

MEN WITH GUNS

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Screenplay by John Sayles

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EXT. CLEARING - CU FIRE - PRE-DAWN

We see the HANDS of a YOUNG GIRL and of her MOTHER as they pile kindling and start a cookfire. The sun won't rise for another couple hours-

MOTHER

This will burn fast- use it only to start the flame. Then this- this will last the morning.

YOUNG GIRL

Tell me more about the man.

The mother waits till the kindling has taken FLAME before she speaks-

MOTHER

He has trouble breathing- sometimes he has to fight to swallow enough air. He can put his hand inside of your body and tell what your sickness is.

YOUNG GIRL

By magic?

MOTHER

By science. He's a doctor. He lives in the city.

YOUNG GIRL

He can cure you of worms.

MOTHER

City people, the kind he treats- don't have the same sicknesses we do. They speak a different language, they wear different clothes-

INT.- DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY - CU 'INVISIBLE MAN'

We see a large chart of the human body, stripped of its skin, muscles and veins visible in bright colors-

MOTHER (V.O.)

-they don't look anything like us.

We RACK FOCUS to see a man of seventy bent over an examination table. The GENERAL-

GENERAL

The people love drama.

CU FINGER

We see a hand in a rubber glove, one finger buried in a jar of vaseline-

FUENTES (O.S.)

They watch soap operas.

TWO-SHOT

DR. FUENTES puts the greased finger up the general's rectum, checking for something-

GENERAL

Which is why you can't believe any of these rumors. How is it?

FUENTES

It doesn't seem to have changed.

GENERAL

It isn't bigger?

FUENTES

It isn't smaller, either. We'll have to watch it.

GENERAL

What a thought- watching my ass.

The two laugh-

GENERAL

The Reds make up these wild stories and the people- the common people- believe them. It makes our job really difficult.

FUENTES

You can get dressed.

The General puts his clothes in order-

GENERAL

I was sorry to hear about your wife.

FUENTES

Thank you. There was nothing to be done about it.

GENERAL

You're retiring soon?

FUENTES

I don't know. My vacation starts tomorrow. I'll have time to think.

GENERAL

Going to the beach?

FUENTES

I want to go where there aren't any tourists. Maybe the mountains.

The General puts his uniform jacket on and we can see the stars on his shoulder and collar. A powerful man-

GENERAL

The mountains? My Tigers waste half their lives chasing guerillas in those fucking mountains.

FUENTES

I thought the Army had wiped them out. I thought the guerillas were only a rumor-

GENERAL

It only takes a couple of the bastards to make trouble. What can you do in the mountains?

Fuentes smiles slightly-

GENERAL

So- my condition-

FUENTES

-is confidential. As always.

GENERAL

It could be used against me.

FUENTES

Who'd want to give you trouble?

The General puts his hand on the doctor's shoulder-

GENERAL

You're like a child, Humberto. The world is a savage place.

EXT. CAFE - DAY

We start on the impassive face of an Indian BUSBOY, waiting to swoop onto whatever table needs his attention-

FUENTES (O.S.)

Nothing lasts at the beach. The waves wipe it all away.

ANGELA (O.S.)

That's why people like it. They can forget their problems.

We SHIFT to see Fuentes sitting with his daughter ANGELA and her fiance RAUL, at a cafe in a courtyard in the center of the city-

FUENTES

I've been thinking about my students in the Program.

ANGELA

Daddy trained doctors for the government-

An Indian WAITER passes with a tray of food-

FUENTES
Ambassadors of Health.

RAUL
I remember something about that- the
foreigners who made war on tapeworms-

FUENTES (proud)
The Alliance for Progress.

RAUL
I don't know why they don't go cure
their own Indians.

ANGELA
Raul-

RAUL
The government was forced to accept
their aid to shut the Americans up.

FUENTES
That might be true, but the Program
was still a good idea.

ANGELA
You should be really proud, Daddy.

FUENTES
I've been thinking about going to
visit some of my students.

ANGELA
Out in the country?

RAUL
If they're still there.

FUENTES
Why wouldn't they be?

RAUL
It's been what- two years?

FUENTES
Three.

RAUL
Three years living with Indians. My
idea of Hell.

FUENTES
It isn't a punishment-

RAUL
Doctor, how many of your patients are
Indians?

Fuentes thinks. He can't name one-

RAUL

My family has been living with them at our plantation for centuries. The more you do for them, the more you give them, the lazier they get. Giving them a taste for modern things- ideas, medicine, television- you destroy their souls.

Fuentes isn't happy to hear this-

FUENTES

The Program was a good idea. It's my legacy.

A moment of silence-

ANGELA

Daddy? You aren't going to drive the Mercedes into the jungle?

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

Two RICH WOMEN sit waiting for the doctor-

RICH WOMAN 1

They call it tennis elbow but I haven't played tennis in three months and it still hurts.

RICH WOMAN 2

What torture!

RICH WOMAN 1

My kidneys are bothering me too. Whenever I drink red wine I get a pain right here- the more expensive the wine the sharper the pain.

Fuentes passes through the room-

RICH WOMEN

Good afternoon, Doctor!

FUENTES

Afternoon, ladies.

EXT. CITY - LATE AFTERNOON

Fuentes walks toward us, seen with a LONG LENS. At almost every corner there is a poor Indian, begging for change with open palm. Fuentes, lost in his thoughts, puts a few coins in the hand of one beggar without looking at her-

INT. MEDICAL CLASSROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

We hear Fuentes lecturing as we TRACK across the faces of young MEDICAL STUDENTS- CIENFUEGOS, MONTOYA, BRAZOS, ARENAS, ECHEVARRIA, DE SOTO, HIDALGO- listening eagerly from their seats-

FUENTES (O.S.)

In a struggle to the death, even a small advantage in technology can win the battle. Cortes conquered an empire with a handful of men- but they had the horse and the gun and their adversary did not. Where you are going, your principle enemies will be ignorance and bacteria. Bacteria can be fought with drugs, but their ally, ignorance-

We PAN to see Fuentes, standing in front of a blackboard bearing complicated Latin words and chemical descriptions of antibiotics-

FUENTES

-this is a disease no one is immune to. More specifically, you will be expected to-

Fuentes' VOICE FADES replaced by the sounds of a TV GAME SHOW-

INT. FUENTES' HOUSE - NIGHT

Fuentes stands lost in thought in his living room, the TV PLAYING a stupid game show. He snaps out of his reverie, looks around. We FOLLOW him into his study, carrying a drink in his hand-

INT. STUDY - CU PHOTOGRAPH

A photo of Fuentes with the students, smiling for the camera. Fuentes pulls it off the wall-

WIDER

Fuentes looks at the picture, remembering-

FUENTES

It was a good idea.

FADE OUT:

EXT. MARKET - DAY

Fuentes looks over the produce in a crowded open market. Many of the vendors are Indians, sitting behind their produce. Fuentes sees someone-

POV - BRAZOS

BRAZOS, twenty-five, is speaking with a Ladino vendor-
FUENTES, BRAZOS

Before Fuentes can call out, Brazos starts away from the market, walking rapidly. Fuentes follows-

EXT. STREET

Fuentes tries to catch up to the younger man-

FUENTES
Brzos! Brazos! Wait!

We PAN to see Brazos. He shoots an annoyed look back at the doctor, then hops onto a bus-

FUENTES

Fuentes stops for a moment to catch his breath, hand over his heart, then crosses the street to where he parked his car-

INT. CAR

Fuentes drives, following the bus-

EXT. BARRIO - DUMP

We see a poor neighborhood behind a mountain of garbage-

STREET

Fuentes' car rolls towards us. He parks it in front of a shack made from scraps of corrugated metal-

INT.-SHACK

Brazos sits shuffling cards. Fuentes appears at the open doorway-

FUENTES
Brazos?

Brazos doesn't answer-

FUENTES
Don't you recognize me?

Brazos looks at the doctor with a mixture of resentment and shame-

BRAZOS
What do you want with me?

FUENTES
Why aren't you in the village?

BRAZOS
The Program is finished.

FUENTES
That's not true-

BRAZOS
It's finished for me.

FUENTES
You were trained- you accepted the responsibility. There were dozens of students who applied who weren't as lucky as you-

BRAZOS
I was lucky, all right. Luckier than Cienfuegos.

FUENTES
What happened to Cienfuegos?

BRAZOS
What do you think?

FUENTES
I have no idea.

Brazos looks at him for a long moment, deciding whether to believe him or not-

BRAZOS
He didn't get a warning.

FUENTES
A warning of what?

BRAZOS (smiling bitterly)
You don't know a thing about it, do you? Some Professor.

Fuentes looks around the squalid shack-

FUENTES
Why are you living in Los Perdidos?

BRAZOS
This is a pharmacy. We sell drugs at popular prices.

Fuentes gives him a look-

BRAZOS
So your classes weren't a complete waste.

FUENTES (shaken)
I sent you off with medicine, with
training, with the support of the
government-

BRAZOS
Dr. Fuentes, you're the most learned
man I've ever met. And the most
ignorant.

Fuentes doesn't know what he's getting at-

BRAZOS
Go find Cienfuegos. He's got the
whole story.

Two street kids appear at the door, looking at Fuentes
suspiciously-

BRAZOS
Go home, Doctor. Los Perdidos is no
place to be when the sun goes down.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Fuentes is in his office after hours, only a small lamp on.
He opens the door to see his supply of medicines. He pulls
down various boxes and bottles, putting them into his black
bag-

CU CHEST

Fuentes puts the stethoscope against his own bare chest-

WIDER

Fuentes listens to his heart. He doesn't like what he hears-

FADE OUT:

FADE UP TO:

EXT. STREET - MORNING

A group of Indian GARDENERS wait for their rides in front of
the gate outside Fuentes' house in a wealthy neighborhood of
the city. We PAN to see Fuentes getting the keys to a
station wagon from his son CARLOS, thirty-

CARLOS
You have to be careful, Dad. They've
never seen a car like this in those
little villages.

FUENTES
I'm not going to the jungle.

CARLOS

Your student probably got some Indian girl pregnant and had to run away save his ass.

Fuentes puts his camera, suitcase and black bag into the car-

FUENTES

It was a shock. Brazos was one of my best students.

CARLOS

Can I use the Mercedes while you're gone?

EXT. ROAD - VARIOUS SCENES

Fuentes drives on a dry plain, leaving the city. A truck bearing a rattling load of soda bottles (KOKAL) passes him, honking. We see MARIO and JESUS, the drivers, smiling and waving as they pass-

EXT. ROAD - CU SALT

An OLD INDIAN MAN sells salt in plastic bags from a small table by the side of the road. There is nothing but dry plain for miles around. Fuentes hands him a bill through the car window-

FUENTES

What town are you from?

OLD INDIAN MAN

I'm from here.

FUENTES

There must be a name for where you live. What are your people called?

The old man shrugs-

OLD INDIAN MAN

We are Salt People. We live here.

FUENTES (looking around)

There's nothing here.

OLD INDIAN MAN

You can't see anything from a car.

EXT. CAFE - DAY

A gas station and diner alongside the highway, cars parked in front-

INT. CAFE - CU MAP

We hear the voices of a pair of Americans while a finger moves across a map of the country-

ANDREW (O.S.)
There was like a hub here- like
Chicago or Atlanta-

HARRIET (O.S.)
They cut paths through the jungle?

ROOM

Fuentes studies his menu as the tourists, ANDREW and HARRIET,
look at their map at the next table-

ANDREW
No jungle to cut through. It was all
farmland back then. Overpopulated,
overfarmed- Harriet, see if this guy
knows-

HARRIET (Spanish)
Excuse me, Sir- do you know how far
it is to the ruins in Jobal?

FUENTES (Spanish)
I'm not sure. I've never travelled
here before.

HARRIET
I think he said he doesn't know this
area.

ANDREW
Great.

HARRIET
At least he speaks Spanish.
(to Fuentes, Spanish)
When we speak to the Indians they
don't seem to understand Spanish.

FUENTES (Spanish)
Do the Indians in the United States
speak English?

HARRIET
He wants to know if our Indians speak
English.
(to Fuentes, Spanish)
Yes, almost all of them do.
(to Andrew)
I think there's a law, isn't there?

ANDREW
Ask if he's heard about any
atrocities.

HARRIET
I can't ask him that.

ANDREW
Look, if we're going up there-

HARRIET
You ask him.

ANDREW
Hay- it's hay, isn't it? Hay
atrocidades aqui?

FUENTES (Spanish)
What?

ANDREW
Atrocidades.

HARRIET (Spanish)
My husband wants to know if you've
read about the problems in this area.
Political problems.

ANDREW
Tell him about the book we have, with
the people with their hands cut off.
(indicates)
Manos cutados-

HARRIET
Cortados.

FUENTES (defensive, Spanish)
That must be in another country. Not
here.

ANDREW (Spanish)
Not here?

FUENTES (Spanish)
It isn't perfect here, but you can't
believe all the stories.

HARRIET (Spanish)
There are stories about the murders
in the papers in New York.

FUENTES (smiling, Spanish)
Newspapers are businesses. And the
common people love drama.

HARRIET
He says the common people love drama.

ANDREW
Ask him why they don't have fajitas
here-

EXT. ROAD - DAY - VARIOUS SHOTS

Fuentes drives through the beginning of a low, cane-growing area. We see WORKERS slashing and burning cane, trucks full of stalks passing by-

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Fuentes has stopped at a fork in the road, hiding his bag, camera and suitcase under a blanket. An INDIAN MAN walks by on the other side of the road. Fuentes calls to him-

FUENTES

Senor, is the town of Rio Seco close to here?

The Indian man points left. There is no road, just a path through a cane field-

FUENTES

How do you get there?

The Indian points again to the same spot-

EXT. CANE FIELD - DAY

Fuentes walks through the cane, pausing a moment to rest-

EXT. VILLAGE

A dozen small houses. Chickens peck at the ground. All the inhabitants are Indian-

CLOSER - WOMAN

A WOMAN, hanging wet laundry in front of her house, looks at Fuentes without expression-

FUENTES

Senora, do you know where the doctor lives? Dr. Cienfuegos?

She doesn't answer-

VARIOUS SHOTS - INDIAN PEOPLE

The faces of several of the INHABITANTS, looking without answering-

FUENTES (O.S.)

Dr. Cienfuegos?

The Doctor?

This is Rio Seco, isn't it?

Cienfuegos works here-

FUENTES

Fuentes looks at a last INDIAN MAN, ducking into his house to avoid the question. The village looks deserted.

Fuentes sits in front of an abandoned house, sweat rolling from his forehead-

FUENTES
Nobody speaks Spanish in this country.

ABUELA (O.S.)
Who's that?

Fuentes turns to see an old and blind woman, ABUELA, sitting on the floor of the ruined house-

FUENTES
Senora- is this Rio Seco?

ABUELA
Of course it is. Are you blind?

She laughs-

FUENTES
I've never been here before. Nobody will talk to me.

ABUELA
We're just poor Sugar People here. We don't get many visitors. Who are you?

FUENTES
I'm Dr. Fuentes.

ABUELA
Good. We need a doctor. The last one died.

Fuentes is distressed to hear this-

FUENTES
Died? How?

ABUELA
They killed him.

FUENTES
Who killed him?

ABUELA
Them. Men with guns.

FUENTES
You saw this?

ABUELA (laughing)
I'm blind.

FUENTES
I'm sorry-

ABUELA

But I know everything that happens.
They made us witness- even me. Even
the blind had to witness. The doctor
and three others- out there-

FUENTES

Somebody shot them?

ABUELA

They burned them with gasoline. I
smelled it. First I smelled the gas
and then the fire and then the men.
Cooked.

FUENTES

Why?

ABUELA

Because they had guns and we didn't.

FUENTES

But why Cienfuegos? Why the doctor?

ABUELA

They didn't like him.

FUENTES

But why?

ABUELA

Why, why, why- you talk like a
parrot.

FUENTES

Are you the only one in town who
speaks Spanish?

ABUELA

No.

FUENTES

They why won't the others talk to me?

ABUELA

They don't know you.

FUENTES

But you're talking to me-

ABUELA

It doesn't matter if I die. All my
children have been killed.

FUENTES

By who?

ABUELA

By them. Men with guns.

FUENTES

These men- who were they? White or Indian?

ABUELA

When he puts on a uniform an Indian turns white. It's magic.

A MAN calls something from his window in an Indian dialect-

ABUELA

You'd better go now, Mr. Doctor.

FUENTES

Is something wrong?

ABUELA

The others don't know who you are.

FUENTES

I'm the man who taught your doctor. His name was Cienfuegos- he was a good student.

ABUELA

He wasn't a good doctor, Cienfuegos.

FUENTES

Why do you say that?

ABUELA

Too many of his patients are dead.

She laughs dementedly. Fuentes looks at the sad village-

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Fuentes returns to his car. The window has been forced open. His suitcase is open on the ground. He finds his black bag undisturbed, but the camera is gone-

FUENTES

My camera! Shit!

EXT. HOTEL - SIGN - NIGHT

CAR HEADLIGHTS illuminate the sign for a hotel- 'POZO DE LOS CACIQUES' over a painting of a naked Indian chief, knife in hand, about to sacrifice a maiden-

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Andrew and Harriet sit at a table with another pair of TOURISTS-

ANDREW

Thousands of them- tore their hearts out and threw them in the well. Must have had a labor surplus.

Harriet sees Fuentes passing through the dining room, looking tired-

HARRIET

Hi! We meet again.

ANDREW

The accounts say there was a stream of blood running down the pyramid-

FUENTES

Mexico.

ANDREW

Pardon?

FUENTES (Spanish)

Not here. Maybe in Mexico. The Aztecs.

Andrew indicates his travel book-

ANDREW

But it says here-

FUENTES (Spanish)

That wasn't our people. It was other tribes, attacking from the north.

HARRIET

He says it was foreigners from the north.

ANDREW

That's not what it says in the book.

Fuentes steps out by the pool behind the restaurant-

EXT. POOL - NIGHT

A bug-zapper kills insects. Fuentes sits by the pool under the yellow lights, looking at his hands, thinking-

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Cienfuegos turns from something he is writing on the blackboard, smiles, turns back to his work-

COMPANION (O.S.)

Go ahead, read it.

TOURIST WOMAN (O.S.)

It's all in italics.

COMPANION (O.S.)

So read it poetically.

EXT. POOL - NIGHT

Fuentes looks up. We PAN with his gaze across to a pair of Americans sitting by the pool. A TOURIST WOMAN reads from a travel brochure to her female COMPANION-

TOURIST WOMAN

'There is a place where the air is like a caress, where gentle waters flow, a place where your burdens are lifted from your shoulders on wings of peace- '

COMPANION

They can't be talking about this place.

TOURIST WOMAN

No, this is near Bali-
(resumes reading)

'A place to forget, a place to grow, a place where each day is a gift and each person is reborn- '

CU FUENTES

Leaning back to listen-

TOURIST WOMAN (O.S.)

'Where is this Paradise on earth, this haven, this safe harbor?'

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Fuentes sits in front of a CAPTAIN of the rural police, who watches the street through a window-

FUENTES

Cienfuegos has been murdered.

CAPTAIN

Who told you that?

FUENTES

I heard a rumor in the capital, I went to the village, and he wasn't there.

The Captain sighs, turns and sits at his desk-

CAPTAIN

He was kidnaped by guerillas.

FUENTES

They told me he was burned to death.

CAPTAIN
What is your name, Sir?

FUENTES
Doctor Fuentes. Humberto Fuentes.

The Captain writes his name on a form-

CAPTAIN
I'll send somebody to investigate.
We have to stop these rumors.

FUENTES
No, it won't make any difference- if
the guerillas killed him- kidnaped
him- then-

CAPTAIN
Are you going home to the capital?

FUENTES
I think I'll keep going, visit
another of my students in Tierra
Quemada.

CAPTAIN
I wouldn't advise you to go there.

FUENTES
Why not?

CAPTAIN
There have been incidents with
guerillas up there. Then there are
bandits, deserters- And the Indians-
well- they're Indians, right? They
won't talk to anybody, they see a
white face and-

He puts a finger to his lips to indicate silence. The
Captain himself has an Indian face-

FUENTES
I'm sure my student is there. I'll
be with him.

CAPTAIN
Okay- but I can't guarantee your
safety.

Fuentes shrugs his shoulders-

CAPTAIN
Could I see your identification? I
need to be sure you're really a
doctor and not a journalist. We've
had problems with journalists.
(more)

CAPTAIN (cont'd)

They go up to take pictures of the Indians, then they disappear. And I get blamed for it.

Fuentes stands-

FUENTES

I'm not taking any pictures. They stole my camera.

CAPTAIN (serious)

Identification, please-

EXT. STREET

Fuentes steps out of the station and three young boys run away. He sees that they've stolen his hub caps. One remains, spinning on the pavement-

EXT. RIVER COUNTRY - DAY - VARIOUS SHOTS

Fuentes drives through the beginning of hilly river country-

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Fuentes studies a map on the hood of his car, parked alongside the road in a hilly area. The Kokal truck blasts by, bottles clinking, HORN honking-

CLOSER

Looking for Tierra Quemada on the map. Fuentes looks up at the hills-

POV

There is a pathway nearly covered with weeds, leading to the top of the nearest hill-

FUENTES

Considers, then takes his black bag from the station wagon. He begins to climb, passing through coffee plants growing haphazardly along the trail. Suddenly there is a WHISTLE. He stops, listening- then continues-

EXT. TIERRA QUEMADA

A village even poorer than Rio Seco. Fuentes walks between the shacks. There are no men, only WOMEN, who turn their backs when he approaches-

FUENTES

Is Dr. Arenas here? Do you know him?
Do you know where the Doctor is?

Once again, nobody will speak to him, suspicious. Finally a YOUNG WOMAN approaches with a little BOY in her arms.

The little boy has a distended stomach. The woman points to the black bag and says something in an Indian language. Fuentes looks beyond her at the village-

FUENTES

Okay. Take his shirt off.

She pulls the boy's shirt off and Fuentes touches his stomach, looks at his eyes and tongue-

FUENTES

He isn't sick. This is malnutrition. And thirst. Food- what are you feeding him?

The woman indicates her breasts-

FUENTES

He's too big to be breast-feeding. He needs solid food. Like corn, right?

MOTHER

There isn't any corn. Only coffee.

FUENTES

Then what do you eat?

MOTHER

There isn't any.

She points at the black bag-

FUENTES

I only have medicine, not food. Your child needs food. Vegetables, fruit, rice-

A boy of ten or eleven, RABBIT, has come closer, listening-

RABBIT

These are Coffee People. They pick coffee to buy food.

FUENTES

Okay, so buy food-

RABBIT

But they tell us that the coffee price is bad, so the wages are low and there isn't any food. This village is fucked.

FUENTES

Where is the doctor? The other doctor, Dr. Arenas?

RABBIT

He's gone.

FUENTES
Gone where?

RABBIT
They took him.

FUENTES
Who took him?

RABBIT
The Army.

FUENTES
Where?

RABBIT
To school.

FUENTES
Is he still there?

RABBIT
That's where they said they were
taking him.

FUENTES
Where is the school?

Fuentes pulls out the map and points to a spot-

FUENTES
We're here.

RABBIT
Where?

FUENTES
Here.

RABBIT
Really?

FUENTES
Yes. Which direction is the school?

Rabbit points-

FUENTES
Is there a road?

RABBIT
For two pesetas I'll show you.

Fuentes sighs-

FUENTES
Okay- tell your mother you're going-

RABBIT
I don't have a mother.

FUENTES
Your father?

RABBIT
I don't have one.

MOTHER
He doesn't have anyone.

FUENTES (sighs)
Let's go-

The mother and child watch Fuentes leave with Rabbit-

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Rabbit hesitates as he's about to follow Fuentes into the station wagon-

FUENTES
Is something wrong?

RABBIT
I'm hungry.
(grins)
I'm as fucked as the rest of them.

INT. STATION WAGON - DAY

Rabbit eats crackers while Fuentes drives-

FUENTES
That woman needed food. That's who
I should be feeding.

RABBIT
She didn't have anything to sell.

Fuentes gives him a dirty look-

RABBIT
Here.

FUENTES
What?

RABBIT
Stop here.

Fuentes hits the brakes. There is nothing beside the road but woods-

FUENTES
The school is here?

RABBIT

No. But I bet the doctor is.

FUENTES

Show me.

RABBIT

I want my two pesetas first.

Fuentes gives him the money-

EXT. WOODS

The boy walks beside the doctor in the woods. They reach a clearing. At first Fuentes doesn't see what it is, but gradually he sees the human bones at his feet. They are walking in a secret cemetery-

FUENTES (surprised)

These are people. Human beings.

RABBIT

Not any more.

FUENTES

What are they doing here?

RABBIT

This is where they take you when you graduate.

Fuentes picks up a piece of skull and looks at it. There is a bullet hole in the skull-

FUENTES

Why were they killed?

RABBIT

The Army was mad at them.

FUENTES

They didn't bury them-

RABBIT

To make an example.

FUENTES

Example of what?

RABBIT

That it's a bad idea to get the Army mad at you.

FUENTES

And why did they kill Dr. Arenas?

RABBIT

He was a doctor.

FUENTES
I know that, but why did they kill him?

RABBIT
Because he was a doctor.

Fuentes makes a face, drops the piece of skull-

FUENTES
Was he a good doctor?

RABBIT
Yes. When I broke my wrist he fixed it.

FUENTES
And the people in the village liked him?

RABBIT
No.

FUENTES
Why not?

RABBIT
He wasn't one of them.

FUENTES
People should know about this-

RABBIT
Everybody knows about it. The Army brought us to see what could happen to us.

FUENTES
I didn't know anything about it.

RABBIT
You're a stranger.

EXT. ROAD - AFTERNOON

Fuentes and Rabbit return to the station wagon-

FUENTES
I'll take you back.

RABBIT
Are you going home?

FUENTES
I don't know. Maybe I'll go on to Caras Sucias.

RABBIT
You'll get lost.

FUENTES
I know how to find it. I can't take
you with me.

RABBIT
Where are you going to sleep?

FUENTES
In a hotel.

RABBIT
There aren't any hotels between here
and there.

FUENTES
And in your village?

RABBIT
They might kill you.

FUENTES
Who?

RABBIT
The men who are hiding. When you
came there was a signal and all the
men hid. Now that they know you're
alone they might kill you.

FUENTES
I haven't done anything to them.

RABBIT
So what? You're a stranger. I know
a place we can sleep.

EXT. SCHOOL - DUSK

The station wagon is parked in front of a ruined building at
the edge of the woods-

INT. SCHOOL

Broken desks and chairs, a blackboard covered with
obscenities- we find Fuentes and Rabbit looking at a huge
stain of blood on the wall-

RABBIT
This used to be the school. But
after the teacher disappeared the
Army used it to question suspects.
They used to scare people by saying
"We're going to take you to school."
If you survived, people said you were
"educated". If you didn't, they said
you had "graduated".

FUENTES
How do you know all this?

Rabbit shrugs-

RABBIT

They took me with three girls. The girls washed their clothes and cooked and fucked them. And I did all the other work.

FUENTES

They were prostitutes?

RABBIT

The soldiers called them whores, but they didn't get paid.

FUENTES

These were white men?

RABBIT

The commander acted like a white man. The soldiers were Indians.

FUENTES

From where?

RABBIT

Not from here. They never send you to your own region.

Rabbit lies down on a long table with strips of leather attached to it-

RABBIT

I slept here.

Fuentes touches one of the leather thongs-

FUENTES

What are these for?

RABBIT

Operations.

FUENTES

They had a doctor?

RABBIT

They took your friend's tools after his 'education', and they used them on people to make them say things. They call that 'operations'. They were always making jokes, the soldiers.

Rabbit opens the doctor's bag and pulls out a scalpel-

RABBIT

They used one like this-

FUENTES
Put that back!

Rabbit lies back down-

RABBIT
If you want to go to Caras Sucias
tomorrow we have to start early.
There isn't a path.

FUENTES
How can there be a village if there
isn't a path?

RABBIT
They don't want to be found.

Fuentes sits on a wobbly chair. Rabbit closes his eyes-

RABBIT
(sadly)
The guys said they were going to take
me with them as a mascot, but the
commander said no.
(he looks to the doctor)
I'll wake you at sunrise.

He closes his eyes again-

YOUNG GIRL (V.O.)
The boy has no mother.

EXT. COOKFIRE - MORNING - HANDS

We watch the hands of the woman as she grinds corns into
paste in a stone bowl, then slowly PAN to see the girl's
hands as she inexpertly tries to pat corn mash into a
tortilla-

MOTHER
His mother is alive but she won't
look at him.

YOUNG GIRL
How can that be?

MOTHER
She was only a girl herself when
soldiers came and forced her. The
boy is like a demon she has pushed
from her body. Use your fingertips-

YOUNG GIRL
How can he live?

MOTHER
As a dog lives. He takes the scraps
that real people leave.

YOUNG GIRL
Is he bad?

MOTHER
Dogs can't be bad or good.

EXT. CARAS SUCIAS - MORNING

Fuentes walks through ruins, followed by Rabbit-

MOTHER (V.O.)
They're just dogs.

Caras Sucias is a deserted village at the edge of low tropical jungle. Nothing much remains of the houses- burnt and tumbled-down-

FUENTES
Nobody left?

RABBIT
These were the Banana People. They thought they could hide in the trees, but during Festival they caught them in the open and killed a lot of them from a helicopter. The others have been taken away.

FUENTES
Why didn't you tell me?

RABBIT
You didn't ask me if there were people here.

FUENTES
Do you know what happened to the doctor here? Echevarria?

RABBIT
No.

FUENTES (angry)
Okay- I'll take you back.

RABBIT
They don't want me there. They think I'm bad luck.

FUENTES
They're right.

RABBIT
Do you know how to find the main road?
Fuentes thinks. He doesn't know-

RABBIT
Do you know how to find Los Martires?

FUENTES
It's up higher-

RABBIT
You ever been there?

FUENTES
Have you?

Rabbit smiles-

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Fuentes and Rabbit look at the station wagon. The tires have been stolen-

FUENTES
Dammit. This fucking country-

The soda truck blasts past, going back toward the capital, the drivers HONKING and WAVING but not stopping-

FUENTES
These fucking people.

EXT. ROAD - LATER

Fuentes and Rabbit sit on the hood of the car, waiting. Rabbit is finishing the crackers. A thin young Indian man, DOMINGO, approaches on foot-

FUENTES
Hey! Did you see anybody carrying my tires?

Domingo doesn't answer-

FUENTES
Where are you coming from?

RABBIT
Watch it, Mister. He's a soldier.

FUENTES
Do you speak Spanish? Did you see somebody with tires?

Domingo steps right up to Fuentes and looks him in the eye. He acts totally fearless compared to the other people Fuentes has encountered in the villages-

DOMINGO
I don't know anything about your fucking tires. How much money have you got?

Fuentes is terrified. Domingo grabs Rabbit-

DOMINGO
Give me your money or I'll break his
arm.

FUENTES
He isn't mine-

DOMINGO
So what?

RABBIT
I've got two pesetas.

DOMINGO
Give them to me.

Rabbit gives his money to Domingo, who pushes him away and
pulls a pistol from his pants. He waves it at the doctor-

DOMINGO
And you?

Fuentes hands him his wallet. Domingo pulls the money out
and tosses the wallet on the ground-

FUENTES
At least let me have the tires back-

DOMINGO
How could I have your tires?
Somebody with a jack took them. Give
me the keys.

Fuentes gives the keys to Domingo. Domingo opens the rear
door, pulling out bottles of water. He opens the black bag
and pulls out the scalpel-

DOMINGO
What are you doing out here?

FUENTES
Visiting friends.

DOMINGO
Where?

FUENTES
The next one works in Pico de Aguila.

DOMINGO
You can't reach that village by car.

Domingo takes the scalpel and the keys and a bottle of water
and walks ahead up the road-

FUENTES
Some soldier.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Fuentes and Rabbit lie on the hood of the station wagon. We hear the INSECTS SINGING-

RABBIT

If there's a battle and a soldier loses his rifle, the captain says he must be a spy, and the soldier is executed.

FUENTES

That's stupid-

RABBIT

You have to maintain discipline. When I was their mascot I saw it lots of times. Maybe that's what happened to the man who took my money.

FUENTES

Two pesetas. I had hundreds in my wallet.

RABBIT

Do you have a house in the capital?

FUENTES

Yes-

RABBIT

And you have more money in that house?

FUENTES

It's in a bank-

RABBIT

You've got nothing to cry about, then. He took everything I had in the world.

Fuentes scowls and looks down the empty road-

FUENTES

Nobody drives on this road.

RABBIT

Nobody but idiots.

Fuentes gives him a dirty look. The HEADLIGHTS of a car appear-

FUENTES

Somebody's coming-

RABBIT

Some idiot.

Fuentes gets up to signal. The car swerves very close, almost hitting him, then running off the road, skidding to a halt between the trees. Domingo steps out, wounded in the leg-

FUENTES
Run away, kid!

Rabbit doesn't budge. Domingo limps up with his pistol drawn-

FUENTES
Where did you get that car?

Domingo points the gun at him-

DOMINGO
Put the tires from it on your car.

Fuentes hesitates-

FUENTES
Your leg looks bad-

DOMINGO
Do it! There's a jack in the trunk.

Fuentes turns to Rabbit-

FUENTES
I told you to run.

Rabbit crosses to the stolen car. He reaches in and pulls a flashlight from the glove compartment. He flicks it on-

RABBIT
Tourists. Tourists always have
flashlights.

He plays with the light, flicking it on and off as the men look at each other. Domingo is sweating heavily, in a lot of pain-

DOMINGO
Point it at the tires.

EXT. ROAD - MORNING

Dawn. The station wagon has new tires-

EXT. WOODS

Fuentes operates on Domingo's leg as he lies on the hood of the stolen car, surrounded by trees. Rabbit watches, face very close to the scalpel as it hovers over the skin of Domingo's thigh. Domingo watches too, pointing his pistol at Fuentes, sweat covering his face-

DOMINGO
What are you doing? Tell me what
you're doing!

FUENTES
I have to give you a shot.

DOMINGO
No. Don't knock me out.

FUENTES
It's going to hurt like hell-

DOMINGO
Do it.

Fuentes cuts. Rabbit leans in to see the gory details-

CU HUBCAP

In SLOW-MOTION we see a bloody bullet fall into the upturned
hubcap-

MEN

Fuentes cleans the wound while Rabbit holds a bandage ready.
Domingo has a bad color-

DOMINGO
You don't have much experience with
bullets.

FUENTES
My patients aren't thieves.

No reaction from Domingo-

FUENTES
The boy said you're a deserter.

Domingo shoots a look at Rabbit-

DOMINGO
I was a medic in the Army. If
anybody stops us, say that I'm your
chauffeur, and that I was bitten by
a snake.

FUENTES
What?

DOMINGO
Tell them I was pissing at the side
of the road and a snake bit me.

FUENTES
Where are we going?

DOMINGO

Further on. You'll drive. You can give me shot for the pain now. But not enough to knock me out.

Fuentes takes a small bottle from his bag-

DOMINGO

What is that? I can't read the label-

FUENTES

It's a narcotic.

Fuentes fills a hypodermic with liquid from the bottle-

DOMINGO

(to Rabbit)

Can you read?

RABBIT

No.

FUENTES

You have to trust me.

DOMINGO

What is it exactly?

FUENTES

You have to trust me.

Domingo grabs the syringe and points the pistol at Rabbit-

DOMINGO

Give me your arm.

FUENTES

He's just a boy!

DOMINGO

I'll give him half a dose and see what it does.

(to Rabbit)

Give me your arm!

Rabbit offers his arm. Fuentes watches, expressionless, Domingo searching his eyes as he spikes the boy's arm and injects the drug. He pulls it out, watches Rabbit for a moment-

RABBIT

I want my two pesetas back.

DOMINGO

When I get where I'm going.

He shoots himself up with the other half of the dose-

FUENTES
Where are you going?

DOMINGO
Further ahead. Let's go.

INT. STATION WAGON - AFTERNOON

Fuentes drives. Rabbit watches the countryside pass with clouded eyes. Domingo sits in back with his leg stretched out-

FUENTES
Did you kill the tourists?

DOMINGO
Who?

FUENTES
The ones whose tires we took. Did you kill them?

DOMINGO
No.

FUENTES
Why not?

DOMINGO
What do you care?

FUENTES
Who shot you?

DOMINGO
It doesn't matter.

Rabbit begins to talk in an Indian dialect. Domingo talks with him for a moment in the same language-

FUENTES
What's he saying?

DOMINGO
He says he's never been in an airplane before.

EXT. ROAD - AFTERNOON

Fuentes and Domingo wait in the car as Rabbit vomits at the side of the road-

FUENTES
He won't run away.

DOMINGO
I know.

Domingo gives him a look-

DOMINGO
Am I going to die because of this leg?

FUENTES
Not if you get treatment.

DOMINGO
Then you'll get to live a little longer.

Rabbit comes back, wiping his mouth-

FUENTES
If you're going to get better you have to sleep.

DOMINGO
You first.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

The station wagon is parked in a clearing in the trees-

INT. STATION WAGON

Domingo and Rabbit sleep. Fuentes opens his eyes, watches Domingo for a moment. He reaches back slowly and lightly lifts the pistol from Domingo's hand. He opens the chamber, looks- no bullets. He smiles, closes the chamber and returns the pistol to Domingo-

EXT. MERCADO - LATE MORNING

The station wagon slows, people barely moving out of the way as they drive through the market of a small town- a stone church, plaza, stucco buildings painted in pastels. Things don't seem so desperate here-

INT. CAR

Domingo is in pain again, the drug worn off, and very nervous-

DOMINGO
Keep moving, dammit! I told you not to go this way!

FUENTES
There's no way around this town.

DOMINGO
What are you doing?

Fuentes pulls the car to the side when there is a spot free of vendors-

FUENTES
We need food and water. Bring the wallet.

He is out of the car before Domingo can make another threat-

EXT. MARKET

Fuentes begins to stroll past the stalls and groundcloths, checking out the goods. Domingo lurches after him, wincing on the bad leg, and Rabbit wanders behind. They walk past a wall covered with stencils of various political parties and much graffiti, much of it spray-painted over. There is a partially vandalized poster of the General, exhorting the populace to be vigilant against subversives. Fuentes sees something, frowns, and stops in front of a VENDOR sitting behind a blanket covered with cheap manufactured goods, just as Domingo catches up-

FUENTES

Where do you get these things?

No response. Fuentes turns to Domingo-

FUENTES

Ask him.

Domingo gives him a dark look, but then translates Fuentes' question into the local Indian language. The vendor answers-

DOMINGO

From the city.

Fuentes bends and lifts something off the vendor's blanket-

CLOSER - SPECULUM

Fuentes lifts the shiny medical instrument-

FUENTES (O.S.)

And he got this in the city too?

WIDER - MEN

The vendor nods to Domingo's question-

FUENTES

Ask him what it is.

Domingo asks-

DOMINGO

He doesn't know.

FUENTES

Does he know what any of these things are?

Fuentes indicates a group of medical instruments lying side by side on the blanket-

DOMINGO

He says they are for a doctor. He'll give you a good price if you want them.

FUENTES

And where is the doctor's office?
Dr. de Soto?

DOMINGO

He says there is no doctor.

FUENTES

Tell him I know these are stolen, and that I'll bring the police if he won't tell me where Dr. de Soto is.

The vendor has a worried exchange with Domingo-

DOMINGO

At the end of that street. But he says the doctor isn't there.

FUENTES

We'll see about that.

Fuentes starts away-

DOMINGO

Where are you going? I'll put a bullet in you!

FUENTES

No you won't.

Domingo struggles to catch up-

SOLDIER, FUENTES

Seen from a distance, Fuentes is asking a soldier for directions. He turns and points back toward us. We SHIFT to see Domingo in the FG, ducking behind a building, sweat beading his forehead-

INT. BARBER SHOP

Fuentes steps into a makeshift barber shop. The BARBER is cutting the hair of a CLIENT in front of a small mirror. All the furnishings of the room belong to a modest doctor's office- government hygiene posters still on the wall, a curtained partition and cot in one corner, a glass cabinet still holding a few bottles and boxes of medicine-

BARBER

Good afternoon.

FUENTES

Good afternoon. Is the doctor in?

The barber and client look at each other-

FUENTES
This is Dr. de Soto's office?

BARBER
It was.

FUENTES
He's not here any more?

CLIENT
The doctor has passed away.

Fuentes looks very tired. He indicates a chair-

FUENTES
Do you mind if I sit?

BARBER
Please-

Fuentes sits, bends to hold his head in his hands-

FUENTES
May I ask how the doctor died?

The barber and client look at each other again. The barber sighs, crosses to pull the shade down on the window to the street. We see Domingo glaring in before it blocks our view of him. The barber begins to speak quietly-

BARBER
It was very unfortunate. He was murdered by guerillas.

FUENTES
Guerillas came into this town?

CLIENT
How can you stop them? Whenever the Army isn't here they come.

BARBER
They come to shop, to visit their friends.

FUENTES
And what did they have against the doctor?

BARBER
He treated the wounded soldiers when the Army came through. Whenever they leave, the guerillas come back and punish the people who help them.

FUENTES

What if he had refused to treat the soldiers?

CLIENT

(smiles)

You don't refuse men with guns.

BARBER

They killed him to make an example.

Fuentes stands-

FUENTES

So now you don't have a doctor.

BARBER

(shrugs)

It seems simpler that way. Would you like a haircut?

MARKET

Domingo and Rabbit wait by the blanket of an old INDIAN MAN-

RABBIT

Does it hurt?

DOMINGO

Yes.

RABBIT

Does it hurt a lot?

DOMINGO

Shut up.

A BOY of about fifteen approaches, looking to see that no soldiers are near-

DOMINGO

Have you got them?

The boy hands something to Domingo. He hides it in his hand, then hands a bill to the boy, who hurries away-

CU HAND

Domingo opens his hand and we see three bullets in the palm-

DOMINGO, RABBIT

DOMINGO

Here they are, kid- The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

He quickly pockets the bullets as he sees Fuentes coming back from the barber shop-

DOMINGO
We're getting out of here.

FUENTES
Fine.

DOMINGO
I'm not fucking around now.

FUENTES
Of course you're not.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY - FLASHBACK

Medicals students- Echavarria, de Soto, Brazos, Arenas- fool around at their table, pretending to perform surgery on a roast chicken, the others handing de Soto a knife and fork, improvising clamps to hold the chest cavity open. We hear a CAR DRIVING-

DOMINGO (O.S.)
Towns like that are full of leeches.

INT. CAR - ROAD - DAY

Fuentes drives wordlessly, thoroughly depressed. Domingo sits in the rear with Rabbit, who is happily eating small bananas-

DOMINGO
The rich people, the ones who own the plantations, get the Army to push the Indians further and further back from the good land, so they'll starve if they don't go and pick the rich people's crops. The Indians come back with their pitiful little wages in their pockets, and those leeches suck them dry.

We see a man up ahead in the road, dressed in rags, waving his arms. Domingo pushes the pistol against the back of Fuentes' neck-

DOMINGO
Don't stop.

Fuentes ignores the pistol and begins to slow down-

DOMINGO
I'm warning you-

FUENTES
Go ahead and shoot. If the police or the Army see you alone in this car they'll pick you up in a minute.

Fuentes stops the wagon. The waving man, PORTILLO, smiles and sits in front by the doctor-

FUENTES
Good morning.

PORTILLO
Morning.

FUENTES
Where are you headed?

Portillo shrugs-

PORTILLO
Further on.

FUENTES
Okay-

Fuentes starts the car ahead. He gives a look to Portillo-
a white man who looks a little crazy-

FUENTES
Are you lost?

PORTILLO (laughing)
Yes. For a long time now.

DOMINGO (suspicious)
Where do you live?

PORTILLO
Neither here nor there.

DOMINGO
What's your name?

PORTILLO
Padre Portillo. But these days
people just call me 'The Spirit'.

FUENTES
You're a priest?

PORTILLO
Not anymore. I was when I came here.
I taught the Indians religion through
theater. People love drama. But I
was a bad actor- I stopped believing
in my role and lost my faith.

FUENTES
That's a shame. A man should believe
in something.

PORTILLO
You're a religious man?

FUENTES
No- no, I'm a doctor- a scientist.
I guess I believe in Progress.

PORTILLO
Moving forward.

FUENTES
Yes.

PORTILLO
These days I just believe in moving.
It doesn't matter which direction.

They ride in silence for a moment-

FUENTES
I have to admit my faith has been
shaken in the last few days.

PORTILLO
I'm sorry for you.

Domingo has been staring at the newcomer with undigued
suspicion-

DOMINGO
So you got a village girl pregnant.

PORTILLO
(smiles)
Oh, no. Much worse than that.

DOMINGO
You stole from the church.

PORTILLO
There was nothing to steal. I was a
very good priest, until I was tested.

FUENTES
Tested?

PORTILLO
I was tested, and I was weak.

FUENTES (digging)
A priest without his faith is like a
soldier without his rifle.

Domingo scowls at him-

EXT. ROAD - DAY - CAMPESINO

An older MAN struggles up a hill with a huge bundle of
branches cut for firewood on his back. The road winds down
the long hill behind him. The station wagon glides from the
far BG, finally passing us out of frame. We HOLD on the man,
still walking-

EXT. ROADSIDE - EVENING

Domingo is watching Rabbit camouflage the car with palm fronds. They've pulled off the road for the night. Portillo squats with his back against a tree, thinking as he talks to Fuentes-

PORTILLO

You can't feel responsible for these students. The world is a hard place-

FUENTES

I should have warned them.

PORTILLO

If you didn't know what the danger was, how could you warn them?

FUENTES

I should have known.

PORTILLO (considers)

Maybe. Maybe innocence is a sin.

He looks back into the trees, lowers his voice slightly-

PORTILLO (considers)

Your chauffeur doesn't like me.

FUENTES

He isn't my chauffeur. He's just somebody heading in the same direction.

PORTILLO

How far are you going?

FUENTES

Till I find my students.

Domingo limps back to them-

DOMINGO

You can stay with us tonight, but in the morning you hit the road.

PORTILLO

May God bless you.

Fuentes turns to step further into the trees-

DOMINGO

Where are you going?

FUENTES

To relieve myself, if it's alright with you.

PORTILLO
Be careful of snakes.

EXT. WOODS - EVENING

Fuentes stands peeing in the woods. He stares at a gummy substance rolling down the tree bark, then looks up-

FUENTES' POV - MACHETE SCARS

The bark has been scarred in a criss-cross pattern. Rubber sap seethes out of the cuts. Fuentes' hand appears, fingers touching the sap-

WIDER

Fuentes pulls his zipper shut, turns- two men flank him, both with machete in hand. He gasps, surprised. One of the men smiles shyly-

AMPARO
Bienvenido.

EXT. WOODS - CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

The travelers sit around a fire by a palm frond lean-to with AMPARO and JAVIER, a pair of leathery chicleros. A cauldron of gum is cooking nearby, while rough blocks of the stuff are piled beneath the lean-to. Javier is cooking coffee in a battered tin pot-

JAVIER
We don't get many visitors.

FUENTES
Where are you from?

AMPARO
Gum People just go where the sap is running.

FUENTES
But where were you born?

AMPARO
On the coast.

JAVIER
In the mountains. But we live out here where the work is.

Javier pours coffee into metal cups for them-

AMPARO
Do you know any stories?

FUENTES
Stories?

He smiles and indicates the jungle around them-

AMPARO

We don't get television out here.

FUENTES

People come to places like this to get away from television.

JAVIER

It's good to have a story at night.
If you talk loud enough you can't hear the mosquitos whine.

PORTILLO

I'll tell you a story.

They turn their attention to Portillo. He has a strange look on his face-

JAVIER

Is it a true story?

PORTILLO

It's a ghost story.

We begin to TRACK IN tight on a CU of Portillo-

PORTILLO

There was a priest who came to a small village in the hills to teach the Bible. He used theater for his teaching- he put on plays with the children to bring the holy word to the people. But it was the time when the Army was mad at the people, and because the priest was their friend, he became their enemy. Before the killing began there were threats- anonymous notes, things painted on the side of the church. The people begged him not to go.

Portillo smiles bitterly-

PORTILLO

They thought if he stayed God would protect them.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. VILLAGE CHURCH - DAY

We see several Indian MEN prying boards from a makeshift altar in a tiny cinder-block church-

PORTILLO (V.O.)

The Army burned Los Suenos, which was above the village, but the people there had all become Baptists. Then they burned El Chino, which was below the village.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

A man's hand charred into a claw is in the dirt in the FG. A hut burns in the BG, a bloody, fire-blackened CHILD toddles in between, SCREAMING. SOLDIERS rush by, dragging a corpse by the feet-

PORTILLO (V.O.)

And in El Chino they were all Catholics.

INT. ALTAR - LOW ANGLE POV

We see the faces of the men appear above us as the hole they are making widens-

PORTILLO (V.O.)

There was nothing bad or unusual happening in their village- they were just Corn People, planting, having children, trying to feed them. Nobody was interested in politics.

ROOM

The men help Portillo out of his hiding place-

PORTILLO (V.O.)

So when the Army came all they could think to do was hide.

CU PORTILLO

Looking around at the men. He is very frightened-

POV, MEN

Looking at him with grim faces-

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

The men of the village sit on the ground in a central circle, the women and children ringed around them. They are debating what to do-

MOISES

The Commandante has left us this list of five men- five men and our Padre-

He nods toward Portillo, who sits among the men-

MOISES

These are the men he says we must execute.

ISIDRO

What have they done?

MOISES

He says they are subversives. That they help the guerillas.

JUNIPERO

That isn't true.

MOISES

The Commandante says it is. And he has men with guns. You saw them.

SIXTO

Can we fight them?

ISIDRO

With machetes? With hoes?

MOISES

He says it is our duty to march the traitors to our cemetery, to dig holes for them, then kill them and leave them lying there till he comes to check.

CU PORTILLO

Terrified as he listens-

MOISES

If we fail to do this, he says he will know we are bad people, and his soldiers will burn our village and kill us all, as they did in El Chino and Los Suenos.

WIDER, VILLAGERS

Considering their limited options-

ARTEMIO

If we run-

ISIDRO

If we run they will kill us in small groups instead of all together.

The men think about this for a moment-

MOISES

We should have a vote on this. We have three choices- to try to fight and be slaughtered; to try to run away and be slaughtered; or to sacrifice the men who are on the commandante's list. May I see hands of those who wish to fight-

Nobody raises a hand-

MOISES

And those who wish to run-

Not a hand-

MOISES

Those who think we must do as the Commandante tells us-

The men resignedly raise their hands-

PORTILLO

In a kind of shock, he hasn't moved-

MOISES (O.S.)

Padre? Padre?

Portillo snaps to, looks to Moises-

MOISES (O.S.)

You haven't voted, Padre.

PORTILLO

I'm sorry, I- I go along with the majority.

MOISES

The village head man nods gravely. Moises raises the list-

MOISES

Thank you. On the list are named Padre Portillo, Isidro Mendez, Jacobo Duran, Eufemio Ramirez, Sixto Lima, and I am the sixth. We will give these men an hour to be with their families and then all will meet at the cemetery.

He looks around to see if there are any objections-

MOISES

I think it's better if we do this as quickly as possible.

VILLAGERS

They rise slowly, without a word, and head back to their dwellings. Portillo, still stunned, remains sitting-

INT. CHURCH - STATUE

A crudely-painted statue of Saint Stephen, pin-cushioned with arrows-

WIDER

Portillo kneels at the altar, praying-

PORTILLO (V.O.)

As a boy the priest read the histories of the Christian martyrs as if they were comic books. He often imagined his heroic death at the hands of the infidels-

CU PORTILLO

His mind working, trying to figure a way out of this-

PORTILLO (V.O.)

-a golden ray of light lifting him to the heavens, his soul rising to take its place at the right hand of God-

His eyes flick to the base of the altar-

ALTAR, HOLE

The planks have not been replaced. His old hiding place beckons-

PORTILLO (V.O.)

-but when the reality was upon him, well---

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Portillo steps out of the tiny church and looks around. Not a soul in sight. He begins to walk, looking neither left nor right-

PORTILLO (V.O.)

The church called the gospel he taught liberation theology. He chose to liberate himself.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

We shoot past simple crosses and painted statues in the FG at Portillo as he reaches the edge of the village-

EXT. CORNFIELD - DAY

Portillo comes at us down an aisle of corn stalks-

PORTILLO (V.O.)
He knew the people of the village.
He had eaten in their homes, shared
their work, baptised their babies.

We TRACK BACK when he reaches a CU-

PORTILLO (V.O.)
Because he knew them so well, he
could see every detail of what would
happen next.

EXT. CEMEMTERY - DAY - CU SHOVEL

A shovel chops into the hard dirt of the cemetery-

WIDER

The entire village, but for the priest, have gathered. Men
take turns digging the holes-

CU CHALICE

Calloused fingers lift a communion wafer from the chalice and
hold it aloft-

PORTILLO (V.O.)
Gonzalo, who was the sacristan, led
the Christian part of the ceremony.

GONZALO

Muttering phrases, Gonzalo makes a sign of the cross in the
air with the host-

PORTILLO (V.O.)
The priest's absence would be noted
by all, but never spoken of.

MOISES

Moises, kneeling, raises his chin to receive the sacrament-

PORTILLO (V.O.)
They could only hope, as he did, that
the Commandante would not blame them
for his lack of faith.

Moises swallows the wafer, then closes his eyes. The barrel
of an old pistol is pressed to his forehead-

HAMMER

The hammer of the pistol begins to move forward- BLAM! The
screen goes WHITE:

FADE UP TO:

OVERHEAD SHOT - GRAVES

We CRANE over the bodies lying dead on their backs in their freshly dug pits, foreheads bearing a blue-black hole-Moises, Isidro, Eufemio, Sixto, Jacobo. The last pit is empty-

CEMETERY

Women lay stripped corn stalks across the pits, then begin to cover them with palm fronds as the rest of the villagers remain on their knees, praying-

PORTILLO (V.O.)

They could have sent someone to bring him back if they wanted to, but they didn't. I suppose they had their reasons. They waited for the Commandante.

EXT. CHICLERO'S CAMP - NIGHT

The men ponder this story-

PORTILLO

Patience. The villagers would clear a section of jungle knowing it would take seven, eight years for a decent yield. Do you know anybody with that kind of patience?

FUENTES

What happened to the village?

PORTILLO

I've been to the place where it was.

FUENTES

They were slaughtered?

Portillo thinks for a long time before answering-

PORTILLO (smiles sadly)

Obviously I don't believe in Heaven, Doctor. But Hell- I can give you a tour of Hell.

DOMINGO

And the priest?

PORTILLO

I told you it was a ghost story. The priest wanders the roads and pathways of the country, never sleeping in the same place. He is neither here nor there- a spirit.

Silence as the men think. The fire pops-

AMPARO

I would hate to meet a spirit like that.

PORTILLO

What would you do if you were in the same situation?

AMPARO

If I was me? Who knows? But I'm not a priest. Priests are not regular people.

PORTILLO (smiles sadly)

No. They're not supposed to be.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT - FUENTES

Once again Fuentes can't sleep. He rises and steps past the bodies of the others-

TREE FROG

A colorful tree frog is illuminated by a FLASHLIGHT BEAM. Fuentes appears, looking at the frog-

INT. STATION WAGON - NIGHT

Fuentes slips into the front seat of the car as quietly as he can. He reaches over to the glove compartment, pulls out a photograph-

CU PHOTOGRAPH

Fuentes and his students in the class picture. He covers the faces of the ones he knows are dead with his fingers. He hovers a finger over Brazos, then covers him as well-

FADE OUT:

FADE UP:

EXT. ROADSIDE - SUNRISE

Domingo shifts a palm frond to see Fuentes asleep in the front seat of the car. We FOLLOW as he moves to the edge of the road, where Portillo stands shivering, watching the sun come up. Domingo watches him for a moment, then speaks softly-

DOMINGO

Could you hear my confession?

PORTILLO

I'm not a priest anymore. I don't wear a cassock anymore- see?

DOMINGO

I was a soldier and now I don't wear
a uniform. Does that mean I haven't
killed people?

PORTILLO

Killing the enemy in battle isn't the
same as murder.

Domingo smiles bitterly, then squats at the side of the road,
turning his face away from Portillo-

DOMINGO

Bless me, Father, for I have sinned-

CU DOMINGO

As he continues his confession we lose his voice and hear
MEN'S VOICES SHOUTING-

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARMY CAMP - DAY - SOLDIERS

We see SOLDIERS ringed above us, SHOUTING-

SOLDIERS

Do it! Do it! Do it!

DOMINGO

Domingo stands in a pit below the soldiers, in uniform,
looking young and lost with a huge knife in his hand. We
TILT to see an Indian TEENAGER, looking much like Domingo,
lying on the ground at the bottom of the pit. The boy is
wounded, bullet holes in his knees and chest-

SOLDIERS

Do it! Don't be a faggot! Do it!

HAND

Domingo's fingers tighten around the handle of the knife-

CU BOY

Lying on his back, looking up at Domingo with glassy eyes-

DOMINGO

Domingo gets on his knees, holds the knife in both hands,
then stabs hard and quick into the boy's chest four times,
blood spattering his face and arms. We hear the APPLAUSE of
the soldiers-

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROADSIDE MORNING - CU DOMINGO

Sad in his recollection-

DOMINGO
That was only the first. My
initiation.

PORTILLO
I'm not a priest. I can't absolve
you-

DOMINGO
Then what good are you? I ought to
kill you.

Portillo holds his eyes for a long moment-

PORTILLO
As you wish.

INT. STATION WAGON - DAY

Fuentes driving, Portillo in front with him-

FUENTES
Tell me, Father, are sins only things
that you do? Can they be something
that you don't do?

PORTILLO
There are sins of commission and sins
of omission. And there is Original
Sin. We are all born guilty in the
eyes of the Lord.

FUENTES
If a man has hurt someone but doesn't
know it- if there was no intention-

PORTILLO
He probably isn't a sinner.

DOMINGO
But he might be an idiot.

Portillo turns to regard Domingo-

PORTILLO
Of course. An idiot or a coward. If
God kept such people from heaven he
would be very lonely.

They have started down a very steep hill, gaining on a truck-

DOMINGO
Oh shit-

The truck is a military transport, the back chock full of young SOLDIERS carrying rifles. The soldiers stare back and the station wagon full of men-

DOMINGO
Pass them.

FUENTES
It's too narrow.

DOMINGO
Pass them!

Domingo is sweating again, nervous about the soldiers-

PORTILLO
Are you in such a hurry?

Domingo reaches in his shirt to show Portillo his pistol-

DOMINGO
You shut up.

PORTILLO
(smiles)
As you wish.

Fuentes mashes the gas pedal-

FUENTES
Hang on.

EXT. TRUCK, STATION WAGON

Fuentes tries to pass on the narrow, winding mountain road. The soldiers think it is funny, leaning to look over the side as the wagon nearly hits the side of the truck, falls back, then revs forward for another try. They CHEER as the car finally scoots past-

INT. CAR

Rabbit is exhilarated, Fuentes grimly satisfied-

RABBIT
That was great! What a ride!

FUENTES
Are you happy now?

DOMINGO
Shit. Shit, shit, shit-

Fuentes turns to see as they reach the bottom of the hill-

POV - BARRICADE

Fuentes sees a barricade up ahead, with armed SOLDIERS waiting around it. Domingo sees it as well-

DOMINGO
Shit. Careful what you say, Doctor.

Fuentes slows, the troop truck catching up behind them. A guard signals them to stop and soldiers surround the station wagon, rifles pointed. A SERGEANT sticks his face in the window-

SERGEANT
Identification, please.

Fuentes gives him his license. The Sergeant looks at it-

SERGEANT
Doctor Fuentes-

FUENTES
Yes?

SERGEANT
And the others?

There is no way Domingo can do anything to stop Fuentes from turning him in and he knows it. He looks straight ahead, awaiting the verdict. Fuentes points to Domingo and Rabbit-

FUENTES
This is my chauffeur, and his son.
And this-

Fuentes points to Portillo-

DOMINGO
We just picked him up. He was
walking along the road.

Fuentes stares at Domingo, upset by the betrayal, but doesn't speak. Portillo seems calm-

PORTILLO
That's right.

The Sergeant waggles his finger at Portillo-

SERGEANT
You come with me.

Portillo looks back to give Domingo a little smile as he gets out-

PORTILLO
I absolve you.

The soldiers take Portillo to their interrogation shack. The Sergeant points Fuentes toward the path to the left-

SERGEANT
Stop when you reach the town.

Fuentes starts the car up, leaving the soldiers behind-

FUENTES

You didn't have to do that.

DOMINGO

He's crazy. And he's a bad priest.

They come to a sign hanging over the entrance to a fenced-in refugee camp. The sign says 'MODELO #4- Community of Hope'. It is not a town but a wire and cement prison. Rows of identical shacks with corrugated metal roofs surrounded by barbed wire. A pair of bored SOLDIERS signal Fuentes to stop. The Indian inhabitants look without expression from in front of their hovels-

RABBIT

They put the people in here after they burn their villages.

FUENTES

Why?

RABBIT

To protect them.

FUENTES

From what?

RABBIT

From the guerillas.

FUENTES

They're afraid of the guerillas?

DOMINGO

They're afraid of everything. But the Army thinks they'll help the guerillas if they can't watch them all the time.

EXT. MODELO - DAY

We TRACK past a line of Indians waiting for the doctor's help. We reach a table where Fuentes is examining the villagers under the gaze of the Sergeant. Domingo sits a few yards away, talking to the people in the line, as he expertly applies a dressing to the ulcerated leg of a LITTLE BOY-

SERGEANT

Our doctor only comes every third month.

FUENTES

Wasn't there a doctor in Pico de Aguila before they came here? Doctor Hidalgo?

SERGEANT
He was executed.

Fuentes is no longer surprised-

SERGEANT
It was almost a year ago.

FUENTES
Why?

SERGEANT
For helping the guerillas.

FUENTES
You're sure of that?

SERGEANT
What other reason would an educated man live out here?

FUENTES
Maybe he just wanted to help the Indians.

SERGEANT
It's the same thing.
(suspicious)
How come your chauffeur wasn't driving?

Fuentes thinks for a moment, decides-

FUENTES
He was bitten by a snake. He went to take a pee in the bushes and a snake bit him.

The sergeant laughs-

SERGEANT
That'll teach him to hold his water.

EXT. SHACK

Rabbit is in front of a shack in another part of the town with a pair of KIDS about his age, kicking a ragged soccer ball around-

KID
It's much further on, up in the high jungle. They call it Cerca Cielo.

RABBIT
Bullshit.

KID
Everybody says it's true.

RABBIT

Has anybody ever come back from there?

KID

Why would anybody come back to Modelo?

EXT. MODELO - FUENTES

Fuentes is treating ulcers in the mouth of a LITTLE GIRL sitting on the table. The Sergeant is gone. Domingo comes over next to him, limping slightly, trying to hide the pain in his leg-

FUENTES

You should rest that leg.

DOMINGO

If that priest sings I'm fucked.

Fuentes nods to indicate the Sergeant watching them from across the way-

FUENTES

Just keep pretending you're my assistant- ask them what their problems are. I don't understand this dialect.

DOMINGO

Me neither.

Domingo checks out the little girl's mouth, then hands Fuentes a bottle of medicine-

DOMINGO

For ulcers.

FUENTES

How many years were you in the Army?

DOMINGO

Two. You treat a lot of skin rashes, dysentery, now and then somebody gets shot.

FUENTES

You operated on people?

DOMINGO

If there wasn't a doctor there. Sometimes they died, sometimes they didn't.

Rabbit rejoins them-

DOMINGO (shrugs)

We never had much medicine. The officers always sold it.

RABBIT

Almost everybody here is from Pico de Aguila. They burned the town after bringing the people here. Your friend Hidalgo is dead.

FUENTES

The Sergeant told me.

RABBIT

The people say there's a village further on. A village so high and so hidden the Army has never been able to find it. They call it Cerca Cielo.

DOMINGO

There's always rumors like that.

RABBIT

They say that all the refugees from the burnt villages have gone there. They say there's a young doctor who lives there- a doctor named-

FUENTES

Montoya?

RABBIT

Yes. That's it.

FUENTES

(sighs)
He's the last one.

The next in line is a young woman, GRACIELA, looking at the soldiers nearby with apprehension. An old woman, VIEJA, stands behind her-

FUENTES

What's your problem?

Graciela doesn't answer. Rabbit repeats the question in Indian, and Vieja answers him in the same language-

RABBIT

The old woman says this girl's stomach hurts.

FUENTES

Since when?

Another exchange between Rabbit and Vieja-

RABBIT

Since she was raped. She hasn't talked since then, either.

FUENTES

When was that?

RABBIT

Two years ago. When the Army burned Pico.

FUENTES

Then the problem is in her mind.

DOMINGO

Give her a pill.

Vieja speaks again-

RABBIT

She's in a lot of pain.

FUENTES

I can't cure imaginary diseases. I'm not a psychologist.

Domingo grabs an aspirin bottle and shakes two pills out to give to Graciela, not looking in her eyes-

DOMINGO

Take these.

Graciela nods her thanks-

VIEJA

May God bless you.

EXT. MODELO - NIGHT

A SOLDIER watches from his sentry box-

EXT. BARRACKS BUILDING - NIGHT

Rabbit stands in the midst of a group of CAMP CHILDREN staring through a window. We hear MACHINE-GUN FIRE-

THEIR POV - SOLDIERS, TV

A dozen soldiers sit inside in folding chairs watching a Rambo-type movie on a VCR-

RABBIT

Rapt. Domingo appears beside him-

DOMINGO

If you want to come it has to be now.

Rabbit gives a longing glance back at the TV as they step away-

STATION WAGON

Fuentes, Domingo and Rabbit sit in the car. The Sergeant gives Fuentes his license back-

SERGEANT

You'd better head back to the capital. We have word that there are guerillas operating around here. They stole some tourists' car.

FUENTES

What happened to the man who was with us?

SERGEANT

(shrugs)

You shouldn't be picking people up off the road.

FUENTES

I'll remember that.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The station wagon cruises toward us slowly-

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Domingo sits in front with Fuentes-

DOMINGO

Why didn't you turn me in when you had the chance?

FUENTES

I should have. I'm a bad citizen.

Domingo considers this-

DOMINGO

You won't find him, you know. There's nothing up there.

FUENTES

I'm going to try.

Fuentes brakes as he sees something ahead-

THEIR POV - GRACIELA

Graciela appears in the HEADLIGHTS, standing in the middle of the road. Fuentes stops-

INT./EXT. STATION WAGON

They look at the mute girl through the windshield-

DOMINGO

Go around her.

Fuentes gives him a dirty look and steps out of the car. Rabbit steps up behind him-

FUENTES

What are you doing out here?

Graciela just stands there. Rabbit says something in Indian dialect and she nods, pointing away and upward-

RABBIT

She wants to go to Cerca Cielo.

FUENTES

We don't know where it is.

Rabbit gives Fuentes a challenging look-

RABBIT

So?

Fuentes sighs, waves her over-

INT. STATION WAGON

Domingo glares at Fuentes as Graciela gets in the back with Rabbit-

DOMINGO

We should start charging bus fare.

INT. RUINED CHURCH - NIGHT - CAMPFIRE

Fuentes, Domingo, Rabbit sit warming themselves by a little campfire they've made inside a burnt-out church. Graciela sits apart from them, in the shadows. We hear WATER FLOWING nearby-

FUENTES

It's warmer if you come next to the fire.

Graciela doesn't answer, watching them without expression-

CU GRACIELA

Her eyes go down to something-

HER POV - PISTOL

The pistol sits on the floor next to Domingo-

GRACIELA

Looking up at Domingo's face-

RABBIT (O.S.)

She's afraid of us.

FIRE - MEN

FUENTES

Then why did she come?

RABBIT

She's more afraid of the soldiers at Modelo.

Fuentes scowls and looks around-

FUENTES

So this is what's left of Pico.

RABBIT

I think Pico is behind us now. This is some other place.

DOMINGO

Another place where everybody is dead.

RABBIT

Or gone to Cerca Cielo.

DOMINGO

There is no such place.

RABBIT

How do you know?

CU GRACIELA

Graciela curls herself in a ball on her blanket on the floor, her back to the conversation. She listens intently as Domingo tries to deflate the idea of a free town-

DOMINGO

When I was in the Army there was always a rumor about this place. We never found it.

RABBIT

So it's very well hidden.

DOMINGO

We never found it because it doesn't exist. We were in helicopters, we searched and searched. If people have cleared land to plant we would have seen it from the air. If they haven't, then they've starved.

RABBIT

Just because you haven't seen it doesn't mean it's not there.

DOMINGO

You can believe in Heaven if you want, Kid. See where it gets you.

MEN

FUENTES

So why are you coming with us?

DOMINGO
 (shrugs)
 Where else can I go?

EXT. RUINED CHURCH - EARLY MORNING

The rising sun hits the side of the church-

INT. CHURCH - CU PISTOL

Once again the pistol lies a few inches from Domingo's hand as he sleeps. This time it is Graciela who steals it-

FUENTES

His eyes open as we see Graciela's feet pass by-

EXT. TREES/RIVERSIDE - MORNING

Fuentes moves through the trees, trying to find where the girl has gone. He comes out by the water, freezes. Graciela sits on the bank of a beautiful lagoon-like wide spot in the river with the pistol aimed at her forehead, with her thumb inside the trigger guard-

FUENTES (softly)
 Senorita-

Graciela stiffens, but doesn't shoot and doesn't turn. Fuentes thinks the gun is still unloaded, at speaks very off-handedly-

FUENTES
 If you shoot yourself now, you'll
 wake the others up.

Graciela's thumb stiffens on the trigger-

FUENTES
 I mean if you want, be my guest, but
 it seems like a bit of a waste when
 we're almost to Cerca Cielo.

Graciela doesn't budge, but she's listening-

FUENTES
 I know Domingo said it doesn't exist,
 but he's just bitter. He's been
 disappointed too many times. he
 doesn't want to get his hopes up.

Graciela is crying, her hands starting to shake. Fuentes thinks, remembering. He sits on the ground behind her. We TRACK IN at him as he speaks gently-

FUENTES
 This Cerca Cielo is supposed to be a
 very special place.
 (more)

FUENTES (cont'd)

A place- a place where the air is
like a caress, where gentle waters
flow, a place where your burdens are
lifted from your shoulders on wings
of peace. A place to forget, a place
where each day is a gift and each
person is reborn-

CU GRACIELA

She lowers the gun, her hands shaking-

FUENTES

-and it's not very far from here.
Just a little bit further on.

She turns to look at him. Fuentes picks up the gun, snorts
his disapproval then holds it to his own temple-

FUENTES

By the way-

He is about to pull the trigger when Domingo HOLLERS-

DOMINGO (O.S.)

Fuentes! Where the fuck are you?

Fuentes looks amused, lowers the gun-

FUENTES

He hates it when people play with his
things.

Domingo crashes out on the bank above them, freezing when
Fuentes turns and points the gun at him-

DOMINGO

Shit.

Fuentes gets up and tosses the pistol to him. He catches it,
terrified it will go off-

FUENTES

Let's get on the road.

EXT. ROAD - DAY - CU PISTOL

Tucked snugly back in Domingo's pants-

WIDER

The passengers are all out standing in front of the station
wagon looking up. We PAN with their gaze- the road stops at
the foot of a mountain.

FUENTES

Is there a path?

EXT. MOUNTAIN

They climb through the jungle vegetation, Rabbit in the lead. Fuentes breathes with difficulty, Domingo limping in the rear-

DOMINGO

He looks ahead at Graciela. She climbs solemnly. We ZOOM IN on Domingo-

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Burnt houses, SHOTS ringing out, woman SCREAMING and CRYING. We FOLLOW the legs of an INDIAN GIRL as she is dragged toward a hut. We TILT to see Domingo, in uniform, lagging behind the SOLDIERS who are dragging the girl away. One of his fellow soldiers pushes him into the hut after the girl and the men-

SOLDIER

Hurry up! You got to get it while they're still fresh!

INT. HUT - INDIAN GIRL

She's only thirteen or fourteen. She looks at the ceiling, eyes filled with tears-

DOMINGO

He leans over her-

INDIAN GIRL

His shadow covers her face-

EXT. MOUNTAIN - DAY - DOMINGO

Fighting the memory. Fuentes stops ahead, gasping for breath-

DOMINGO

Keep going.

FUENTES

I have to rest.

Domingo points the gun-

DOMINGO

Move.

FUENTES

Go ahead. Shoot.

Domingo glares at him-

DOMINGO

Fuck it.

He climbs up away from them. Rabbit sits by Fuentes and Graciela waits nearby-

FUENTES

He's going to get that leg infected.

He looks around at the tangled jungle vegetation-

FUENTES

Human beings can't survive in this.
Snakes and jaguars, insects that eat
everything in sight-

RABBIT

You have to burn it all away and
start from scratch.

FUENTES

But why come here in the first place?

RABBIT

To get away from white people.

FUENTES (laughing)

I guess that might be worth it.
There should be somewhere that white
people aren't allowed.

ANDREW (O.S.)

Helloooooooo!

Fuentes and Rabbit exchange a look. The doctor moves to the left a few yards, walking through the trees till he steps into a clearing in the jungle- a clearing filled with ancient stone ruins. Andrew and Harriet are on the stairs of a pyramid in the distance, waving-

HARRIET

Hola, Senor!

EXT. RUINS - VARIOUS SHOTS

We see the ruins of an ancient city. The jungle around it seems about to reclaim the clearing-

ANDREW (O.S.)

It's a unique mixture of
architectures-

RUINS

Fuentes walks with the tourists, Rabbit and Graciela lagging behind-

ANDREW

It isn't clear yet if the Lotecs were a homogenous group or a mongrelized culture-

HARRIET

You wouldn't believe what we've been through-

ANDREW

Most of the evidence suggests they were driven up here by the more dominant civilizations.

HARRIET

A man stole our car at gunpoint! Like in Treasure of the Sierra Madre? Only the police found it the next day, with all the tires gone-

ANDREW

Another theory is that this site was founded by runaways from different cities in the lowlands. Possibly people earmarked for sacrifice.

FUENTES (Spanish)

Americans are obsessed by these sacrifices.

HARRIET

He says we're hung up on sacrifice.

ANDREW

Well, the concept of sacrifice is a tough one to sell in the States. You know- you don't look so good, Doctor. This is the tropics- you've got to watch yourself.

EXT. RUINS - CU PICNIC

A cloth spread on the ground, covered with bread, wine, cheese, fruit-

WIDER

Fuentes, Rabbit and Graciela sit with the tourists-

ANDREW

They were gone before the Spanish got here. Fell apart on their own. Civil war, family feuds-

FUENTES (Spanish)

Like Europe at the same time-

ANDREW

Oh, Europe was in much worse shape.
Mas peor? Europe bit the big one.
Here at least there was some
organization, some pattern to the
killing. In Europe it was still
warlords, feudal disputes, little
ethnic conflicts-

HARRIET

It's so peaceful here.

ANDREW

They battled the jungle to carve out
a living- the Incas, the Aztecs,
Olmecs, Toltecs, Zapotecs--

FUENTES (Spanish)

And here?

ANDREW

And here the jungle won.

EDGE OF CLEARING

Harriet and Andrew, backpacks strapped on, say goodbye to
Fuentes-

FUENTES (Spanish)

Are you sure you'll be alright?

HARRIET

Don't worry- Andrew has a terrific
sense of direction.

ANDREW

We'll probably see you at the hotel
in Tres Cruces.

FUENTES (Spanish)

Yes. Probably.

EXT. PYRAMID - DUSK

The sun sets behind the crest of the pyramid-

PATIO

Fuentes sits on the flat rocks in front of the pyramid,
watching Rabbit and Graciela finish the food the tourists
left-

RABBIT

I was a guide at the ruins at Xtal.
The gringos gave me bigger tips if I
made up bloody stories. I told them
the priests ate the hearts they
ripped from virgins.

FUENTES

It's going to be cold here tonight.
I must be crazy-

There is a SOUND. Domingo steps into the clearing, his hands tied behind his back, looking scared. Blood has soaked through his socks where he was wounded. Four GUERILLAS step out behind him-

GUERILLA 1

Good evening.

The men fan out to surround them, looking around the ruins to be sure they are alone-

GUERILLA 1

You're visiting the ruins?

FUENTES

We were just resting here.

GUERILLA 1

Resting. I see.

(points to Domingo)

Do you know this man?

Domingo pleads with his eyes-

FUENTES

Yes.

GUERILLA 1

He says he was escaping from Modelo and the soldiers shot him. He says you picked him up on the road and treated his wound.

FUENTES

That's true.

The guerilla holds out the pistol-

GUERILLA 1

How did he get this?

FUENTES

He must have stolen it.

The guerilla nods, jams the gun into his belt-

GUERILLA 1

I wish he'd stolen more than three bullets.

Fuentes gives Domingo a look. Three bullets?

GUERILLA 1

Untie him.

One of the others unties Domingo. The guerilla leader sits by Fuentes on the rock-

GUERILLA 1

So what are you really doing up here?

FUENTES

I'm looking for a friend, Doctor Montoya. There's a rumor he's fled up into these mountains, that he's living with refugees.

GUERILLA 2

Doctor Montoya is at Cerca Cielo.

FUENTES

You're sure?

GUERILLA 2

The Army tried to kill him, but he got away and then he went there. That's what everybody says.

FUENTES

Where is it?

GUERILLA 1

We can't tell you.

FUENTES

He's my friend, my student-

GUERILLA 2

We don't know where it is. This village- Cerca Cielo- we've never seen it.

GUERILLA 1

Maybe it's only a rumor. Like the story about Dr. Montoya.

GUERILLA 2

Whenever we go looking for it we just keep circling back to this place.

(points)

Is there any more food?

FUENTES

Help yourselves.

The guerillas sit to eat. Graciela moves away, watching them fearfully. The leader struggles to pull his boot and sock off-

GUERILLA 1

You people should go home. It's dangerous in these mountains.

He lifts a sore-looking foot-

GUERILLA 1
Can you do anything for blisters?

INT. AUTOPSY ROOM - DAY

We PAN around the faces of the medical students, eyes grave over their surgical masks, looking down at a corpse they are dissecting. The corpse is a small INDIAN GIRL, probably a street kid. We come to Fuentes, doing the actual cutting in the girl's chest. He glances over at something-

FUENTES' POV

Long, silky black hair slides over the rubber-gloved fingers of one of the students. We TILT UP to see Montoya, a serious young woman, contemplating death at close range. She senses Fuentes watching her, looks up to him, embarrassed, then lets the little girl's hair drop and looks back to her chest cavity-

GUERILLA 2 (O.S.)
They do.

GUERILLA 3 (O.S.)
No they don't.

GUERILLA 2 (O.S.)
How would you know?

EXT. RUINS - NIGHT - MOON

The moon hangs over the trees surrounding the pyramid-

GUERILLA 3 (O.S.)
I'm not going to take your word for it. Ask the doctor.

FIRE

The group is arranged by the fire, lying on blankets. Fuentes is still awake, as are the two youngest of the guerillas, boys in their early teens-

GUERILLA 2
Senor Doctor-

FUENTES
Yes?

GUERILLA 2
You're from the city?

FUENTES
Yes.

GUERILLA 2
Do you know the ice cream store
across from the bus station?

FUENTES
I used to take my daughter there.

GUERILLA 2
What are the flavors they sell?

FUENTES
They have lots of flavors.

GUERILLA 2
But what are they? Say them- they have them written on the sign in front.

FUENTES
There's chocolate, vanilla, mango- they have lots-

GUERILLA 2
Keep saying them- as many as you can remember.

FUENTES (sighs)
Okay- chocolate, vanilla, mango, guava, coconut, guanabana, pineapple, strawberry, coffee, banana, orange-- let's see- hazelnut-----

GUERILLA 2
-they have rum flavor, don't they?

FUENTES
Yes. Rum, and tamarind- and I think something green. Mint something-

GUERILLA 3
I want chocolate and coconut.

GUERILLA 2
You only get to have one kind.

GUERILLA 3
Why?

GUERILLA 2
Because that's the rule.

GUERILLA 3
How come you get to make the rule?

GUERILLA 2
Because I've had ice cream and you haven't.

FUENTES
Have you boys been in fights with the Army?

GUERILLA 2

Sure. We're not just fucking around up here. We attack them and they run away and we get whatever guns and ammunition they leave behind.

GUERILLA 3

But they never leave any food.

GUERILLA 2

They know if they brought food we'd never leave them alone.

The leader calls from under his blanket-

GUERILLA 1

Get to sleep, you two. We leave before sunup.

The boys settle down onto their blankets. Fuentes looks up at the stars-

GUERILLA 3

Chocolate and mango.

EXT. JUNGLE - MORNING

The strange family climbs through steep jungle. Fuentes fights to breathe-

EXT. CERCA DE CIELO - MORNING

The Mother and the Young Girl cook tortillas on a comal in front of a meager hut. We can see now that the Mother's leg is lacerated and badly discolored-

YOUNG GIRL

What do they think they'll find?

MOTHER

It doesn't matter so much. When people start into a story they have to see the end or they aren't happy.

YOUNG GIRL

How do these look?

MOTHER

They look like whoever made them doesn't know what she's doing.

She raises her head, seeming to hear something-

MOTHER

They're here.

She turns and we PAN with her gaze to see Domingo, Fuentes, Graciela and Rabbit stumble out of the surrounding trees. They look wasted, especially the doctor.

They give the mother and her daughter a dazed nod as they pass-

YOUNG GIRL
I'll ask him for you.

MOTHER
There's no hurry. He's come to stay.

EXT. CERCA DE CIELO - DAY - VARIOUS SHOTS

We FOLLOW Fuentes and the others through the tiny settlement. It's not Paradise. Malnourished INDIAN PEOPLE, shacks made of palm, a few chickens in wicker cages, a tiny field of corn that doesn't get enough sun. The villagers watch us solemnly as we TRACK through their encampment-

EXT. CERCA DE CIELO - FUENTES, OTHERS

The visitors look around. An old Indian man, VIEJO, approaches-

VIEJO
Welcome.

FUENTES
Hello.

VIEJO
You can stay here if you want. But you have to build under the trees.

FUENTES
Where is the doctor?

VIEJO
There is no doctor here.

FUENTES
We heard she was with you. Doctor Montoya.

The old man shrugs-

VIEJO
This is where rumors go to die.

He walks away. Fuentes sits heavily at the base of a huge tree-

DOMINGO
This village is fucked.

RABBIT
This is where the Sky People live. They eat air and shit clouds.

FUENTES
This is my legacy.

DOMINGO
Modelo looked better than this.

Fuentes is laughing bitterly-

FUENTES
Every man should leave a legacy-
something he built, something he
brought to the world. Maybe just
somebody he passed his knowlege to-
just one person to carry on for him.
This is what I leave.

Fuentes smiles a peaceful smile-

FUENTES
At least I don't have to climb any
more.

DOMINGO
The fucking ruins looked better than
this.

RABBIT
Is there anywhere else that would
take you?

DOMINGO
There must be somewhere else.
Somewhere even further on-

RABBIT
Can I have my two pesetas back?

DOMINGO
It's not what you had planned for
your vacation, is it Doctor?

Domingo turns to look at Fuentes. The doctor's eyes are
closed. He doesn't breathe. Domingo goes to one knee to
examine him-

DOMINGO
Dead.

RABBIT
Really?

DOMINGO
He's dead.

Rabbit bends and stares at the doctor's face. Domingo
stands, then picks up the black bag-

DOMINGO
They'll steal this if we leave it
here.

But the Young Girl stands there, looking fixedly at him, pointing to the bag. She says something in Indian and Rabbit answers-

RABBIT

She needs a doctor.

DOMINGO

There is no doctor. The doctor is dead.

The girl keeps pointing at the bag. She speaks again-

RABBIT

She says there's a piece of metal in her mother's leg. She stepped on a mine the Army dropped from an airplane. She can't stand up.

DOMINGO

The doctor is dead.

The girl keeps pointing at the bag. Domingo puts it down and takes a step away. Other VILLAGERS begin to line up behind her, looking at Domingo. A MAN says something-

RABBIT

They say they can't give you money, but they have food.

DOMINGO

I'm not a doctor.

Graciela picks up the bag and holds it out to Domingo. He looks her in the eye for the first time, then looks to the villagers. He sighs and turns to the girl-

DOMINGO

Okay. Where's your mother?

WIDER

With a LONG LENS we watch the new doctor followed by his patients, crossing between the tiny huts of Cerca de Cielo. We ZOOM OUT to lose them in the canopy of the jungle-covered mountain.