

# "THUNDERHEART"

Screenplay by

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FOURTH DRAFT

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A DRUM. Beating slow. And deep. Like a heart.

FADE IN:

EXT. THE GREAT PLAINS SOUTH DAKOTA - DAWN

Something is rising from the Black Hills. A sphere of light, too red to be the sun. A sphere of contained fire, undulating in crimson and ochre, and rising slowly, majestically, to the pulse. To the DRUM. It is the sun. But it is a Paha Sapa sunrise. A Black Hills sunrise. And it is spectacular.

The DRUM, pounds deeper, bigger, as the sun gets higher. Stronger. Igniting a vast landscape of gentle slopes and foothills; throwing shadows on the plains that look like, as the Indians say, an old man dancing. The grass is golden. And high. The wind moves through it, snakes through it. Slowly.

BEGIN CREDITS.

Voices; a TRADITIONAL INDIAN SONG (Lakota), summoning Wakan Tanka - The Great Mystery.

And now, rising up over one of the small land waves, a head comes into view. Shoulders. A man, running in ghostly SLOW MOTION, his long black hair trailing in the wind. The INDIAN MAN wears only buckskin pants and a bone choker around his neck.

Legs and arms churning, the man runs with antelope grace, backlit by the sunrise, bounding toward us. Running... his heart pounding. SONG RISING... DRUM POUNDING... FIVE MORE

VOICES in high-pitched tremolo join the song.

And then the runner soars, like an eagle from a bluff, airborne, flying over a small dip, arms outstretched, and it would be a wondrous thing if there were not a fine, crimson, mist all around him and if slow motion was not suddenly overtaken by LIVE SPEED, revealing the brutal force of gunfire which has slammed the Indian into the air, throwing him. Slamming him hard into the grass. And it is over as quickly and violently as a deer shot dead.

LAKOTA SONG ends abruptly.

LONG SHOT - THE GREAT PLAINS

the sun burns like lava at the horizon. DRUM beats like a heart. And Somewhere off in a distant cottonwood, an OWL. Then Silence. Deep, disturbing stillness.

EXT. CAPITAL BELTWAY - WASHINGTON. D.C - DAY

ROCK N'ROLL shatters the silence.

Cars – a multicolored metallic criss-cross reflecting off a building made of mirrors – races past an electronic billboard that blinks in red skyhigh digital: PRUDENTIAL LIFE INSURANCE. 7:59. 73 degrees.

The D.C. Superhighway. And off behind it, in the distance, Capital Hill holds imposing vigil, the massive cast iron dome of The Capital, catching the sun. But everything is soon smothered by a METRO BUS, hogging the far lane of the Beltway, leaning on its HORN.

Good morning.

And the rock n'roll is everybody's radio, everybody's tempo.

CARBON MONOXIDE WAVE

shimmers across the beltway hugging then releasing a solitary vehicle that we stay with... move with... A black Nissan 240 SX, hard-waxed.

INT. 240 SX - TRAVELING

Behind the wheel – an intense young man with close-cropped black hair, eyes hidden by sunglasses. Whatever he does for a living, he does in a suit (not expensive but well-fit. But we might also note that any extra suit cash has gone instead into the silver-plated watch on his left wrist). Lean as a rake, sallow in the cheeks, there is something insatiable about him – a hungry energy that won't let him go.

RAY LEVOI, late 20's, early 30's, pulls out of a threatening traffic jam and races on the narrow right between thirty cars and a cement girder.

EXT. T STREET - OUTSIDE WEST-CENTRAL

The black SX has jumped off an exit and has entered the light-industrial section of Washington. It pulls up near a loading dock behind an old gray building and several parked cars and vans. Ray steps out, smooths his jacket, locks and SETS HIS CAR ALARM.

Another young man – chubby, clean-shaven; in a nicer suit than Ray's – steps out from a parked Miata, and approaches Ray. CARL PODJWICK balances a coffee, a U.S.A. Today and a black eel-skin briefcase.

CARL

Hey.

RAY

Hey. Nice tie.

CARL

Don't get too attached.

They start walking briskly toward the loading dock.

RAY

Ya got the paper?

They mount steps.

CARL

Yeah.

RAY

You're my hero, Carl.

CARL

Heroes ain't supposed to shake. I'm shakin', man, look at me.

RAY

Breathe, Carl. Four, nice, deep ones.

They stop at the door of a service elevator and Carl breathes. Expanding his chest, exhaling. Ray adjusts Carl's tie for him, his collar. He speaks quietly. Quickly.

RAY

Anyone stops us going in, we're with the Bowen-Hamilton Textile Company. We have rug samples.

CARL

Rug samples.

RAY

We are one-dimensional, boring peddlers of fine carpet, Carl.

Carl nods. Ray hesitates, adjusts his own collar and enters the service elevator. Carl follows. Door closes.

BEGIN CREDITS END.

INT. GRAY BUILDING - FENCING OPERATION

Carl follows Ray into the big sparse room of unfinished sheetrock walls. There is nothing in here but cardboard boxes, and two people; a bearded HISPANIC MAN standing behind a counter, writing on a clipboard. The other is a middle-aged BLACK MAN in a purple silk shirt sitting in a chair with a newspaper held open. He barely looks over the top of the Wall Street Journal.

BLACK MAN

Hey, look who's here.

RAY

Louis, my man, what's happenin'?

Ray walks up to the counter. Carl lingers, fidgeting. Ray sets his briefcase on the counter and click-clicks it open. The Hispanic fence man looks inside, and begins pulling out stacks of treasury checks.

FENCE MAN  
Clean ones?

RAY  
Immaculate.

Ray gestures to Carl and he nervously sets his briefcase on the counter, fumbles with the first latch. The second. He flips it open.

The fence man casts his eyes down at a neat cache of Grade A Treasury. A lot of it. Then his eyes rise to Carl.

FENCE MAN  
What ya got there, seventy-five thousand?

CARL  
A hundred and ten. Count it.

LOUIS (BLACK MAN)  
Have the girl count it, we can't sit around here countin' bonds, we got things to do here.

The fence man pushes an intercom button and yells into a speaker.

FENCE MAN  
SALLLLY!

Carl's eyes flit to Ray. Ray's eyes flit to Carl.

Louis crushes his newspaper down and lifts a big Colt Python from his lap just as –

A section of sheetrock kicks open and THREE FEDERAL OFFICERS bust out, each clutching a handgun, SHOUTING inaudibly.

LOUIS  
F.B.I! Get your face on the fuckin'  
floor! MOVE!

Carl startled, does an almost effeminate dip down to one knee, but that knee is swept out from under him, slapping him flat onto plywood where he is instantly frisked down by the fence man who is wielding a 9 mm handgun. But the white collar criminal is more stunned by the fact that –

Ray is walking across the floor with his hands in his pockets over to the Mr. Coffee. He pours one, and adds some milk. Turns and watches the bust while opening a packet of Sweet n'Low.

RAY  
Slam dunk.

LOUIS  
Beauty. Beauty...

Ray rests his weight against the coffee station, takes a careful sip. Carl is yanked to his feet by the fence man and he stands there, looking at Ray, baffled. Completely shocked.

CARL  
Jesus Christ, Larry, what the fu–  
Larry. That's not even your name, is  
it? What's your real name, you fucking  
scumbag?

RAY  
Don't have one, Carl. I have a number,  
man. Just like the numbers on those  
treasury checks. You stole from your  
own country, Carl. Shame on you.

Coffee in hand, Ray walks briskly toward the door.

LOUIS  
Sugar Ray.

Ray turns. Louis takes a few steps toward him, putting his gun back in his waistband.

LOUIS

They want ya Home. Upstairs wants to see ya.

Ray stands frozen, holding the door knob, and digesting what are apparently influential words.

LOUIS

Make sure ya spell my name right.

Ray just stares for a moment. Then hurries out the door.

Carl, being arm-gripped by two agents and photographed like a trout, gazes bewildered at the door.

CARL

(incredulous)

We just spent four months together...  
I thought he was my friend... what  
the fuck, man?

(even more incredulous)

He had dinner at my mother's.

CAMERA FLASHES at him, an agent on either side, striking a natural pose.

EXT. J. EDGAR HOOVER BUILDING - ESTABLISHING - DAY

The huge, imposing, mausoleum-like Hoover building, bordered by artificial turf, hemmed by cherry trees in blossom. Turning out to be a nice day on Pennsylvania Avenue.

INT. FBI DIRECTOR'S CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

8x10 BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOS dealt like cards onto a table, one on top of another.

1 – an aerial shot of some wasteland.

2 – a closer bird's eye of the same, what looks like a NASA photo of Mars.

3 – a vast expanse of the Great Plains.

ROBERT F. TULLY, Number-Two-in-Command, deals a fourth photo onto the table. He is an understated, fatherly man, well-manicured in cotton pencil-striped shirt, white-tab collar and tie. The photos and maps and files a foot deep on the huge table are neatly organized.

INTERCOM  
SA Levoi, Sir.

TULLY  
Please.

Seated, at the far end of the table, engrossed in the deep spread of information, SA (Special Agent) FRANK COUTURE is about to break the record for longest single ash on the end of a cigarette and the smoke forces his eyes into tight, concentrating, slits. "COOCH" as they call him in the Bureau has seen thirty years in some rough "provinces". He has survived the Hoover era and is a legend in the Sessions era but survival has honed an edge. An edge with a touch of ironic cop humor.

Ray enters, walks into a firm shake.

TULLY  
Ray...

RAY  
Mister Tully.

TULLY  
Do you want a coffee?

RAY  
No. No, no. Thank you.

Ray sits nervously across from Cooch who looks up from the photos and studies the younger man through reading glasses and cigarette smoke, and he looks at him like he doesn't know who the hell he is or why he's sitting there.

TULLY  
Levoi, Cooch. Raymond Levoi, Criminal  
Division.



COOCH  
Oh, yeah – right.

Cooch sticks his cigarette in his left hand, shakes with his right.

TULLY  
Ray this is –

RAY / TULLY  
Frank Couture.

TULLY  
That's right.

COUTURE  
Hello, Ray.

The handshake is still locked. Cooch is still squinting at the younger agent. Ray obviously knows something about Agent Couture.

RAY  
It's an honor.

Tully leans back in his chair, crosses his legs casually.

TULLY  
Ray, we're taking you off the street.  
We need you out in South Dakota.

Ray's enthusiasm suddenly deflates.

RAY  
South Dakota...  
(confused)  
Did I do something unsatisfactory,  
Sir?

COOCH  
No, Ray. You're gonna have to blame  
that on your grandmother.

Ray looks completely baffled now, swinging a look from Cooch to Tully.

TULLY

Interesting bloodline you have, Ray.  
(scanning file)  
French, Scots-Irish, Italian, ...and  
one-eighth American Indian.

COOCH

Sioux Indian, right?

RAY

I'm not that sure. Yeah, I think –

TULLY

– yes, Teton Sioux. Father's side.

Ray nods, looks from Tully to Cooch. What's going on here?

TULLY

Ray, there's been a homicide out in  
an area known as The Badlands. Indian  
Reservation.

COOCH

It's not the first. There's been  
several. And our field office in  
Rapid City is getting a lot of heat...  
none of the investigations have turned  
up jack shit.

TULLY

The main problem is, Ray, these people  
are extremely distrustful of  
outsiders, non-Indians. Relations  
have not been amicable.

COOCH

Different culture. Hard to penetrate.  
The Indians don't like white cops  
poking around. And that's why we're  
in a position where we have to bring  
in an American Indian agent.

Tully straightens the edges of a bureau memorandum.

TULLY

With an Indian representative out there, we hope to keep hostilities dormant; this is a COINTELPRO, Selective Operations Unit, and it'll be easier on Agent Couture if you can gain the people's trust and maybe –

RAY

Woh, excuse me, Sir... I see what you're saying... I've got a little Indian blood, that's true. But –

(laughing)

I am not an... an Indian. I can't just go in and –

TULLY

– your father was part Sioux.

A beat. Ray lowers his eyes to the photos.

RAY

I didn't know him, Sir. He passed away when I was six.

COOCH

Seven.

Ray looks up at Cooch. Another uneasy beat. Cooch lights a cigarette as if lighting a cigarette was a science.

COOCH

Don't worry about it, Ray. As long as the people have proof that we sent them one of their own, no one's gonna ask you to weave baskets or make it rain.

Ray sits before the files and photos, looking unsure. He has come to garner a promotion but has just been sent to The Graveyard. Or in the FBI argot, Indian Country.

Tully pivots his leather chair in a full circle and slaps an assignment folder down in front of the young agent.

EXT. THE GREAT PLAINS - SOUTH DAKOTA - DAWN

The very landscape from opening image. Gentle waves of land, rolling out to touch the Black Hills. The sun rises up out of the distant silhouette like a waking God. HEARTBEAT DRUM. Hypnotic.

And then a car blows by, throwing up gravel and agate and gypsum. ZOOOOM! Right by us. Gone.

When a dense screen of red dust clears, an old, bent, metal sign at roadside becomes visible. It reads, through punched and rusted bullet holes: "Entering Bear Creek Indian Reservation."

HEARTBEAT DRUM calls in the high-pitched, mournful voices of LAKOTA SINGERS. The same haunting song.

INT. LE BARON - MOVING

Cooch is at the wheel. Ray, passenger. His lap is a desk for several folders, and he works through them as they drive. Both agents eat a sandwich as they travel.

RAY

Eight murders in less than a year.  
All of them Indian. All of them  
unsolved. Is the law a non-entity  
out here or what?

Cooch opens a folder that sits between them, and taking his eyes off the road for a dangerous five seconds, locates some photos, and hands them to Ray. Ray's expression tells us they are not pretty.

COOCH

Those are two agents who went into a reservation a few years ago to serve a warrant. They were executed at close range. That one there is a police officer killed by the Mohawks up in Canada more recently.

RAY

Jesus...

COOCH

The agents who have worked out here say its like going into Nam. Unfamiliar terrain, foreign language, foreign customs... and you never know when you might walk into a few rounds. They hold a lot of old anger for the white man out here.

Ray considers this as he looks out at the unfamiliar terrain while on the RADIO, a D.J. speaks in LAKOTA LANGUAGE. Ray... back at Cooch, studying his face.

RAY

Were you in Nam?

COOCH

Airborne. That's where they used to get us agents from. Now we get 'em from Carnegie-Melon, Ivy League. Accountants and computer whiz-kids. Yuppies with guns.  
(lights a smoke)  
That's scary shit.

Ray smiles, sets the AC on high.

RAY

Not as scary as a Hoover man with a computer.

Cooch throws a quick look Ray's way. And a smile. He appreciates the sting of a right off a left.

COOCH

Hey, hey, hey. J. Edgar would've loved you. He'd love anybody who joined the bureau to, what was it?  
"To enforce the laws of my country and protect her interests"?

RAY

You crashed my file?

COOCH

No. I consulted it. We're going into Indian Country, I wanna know what kind of individual is covering my ass. Don't you?

Ray has finished his sandwich. He wipes his hands on a kerchief while taking in the sight of chalky buttes cramming roadside.

RAY

You've been in the bureau for thirty years. You survived The Hoov, the Black Panthers and Abscam. I don't see any bullet holes. That's good enough for me.

Cooch looks at Ray, amused. He likes this guy. And then he notices a look of growing consternation on his partner's face.

RAY'S POV - MOVING

as they drive through the first settlement, a little, broken and scattered community, littered with wrecked cars on blocks, and overpopulated with hungry dogs. HEARTBEAT DRUM softly under.

SIX INDIAN CHILDREN with dirty but beautiful faces and long blue black hair run alongside the car, curious. One of them YELLS SOMETHING we don't understand.

PAST the trading post – a white man's store – where SIX OGLALA SIOUX – four men, two women sit like wax figures, only their eyes moving to light on the freshly waxed government car.

A little house has a tipi erected beside it. And a satellite dish. The house beside that one has been half chopped away to feed the wood stove.

Poverty.

EXT. BEAR CREEK COMMUNITY - RESERVATION - DAY

The federal car drives out of the community and further into vast bluffs and strange rock formations where it is swallowed, leaving the ramshackle village in dust.

A lone dog – all its ribs showing – chases, BARKING.

EXT. BADLANDS - SHORT TIME LATER

We are on the Moon. Or Israel. But not America. Not any America we've ever seen. A thirty-mile eroded landscape of dunes and crevices, soft rock strata and fossils. Barren. And eerie. A LAKOTA DEATH SONG underscores the otherworldly ambiance of this place as –

SHOES scuff through the gumbo and multi-colored stones. Two pair of black, spit-shined, lace-ups. Three. Tripping. Scuffing. And then a fourth pair. But they are not loafers. They are Georgio Brutini's and they belong to –

Ray, as he and Cooch follow two Special Agents from the regional office. SA MILES is about Cooch's age, balding. SA SHERMAN is closer to Ray's age but instead of a suit like the rest, he favors an army-green jacket. Neither is a South Dakota shit-kicker but transplanted field agents. All four shield their eyes with dark glasses, and here in the Badlands it is wise because the sun makes dunes shimmy and craters become faces. It plays mischief on the eye, making Ray and Sherman nearly trip on –

A DEAD BODY

lying face down in the rainbow sand. Dried blood and horse flies cover his blown out torso. The agents stand over him, breathless from the rugged walk.

COOCH  
Who found him?

MILES  
Indian kids. Hunting fossils.

Cooch studies the body from where he stands. Sherman hands a file over to Ray.

COOCH

Okay. I think Agent Levoi and I can proceed from here. What are your call signals?

SHERMAN

PX-10 and 11. Anything we can do to help you out, just radio.

COOCH

Good. Thanks, Guys.

The agents start back through the Badlands. Ray is already squatting a safe distance from the body, covering his nose with a kerchief while looking in the file.

Cooch takes a bended knee on the other side of the body. Flies buzz on and around the corpse.

RAY

Leo Fast Elk... Thirty seven... single... Member of the Tribal Council.

Cooch makes a note then slowly circles the body. He holds a hand out to Ray and the younger agent turns the file over.

COOCH

Looks like Fast Elk wasn't fast enough to outrun that load. What do you make of the damage?

Ray gets closer, swats at Flies with the folder.

RAY

Six rounds. 357.

COOCH

That's what it looks like, doesn't it? But that's what a ten gauge, choke-bored, shotgun will look like when it hits your lower back from five feet away.

Ray looks up impressed. Cooch rises and walks off gingerly, scanning the surroundings.



RAY

Somebody was serious about doing  
this guy, that's for sure.

COOCH

Ray.

Cooch is standing ten feet away, staring at the ground. Ray walks over, carefully. He follows Cooch's frown down at the twisted layers of earth.

ON THE GROUND

a circle has been etched deep in the soft gumbo, and in the center of the circle, a white eagle plume sticks straight up, dancing in the wind.

Cooch and Ray each lower themselves to their haunches to study the strange sight. Cooch puts his reading glasses on, stares at it. Then lights a cigarette.

Ray hefts up a camera and begins CLICKING off shots. He starts moving around it, taking shots at different angles. And then the sound of a DISTANT MOTOR draws both agent's attention.

POV:

way out in the bizarre moonscape of eroded rock and earth, a lone figure on a motorcycle bounces and grinds, born out of a silvery heat mirage. It's fifty yards off but heading straight for us. The HEARTBEAT DRUM.

REVERSE - RAY AND COOCH try to make the figure out.

IN THE BADLANDS

the archaic mud-caked Harley chugs and stalls, spits and choices, and begins an incredible drive straight up the steep side of this natural wonder. At the throttle is an imposing figure.

WALTER CROW HORSE is a portly Indian in his late-thirties with a black reservation hat worn low over a face that seems to have been cast from a bust of Sitting Bull. Sitting Bull

with aviator shades. Denim jacket over checkered shirt. Faded jeans. Well broken duct-taped boots. His hair is worn long in tight duel braids.

The rusted bike bajas up and down slopes, finally stalling out, twenty feet or so from the murder site. Crow Horse swings his bulk off the bike like dismounting a horse. He looks around suspiciously then pulls a rolled-up blanket from the carrier rack.

LEO LITTLE SKY

lies in death. Crow Horse's boots move in stealthily, creaking like saddle leather.

He squats and looks at the corpse... then looks around with animal alertness. He reaches into the front pocket of his jacket and pulls out some Bull Durham tobacco. He pinches some and offers it to the four directions around the body.

He then unrolls the blanket, begins to move the dead man... sense something and wheels to see Cooch standing behind him, one hand behind his back where his gun must be, and the other hand holding up open wallet. The sun hits his badge.

COOCH

Good morning.

Crow Horse hawks his eyes onto a big rock, a full second before Ray steps out, his .45 drawn but held at ease.

Crow Horse slowly raises his arms as Ray moves up to him, studying him.

COOCH

Taking ol' Leo somewhere?

CROW HORSE

Leo's been out here too long, man.  
I'm taking him to ceremonial burial.

RAY

This is a restricted area.

COOCH

Check him out, Ray.

Ray frisks the Indian, finds an old leather wallet, and then a gun. A .38.

COOCH

Nice piece. You come back here to cover your tracks, Geronimo? What's your name?

CROW HORSE

It ain't Geronimo.

COOCH

Who are you?

CROW HORSE

I think maybe you guys got off the wrong exit, yeah? This is the Bear Creek Indian Reservation.

Cooch walks around to the front of Crow Horse, and studies him.

COOCH

I know where I am. I'm on federal land, doing a federal investigation, and if you don't wanna cooperate you can take a ride in a federal car, and spend the rest of the day in a little room, answering federal questions. It's your call. Who are you?

CROW HORSE

I'm a full blood Oglala Sioux, born and raised on this reservation.

COOCH

You're a wise-ass. Ray check his wallet.

RAY

I did.

COOCH  
Who the fuck is he?

RAY  
– a fucking cop.

A pause. A long, dead of South Dakota, Badlands pause. Cooch turns and looks at Ray who holds up the open wallet, revealing a badge. Like Cooch's it shines in the sun.

RAY  
Walter Crow Horse. Tribal Police.

Cooch stands staring at the Indian... then takes a few steps over to Ray and grabs the wallet. He examines it. Then looks at Crow Horse and laughs.

COOCH  
He's a fucking cop.

The Indian cop has plenty of time to get up on his own but he kneels there, tauntingly, waiting for Ray to help him. Ray walks over and offers a hand. Crow Horse takes it, and pulls himself up, looking square into Ray's sunglasses.

Cooch walks over and hands the officer his wallet, and his .23. Crow Horse takes the items, eyeing the older agent.

CROW HORSE  
We got the wire ya was comin'. You're the Indian official, yeah?

COOCH  
No. No, that's Ray, here. Ray, uh...  
(searching his  
imagination)  
Ray... Little Weasel.

Ray does a take but quickly recovers, meeting Crow Horse's scrutinizing gaze. Crow Horse nods to Ray, and Ray nods back in case it's the Indian thing to do. Crow Horse nods again. Ray nods again.

CROW HORSE  
Leo's gotta get to burial, Brother.

He's gotta make the journey.

                  COOCH  
What journey?

                  CROW HORSE  
Tell him, Ray.

Ray stares at Crow Horse, uneasy. The wind sings through the Badlands.

                  RAY  
Leo has to take the journey, Cooch.

                  COOCH  
We'll have to give Leo a refund.  
Because he's gotta go to the M.E. In  
case you don't know, Officer,  
violation of the Major Crimes Act on –

                  CROW HORSE  
– an Indian Reservation is within  
the jurisdiction of the Federal Bureau  
of Intimidation. I know that.

                  COOCH  
Good. Thank you.

Crow Horse says something in Sioux to Ray. Ray just stares.

                  CROW HORSE  
I said when can Leo be taken to  
ceremony?

                  RAY  
After we've completed our  
investigation.

Crow Horse is staring at Ray.

                  CROW HORSE  
That's a nice suit.

Ray looks offended. Cooch puts a hand on Crow Horse's shoulder and walks him toward his beat-up motorcycle.

COOCH

Somebody must be doing something  
somewhere in your jurisdiction,  
Officer Crow Foot.

CROW HORSE

You ain't gonna cut his hands off  
and send 'em to Washinton, are ya?  
They done that to one of our girls  
once. Leo did quillwork, he's gonna  
need his hands.

Crow Horse turns and looks at Ray. Ray is quick this time.

RAY

Leo's gonna need his hands, Cooch.  
He does quillwork.

COOCH

I think Leo's retired from quillwork  
for the moment.

CROW HORSE

Respect the dead, Hoss. Because when –

COOCH

– did you understand me when I said  
that –

CROW HORSE

(walking away)

– violation of the Major Crimes Act  
on an Indian Reservation is within  
the jurisdiction of the Federal Bureau  
of Instigation. I know that.

COOCH

Goodbye.

Crow Horse appears to be getting on his bike when suddenly  
he moves like a cat and lays his knife to the dead man's  
head. He cuts away a patch of hair.

COOCH

What the hell you doing?!

CROW HORSE

His mother needs a piece of his hair.  
It's for the Keeping of the Souls  
Ceremony.

(wrapping lock of  
hair)

Has to be kept for four days.

Cooch and Ray stand there, watching Crow Horse mount his bike and push off down a nasty slope back through the Badlands. He starts his motor. It dies. Then starts again.

COOCH

Keeping of the souls. Do they still  
burn their dead or something?

RAY

Beats the hell outta me.

Ray and Cooch look off across the Badlands, as far out of their element as they can be.

CLOSE ON - THE WHITE EAGLE PLUME

in the circle in the sand, fluttering in the wind.

The gold spit-shined Le Baron eases to a crawl, passing an old wooden sign. "Leaving Bear Creak Indian Reservation."

And immediately pulling in front of a squat old bar with a burned out neon Miller light. DWIGHT YOAKUM croons "Youuuuuu-Got-Your Little-Ways" on the jukebox from inside.

The Buffalo Butte bar has several cracked and sun-bleached buffalo skulls hanging off the edge of its flat roof and big faded white letters painted across the front read: "No Indians Allowed."

(This sign actually exists today in the res-line border town of Scenic, South Dakota). The car pulls up beside a pick-up and parks. Ray and Cooch step out, careful to walk wide around a PITBULL in the bed of the truck.

A WHITE LOCAL walks out of the bar and looks askance at the suits. As the two feds approach the bar, Cooch looks up at the warning sign. Ray sees it too.

COOCH

Sorry, Ray. You're gonna have to wait in the car. I'll bring you out a cheeseburger.

The young agent smiles, amused, starts to enter the bar but –

VOICE (O.S.)

Hey!

Ray spins quickly, paranoid about entering. But the man calling to them is –

An Indian himself. TRIBAL PRESIDENT OLIVER CLEAR MOON, a small man in his late fifties who peers out at the agents through fat bifocals. He wears a straw cowboy hat, red windbreaker and his hair is cut short, or "bobtailed" as the Indians say.

Clear Moon is walking away from a parked pick-up truck, toward the white men, eyeing the two with deep curiosity.

CLEAR MOON

(heavy Indian accent)

You made it. Was-te.

Cooch discreetly peeks into a folder as he walks toward the man

COOCH

You must be... President Clear Bone.

CLEAR MOON

Clear Moon.

(pointing to the sky)

Moon. You must be the Sioux.

He is pointing his long, skinny finger at Cooch.

COOCH

No. That's Ray here. Ray...



RAY  
(quickly)  
Ray Levoi, Sir. Pleasure.

Clear Moon beholds the young agent with hopeful eyes, a smile breaking across his flaccid brown skin. He takes Ray's hand in a respectful double-clutch and grips him tightly... almost desperately.

CLEAR MOON  
It's about time they sent us one of our own. Was-te.

He keeps pumping Ray's hand, looking into his face with great admiration. Cooch looks on with amusement.

CLEAR MOON  
Things are no good here. It is like war zone. We need an official who understands what is good for the Indian people. Who knows Indian way.

Clear Moon has not released Ray's arm as he leads them to a string of seedy motel units across the street.

RAY  
I thought we were staying on the reservation.

CLEAR MOON  
Yes. Rooms thirteen and fourteen are on Indian land.

RAY  
I see.

CLEAR MOON  
Are you hungry? I have some nice raw kidney in the truck.

RAY  
Oh, I'm set, Sir. I'm set.

COOCH

He's starving, Mr. Clear Moon. Get him some raw kidney. He hasn't had any Indian food in days...

And Clear Moon guides them through the front door of room 13. Ray looks over his shoulder threateningly at Cooch who winks and pats his back.

EXT. RESERVATION LINE - NIGHT

A lone headlight appears out of the black. HEARTBEAT DRUM. But faster. Relentless. A "res" car, a dented, rusted, peeling old station wagon, drives slowly toward the reservation.

Then suddenly, someone steps in front of the car. A BIG MAN in cowboy boots and blue jeans.

INT. MOTEL - ROOM 13 - NIGHT

Ray lies in bed. Awake. He is hanging off the bed with a file open on the floor and using the moon to light photos and memorandums. And then he hears LAUGHTER outside. And GLASS BREAK.

He gets out of bed quickly, snatching up his pants, putting their on, and going to the window.

POV - OUT WINDOW:

SEVERAL LOCALS out in front of the bar help a middle-aged INDIAN MAN out of the station wagon.

WHITE LOCAL

Where you goin'? Back to the res?

A young local bends down behind the Indian while another shoves him, sending him tripping over the bent man and onto his back in the dirt.

WHITE LOCAL

What ya doin'? You drunk?

MORE LOCALS come out from the bar, beers and drinks and interested in what's going on.

## REVERSE - RAY

at the window, observes. Cooch enters from the connecting room, puffy-eyed but quickly buttoning his shirt. He shares Ray's view.

COOCH

Let's take a walk.

Ray is transfixed.

## EXT. BUFFALO BUTTE BAR - NIGHT

The Indian man, is pushed into a stumble, and caught by another white man as a little game of catch takes place. Cooch, stepping into the circle, shirt half unbuttoned, hair a mess, looks on. Then steps in front of a big local and catches the Indian as he comes stumbling. He holds onto him, looking at the faces that turn his way. Ray steps up beside him, looking tense.

COOCH

What's goin' on here?

(a beat)

I can't walk across the goddamn street  
without some breed-ass fallin' all  
over me?

And then Cooch shoves the Indian with all his might back across the road. The locals resume their fun, and Cooch looks at a local man and shares a chattering laugh that makes Ray do a serious take.

COOCH

Watch out now, he wants a kiss, Ray,  
wants a kiss –

The Indian ends up stumbling back toward Ray, and Ray catches him this time. The man maintains a perfect vacant expression and keeps acting as though nothing of the sort is happening. But he is dizzy, and exhausted, and Ray keeps him from falling.

Cooch looks at Ray. Their eyes meet. Ray shoves the man forward. This time, instead of catching him, the local on

the receiving end, hauls off and punches him in the face.  
The Indian drops.

Cooch runs in, grabs the Indian under the arms and drags him back to his car.

COOCH

Go ahead, skin, get your ass back on your sacred land. Get outta here.

He shoves him behind the wheel as the locals crowd around. They don't see Cooch throw the wheel stick in drive, and lean into the man's ear.

COOCH

Get outta here. Drive.

Cooch slams the door, and kicks it, and the vehicle lurches forward. A beer can clanks off the rear window, and rolls clanking into the middle of the road.

Ray stands there with the locals as they all watch the car drive off across the reservation line. Cooch, belly sticking out of his unbuttoned shirt, and a breathless smile on his face, heads to the bar without breaking stride. This man has done "underground" before.

INT. BUFFALO BUTTE BAR - NIGHT - SHORT TIME LATER

Cooch and Ray sit in a booth with DENNIS VAUGHN, a strapping local man, ranch-raised, and gentlemanly. In fact, downright likeable.

DENNIS

So what type of salesmen are you gentlemen anyway?

RAY

Liquor. We heard they like their drink on the reservation, and we were gonna see if we couldn't unload some surplus on the way to Nebraska.

COOCH

Now keep that between us, Dennis,

cuz I don't know what kinda Johnny Law they got here.

DENNIS

Hey, Brooks, come over here. I want you to meet a coupla fellas from Denver.

BROOKS, a small, older man with a feed store cap and a clean cowboy shirt, comes over with a beer and a pensive look on his face. He pulls up a chair and positions himself at the end of the booth.

DENNIS

Liquor salesmen. Be nice to them, maybe they'll give you a sample of some of that gin you like.

(to Ray)

He likes that Russian shit that –

BROOKS

They ain't liquor salesmen. They're FBI.

Cooch and Ray don't flinch. Dennis does. He looks between the two, cautiously.

COOCH

Brooks, what's a perceptive fellow like you, doing in a joint like this? Let me buy you a glass of some of that Russian shit you like.

DENNIS

FBI? What you investigatin'?

COOCH

A murder. On the reservation.

DENNIS

Again. Figures, man.

BROOKS

You'll never find out who did it.

COOCH

You underestimate me, Brooks.

BROOKS

No. You underestimate these grass niggers. They're killing each other. That's all they do. Get drunk and kill each other. Then cover for each other. Who gives a damn really as long as they stay on their reservation. You ask me, the government shouldn't care one particle.

DENNIS

You know how in your big cities, you got your niggers and you got your Puerto Ricans? Well out here we got Indians. That's just the way it is.

COOCH

The only good Indian is a dead Indian, does that old adage still hold true out here?

Cooch laughs good-naturedly. Ray smiles. But Brooks looks offended.

BROOKS

That set-to you saw out front, was nothin' more than a message we were sendin' to the sonsabitches that are divertin' water from the river.

DENNIS

We got rights. We got a ranch just up here.

Ray catches this. Glances a look off Cooch who works on a cold draught beer.

RAY

Did any of you gentlemen know Leo Fast Elk?

Both men shake their heads. Get quiet.

BROOKS

You fellas are here to investigate a Indian crime, you should keep to Indian land, and talk to them, not us. But you wanna drink here and shoot stick here, that's your right, and we respect that.

(to Dennis)

Come on, Son, we're up on the table.

DENNIS

You fellas wanna play doubles?

Cooch shakes his head, distracted, and the two locals leave, enroute for the pool table. Ray watches them go, curious.

EXT. BUFFALO BUTTE BAR - NIGHT

Ray and Cooch, cross the street back to the motel. It is black and chillingly still.

RAY

Water. Worth killing for out here, I'd think.

COOCH

Get the plate numbers off everyone of these cars.

RAY

I already did.

Cooch looks at Ray, impressed.

RAY

Couldn't sleep.

COOCH

Good.

They stop in front of their rooms and Cooch pulls a small tape recorder from his waistband. A micro-cassette recorder that he examines in the dim door light.

RECORDER

(locals)

– out here we got our Indians. And that's the way it is.

Cooch shuts it off.

COOCH

By the time you get to the main village, sun'll be up. I want you to fraternize. Socialize. Penetrate. Infiltrate. Eat some raw kidney, and get these Indians talking. I'm gonna Powwow with Big Chief Clear Moon and find out more about Leo.

He hands Ray the recorder.

RAY

Done.

Cooch starts for his room but in a long, exaggerated country step as he breaks into the HANK WILLIAMS tune that has all but driven him insane inside the joint. Ray watches him go, and cracks a laugh.

INT. LE BARON - TRAVELING - SUNRISE

Ray's at the wheel, looks intense as he studies the vast expanse of slopes and rock formations and the rising sphere of flame that lights the road in strange color. He is reading a name list that he traps against the wheel.

RAY

Hobert Standing-Buffalo-That-Walks-Dreamer.

(a dry run)

Hello, I'm looking for Hobert Standing-Buffalo-That-Walks... Dreamer.

Ray pulls up a long dirt drive and parks.

EXT. OLD TRAILER - ACROSS FROM BADLANDS , SUNRISE



Ray walks to the front door of a war-torn trailer that is halfway swallowed by weeds and plants. It is static out here. Dead still. Ray approaches the front door. There is a huge hole in it. He knocks above the hole.

After a moment, the door opens a crack. A dark, weather-beaten face barely shows.

RAY

Good morning. I'm looking for Hobert-Buffalo-Dreaming...

(cheat sheet)

Hobert Standing-Buffalo-That-Walks-

The door closes. Locks.

RAY

-Dreamer.

Ray stands there for a moment then lowers himself to look through the huge hole in the door.

RAY

Sir?

A tattered chair is pushed against the door, covering the hole. Ray stands up, turns on the steps. And before he can let out a flustered sigh, he spots something across the dirt road. Something that makes him remove his shades, look again. Whatever it is, it doesn't make him happy, and he is hurrying across the road.

EXT. BADLANDS - DAY

A motorcycle, parked between the road and the badlands. We've seen the ancient bike before. Ray walks past it, looking at it.

He pushes his shades up on the bridge of his nose and looks down into the moonscape.

Walter Crow Horse is down there, on his haunches, "feel tracking", laying his fingers inside tracks and reading them. He doesn't even look up at the sound of the FBI agent's footsteps.

CROW HORSE

Ray Little Weasel. FBI. I like the way ya sneaked up on me. Must be Indian.

The wind whistles and moans through the Badlands as Crow Horse continues feel tracking.

RAY

What are you –

CROW HORSE

Watch out!

Ray draws back.

RAY

What?!

CROW HORSE

You're steppin' on sign.

Crow Horse lowers his face to the ground and blows some scattered dust out of a print. Lightly lays his fingers inside

RAY

Hey.

(ignored)

Hey, you, listen up –

CROW HORSE

– Leo wasn't killed here. He was dumped here. Out of a vehicle. Bald tread. Muffler held on with baling wire.

Crow Horse checks out another track.

CROW HORSE

The man you want... stepped outta the car, dragged Leo out, laid him down. Then walked over here and made a circle in the earth with a stick. I can't find the stick. He stuck an

eagle plume in the circle, got back  
in his car, dustin' his own prints  
with a pine bough for about six feet,  
but he missed a print, right here,  
see. He got in his car and went Hell-  
bent-for-Holy-Sunday outta here. He  
ditched that pine bough three miles  
across the flat, in the Little Bear  
River, it floated down to  
Thundershield Gap. The car hit paved  
road, and was outta here.

Crow Horse rises, points down the road.

CROW HORSE

The killin' was done where Leo's  
mother lives. But he was driven here  
into these Badlands.

Ray is frowning at the big Indian, trying to get a fix on  
this

CROW HORSE

Big sonuvabuck. Based on the depth  
of that print, pressure releases...  
I'd say he goes two-ten, two-fifteen –

RAY

Bullshit.

CROW HORSE

– Well, maybe two-seventeen.

RAY

You're trying to tell me you can  
read all that from a track?

CROW HORSE

No. Not just a track. You gotta listen  
to the trees, man. To the leaves. To  
this sand, you FBI's kicked all up.  
You gotta listen to the earth.

RAY

Is that right? Well, listen to this:

drag your ass. This is a restricted area.

CROW HORSE

No, this is the home of the Oglala Sioux and I want the dog-fucker who killed Leo. Whether you get him or I get him, I just want him. Shit's been goin' on too long.

RAY

You've got no jurisdiction.

CROW HORSE

You got no know-how. About Indian Way. Or about Jack Shit for that matter.

RAY

Maybe you're not aware of this, Crow Horse, but I just flew in from a place called the Twentieth Century where we have such things as electrostatic tracking methods, psycholinguistics, DNA fingerprinting; I don't have to crawl around with the scorpions and talk to the fucking trees to get answers. Leo was killed right here.

CROW HORSE

Go back to the M.E., take a look inside Leo's exit wounds and tell me how chicken feed got in there. Trust me, there ain't chickens in the Badlands. His mother's place is –

RAY

– his mother never lived here. She was from up in North Dakota.

CROW HORSE

I'm talkin' his spiritual mother. Maisy Blue Legs.

RAY

His spiritual mother...

CROW HORSE

To us Indians, our spiritual relatives are as close as family. I've got seven mothers on this reservation. Sisters. Brothers. You ain't one of them.

RAY

Thank God. Now listen to me, asshole. I'm giving you a break. But if my partner finds out you're here, you're gonna be reading rat tracks in Sioux Falls Maximum Security.

CROW HORSE

Easy. Easy... I'm goin'.

Crow Horse walks back up toward the road.

Ray lets him leave then crouches where Crow Horse was, begins looking at tracks.

CROW HORSE (O.S.)

Hey, Little Weasel.

Ray turns, and sees Crow Horse perched on a high bank – the one Ray came down – and he's in a tracking stance.

CROW HORSE

You weigh one sixty-three, yeah? Not a beer drinker. You're one of these tofu and pilaf characters. Pack your gun, under your coat – left shoulder. But you got backup; a little .32, .38 maybe, in a ankle holster that gives you a right foot drag, Shoes are too tight at the toe but, man, they look cool. And that's what counts.

Ray just stands frozen, blown away. Crow Horse rises, dusting off his hands, and heading to his vehicle.

RAY  
Crow Horse.

The Indian turns. The wind moans. Ray scrutinizes him, deliberating.

RAY  
Fuck you.

Crow Horse grins and waves, and ambles away. DOWN IN

THE BADLANDS

Ray stands, sweating under his suit jacket, and not sure if he's amazed or pissed off.

EXT MAISY BLUE LEGS HOUSE , BLACK TAIL DISTRICT - DAY

A trailer sits off from the river in beaten solitude. There are two junked cars and one burned black.

Wind blows across deep bald tire tracks. Ray walks slowly beside them, surveying, following them to a place where they become puckers and skids next to a dilapidated outhouse. There is a shotgun blast in the side of it. Ray studies it, enters the outhouse. Exits, and walks the rutted gumbo earth to where it meets rolling hills of golden grass. He stands here, mesmerized.

CHICKENS scratch around in the dirt.

Like so many far-off res homesteads, this is a haunting place. Made more so by a persistent SQUEAKING, a rusty, metallic squeal coming from –

A WATER PUMP

across the yard, where MAISY BLUE LEGS, a Sioux elder, works the handle. She wears thick bifocals and keeps her hair under a bandanna. No water comes forth from the pump, and she tries again and again until she breaks a sweat. And then she sees the waal'cu standing out there.

Urgently, she turns and starts back to her trailer with an

empty coffee can.

Ray starts after her.

RAY  
Mrs... Blue Legs? Can I ask you a  
few questions –

MAISY  
(1/3 res speed)  
– go away. Leave us alone...

RAY  
Ma'am, Please –

She mounts the metal steps. Ray is losing her. He gets a foot on the bottom step, and attempts something he does not want to do.

RAY  
Mrs. Blue Legs. I'm Indian.

Halfway through the screendoor, Maisy turns and looks at the young man in suit and shades.

RAY  
I'm Sioux.

Maisy lowers her bifocals, studies him. Then walks in, slaps the door shut, and locks it. A towel hung as a shade folds down.

Ray lingers at the bottom of the steps.

RAY  
Yeah, right.

And he walks around the side of the trailer, looking at the ground. In the gaping space between the trailer blocks, and the grass, there is much junk stored, and Ray kneels to look. He is drawn to a pair of cowboy boots, caked with dried mud. He picks up a boot, looks at the sole, then touches the mud. His fingers break through the hardened crust and come back moist and blue. He looks at this sniffs it. There is a tense, water-torture like tempo coming from the old pump where water

barely drips onto a hub cap in the dirt. Ray sets the boot down. Goes to grab the other boot and –

a WESTERN DIAMOND BACK RATTLER coils out from the shade of the boot, RATTLING and HISSING from white mouth and three-inch fangs, and Ray has done a backflip and roll, slapping his shoulder holster and pulling lead and BLAM! BLAAAM! he unloads two, and the reptile is so dead, there's not even enough snake left to make a truck-stop key chain.

He kneels there, flushed in the face, holding his breath and double-clutching his gun. The SHOTS ECHO through the Badlands like the aftermath of dynamite. From inside the trailer, he can hear CRYING. A low moaning. Praying softly.

RAY

Shit. Mrs. Blue Legs! It's okay!

Then his RADIO CRACKS IN.

RADIO (COOCH)

X21, give me a 20.

RAY

(yelling)

Black Tail District, X22. You ready for this? Leo wasn't killed in the Badlands. I... I found the location.

COOCH

Maisy Blue Legs place?

RAY

How'd you know?

COOCH

I got one up on ya.

RAY

Go ahead.

COOCH

I've got the doer. I know who he is.

Ray looks relieved.



COOCH

Meet me at base. Over.

RAY

Cooch. You're my hero.

Ray looks down at the dead snake, still rushed from it, and he hurries out of there.

IN THE SHADE OF THE TRAILER

the snake's RATTLE moves spasmodically, still kicking with reflex.

EXT. LOOKS TWICE HOUSE - BEAR CREEK RES - NIGHT

CLOSE ON an AMERICAN FLAG, flapping in the hot night wind. But something is wrong about the image. The flag is hung upside lit by –

A full moon that also illuminates an overgrown field that fronts a small, one-level house where the flag hangs. Three old cars decorate the front yard. A busted screendoor creaks in the wind, and somewhere off in the hills, a DOG BARKS away his boredom.

COOCH (O.S.)

Jimmy Looks Twice.

INT. LE BARON

SA Couture and SA Levoi sit inside the car, staking out this little place far down a dirt road on the outskirts of the settlement.

Cooch has the suspect's file on his knee.

RAY

Who is he?

COOCH

One of the leaders of the Warriors of All Red Nations. Militant organization.

He hands an open file over to Ray.

CLOSE ON - FILE PHOTO: a raging fire and six long-haired, fist-raising Indians, yelling at the camera.

COOCH (O.S.)

The progressive Indians don't like them because they want everybody to go back to the old Indian ways, and the old way Indians don't like them because they use violence to get attention.

RAY SHUFFLES TO

PHOTO 2 – a big Indian in a wheel chair, holding a rifle. He is shirtless under a vest and on his muscular right shoulder there is a clearly defined tattoo of a circle with an eagle feather through it.

PHOTO 3 – a Close Up of the tattoo.

PHOTO 4 – a propaganda flyer with the letters W.A.R.N. and the same symbol – perfect circle, pierced by a white eagle feather.

RAY

White eagle feather through the circle. That's their symbol.

COOCH

That's right.

Ray shuffles through more of the same with great interest.

RAY

They obviously wanted it to be known that they offed Leo. Some kind of statement.

COOCH

Jimmy Looks Twice put Leo's head through a glass door of the tribal offices three months ago. And

threatened him several times since.  
President Clear Moon and the regional  
FBI feel he made good on that threat.

Cooch takes a long, tight breath then turns around in his seat, coming up with an M-16. Ray lifts one of his own. He looks out the car window.

RAY

I'd just like five minutes alone  
with the motherfucker who hung that  
flag upside down.

COOCH

Easy, Cowboy. No vendettas on my  
ship. Now: remember what I told you  
about Nam? Watch the grass, watch  
the trees, watch the shit house, be  
on your toes, and if we get committed,  
don't hesitate to empty that sucker.

RAY

Alright. Alright.

Cooch whacks a top clip into the M-16. Ray slams a clip in his.

COOCH

It's show time.

Car doors open in skillful silence.

LOOKS TWICE HOUSE - CLOSER - NIGHT

and Ray maneuver toward the house, rifles ready. Cooch gets under the picture window, sneaks a look. Nothing. He follows Ray around the side.

POV:

off in a backfield, lit by a hot fire, a small round hut covered in patchwork quilts, canvas and buffalo hide. A strange mist floats around it, and from inside, voices are heard –

A DRUMMING AND CHANTING in LAKOTA. And EAGLE SOUNDS.

Dozens of shrill whistles. Are there birds inside this thing?

REVERSE - RAY

and Cooch, kneeling in the weeds, look dumbfounded. And more than a little unnerved.

RAY  
(whispering)  
What the hell is that?

NEAR THE INIPI LODGE

An INDIAN YOUTH DOOR TENDER with shoulder length hair falling over a T-shirt, steps out of the dark and walks to the fire. He prods it with a broken pitch fork.

He turns to get some more wood and walks right into an M-16, trained chest level. Ray stares him down.

RAY  
On the ground.

The boy drops boot camp fast.

Cooch moves up on the sweat lodge, looking quizzically at it, trying to figure out how to open it. He grabs a canvas flap at the front and after a moment's hesitation and a look at Ray, he tears the flap away.

A BLAST OF 200 DEGREE STEAM explodes forth and Cooch dances back, throwing up his rifle.

VOICE (O.S.)  
(inside lodge)  
Mitakue Oyasin!

GRANDPA SAMUEL REACHES, a rail-thin Sioux elder, appears through the steam like a vision. Bent in the tiny doorway, he searches out the interruption.

Cooch aims the M-16 at the old man.

COOCH  
This is the FBI! Come on out of there

nice and slow. Let's move it! Hands  
on your head!

Grandpa Reaches crawls out first, ignoring the "Hands on your head" order from Cooch. His eyes move back and forth between the two agents.

FIVE MORE INDIANS, from 16-45 come out, looking confused. Cooch makes the towel-wrapped men spread out in a line. The old man is speaking to the others in LAKOTA, and Ray steps up to him, cuts him off.

RAY

Hands on your head, Sir. Come on,  
come on...

The archaic figure just looks through him. Starts to walk away. Ray takes his thin arm. He locks eyes with the old man. Slowly, he obeys, raising his hands and laying them on his head.

From the lodge, the last man emerges. It's Crazy Horse reborn out of the burning sage. JIMMY LOOKS TWICE is in his mid-thirties – big, well over two-hundred pounds. But lean. His braids fall nearly to his hips. His face is handsome but at the moment, twisted in a full-blood's scowl.

LOOKS TWICE

(outraged)

What are you doing?

COOCH

James Looks Twice?

LOOKS TWICE

That's right. What are you doing here? This is a religious ceremony you're desecrating.

Looks Twice shoots hawk-like black eyes onto Ray.

RAY

We're FBI, James. We just need to ask you a few questions.

LOOKS TWICE

We are in the middle of a sweat lodge ceremony. Do you drag people out of your churches when they're in the middle of prayer?

COOCH

Let's take a walk, Jimmy. Come on.

Cooch takes a careful step behind Jimmy and cuffs him. Looks Twice speaks to the others in LAKOTA, and they disband, heading to a shade arbor where their clothes hang.

As Cooch starts marching Looks Twice toward the house, Ray keeps an eye on the departing. One of them stops halfway to the fence and turns. Grandpa Reaches looks at Ray with eyes that have seen one hundred and one hard years in Indian Country.

RAY

Go ahead. You can all go home.

And he follows Cooch and the cuffed Jimmy to the house.

COOCH

We just wanna take a look around your place, Jimmy. We're not here to bust your balls.

AT THE BACK OF THE HOUSE

Cooch leads the half-naked suspect to the backdoor. Cooch show: a warrant, tries the door but it is locked.

LOOKS TWICE

What's this about?

COOCH

Your good friend Leo Fast Elk.

LOOKS TWICE

You think I killed him? Cuz he was an apple? Well, let me tell you something about Leo, Man –

COOCH

– don't "man" me, Jimmy. Where's the key?

Jimmy doesn't answer. He glares with hatred into Cooch's eyes.

COOCH

Ray, use the federal master key.

Ray steps up, gets ready to throw a frontkick at the door.

LOOKS TWICE

No. Don't do that. Don't deface the property, man. The key's in there.

With his hands cuffed, he can only jerk his head toward a big hole in the wall down near the foundation. Cooch quickly drops to a knee and checks out the hole.

LOOKS TWICE

Inside... in the coffee can.

Cooch reaches in, probes.

COOCH

There's no coffee can in –

Something horrifying happens so fast, Cooch has no time to react.

Whatever has taken his arm has done so with such force, his body jolts like he's touched raw voltage. The South Dakota BADGER rips through his leather jacket – we get a glimpse of its striped face and yellowed teeth – through his shirt. Through flesh, and deeper, GROWLING insanely while COOCH HOLLERS in shock tries to pull free and –

Jimmy Looks Twice spins from the porch with a skillfully executed back kick, knocking Ray off the step and to the ground. The Indian bolts like a deer into the darkness.

Ray rolls in the grass, throwing his M-16 up. He hesitates. But only for a moment before FIRING and decimating the corner gutter, a junked car, several trees. But no sign of Jimmy.

Cooch falls back in the grass badly mauled. His arm has been ripped open down to the bone.

                  COOCH  
Jesus... Jesus...

Ray starts toward Cooch.

                  COOCH  
Get him...

Ray takes off, crashing through weeds, into a stream, wading through mud. He throws his flashlight left and right. He crosses the river, shines the light in a field of wild sage. Nothing. He runs like a sprinter, looking everywhere. But as he enters an –

OPEN FIELD

all he finds is Jimmy's towel. He picks it up and looks around the area, breathing heavily.

And then suddenly, something leaps up out of the grass. Ray swings his M-16 up, ready to blast. But it is a DEER, taking off into a mystical blue night. THE DRUM. Beating fast. Heavy.

TURTLESHELL RATTLE. EAGLE BONE WHISTLES.

IN THE YARD

Cooch traps his bleeding arm between his knees to stanch the blood. He speaks quietly but firm into his radio, trying to stay in control.

                  COOCH  
                  (into radio)  
Assault on federal officers. Suspect  
has left the area. One officer down.  
Issue a Fugitive Alert immediately.  
Over.

                  RADIO  
Has the officer been shot, X-22?



## COOCH

No, the officer's been bitten by a fucking badger, okay? Get a Fugitive Alert fucking now! Over.

## EXT. BEAR CREEK RESERVATION - LANDSCAPE - SUNRISE

A mind-blowing Aurora. Living clouds. The incredible mesa. PULLING BACK slowly to the dirt road where a line of federal aerals high, enter Indian Country.

HEARTBEAT DRUM. But a fast heartbeat. A relentless pulse throughout –

## AN FBI SATURATION SEARCH

FOUR AGENTS surround a little tar-paper shack, rifles up and ready. Two go in, and flush out an OLD WOMAN, an OLD MAN, and some TEN CHILDREN. DOGS.

A SMALL TRAILER that has thirty junked cars in its yard and serves as a reservation parts store is crawling with FEDERAL MARSHALS; car doors are being opened, trunks. TRACKING DOGS run through the cars. WARPATH DRUMS...

– A BELL UH 1-B "HUEY" HELICOPTER chutters low over the grasslands, over the Badlands, flattening wheat. It swings down over the main settlement. CHILDREN gather in the street to look up at it but then run when –

– SIX FEDERAL CARS come down the main road. They pass by –

– THE FRONT PORCH OF THE TRADING POST where Ray stands, talking to the elders. A few of the same from earlier but several new ones.

He is sweat-drenched, and has shed his jacket and tie. He is showing them photos of Jimmy but getting no response. And then, for a little iodine on top of that, a MOTORCYCLE ENGINE, spitting and choking and coughing comes around the corner, Walter Crow Horse, manning the handlebars.

He pulls up to Ray and just looks at him. DRUMS FADE.

## CROW HORSE

You're an easy man to track, Ray. Ya walk like a penguin with a hard-on.

RAY

Is that right? What are the trees saying today?

CROW HORSE

They're sayin' that nobody's gonna talk to you cuz they don't give away one of their own. But they did say there's somebody way across the Little Walking River who wants to talk to you.

Ray soaks sweat off his forehead as he eyes the Indian on this one. He sees himself in the polaroid shades.

CROW HORSE

He sent me to find ya. He says he's got information.

RAY

Let's go.

Ray quickly leaves the porch.

EXT. GRANDPA SAM REACHES TRAILER - OUTSIDE SETTLEMENT -  
DAY

Silent. The unnerving silence of the Great Plains filled only by FLYS, big horseflies, buzzing around drying sage that hangs from the rafters of a shade arbor. A GOAT stands under it, just gazing across –

the vast spread of grass and dry land where an ancient Airstream trailer sits lop-sided. Sheets are hung as curtains. Six old cars – two from the early 50'a – sit stripped to the hubs on blocks in the overgrown grass. The air is dry and heavy and the only sound is –

FLYS. Ray swats at them as he steps over a truck seat that lies in the grass, stuffing and springs hanging out. Crow Horse walk. a few steps ahead, toward the trailer.

CROW HORSE  
(with reverence)  
Grandpa Samuel Reaches. Heavy duty  
medicine.

RAY  
Medicine. As in medicine man?

Crow Horse nods slowly, looking at Ray in a very serious  
manner

RAY  
Why does he wanna see me?

CROW HORSE  
Good question. Hardly sees anybody  
anymore. Hasn't left this place in  
twenty years. Did you bring some  
tobacco?

Crow Horse stops walking, making Ray do the same.

CROW HORSE  
When you go see an elder, you always  
bring some tobacco as a gift.

Ray reaches into his shirt pocket and fishes out a pack of  
Marlboro. Crow Horse glances at it, and shrug-nods. They  
continue on toward the trailer.

INT. GRANDPA REACHES TRAILER

Grandpa Samuel Reaches sits in a taped and tuckered easy  
chair, his alert black eyes moving from side to side. We  
recognize him from the sweat lodge ceremony at Looks Twice'  
although today he wears a straw cowboy hat giving him a more  
youthful look despite a face like a map of the Badlands.

He wears a vest over a western shirt, baggy work slacks, old  
cowboy boots.

His brown wrinkled hands run over the top of the Marlboro  
pack as if he's reading braille.

Crow Horse sits across from him on a stool. Ray leans on one

of the plain green walls, looking uncomfortable. A three foot adhesive fly strip hangs from the ceiling, thick with dead ones. There is a black and white TV with Sesame Street wailing, honking and guffawing through static.

Grandpa fixes his eyes on Ray for only split seconds at a time but one gets the feeling he's doing an incredibly deep reading of the young man. Slowly, he sits up – focusing intensely on Ray.

He begins to speak. A hoarse, strained, string of LAKOTA, spoken like it used to be, gesturing toward Ray. When he finishes, he sits back in his chair. Ray looks intrigued.

RAY

What did he say?

CROW HORSE

He wants to know if you ever watch the Cookie Monster. He says the Cookie Monster is not to be trusted – a trickster.

Ray looks puzzled. Crow Horse laughs bull-wild as Grandpa takes up a fly swatter and takes out a big horsefly. The old man begins speaking Indian again.

CROW HORSE

He says there's something wrong with Big Bird – he's crazy,  
(stops laughing)  
He says you stopped the Inipi ceremony last night...?

Crow Horse turns a questioning look at Ray. Ray doesn't flinch.

CROW HORSE

But he is not unhappy with you because he knows you.

RAY

He knows me?

CROW HORSE

He says he saw you in a vision some time ago.

Crow Horse stops translating suddenly even though the old man continues speaking. Crow Horse looks concerned, and ASKS A QUESTION IN LAKOTA. We don't know what he's asking but the tone is absolute amazement.

This question triggers an exchange between he and Grandpa, the old one getting angry. Grandpa wins.

CROW HORSE

I guess he had this vision some time ago, in the Moon of the Popping Trees – uh, back in the winter. He says you come from Wasi'cu city in the East but that your people... way back... are of the Minniconjou Sioux. But you yourself don't know that.

Ray's brow is drawn tense as he stares at the old Indian, absorbing the translation. Grandpa speaks more fervently now, incorporating Indian sign. Each time Grandpa does the hard Sioux HAND SLAP, Ray blinks.

CROW HORSE

He says he knew you'd be coming to Bear Creek. He was told. It is the will of Tunkasilia – the grandfather that you come here. He says let's smoke the caanunpa the sacred pipe, symbol of truth. So that there will be no lies between us.

The old man has taken a long wooden stem and a red stone bowl from a beaded pipe bag. He joins the two together then begins offering a pinch of tobacco to the Four Directions. While this goes on, Ray fidgets.

RAY

What's he smoke in that?

CROW HORSE

Sacred herbs. Tobacco. Don't worry, we don't smoke no Mexican agriculture

in The Pipe. That's a white man's myth. This is a sacrament.

The old man is offering the pipe to Ray.

GRANDPA  
Mltaku Oyasin.

Ray looks at Grandpa. The old man offers the pipe again.

CROW HORSE  
You don't smoke with him, it means you're hiding something.

Ray takes the pipe, looks at it... then passes it to Crow Horse. The big Indian takes it from Ray, giving him a long eye, then offering the pipe to The Directions before smoking.

Crow Horse puffs hard, eyes closed, then slowly releases some smoke upward. Ray watches it climb and fade. The old man then takes up an old turtle shell rattle. He speaks.

CROW HORSE  
He says Wakan. Sacred. Five hundred year old turtleshell rattle, passed down from the Grandfathers. Heavy duty.

He shakes the rattle very slightly, moving it in front of Ray. He speaks just above a whisper.

CROW HORSE  
He says, it is good. The Spirits are here. The Spirits want to know what you're doing here?

Ray smirks.

RAY  
Tell him I'm trying to find the man who murdered Leo Fast Elk. Ask him if he knows where he is.

Crow Horse asks the old man in Lakota. No answer. The pipe is back to grandpa, and he offers it to the Directions, to

the Earth then upward before smoking himself. He begins to speak again.

Passionately. In long glottal Sioux sentences, adding sign, fingers crossing, brushing an arm, a slap here and there,

He is working himself into an excited state, and Ray keeps looking at Crow Horse, very interested in the old man's answer.

Finally Grandpa's breath comes up short and wheezing, he ends his oratory with a solid hand slap.

RAY

What did he say?

CROW HORSE

He said he doesn't know.

RAY

He just did the Gettysburg Address in Sioux. What did he say?

Crow Horse ignores him. Grandpa speaks again. More hand language.

The old man is staring at Ray while whispering to Crow Horse. He strokes his badger claw necklace.

Crow Horse looks at Ray and seems hesitant to translate this new piece of information.

CROW HORSE

Uh... Grandpa likes to trade; no one stops by here without gettin' stuck in the old Indian barter. He, uh... he likes your shades.

Grandpa smiles toothlessly. Ray who has his driving glasses in hand, lifts them to say "these?" but Grandpa sees it as an accepted deal, and swiftly removes his necklace. He holds it out.

Ray slowly, hesitantly surrenders his sunglasses, and takes the necklace. Crow Horse bursts into laughter and so does

Grandpa, enjoying a good trade. He draws a hand through the air in a sort of horizontal karate chop, meaning done deal. Ray looks confused. Out of his element. And out of his shades.

Another fly gets snagged on sticky tape.

EXT. GRANDPA REACHES TRAILER

Crow Horse is hurrying toward his bike, Ray with him.

RAY

What was he saying?

CROW HORSE

Why should I tell you.

RAY

Because he was talking to me.

Crow Horse keeps walking.

RAY

Does he know something?

Crow Horse stops walking and eyes Ray, deliberating.

CROW HORSE

The old man saw an owl. Over there in the dry wash. Last week.

RAY

And...

CROW HORSE

He saw an owl.

A silent moment. Ray tries to figure out what he's missing here.

RAY

So what?

CROW HORSE

The owl is a messenger. When one shows itself to a Sioux... it means



someone's gonna die. The owl told him about Leo.

Ray stares vacantly.

RAY

The owl told him about Leo. That's incredible. I guess we just broke the back of this investigation, didn't we? Evidence doesn't get any harder than that – not for my money. Is there anyway we can seduce this owl into Federal Court?

CROW HORSE

He also said "listen to the water."

RAY

Listen to the water. Listen to the owl. He also said, don't trust the fucking Cookie Monster.

CROW HORSE

Go back to your DNA finger-printin'.

Crow Horse KICK STARTS his bike and burns off down the drive

Ray feels the presence of the old man, standing behind the busted screen door. Just watching.

OVER THIS, A SCREAMING. A HIGH-PITCHED, CHILLING, SCREAM that takes us straight into –

SLACK TAIL POWWOW GROUNDS - RES - LATER

CLOSE ON A TERRIFYING FACE – painted in blazing red and yellow, black around the eyes. A ridge of feathers high along the hairline, and a mouth open, tongue trilling – SCREAMING.

A WACIPI

is going down. A Powow. Held in the center of a huge arbor. This DANCER, a traditional Kit Fox dancer, is dressed in authentic costume and is dancing with TEN OTHERS dressed in various traditional garb and paints.

Under the arbor, TWO HUNDRED INDIANS in modern clothing sit on blankets or in lawn chairs, watching the dancing. A group of SINGERS sit around a big drum, beating on it, and wailing the song that keeps the dancers hopping.

SIXTY CARS (res beaters) are parked off around the arbor, less interested kids sitting on them, smoking cigarettes. A few actually have MTV hair-cuts.

Drifting through the cars and people are Special Agents Couture, Miles, Sherman and Levoi. They stroll through, incongruously, checking out faces. Vehicles.

Ray slows his step and takes in –

### THE POWWOW CIRCLE

as the dance ends. WEAK APPLAUSE. The POWWOW CALLER, a big Sioux with a crew-cut and cowboy shirt, speaks through a scratchy P.A. system.

#### CALLER

Was-te Yelo! Let's have five more veterans. Five more veterans. Hoka Hey!

An OLD-INDIAN MAN sitting in a lawn chair, removes his cowboy hat and reaches down toward a blanket. He brings up his VFW hat, adorned with medals and puts it on. Slowly, he rises, and shuffles out to the center pole along with –

FOUR OTHER VETERANS who have exchanged cowboy hats for veteran's caps. There is even a traditional dancer in there, wearing a veteran cap. As a mournful WAR SONG is banged out by the singers, a flag is unrolled by the veterans. An American Flag. Unrolled, and set on the mast. And together, all five Indian men, hoist –

### THE AMERICAN FLAG

high. Slowly it climbs. Proudly. It blows in the hot South Dakota wind.

### OUTSIDE THE ARBOR

Ray stands, watching this. And then the SONG ENDS. A loud, angry voice breaks across the P.A.

#### AT THE CROW'S NEST (CALLER'S BOOTH)

ANDERSON CHASING HAWK, a young Indian in ribbon shirt and long hair has taken possession of the microphone. SIX W.A.R.N. MEMBERS stand behind him. He speaks loud, firm, with the sharp gestures of an old way Chief.

#### CHASING HAWK

What is that that you honor there,  
uncles? After all the Wasi'cu country  
has done to you, after all he still  
does to you, you honor that flag?!  
That flag has been desecrated by the  
United States, because they have not  
honored what that flag represents!

The veterans just stand under the flag, solemn, looking at Chasing Hawk. The flag undulates soundlessly.

#### CHASING HAWK (O.S.)

To them, we are the Bank of America.  
Whenever they get into a little  
difficulty, they go to The Bank,  
withdraw a little land, withdraw a  
little oil –

#### OUTSIDE THE ARBOR

the four FBI agents stand, watching.

#### MILES

Okay. Here we go.

#### COOCH

Who's this guy?

#### SHERMAN

Anderson Chasing Hawk. Second in  
command behind Jimmy.

#### AT THE CROW'S NEST

Chasing Hawk hands the mic over to another Warrior. MAGGIE EAGLE BEAR would be the most beautiful woman Ray has even seen if she was not the meanest-looking. Her thick black hair falls over a denim jacket down below her horse-hair belt. Her faded jeans are stuffed into worn cowboy boots. And she is full of fire. She begins speaking in LAKOTA. Fluently. And with hand sign, like the old man.

## OUTSIDE THE ARBOR

the agents stand. Cooch is writing into a small notebook.

### SHERMAN

Magedelana Eagle Bear. Eagle's claws  
and a bear's balls.

### MILES

She keeps an AR-15 assault rifle in  
her truck. And she'll use it.

As Ray watches her, someone approaches in a less hostile manner. It is President Clear Moon, looking very upset. He holds the hand of a LITTLE GIRL, dressed in traditional dancing garb.

He approaches Ray.

### RAY

Mr. Clear Moon.

### CLEAR MOON

Our police are afraid of them. Please  
get them out of here.

Clear Moon gestures for the little girl to run off. He leans in close to Ray.

### CLEAR MOON

They're going to kill me next. That's  
what I hear. These new Indians are  
destroying everything. Our people  
are a quiet people.

### RAY

They can lead us to Jimmy. Just let them go. We're tightening the net on him. We know he's on the reservation.

Clear Moon is looking past Ray at the Warriors. They are approaching the agents, and Clear Moon looks at Ray with great concern.

CLEAR MOON

Help us.

And he slowly retreats to his lawn chair under the arbor.

Chasing Hawk, Maggie and the other Warriors strut up to the agents. All but one who is bound to a wheelchair. We've seen RICHARD YELLOW BIRD, the big Cheyenne who wears a Red Power baseball cap, an earring, and thick bifocals – in one of the file photos. His arms are plastered with tattoos.

AGENT SHERMAN

Where's Jimmy? We thought he'd be dancing today.

The warriors make a show of not acknowledging the FBI presence. They have walked over here just to walk by them. That is their statement. But Yellow Bird stops cranking the wheels of his chair and stop: long enough to look up at Ray.

YELLOW BIRD

Are you the Washington Redskin?

Even the agents crack grins at this bit of Indian wit. All but Ray who just stands there, arms folded across his chest, considering the crippled activist.

AGENT MILES

Say hello to Richard Yellow Bird,  
Ray.

Yellow Bird sits there, staring up at him through thick glasses. But then Maggie Eagle Bear takes the handles of Yellow Bird's wheel chair. She looks at Ray with eyes that are choke-cherry black, eyes that look right through him. He returns the glare. And then she pushes Yellowbird forward and leaves the feds alone.

Ray turns to Cooch who is lighting a cigarette, and concentrating on the movements of this group as they wander under the arbor, visiting people. LAKOTA SINGERS start up.

#### COOCH

Ray, get to Jimmy's place and keep it tight. I'm gonna get a tail on his Warriors.

#### IN THE POWWOW CENTER

the under ten year-old "fancy dance" – TWENTY-FIVE INDIAN CHILDREN, whirling and stomping and dancing.

#### JIMMY LOOKS TWICE HOUSE - NIGHT

The battered old house sits under a full moon. The upside down flag moves slightly in the cross winds.

#### ACROSS THE ROAD

several junked cars. Among them a black, rusted out VW van with a smashed windshield. A PACK OF RES DOGS sniff at its tires.

#### INT. JIMMY'S VAN

In the dim light, a boot. A black cowboy boot. Up on the dash. Bluejeans. T-shirt. Second hand leather. And a black cowboy hat. Ray is staking out Jimmy's house.

Across the passenger seat and console is an M-16 rifle. On his belt, a .357 Red Hawk. He yawns. From outside, he hears a sound.

POV: down below the van, a small, patchy RES DOG with a missing leg is looking up at him with his tongue long and salivating.

RAY breaks off a piece of sandwich and drops it down to him just as – HEADLIGHTS catch his face. He slides down low, watching an old pick-up truck creak onto the dirt road, leading to Jimmy's.

POV: the truck parks. Someone jumps out, gracefully. Indian. Long braid. Quick steps. Front door. Inside.

RAY lifts his radio.

RAY  
X22. Read.

RADIO  
Go ahead, Ray.

RAY  
I have a pick-up truck. No plates.  
Subject – Indian – entering  
suspect's house. Over.

RADIO  
Okay, Ray. I'm coming in. If he starts  
to leave the area, move in. And hold  
him. Over.

Ray sets his radio down, unclips the leather guard on his handgun. Picks up the Big Mac.

EXT. LOOKS TWICE HOUSE - NIGHT

The front door creaks open, and the subject dashes back out. In the dark we cannot latch onto features.

Suddenly the junker van comes alive, guns onto the dirt road, racing toward the running Indian who gets the door of the truck open but freezes in the van's highbeams as –

Ray leaps out, M-16 in hand.

RAY  
FBI, freeze, Motherfucker – drop  
it, drop it!

Ray maneuvers in Quantico fashion, keeping the rifle on the Indian's back. The Indian drops what he's holding. And turns around. It's not a he. We've seen her before. At the Powwow. Maggie Eagle Bear. Her hair is pulled back tight, braided.

Ray moves in toward her, surprised at first, but still

cautious

RAY

Turn around, put your hands on the roof of the truck.

She does what he tells her. As Ray moves in on her, he notices an INDIAN CHILD sitting in the passenger seat, looking out into the highbeams, frightened.

Ray toes Maggie's legs out wider, frisks her one-handed, pats down her boots.

MAGGIE

You're the Indian FBI.

RAY

That's right. Turn around.

Maggie turns around, looks Ray in the eye. He looks self-conscious in the cowboy hat.

MAGGIE

The people are glad they sent you. They usually send in guys who come at ya with highbeams, screamin' "drop it, Motherfucker", stick a gun in your face, frisk ya down. Even if ya got a child with ya. No, it's good to have ya. It's gonna be was-te times on the res.

Ray is looking down at what she dropped. A bundle lying in the grass. He bends down, starts to untie it.

MAGGIE

I was gonna warn ya about messin' with somebody's medicine bundle but I forgot you know all about that stuff.

IN THE BUNDLE – an eagle skull, tobacco strings, sage, sweet grass, and several white eagle feathers.

RAY



This Jimmy's?

MAGGIE

You're not gonna catch him. He can shape-shift into different animals. Bear. Elk. Porcupine.

RAY

Is that like an hereditary thing, Magdelana, or can one take classes?

MAGGIE

Jimmy didn't kill Leo. Why do you wanna do this?

RAY

He tried to kill him twice before. That's a good place to start don't ya think? Leo was on the other side, wasn't he?

MAGGIE

– Leo was an apple, that's right. Red on the outside, white on the inside. And Jimmy hated him. Kicked his ass a coupla times. But he didn't kill him.

RAY

Who did?

MAGGIE

You're the FBI. That's your job, isn't it? Ya know how many of our Warrior brothers got killed out here? I never saw any investigating then. Why now? What's going down here?

RAY

A Fugitive Alert for a murder suspect. Before somebody else gets a shotgun blast in the spine.

MAGGIE

Try the Fort Laramie Treaty. All

over again.

Ray doesn't have a clue as to what this radical bullshit is about.

RAY

Look. You and I can stand here in a culture clash til the sun comes up, talking about what's right and what's wrong. You're from the reservation. It's a different world.

MAGGIE

I'm from Minneapolis. Fifth Street. I did four years at Dartmouth before I ever set foot on this res. So I know about the other world, Ray.

If this information doesn't throw Ray, the use of his first name does.

MAGGIE

Are you gonna keep that medicine bundle or are you gonna respect its power?

Ray is holding the medicine bundle. He deliberates, then hands it over. She takes it with careful hands, casting a somewhat surprised look up at him.

MAGGIE

Thank you.

RAY

When you see Jimmy, tell him the sooner he turns himself back into a human being and gives himself in... the sooner we back off this reservation. Okay?

Maggie gets in the truck, starts it up. She looks out at him, studying him. Trying to figure him out. HEADLIGHTS are coming fast from down the main road.

MAGGIE

Grandpa Reaches says you come from heavy Indian blood. I used to think Grandpa was gettin' senile. Now I know he is.

RAY

Move it, Magdelana.

Maggie drives forward, turning down another little wagon road, and bumping into the black night only moments before, Cooch's Le Baron pulls in.

SA Miles and Sherman's vehicle pull in behind it. The regional feds fall in behind Cooch, everyone, packing rifles.

COOCH

Ray, you alright?

Ray turns, nodding. An FBI van pulls in from the other direction and FOUR AGENTS empty out, wearing FBI windbreakers and heavily-armed.

AGENT SHERMAN

What do we got, Ray?

RAY

It was just Eagle Bear. I questioned and released her.

COOCH

What'd she say?

RAY

She talks a lot of shit. We're not doing our job. Jimmy's innocent. "What's the FBI really doing here." Some shit about the Fort Laramie Treaty.

Cooch nods. The agents form a tight unit out below the upside down flag.

RAY

She took something from the house. What she called a medicine bundle.

Most likely Jimmy's.

COOCH

Let's see it.

RAY

I gave it back to her.

AGENT SHERMAN

Why?

RAY

If it is Jimmy's, she's taking it to him. We'll have a runner. But I borrowed a little mojo...

Ray reaches inside his pant leg, down around his boot and carefully removes a white eagle feather. He gingerly tucks it in a plastic bag.

COOCH

Way to go, Raymond. Miles, take that to lab. Sherman, I want you to go back to base and produce some written material. Something that indicates that our girl Maggie is leaking information to us. And make sure that material finds its way into the hands of the Warrior Movement.

Sherman and Miles, take off. Cooch, an impressive master of COINTELPRO, now turns to the van squad.

COOCH

You gentlemen missed that medicine basket. Go back through the house, and make sure you missed nothing else. And lay some wire, too. Let's do it.

The van squad moves toward the house, leaving Cooch and Ray alone in the highbeams that light the yard.

COOCH

That's good goddamn work, Ray. Let

the salmon run. Let 'em run Upriver.

RAY

Why we setting Eagle Bear up as an informant?

COOCH

Her own people start to suspect her, it creates discord from within. The Warriors don't know who to trust, they start infighting, and Jimmy loses his support.

Ray nods, impressed.

Cooch bends down near the road, touches the dirt.

COOCH

Her oil pan is shot.

RAY

Cooch. What's the Fort Laramie Treaty?

COOCH

Jesus, I don't know. You tell me. You're the Indian.

Cooch wipes the oil on a handkerchief as he rises, smiling playfully at Ray. He starts back toward his car. Some sort of bird is COOING in the night.

COOCH

Get a tail on her, Ray.

Ray looks up at the upside down flag. Then watches Cooch walking way.

RAY

Cooch.

(a quiet, tired laugh)

Where the fuck did they send us?

COOCH

A long way from home. You be careful out there.

Cooch, standing there with his glasses on and his right arm bandaged, looks tired, too. He gets in his car.

In the yard, Ray starts for the van, the res dog, trying to follow. He chases it away. And then as he gets closer to the van, he looks up to investigate the COOING SOUND.

#### AT THE TOP OF THE FLAG POLE

there is a shadow. What looks to be a large bird. It just hovers. In the shadows.

#### DOWN BELOW

Ray looks up at the pole, watching. Then walking on.

#### EXT. BEAR CREEK RES - SUNRISE

Mind-blowing sunrise of airbrush red. Clusters of lodge-pole pine. The spectacular mesa. PAINT HORSES graze in a field, a few out in the center of the road.

#### AT GRANDPA REACHES TRAILER

the old man comes down the front steps in a frail walk, carrying a paper plate. He steps down into the sage clusters that grow just off his trailer, and offers the plate up toward the sky.

He then stoops, and scrapes a half-eaten English muffin, some potato chips and half a banana onto the Earth in a neat pile.

He straightens his back the best he can, looks up again, and prays softly.

#### THE BADLANDS

possess an otherworldly beauty at this magic hour, a maze of shadows and rainbows. In the distance we cannot mistake the frame of Walter Crow Horse. He's out there, long hair blowing against the white bluffs. Stalking. Tracking.

#### ON THE VILLAGE ROAD

a puppy chases a hen in a klutzy, innocent manner then bumps into the tire of a parked car. Taking a shot at doghood, he hikes his leg, squirts a hubcap belonging to –

Cooch's Le Baron. Cooch leans on the hood, drinking a coffee from a foam-plastic cup, and supervising SIX G-MEN who have a map spread out over the hood and are discussing it.

## MAGGIE EAGLE BEAR'S HOUSE

is way out in a remote corner of the res, a little home, trailer and tipi right on the river. The river is rushing hard this morning, catching the light of the sun. Maggie's truck is parked in front.

Out at the river, Maggie, her hair long and unbrushed, and wearing an extra large T-shirt and nothing else is hauling water in buckets from the river.

THREE INDIAN CHILDREN are with her, helping her. Near the house, an OLD WOMAN in bifocal glasses, feeds some chickens, and a cat that gathers with the chickens and eats feed.

## INT. OLD VAN , NEAR MAGGIE'S

Ray, still in his field clothes sits, training binoculars on the distant house. He opens a carton of milk, drinks some. Then hears a whimpering. In the passenger seat sits the three legged res dog. Ray has taken him with him. He drinks some milk, then opens the carton up fully and sticks it out so the dog can lap it up. Ray laughs in disbelief, shaking his head.

### RAY

For all I know, you're Jimmy. And you're just waiting for a shot at my jugular. Drink, Jimmy. Milk is good for you –

The dog is lapping the milk, desperately. And then a ROARING. A motorcycle.

IN THE SIDE MIRROR: Crow Horse, racing up on the left of the van. Ray pulls his hat down low, and sits back. The motorcycle

passes on the left, slowing enough so that Crow Horse can flip Ray the middle finger. Then he races on, far down the road.

Ray sits there, shaking his head. He'll let it go. Bullshit. He starts the car.

#### EXT. TRIBAL POLICE SHOOTING RANGE - DAWN

Crow Horse guns in, sliding in dirt up to the run-down, low budget shooting range – six plastic milk jugs on sticks, jammed in the mud.

A moment later, the van hammers in. Parks. Ray gets out. He's removed his hat so as not to invite any crap from Crow Horse.

#### CROW HORSE

Don't be mad. That was just an old traditional gesture that means hello, how are you.

#### RAY

I see. Forgive my cultural ignorance.

Ray executes a hard, slapping, "up your ass" gesture.

#### RAY

Have a nice day.

Crow Horse bursts into laughter in his raspy, staccato laugh. He walks off a few steps, picks up a spent shell and pitches it. His laughter simmers and he gets serious.

#### CROW HORSE

Jimmy didn't do it, Ray. I checked it out. You can stop taggin' my sister.

#### RAY

She's your sister?

#### RAY AND CROW HORSE

Spiritual sister.



RAY

Gotchya. We just nailed a genetic match between the eagle feather left at the murder site and one in Jimmy's medicine bundle. It came from a white eagle. Same bird.

Crow Horse fingers an eagle feather that hangs from his hat band.

CROW HORSE

So did this one. Wambli is a rare and sacred creature. When someone finds a dead one, the feathers get around the res. We share everything. A lot of power in the eagle feathers. But you think that's bullshit too, don't –

RAY

(ala Crow Horse)

– Leo Fast Elk was sitting in the outhouse at Maisy Blue Legs when a car pulled into the yard. He came out, approached the vehicle then saw that the man behind the wheel was Jimmy. He tried to get back into the trailer, but the car came highballing at him. He started running for the open grass. With the car moving, Jimmy hung his shotgun out the window, took aim – missed once, hitting the shitter – fired again, and severed Leo's spine. Leo fell, rolled, and came to a stop in the grass. And some chicken feed. Stale chicken feed with four days mold.

(a beat)

Electromagnetic printing.

Crow Horse stares, a little surprised.

CROW HORSE

Was-te. 'Cept for one thing. Jimmy Looks Twice was nowhere near there.

Ya see, when Jimmy was twelve years old, his mother and father was killed in a car wreck right down there near Elk Mountain.

RAY

I don't see the connection.

CROW HORSE

The connection is, it did a head number on him. He's petrified of cars. Won't drive. I've known him all my life, and he's never gotten behind the wheel of a vehicle. He rides passenger and he rides horses, and that's it. The man that shot Leo down was behind the wheel of a moving car.

Ray absorbs this with great interest.

RAY

That's not solid.

CROW HORSE

You want solid? That one, single, print he left in the Badlands – the one the FBI missed and then stepped all over – it belongs to a man who walks heels first. Like a white man. Jimmy has a serious Ind'n walk – ball of the foot first. The man who murdered Leo walked like a Wasi'cu.

Ray lets a pent-up sigh escape.

RAY

You're saying a white guy did it...

Crow Horse chews this over, unable to hide a nagging frustration. He shakes his head.

CROW HORSE

When Leo was dumped out there in the Badlands, he was dropped on his back.

Our man made an effort to turn him over, onto his face. It's an old Ind'n belief that if a dead man is turned face down, his spirit won't leave. And in the killer's case, it won't come back and jump all over his shit. That's an Ind'n thing a white man wouldn't know.

The two of them stand there, thinking this over. Ray takes out his notebook and starts writing. Crow Horse walks away, turns to face the propped up targets.

CROW HORSE

And that's the way it is. Write it down.

To punctuate, Crow Horse slaps leather, draws his .38, and begins blasting at the milk bottles. He hits the bank. A tree. One of the posts. But not a single target.

When he is done, he looks over his gun, disappointed. Starts reloading. Ray starts laughing, looking at the missed targets

CROW HORSE

You laugh all you want, Breed. Sunset tonight, I get my man.

Ray looks at Crow Horse, sees that he's serious, and follows him toward his motorcycle.

RAY

Alright, Crow Horse. I'm listening. I'm listening to the trees, to the stones. Who is it?

Crow Horse turns toward Ray, and creates a long dramatic pause.

CROW HORSE

Damned if I know.

And he hauls his bulk onto his motorbike.

CROW HORSE

But the Old One. He did a Yuwipi ceremony last night.

Crow Horse winks at Ray as he slams the kickstart. To no avail.

RAY

The old man? He's gonna tell you who killed Leo?

CROW HORSE

Go catch Jimmy, Ray. Really. He's gettin' away. Go ahead, go get him. I'm late.

RAY

Hey. Hey, those are my sunglasses you're wearing.

CROW HORSE

Grandpa traded with me.  
(flips the bird)  
Goodbye.

And Crow Horse nails his kick start. The BIKE ROARS alive and the Indian works the throttle hard, leaving gravel and black exhaust. Ray stands there, drifting between logic and instinct. He looks at his watch, then starts at a slow, thoughtful shuffle toward his car.

EXT. GRANDPA REACHES TRAILER - SHORT TIME LATER

The dust-buzzard broncs and bounces down Grandpa's driveway, coming to a stop near the wrecked cars. Crow Horse dismounts and unhooks a carton of smokes from the back.

A moment later, the junker van pulls in, bouncing and shaking.

Crow Horse stares at the approaching vehicle, his eyes hidden behind Ray's former shades. He cracks a slow smile because –

Ray is stepping quickly from the van, and carrying two packs of Marlboros.

INT. GRANDPA REACHES TRAILER

Grandpa sits in his chair, his black eyes moving smoothly from side to side. Smoke enshrouds his ancient face, giving the sense of another time and place. He speaks LAKOTA.

Crow Horse, sitting on a stool across from him, holds The Pipe. He passes it to Ray who sits in a busted lawn chair next to him. The room is dark as the sun sets out the window in red and purple. Ray looks at the pipe. Grandpa will not speak until Ray smokes. And so he does, drawing on the stem, awkwardly.

HEARTBEAT DRUM as Grandpa speaks Indian.

#### CROW HORSE

He says, back behind Red Deer Table, where the Elk-People-used-to-live... there are strange creatures from another world who eat stones... and who will kill anyone who crosses into this place.

Ray looks at Crow Horse, searching for a hint of lightness. But there is only great reverence as he watches Ray blow smoke upward.

#### CROW HORSE

He says, in the Yuwipi ceremony last night, he saw you... going back into the land beyond Red Deer Table. I was with you. But that was all the Spirits let him see so he doesn't know if you were killed or not. But he thinks you probably were.

Ray smirks as he passes the pipe to Grandpa. Crow Horse looks nervous. Grandpa offers the pipe to the directions and then disengages the bowl from the stem. He speaks again. Crow Horse translates.

#### CROW HORSE

Go to the land where the Elk-People-used-to-live and you will find the answers you came here looking for. But you must go as two. That is the

vision. I have spoken. And this is  
so.

Grandpa leans closer to Crow Horse and whispers some Lakota.

CROW HORSE

He wants to trade.

(a beat)

He likes your watch.

Ray looks at Crow Horse, nervous.

RAY

I can't do that,

(explaining)

It's a Rolex.

CROW HORSE

A what?

And Grandpa is already holding out something to offer. It is  
a cigarette. Grandpa offers it again.

RAY

I'm sorry, this is –

(loud to Grandpa)

– this is very, very expensive.

It's –

(to Crow Horse)

Tell him this is an expensive watch.

Crow Horse tells the Old Man. Grandpa speaks Indian.

CROW HORSE

He says, you need to go on Indian  
time. He says your watch is ruining  
your life anyway.

Ray buries his hands in his jacket pocket. No way. Crow Horse  
signs to Grandpa "no." Grandpa gets up, crosses between the  
two young men, up to the TV set. He turns it on.

WHEEL OF FORTUNE

explodes in PINGS AND PONGS and a WOMAN'S SHRILL SCREAM.

EXT. GRANDPA REACHES TRAILER - DAY

Crow Horse and Ray walk down the steps. WHEEL OF FORTUNE is heard from within.

CROW HORSE  
Red Deer Table, Ray.

RAY  
Don't tell me: heavy duty.

CROW HORSE  
Heavy, heavy duty. Taku Wakan. Wanagi Spirits. It's one of those few places we'd never go to as kids. Still don't. Some of the old people say Crazy Horse is buried back there. We have to go Ray. Together. Like his vision.

They step into the yard and Ray stops, turning to Crow Horse

RAY  
Walter. When I fill out my 302, do I say that evil spirits are killing everybody on the reservation?

CROW HORSE  
Ray –

RAY  
– no. No offense to the old man. I appreciate you trying to help. But I put my ass on the line coming out here, man.

CROW HORSE  
What'd you expect to hear?

RAY  
Not Native American myths and legends. I'm with the FBI, Walter, remember? Not National Geographic.

CROW HORSE

What you call myths, we call our history.

RAY

It's not real.

CROW HORSE

What's real to you? Wall Street? Capital Hill? Now they are myths.

RAY

I can't be dicking around here. That's all I'm saying. I don't carry crystals, I don't wanna come back in another life. I just wanna do my job, and do it right, and get the fuck outta here.

CROW HORSE

You ain't no Indian. You're a Sal Mineo Indian.

Crow Horse drives "Indian" home with a hard finger in Ray's chest. Ray knocks his hand away, explosively. Crow Horse is ready.

GRANDPA (O.S.)

Knock it off!

The old man is standing at the top of the steps. Ray and Crow Horse are YELLING OVER EACH OTHER, and hands are up.

GRANDPA

Will ya knock it off? You're actin' like a couple of old women.

Ray stands there, one hand up in defense, another poised to throw a punch. Bewildered, he stares at the old Indian holding onto the porch railing.

GRANDPA

For cryin' out loud. Knock it off.

RAY

He speaks English.



CROW HORSE

Only when he's really pissed off.

GRANDPA

Come inside. Watch TV.

And Grandpa goes back in, screendoor slapping shut behind him. Ray is just staring, his jaw dropped. Crow Horse starts laughing. Harder than he has yet, and Ray starts walking toward his car in fuck-this steps.

He gets into the car, closes the door and looks out the open window at Crow Horse. The Indian moves first.

CROW HORSE

Don't accuse nothin' of not bein' real, Little Weasel. Cuz the only thing around here that ain't real is you.

Ray lifts his arm off the door, and springs his middle finger up at Crow Horse. He holds it there for a long moment just looking at the big Indian.

RAY

Take care of yourself, Walter.

CROW HORSE

Likewise.

Ray checks the time on his watch then guns away. Crow Horse stands there, watching him go. Eventually he shuffles back toward the trailer.

EXT. BUFFALO BUTTE MOTEL - NIGHT

Room 14 has been transformed into a major COINTELPRO base; four computer terminals are set up, card tables spread with photos, boxes of files stacked on the bed, and SIX AGENTS, manning the computers, thumbing through files.

THE CONNECTING ROOM (RAY'S ROOM)

A meeting takes place around a table of paperwork and coffee

cups, and a .45 laid atop a file. Cooch, SA Miles, SA Sherman, TWO OTHER REGIONAL AGENTS and Ray.

SA SHERMAN

We've gotten word that Jimmy has been trying to hook up with Maggie Eagle Bear... but some of the Warriors have been sending word to Jimmy that she may be an FBI operative. So he doesn't know where to go.

Cooch taps some ashes into an empty coffee cup. They sizzle in cold residue.

COOCH

Bingo. It's working.

SHERMAN

He's out of room. All the reservation exits have been watchdogged. We got him. I give it twelve hours.

RAY

Well we better use those twelve hours to apprehend the right man.

The agents all look at Ray. A pin can be heard falling to the cheap carpet.

COOCH

The right man? Talk to me, Ray.

RAY

Whoever dusted Leo, dusted him from the driver's seat of a moving car then drove those eight miles to the Badlands. Jimmy Looks Twice has never been behind the wheel of a car. It's a known fact out here that he's petrified of driving. His parents were killed in a car wreck.

Cooch nods, lights another smoke, intrigued.

SHERMAN

That's not very solid.

RAY

There was also a print found in the Badlands that indicated diagetic locomotion. Heels first. Jimmy's walking pattern doesn't match. He has a distinct Indian walk.

SA MILES

Indian walk? You been smoking hooch in the peace pipe, Ray?

LAUGHTER. Except for Cooch who just stares at Ray, digesting what he has said.

RAY

They don't smoke hooch in The Pipe, Miles. They smoke something called kinickinick, it's like a tobacco.

Sherman looks at Cooch.

SA SHERMAN

Well, you're right about X21 being a Washington Redskin, that's for sure. What else, Ray?

COOCH

You boys want a soda?

SA MILES

Oh, yeah, a Coke. You buying?

COOCH

No, Ray's buying. Sherman? Coke?

SHERMAN

Oh... no. No, Cooch, I'm working on a coffee here. Indian walk?

Cooch nods to Ray and Ray follows, gathering up some paperwork. He looks determined as a terrier.

EXT. BUFFALO BUTTE MOTEL - NIGHT

Ray and Cooch throw long, slim shadows on their way to an archaic Coke machine.

COOCH

Genetic ditto on evidence found at the site with evidence you found in his belongings. An incontrovertible motive. And definite footprints on Jimmy Looks Twice at Maisy Blue Legs house.

RAY

When did we get that?

COOCH

Today. And now you – there's a dog in the van –

RAY

– I know. I fed it, and I can't get rid of –

COOCH

You weren't sent here to go off on your own detail, Ray. You were sent here to assist in a Selective Operations Unit. These regional agents are inept – that's why they were sent out here to The Graveyard, to Indian Country. I need you behind me, Ray. Not pulling against me.

RAY

I'm not trying to pull against you, Cooch. I've just been having nightmares about the way Leo was killed.

COOCH

Your first homicide, that's gonna happen, Ray...

RAY

I just wanna make sure no one else

gets done in that way because we were in bed with the wrong doer.

COOCH

Ray. I never get into bed with somebody unless I know for sure. Just the way I was raised.

Ray studies him with a smile building. Cooch shrugs, sips some soda.

RAY

Alright. Alright...

COOCH

(lightly)

Yeah, alright, alright – fuck you – give a yuppie a badge and he wants to take over the world. Go get a tail on Eagle Bear, and stay with her. Cuz Jimmy's gonna show. And I want you to make the collar.

Ray nods, starting for the van.

COOCH

Ray.

He turns. Cooch looks at him for a time. It is a warm look.

COOCH

I'll sleep around a little.

RAY

Thanks, Cooch.

COOCH

And get rid of the dog.

Ray gets in and pulls the dog out. The dog sits at roadside, tilting its head at him, confused. And he pulls out. It runs after him.

EXT. DIRT ROAD NEAR EAGLE BEAR'S - RES - NIGHT

The van sits parked down the road from Maggie's dimly-lit home. Ray sits behind the wheel, watching the house. LOCUSTS make a steady and unnerving sound. It is black. Black under big sky. Ray lets his head sag out the open window and he takes in the vastness.

POV: stars. Millions of stars. And an incredible full moon. It hangs huge over distant fields, a perfect sphere. The top half of the moon is yellow, the bottom half a lava red.

REVERSE - RAY

stares at it, lost in thought. From Maggie's house, he hears someone SINGING. Singing a traditional SUNDANCE SONG while they haul water from the creek. A WOMAN'S VOICE, trilling out the beautiful but haunting "hey-o-hey-o-hey-o-hey-ohhhhh."

Ray just sits, listening. And then something draws his attention to his rearview mirror.

The res dog, lying in the back seat is GROWLING. Lip curled back, growling low.

Ray looks at him, looks out the window. Blackness. Nothing but the sound of locusts. And a slight crosswind in the wheat fields. The dog stops growling. And Ray fixes his gaze on the house again, lifting a pair of binoculars and –

BOOOOOOM! The rear windshield is SHATTERED by an explosion. Ray throws himself low across the passenger seat – BOOOOOOM! The driver's side window and part of the door explodes.

RES ROAD NEAR EAGLE BEAR'S

The federal van is HAMMERED BY GUNFIRE. All the windows, shattered, the metal doors splayed. Someone is going for the kill,

THE PASSENGER DOOR

is thrown open just as its window implodes, and Ray slides out belly first, gripping his M-16 and crawling like a dog soldier into tall wheat at roadside as the car, the road, the wheat, the dirt, the night are slammed by gunfire.

The res dog overtakes Ray and vanishes in the wheat. Ray vanishes, too. It is quiet for a moment, then Ray, pops up ten feet away, and UNLOADS THE M-16, in a left to right, clean sweep before dropping again. He lies there, listening. The LOCUST HAVE GONE QUIET. His breath is heavy. His heart's got to be pounding through the dirt he lays in.

RAY  
(whispering)  
Motherfucker.

LONG SHOT - THE ROAD

the decimated van, aerial still high. The distant lights of Maggie's house. And the giant Moon, hovering over it all.

HEARTBEAT DRUM into –

SAME ROAD , RES - DAWN

TWENTY FEDS comb the dirt road, the wheat fields, picking up shells with gloved hands, scanning the vast distance.

IN THE FRONT YARD of Maggie's, FOUR INDIAN CHILDREN stand with the Old Woman, watching.

INT. LE BARON , TRAVELING , ANOTHER DIRT ROAD

Cooch, flushed in the face, mans the wheel. He wears only a T-shirt which indicates, a desperate rush to the scene. His eyes scan the surrounding homes and fields.

In the passenger seat, Ray sits, drinking a coffee. He looks haggard.

COOCH  
Bastards...

RAY  
All I could think of was... not here.  
I don't wanna eat it on an Indian  
Reservation, three thousand miles  
from home.

COOCH

He's out there. He's out there playing  
Sitting Bull with us. I want the  
motherfucker so bad I'm getting a  
bleeding ulcer.

Ray turns around in his seat, looking off across dry land.

RAY

It may have been Maggie's way of  
saying "get off my ass."

COOCH

She's that subtle?

RAY

Eagle's claws and a bear's balls  
that's what her profile says.

COOCH

Well, she's running now, too. These  
fucking people like to run, don't –

RAY

– Cooch. Woh. Stop.

He does. Ray is turned around in his seat, staring off into  
the distance.

EXT. DIRT ROAD

The Le Baron whines backward, and off the road, into some  
grass Ray steps out, keeping his gaze fixed. Cooch bails  
from the driver's side, joins him.

HEARTBEAT DRUM.

RAY'S POV: Four-hundred feet across a flat area of sandstone  
and grass clusters, something shimmers in the undulations of  
the harsh morning sun. Something of pea green and rusty  
metal... glass catches sunlight and makes prisms. A car. An  
old res car, sitting in a long, chasm in barely a foot of  
green water.

EXT. DRY WASH - SHORT TIME LATER - PAY



Ray and Cooch go through the car, around the car, with gloved hands and grease pencils and plastic bags, sweating in the hot sun.

COOCH

Tread matches. It's the car.

RAY

Yes.

Excited, Ray walks off, scanning the area.

COOCH

But this doesn't make any sense,  
Ray. If it's just been sitting in  
this dry wash for seven days... why  
the hell didn't we find it?

Ray picks up a handful of stones, sifts them in his hands.

RAY

Because this isn't a dry wash.

Cooch watches him slosh shoes first through a rut where the water shimmers a foot deep or less.

RAY

It's the Little Walking River.

Ray turns, shucking up mud.

RAY

And it was full of water when I drove  
by here three days ago. Full. I  
mean... a river.

COOCH

The Little Walking River. You're  
right. This is part of it. So whoever  
sunk this car didn't compensate for  
drought. Goddamn.

Ray doesn't hear Cooch. He stares past the SAC at the long wide chasm, wet in some places, arid in others, and what he hears must be an echo in his head.

RAY  
Listen to the water...

Cooch is listening to a TRANSMISSION across his radio and he walks off a few feet, exchanging information with the REGIONALS.

Ray stands, ankle deep in stagnant water, his face sweat-soaked, his eyes transfixed on heat undulations.

EXT. BUFFALO BUTTE MOTEL - ROOM 13 - DAY

A flat-bed tow truck drives past the motel with the killer's car on it. Behind the truck is a fed car which stops at the motel, and the Le Baron which also pulls in. Miles and Sherman get out from the first car, Ray and Cooch bail from the Le Baron.

With RADIOS TRANSMITTING, the agents walk, dusty and tired, into room 14. Ray hesitates, snagged by the sight of –

A motorcycle parked in front of the Buffalo Butte Bar. Parked with pick-up trucks and station wagons. It's the mud-caked old Barley. Parked right under the NO INDIANS sign.

He puzzles over this.

INT. BUFFALO BUTTE BAR - DAY

Dark. Even during the day. Cigarette smoke. Sawdust. On the archaic juke box, RANDY TRAVIS sings "Old 8x10" while behind the bar, the BAR OWNER, an old man with long white hair and beard, busies himself with leather work. SEVERAL WHITE LOCALS sit on the old water drum bar stools.

Heads lift, turn when Ray enters in his "fraternizing" clothes – jeans and boots, leather jacket. He scuffs up thick sawdust as he heads to the furthest booth back where –

Crow Horse sits, alone over a bourbon and a beer. Ray approaches carefully, upset by the sight. He slides into the booth and point blanks the Indian.

CROW HORSE

Agent Little Weasel, Federal Bureau of  
your Imagination.

RAY

Jesus Christ. You're hammered. What  
are you doing?

CROW HORSE

You're right about the old man. His  
power's long dried up. He's supposed  
to be a medicine man but he won't go  
see the people. He says we changed,  
and we don't listen. Well, he don't  
go out and talk no more. I haven't  
had a drink in three years but I  
just turned my sobriety chip into  
that man behind the bar, and this  
Hoss is gettin' watered.

RAY

Cut the shit. You shouldn't be in  
here, Man.

CROW HORSE

Cuz I'm a skin?

RAY

Cuz you're a cop.

CROW HORSE

Not no more.

RAY

What are you talking about?

CROW HORSE

You tell me. You tell me who went to  
the B.I.A. – Bureau of Indian  
Annihilation and said I was messin'  
with your case, man. I don't give a  
goddamn about your case.

RAY

And I don't give a goddamn about  
whether you wear a badge or not,

Crow Horse, but I didn't cut you.

Crow Horse shimmers his black eyes onto Ray.

CROW HORSE

Still after Jimmy?

RAY

They found prints at Blue Legs' place.

CROW HORSE

Yeah. Jimmy's prints are there. But they cross over Benjamin Black Star's prints. And he wasn't there until six o'clock the mornin' after to get eggs from the chickens. So Jimmy wasn't there til the next day. Follow?

Ray just looks vacantly at Crow Horse. Crow Horse resents the vacancy.

CROW HORSE

Look, man... you better bust Jimmy and get out before somebody shoots up more than your car next time.

Ray glares at him.

RAY

Next time I'll be ready. You get the word to who ever it is.

CROW HORSE

I can't, Hoss. I don't talk to FBI's.

Ray doesn't blink.

CROW HORSE

You think you was sent here cuz you're a good cop?

RAY

No. I was sent here cuz I'm Indian. And a good cop.

Crow Horse leans toward Ray and speaks more quietly.

CROW HORSE

You ever think that maybe you was sent here cuz the FBI's need one good reason to take out the entire Warrior Movement. And what better reason than one of their men, gettin' blown away on the res. A low-rent, expendable public servant sent in to take a bullet for his country.

Ray is fuming. He can't believe what he's hearing, what's being insinuated, but he's giving it thought and it's getting him angry. He smashes a hand down on the table.

RAY

I'm sick of your shit –

RANCHER (O.S.)

I'm sick of the two of ya timber niggers spewin' off.

Standing over the booth is a long, tall RANCHER'S SON. Rangey with red curly hair tucked under a BLACK HILLS CLASSIC cap, and arms built by tractor work. And behind him, TWO OLDER RANCHERS fall in. And ANOTHER YOUNG MAN, grinning with amusement.

Ray and Crow Horse look up.

CROW HORSE

Sorry, we don't speak United States.

RANCHER'S SON

Yeah, well I do. Get the Jesus up, and get the Jesus out or I'm gonna go out to my truck and come back with my hardware.

RAY

Woh, hold on there, Jack, you're –

RANCHER'S SON

– don't "jack" me, Squanto. I'll

bury your lazy ass right here.

Ray realizes now that they think he's Indian, too. Crow Horse sees this revelation and complicates it by suddenly speaking LAKOTA to Ray.

The rancher grabs Ray by the cheeks.

RANCHER'S SON

I'm talkin' to –

Ray decks him. Backhands him in the solar plexus then, lays a burner of a Quantico roundhouse to his ear, knocking him across the bar, over a mop and bucket and into sawdust.

The others start to fall at him but someone has jumped in, holding them back, and sticking himself in the way. It is Brooks. The old timer Ray met his first night here.

BROOKS

No! No, you butt holes! He ain't skin! He AIN'T SKIN!

CROW HORSE

Yeah he's In'dn. Miniconjou Sioux.

The rancher's son who is coming back with a broken beer bottle, slows his step and shifts his eyes from Brooks to the young fed. There is a lot of heavy breathing. But no talking just yet. The young rancher eyes Ray.

RANCHER'S SON

You ain't Indian?

Ray just stands tense, staring at him. And it's strange. Because he hasn't really looked like he has any Indian blood up to this moment. But dressed the way he is, and his eyes glaring, face drawing tense, he might pass for a breed although that's probably the Italian. But Ray doesn't answer the question. Crow Horse starts laughing. Drunkenly.

OLDER RANCHER

What's so damn funny?

CROW HORSE

Well, it's just that the cavalry  
used to always threaten the Lakota.  
The cavalry ain't around anymore.  
The Lakota still are.

RANCHER'S SON

I got no trouble tellin' where you  
come from, Fat Red.

Crow Horse rises and walks unsteadily across the floor,  
leaving the bar. Brooks is whispering to the others,  
apparently about who Ray is. The bar man comes up to Ray,  
holding a tray, on which sits a shot and a beer. Ray looks  
at it for a moment.

BAR MAN

Sorry. On the house.

Ray knocks the tray out of his hand, spilling beer and whiskey  
all over the bar man and the locals around him.

And he walks out, leaving the locals confused.

INT. LE BARON - TRAVELING - RES - DAY

Ray looks strung-out as he drives. If it's not the conflict  
at the Butte, it's the dangerous seed Crow Horse planted,  
and it is playing with his mind. He is on his RADIO.

RAY

No plates. No registration. Serial  
numbers removed. And all prints washed  
off by the river. That's great. This  
is turning out to be a walk in the  
park, do you know that?

RADIO

(woman agent)  
Come back?

RAY

Never mind.

But before he hangs the radio. IT CUTS BACK IN.

RADIO  
Ray. X22.

RAY  
I read, Cooch.

RADIO  
Remember that upside down flag back at Jimmy's house? Somebody took it down.

RAY  
Good.

RADIO  
They took it down, set fire to it, and threw it on the doorstep of room 13 at the Buffalo Butte Motel. Your room.

Ray seethes quietly as he drives.

RADIO  
We traced the number of the truck that dumped it, and it belongs to one Maggie Sanders, also known as Maggie Eagle Bear. She's been all over the res, riling up the traditionals, telling them not to break, and to keep Jimmy in hiding. She's a problem now. And she's yours. Get her off the reservation.

Ray keeps driving.

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE MEMORIAL - DAY

Maggie's old pick-up is parked near an arch gate of the tiny cemetery where a tall monument is fenced off from other graves. There are tobacco offerings and other medicines hanging on the fence and on the monument.

It is a quiet place. Still.

Maggie stands before the unkempt monument in her denim jacket,



her hair blowing across her face in the wind. She PRAYS IN LAKOTA.

Behind her TEN CHILDREN from the Bear Creek School stand, heads bowed respectfully. Two of them sit on the lap of Richard Yellow Bird who looks on from his wheelchair, praying quietly with Maggie. When Maggie completes her prayer, she ties some tobacco to the monument then turns and faces the children. One of them, a LITTLE GIRL – heavy-set – raises a hand that we might note is deformed. As many of the children we have seen on the res, are.

LITTLE GIRL

Are they all right under here?

MAGGIE

Two-hundred and sixty-seven men, women, old people. And little ones like you. Many killed running along that road you see there.

LITTLE BOY

Where were they runnin' to?

MAGGIE

A place called The Stronghold.  
(a beat)  
They died for a dream. But you live. You are their great-great grandchildren and you live. We have to honor their dream. Of protecting the Mother Earth. And being proud of being Indian.

LITTLE BOY

My mother told me that they call us Indians cuz Columbus was lookin' for India when he discovered our country.

Maggie smiles at the boy.

MAGGIE

Yeah, well, let me tell you something, Henry: just be glad he wasn't looking for Turkey.

The CHILDREN LAUGH. All but one boy, who isn't paying attention. He is staring up at a hill, off in the distance.

MAGGIE'S POV: on the hill, a figure stands, hands in his pockets, hair blowing in the wind. Ray.

REVERSE - MAGGIE

keeping her eyes on the Wasi'cu, but addressing Yellow Bird.

MAGGIE

Richard. Sing the Honoring Song with them. I'll be right back.

ON THE HILL

Ray stands, watching Maggie walking into the wind, toward him. Behind her an HONORING SONG, sung by ten children haunts the still air.

He doesn't budge as she mounts the gentle bluff and joins him there.

MAGGIE

We're praying at the grave. Do you wanna join us?

A long silence. The voices carry in the wind.

RAY

No, Maggie. But you're gonna have to join me for a ride. I'm taking you to Rapid City.

Maggie looks at him. They lock eyes.

MAGGIE

So much power. I see it in your eyes. This... hunger for power. Or for what you think is power.

As if exhausted by the thought, Maggie sits down on the bluff, looking out at the children who are still singing the song. As she speaks, she begins digging her fingers in the earth.

Ray stands over her.

RAY

You burned an American flag today.  
And left it for me...

MAGGIE

– You desecrated it, it had to be  
burned.

RAY

I desecrated it?

MAGGIE

You forced an innocent man to run  
like an animal. You've tried to poison  
my people's hearts against me with  
your manipulation, with letters I  
never wrote... you've been watching  
me eat, work, raise my family...  
wash myself in the river. And now  
you're here, arresting me at a sacred  
place.

(a beat)

In your eyes, that's power.

Maggie lifts herself onto her knees and looks down into the  
small hole she's dug. She picks up a little pine cone.

MAGGIE

So I plant this tree for you. And I  
take all this stuff that you've laid  
on me and my people, and I put it in  
this hole with this pine cone.

(she covers it)

And I bury it. Cuz ya know what it  
is, Ray? Bullshit. And shit is  
fertilizer.

(she stands)

And The Mother will turn your lies  
into something that lives.

Maggie rises, dusting off her hands. She looks him in the  
soul.

MAGGIE

That's what power is, in the Indian way.

(holds her hands out  
to be cuffed)

Take me to Rapid, Ray. I'm the enemy.

Ray just stares at her, struggling with what he's feeling, what he's hearing. What he's supposed to be feeling. Silence hangs between the two of them.

RAY

If I told you... that I think Jimmy's innocent... but I'm in over my head... would you believe me?

Maggie looks at him, considering. Then toward the long dark silhouette of a mountain range across the plains.

MAGGIE

See those Black Hills out there, Ray? When the people lost the land in 1868, the government took everything but those hills. They allowed us to keep those Black Hills, to live there. Signed a treaty. Until they found gold. Then they told us we had to leave because of National interest. They broke that treaty. Anyone who fought or spoke out against it, wound up dead or in jail. And the people wound up here. On a reservation.

While she looks off at Paha Sapa, Ray stares at her profile.

MAGGIE

While up there, in the Black Hills... they carved the faces of four presidents.

She looks at Ray with an ironic smile, and she catches him transfixed.

MAGGIE

Your relatives must've taught you something.

RAY

NO.

(after thought)

My father never told anybody he had Indian blood. But he still used a few Indian words around the house. He called me Washee. Said it meant... good boy.

Maggie starts giggling.

RAY

What?

MAGGIE

Wa-shee is like... a dumpling. Like tallow we put in stew. I think he was calling you chubby boy.

RAY

Great.

Maggie is laughing as she looks back at the children who are no longer singing. Ray reaches inside his jacket and takes out five polaroids. He shuffles them as he ponders. He hands one to Maggie who has caught herself opening up too much to the Wasi'cu.

RAY

You ever see that car before?

Maggie looks at the first photo and says nothing. She hands it back quickly. Ray won't take it.

RAY

Who's it belong to?

Maggie ignores him. Ray studies her reaction.

RAY

Help me, Maggie...

Maggie is looking away. She picks a long blade of grass and smoothes it in her hands.

Ray looks at her a moment longer then rises, dusting off his jeans, and standing there. He thinks for a long moment, pinches the bridge of his nose, then looks out at the Black Hills, pensive.

RAY

I didn't see you today, Maggie.  
(a beat)  
Goodbye.

Maggie watches him go. Looks away. Then watches him again.

MAGGIE

Goodbye... Wa-shee.

Ray stops. She stands on the bluff, her hair riding the wind and her eyes searing. And then her lips do something that might qualify as half a smile. A sense of humor rising up through anger. Survival humor.

Ray looks at her for a long moment. And then he walks on, leaving her there.

INT. LE BARON - PARKED AT WOUNDED KNEE - DAY

Ray sits behind the wheel, going through files on his lap, photographs of Indians. And thinking hard.

RAY

Anyone who fought or spoke out against  
it... wound up dead or in jail.

Ray looks out the window toward the monument.

RAY

(to himself, flustered)  
That was 1868, Maggie...

Exhausted, Ray lays his head back on the seat, and lets a long, constricted breath free. THUNDER ROLLS like the slow, deep roar of some giant bear up in the hills. He opens his eyes, looks out the window.

POV: rain is coming down, and Maggie is getting the children into the back of her truck. She helps them get a tarp over their heads. Then as Yellow Bird pulls himself into the cab of the truck, she hefts the wheelchair and two boys load it in.

She gets in, starts up, and rolls off down the sloping road.

EXT. LE BARON - WOUNDED KNEE , STRANGE TWILIGHT

Ray steps out of the car into the rain and closes the door. He stares at the burial grounds. Then slowly, he starts toward them as if magnetically drawn. HEARTBEAT DRUM.

A shroud of mist lays over the cemetery, growing thicker as the rain falls harder. DRUM BEATS DEEPER. Ray is walking toward the memorial, getting drenched. Then he hears something strange. HOOFBEATS.

RAY'S POV:

coming down the dirt road, toward him, a HORSEMAN drives his mount at a fast trot. The rider is only a vague image in the mist, his face hidden. As he rides closer, we can make out a shotgun in his hand. And he throws it up, takes aim.

REVERSE - RAY

paralyzed for a moment. And then going for his gun. But it's not there. He's left it in the car. He breaks into a run. But there's a shorter distance now between the horseman and the car and Ray has no choice but to turn and flee.

His boots slap wet pavement, and his breath draws heavy and desperate as he bounds off the road and races down a grassy slope, looking over his shoulder, panicking.

His legs and arms churning, his face contorted. And then someone passes him out, running just as hard. AN INDIAN WOMAN in 1890 Winter rags, clutching a BABY to her breast and CRYING. SCREAMING. Ray looks at her, incredulous as he runs. But he keeps running.

The rider is right behind him. He FIRES. The GUNSHOT CRACKS

the sky like thunder. BOOOOM!

INT. LE BARON , TWILIGHT

Ray jumps awake. Cooch is POUNDING on the window. And the three-legged dog inside is BARKING. Ray quickly rolls the window down, letting in THUNDER.

Cooch starts to say something then takes note of Ray's peaked face. Sweat runs down his temples, beads at his nose.

                  COOCH  
Jesus, you alright?

                  RAY  
Yeah. I... I fell asleep. I can't believe it. I –

                  COOCH  
Never turn your radio off! I thought I was gonna find you scalped! Damn it!

                  RAY  
Sorry, Cooch. I lost Eagle Bear –

                  COOCH  
– never mind Eagle Bear. We've got Jimmy nailed. Let's go!

And Cooch runs to his car. Ray fires the car's big engine and takes off behind Cooch who is driving a fed Chevy. CRAZY HEARTBEAT DRUM INTO –

EXT. GRANDPA REACHES TRATLER - LATE DAY

The rain pelts Grandpa's little Airstream trailer, wind snaps at sheet plastic in the windows. An ancient sewing wheel CREAKS RUSTY in the wind.

Three clean, late-model fed cars pull down the muddy drive as two SWAT vehicles pull in from another road. The Le Baron pulls in, and Ray bails out with the others. When he sees where he is, he looks distraught.



Agents are running behind junked cars, positioning themselves around the trailer.

INT. GRANDPA REACHES TRAILER , LATE DAY

The holy man is sitting in his chair, smacking Flies with a swatter. Tonight he wears a black reservation hat and stares vacantly at the TV where RONALD MACDONALD swings a giant baseball bat, and falls on his face, bouncing back up. And then BOOM!

The door is open and Cooch leads Miles, Sherman and Ray inside. Cooch has a gun on the old man.

COOCH  
HANDS ON YOUR HEAD!

The old man slowly removes his hat and hangs it on a knee. Carefully he places his wrinkled hands on his thinning white hair. His eyes seek out Ray who stands in the doorway, M-16 in hand, looking concerned. He stares at Ray.

Cooch storms into a back bedroom, Miles moves to a window. Sherman stands over the old man.

SHERMAN  
Where is he, Sam? Where's Jimmy?

Grandpa looks at Sherman, ignores him, looks back at Ray.

SHERMAN  
He's a medicine man, Ray. The  
"spiritual leader" of the Warriors.  
That right, Sam?

With RADIO TRANSMISSIONS crackling through the house, Cooch comes back down the hall, and heads to the door.

COOCH  
Trailer's clean, let's go.

Ray starts to follow but he sees Sherman pick something up from near Grandpa. The 500 year-old turtleshell rattle. Grandpa's eyes widen slightly.

SHERMAN

You been the one making it rain like that, out there, Sam?

RAY

Hey, put that down.

SHERMAN

Can you make Jimmy outrun an M-16, Sam?

RAY

Sherman!

Sherman drops the turtleshell rattle on the linoleum floor. Then drives his heel into it, CRUSHING the fragile turtleshell.

Ray grabs him and slams him into the tin wall. Miles gets between them, grabbing Sherman.

MILES

EASY, MEN! HEY! –

RADIO

HE'S ON THE ROOF! HE'S ON THE FUCKING ROOF! COME ON GUYS, COME ON, GUYS!

They're out the door, leaving the old man to sit looking down at the shattered rattle. He closes his eyes.

EXT. GRANDPA REACHES TRAILER

In a blizzard of rain, Jimmy Looks Twice in a cowboy shirt, jeans and boots, leaps off the top of the Airstream, clutching his medicine bundle. FLOODLIGHTS HIT him from all directions. BULLHORNS screaming at him.

He tries to turn a corner and runs right into a fed. Ray, having run out the back door has slammed right into him. He has his rifle on him, and they stare each other down for a split second before he is converged on. Guns at his back, at his head.

He is swept off his feet, face down, and frisked. He looks

up at Ray, desperately.

LOOKS TWICE

Brother, the old man told me about you. Listen to me: what was Leo trying to tell me? He wanted to meet me at Maisy –

Another fed, pushes his face into the mud, cuffs him behind his back.

FED

Save your speeches for prison, Jimmy.

With two FIVE MAN SWAT TEAMS swarming the area, and six agents pushing Jimmy toward a car, Cooch stands there in the pouring rain, looking relieved. Ray stands near him, looking abhorred.

COOCH

Damn. That's one hard running Indian.

Ray watches Jimmy as he is shoved into the back of Miles and Sherman's car and driven away. He is twisting around in his seat to look at Ray. Desperately. The SWAT teams disband, return to their vehicles.

COOCH

It's over, Ray. I aged five years.  
But it's over. At least I'm gonna look like I'm ready for the advisory desk. Let's go get a beer.

Cooch heads to his car and Ray starts shuffling toward his as if he is dared by it all. He is looking at the trailer and there on the rickety porch is Grandpa. He comes down the steps slowly, holding his hat on against the wind. He watches the cars pulling out.

Ray walks over to him, looking sick.

RAY

Look... I'm not who you think I am.  
(a long beat)  
I'm sorry.

And after a moment of locking gazes, he starts for his car,

GRANDPA

Out back that way... is a place called Wounded Knee.

Ray turns.

GRANDPA

I was one year old there when our people were shot down. My mother hid me in the snow in a blanket. One of those killed was a Holy Man called Wakiyan Cante – Thunder Heart. They killed him while he was running for The Stronghold. It is his blood – the same blood that spilled on the grass and snow at Wounded Knee – that runs through your heart like a buffalo.

Ray frowns, disturbed by this story.

The old man is speaking with conviction. With power.

GRANDPA

Thunder Heart has come. Sent here to a troubled place to help his people. That's what I am told. Maybe you're right and I am mistaken. Your mind is young, mine is old. If so, so be it. Ho Hecetu Yelo. I'll speak no more.

Ray stands, almost paralyzed, digesting this. He turns and looks into the old man's sharp eyes. Grandpa has closed his eyes, and as he is pulverized by the rain, he turns his face toward it and from way down in his belly, he begins to SING IN LAKOTA. And it is too much. Too weird. He wheels and hurries to the car. Gets in, and beats a fast path out of the old man's lonesome patch of land.

BLUE HEAT LIGHTNING knifes the sky. THUNDER ROLLS, and rumbles into POOL BALLS –

EXT. BUFFALO BUTTE MOTEL AND BAR - LATE DAY

The agents have taken over both sides of the streets, gathered in front of the bar and the motel, putting firearms into cases, removing flak jackets.

POOL BALLS knock from inside the bar while outside, A DAKOTAN takes a piss near a truck while his GIRLFRIEND stands at his back, yelling at him. CHARLIE DANIELS sings country on the juke Ray heads to room 13, starts unlocking the door. Cooch comes up behind him.

COOCH

Buffalo burgers and cold beer,  
Raymond. Don't worry about the sign  
out front... you don't have to be  
Indian anymore.

Cooch throws a mock punch at Ray and he mock blocks, tired. He musters a smile. But he isn't all there.

COOCH

You have a fever. You okay?

Ray nods. Cooch lets a few agents walk past, LAUGHING. He speaks quietly.

COOCH

Listen: when we get back tomorrow,  
you're gonna find Tully laying a  
promotion on you. S.A.C. He wants to  
prove that his yuppie agents are  
making good. He's offering you New  
York. Tell him you want Atlanta.

RAY

Why?

COOCH

Cuz I want New York.

Ray tries to break a smile again. Cooch cups his arm.

RAY

Cooch. They sent us out here because

the place was being neglected. Now, all of a sudden, there's two five man SWAT teams out there tonight. Bell Huey choppers flying all over the place. Federal occupation to catch one guy. Why, Cooch? What's going on?

Cooch stares at Ray. The younger agent looks like he indeed has a fever.

COOCH  
National security, Ray. Get some sleep. Tomorrow, we fly.

Cooch hurries across the rain-swept street. Ray steps inside and closes the door.

INT. ROOM 13 - BUFFALO BUTTE MOTEL

Ray closes the door, and stands there. He seems to be having trouble breathing. He looks down at his boots. There is something on the floor. Something that has been slipped under the door earlier. He just stares down at it. Then slowly stoops.

CLOSE ON: the polaroid of the res car he gave to Maggie earlier. She

has returned it. He turns it over. Written across the white backing of the photo, in dark black marker is the name – YELLOW BIRD.

Ray stares at this for a moment then hurries over to boxes of files on the bed. He rummages like a nervous thief and comes up with a folder. He flips through it, casting off files and 302's and profiles and finally stopping on –

The 8x10 BLACK AND WHITE of Richard Yellow Bird seen earlier. Sitting in his wheelchair, Red Power cap on, tattoos marring big arms. And under it a DOUBLE MUG SHOT stamped LEAVENWORTH PRISON. Under that ANOTHER PRISON MUG SHOT stamped SIOUX FALLS PRISON. And under that a –

THIRD MUG SHOT stamped "PAROLED."

Ray, his eyes fixed on this one, takes a few steps and sits on the end of the bed. He then stuffs the file back in a box, and takes off toward the door.

#### EXT. RESERVATION ROAD - SUNSET

The Le Baron throws up loose rock and red dust, driving toward a place where the sun begins a slow drop behind the Black Hills. HORSES run out of the road. HEARTBEAT DRUM.

#### EXT. MULE DEER DISTRICT , RES - SUNSET

A tarpaper shack. Outhouse. Clothesline on which jerked meat hangs. No cars. A lonely, unnerving place. Le Baron pulls in. Ray gets out, adjusting the gun at the back of his waistband. He starts for the shack. Ray raps a fist on the splintered plywood door. Knocks again. He checks out a boarded-up window. The door finally opens. Just a crack. Tiny black eyes peer out into the fading light.

RAY

I'm looking for Richard Yellow Bird.

Ray sticks his open badge, gold eagle wings, near the crack. The door closes. Then unlatches and opens. Yellow Bird sits there in his wheelchair, tiny tobacco bundles in his lap. He's been tying them.

YELLOW BIRD

The Washington Redskin. Thought you'd be gone by now.

He pivots his chair to allow Ray room to enter.

#### INT. YELLOW BIRD SHACK

Yellow Bird, in a T-shirt that reveals twenty different ink tattoos, rolls himself across the warped floorboards to a cheese crate where his eye glasses sit. He puts the thick bifocals on and focuses resentfully on Ray in the ochre flicker of the dirty room.

YELLOW BIRD

What ya want?

RAY

Must be a bitch getting around in that wheelchair. How long you been in it?

YELLOW BIRD

Since I got a iron pipe put across my knees, man. Fight with three wasi'cus, ya know.

RAY

At Sioux Falls Pen?

YELLOW BIRD

No, that was Leavenworth. This –  
(shows a scar)  
was Sioux Falls. What ya want?

RAY

Leavenworth a tough joint?

Ray walks across the room, his eyes on a covert mission.

YELLOW BIRD

You ever try solitary confinement?

RAY

No. Can't say that I have, Richard.  
Richard do you know why I'm here?

YELLOW BIRD

Washington sent ya. I know that.

RAY

Yes, Washington sent me, Richard.  
They sent me here because this whole thing has been fucked. Do you know what I mean when I say this whole thing has been fucked, Richard?

Yellow Bird stares at Ray.

RAY

An arrangement was made between you...



and us. Do you remember that arrangement?

Yellow Bird looks at Ray, strangely, shaking his head. Ray starts to look like maybe the game's not working. Like maybe this doesn't add up. But –

YELLOW BIRD

I'm here, ain't I?

Ray lets a tense breath out.

RAY

Not for long, Richard. You got early parole under the stipulation that you would help us in a situation, and you didn't deliver.

YELLOW BIRD

What the fuck you talkin' about?

Ray sits in a busted chair, reaches down to his ankle holster and pulls out a .38. He holds it, resting it on the arm of the chair. He strains to look out through the boarded window. Yellow Bird fidgets in his chair.

RAY

Get up out of the chair, Richard.

YELLOW BIRD

What's with you people? Why do ya have to fuck with my head all the time? I came through, man.

RAY

Get up out of the chair, and walk toward the backdoor, Richard.

YELLOW BIRD

(not moving)

I get thrown in solitary until I don't know my own fuckin' name, and then you people tell me I can beat nine years if I help you. I helped you!

RAY

Get up!

Yellow Bird stands. He takes a step forward. Limping. He's got leg problems but he can walk. Heels first. And bowed. But he can walk. He is shaking.

YELLOW BIRD

They said I'd never see FBI again, and I'm livin' with you fuckers. I don't feed ya information on the Warriors, it's back to the pen. I don't do this, back to the pen. Your word against my word. Against a con Indian's word. I really got a chance, man, right?

RAY

They sent me here, Richard because they said you didn't hold up your end of the arrangement, and I have to transport you back to Leavenworth.

YELLOW BIRD

(crying)

What the fuck, man? What do you people want? I did what you wasi'cu's told me to do.

RAY

Leo Fast Elk... is alive.

Yellow Bird wheels.

YELLOW BIRD

No way. No fuckin' way.

RAY

How the hell do you know?

YELLOW BIRD

I blew his back out with a buffalo gun, that's how I know! Now you're gonna say I didn't, so you can throw

me back in solitary?

Ray is trying hard not to reveal his horror at this confession, at this understanding of the machinery. He sits there with his gun, blinking away sweat that beads at his brow. Yellow Bird is weeping in a highpitched voice that doesn't match his great bulk.

RAY

The men who came to see you at Leavenworth. The one's who made the arrangement... who were they? Maybe I can talk to them.

YELLOW BIRD

Miles. Three other suits. That's all I know 'em as – suits. Were you there?

RAY

You turned Leo over on his face. But the coyotes must've turned him back over, man, cuz his spirit is out. It's out, and it knows.

YELLOW BIRD

What do you know about spirits? You ain't no In'dn.

RAY

Leo knew something heavy and was trying to tell Jimmy. But you must not know how serious it was or you would have delivered. Do you realize what Leo could have told Jimmy?! Do you?!

YELLOW BIRD

I took him out before he got the chance. He didn't say nothin' about Tashka Sha. And now his spirit is in the dirt. Forever.

RAY

What's Tashka Sha, speak English,

Speak English!

YELLOW BIRD

Red Deer Table! What's with you, man?

Ray grabs onto these words, rolls them silently on his lips  
And now Yellow Bird is getting suspicious of the fed.

YELLOW BIRD

Wait a minute. Wait – what are you doin'? You ain't a FBI. You ain't the law. Let me see your –

Ray snaps out his gun, straight-armed.

RAY

I'm the fucking law!

Yellow Bird jumps back, raising his hands.

RAY

Keep talking, Yellow Bird...

YELLOW BIRD

All I know... is I did what I did...  
and I ain't in solitary, gettin'  
pumped up with downer, gettin' beat  
to shit. But I tell you what, Suit.  
Take me back. Cuz I can't take this  
shit no more.

And then HEADLIGHTS pierce the gaps in the boarded windows.  
Yellow Bird collapses against the wall, bangs his head off  
it. He lets a long, pained, cry escape from under his breath  
and he begins a slow slide down the wall, to the floor.

Ray peers out the cracks in the boards.

YELLOW BIRD

Man, I don't know who the fuck I am  
no more.

Ray gets up, putting his gun away and heading to the door.  
He stops and looks back at the Indian, sitting on the floor,

clutching his knees, staring into the kerosene flicker.

RAY

You and me both.

Yellow Bird looks at him, his glasses foggy, his face contorted And Ray leaves.

EXT. YELLOW BIRD'S SHACK - NIGHT

Ray steps out into the falling night. There is a car parked there. With a high aerial. Ray raises a hand in a slight wave, walks on. At the fed car, A REGIONAL AGENT behind the wheel, waves a hand. Watches Ray get into the Le Baron.

Ray gets in the car and takes off.

LE BARON - TRAVELING

Ray drives like a crazy man through the dark reservation. Through miles of open land and strange rock formations. And he looks trapped. HEADLIGHTS flicker in his rearview. He sees this. Slams the gas pedal.

EXT. RES ROADS - NIGHT

The Le Baron races at 85 down the dirt stretch. A moment later a car rattles by at 90.

INT. LE BARON - TRAVELING

Ray reaches over to the passenger seat and pulls up the M-16. He lays it across his lap. Looks in the rearview again. Then makes a sudden sharp turn.

He pulls off the road quickly, throwing up dust into the already foggy night, the car goes out of control.

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE MEMORIAL - NIGHT

The car that was following drives right past the narrow layby, hidden by grassy slopes and keeps flying down the long stretch.

INT. LE BARON

Ray skids through the dirt, trying to stop – he can't – and the Le Baron fishtails, smashing into a chain-link fence. And coming to a stop.

Breathing as if he's been running not driving, Ray looks behind him to make sure he lost the car. He did. When he turns back to his wheel, he sees –

THROUGH THE CHAINLINK FENCE

lit by his headlights: THE WOUNDED KNEE gravesite. He is right up on the arch, and the tall stone marker beyond it.

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE MEMORIAL - NIGHT

The Le Baron just sits parked, headlights making the night fog crawl up from the base of the old tomb, along the fence.

The driver's door opens slowly. And Ray steps out. He walks through the arch. Into the small fenced area. Up to the stone which is overgrown with stubborn weeds, half-hidden in mist. Ray studies the tomb.

POV: THE NAMES ON THE STONE ARE CHISELED VERTICALLY:

CHIEF STANDING BEAR

MR. HIGH HAWK

AFRAID OF BEAR

Weeds are grown up over the rest of the names. Ray's hands clear them, grab at them and rip them away from more names:

PRETTY HAWK

BLUE AMERICAN

SHERMAN HORN CLOUD

With frantic abandon, Ray is ripping weeds away. He drops to his knees, clearing weeds.

STRONG FOX

THUNDER HEART

MOVING DOWN and then suddenly back up to the name:

THUNDER HEART

REVERSE ON - RAY

kneeling in the weeds, the wind getting restless around him, screaming the way plains winds do but only these winds are filled with a whistling. What sounds like EAGLE BONE WHISTLES, piping shrill.

Ray kneels before the marker, staring at the name on the stone, his hair thrown around by the wind that drives across the grass, whistling eagles, building to an unbearable, pitch.

Ray stares at the name as if he is looking through a small hole into another world. A world that frightens him. He gets up and backs away from the stone, through the gate. And gets back in his car, quickly. He takes off.

EXT. MAGGIE EAGLE BEAR'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The little home on the river. Dark. Empty. Ray runs up the steps, pounds at the door. No answer. Pounds again.

RAY  
Maggie!

He keeps knocking. Nothing. He hurries back down the steps, starts around the back of the house and something attacks him, leaps at him from the dark, knocking him off his feet, into the grass. Hits him again.

But as quickly as he falls, he rolls, throwing up his hands and blocking a savage kick aimed for his face. He traps the boot, twists it and drops the attacker onto his back. In a matter of seconds, he is on top of the man, sticking his gun in his throat. He grabs a flashlight from his jacket and shines it in the man's face.

Crow Horse. Breathing like a wild animal.

CROW HORSE  
Five-hundred year old turtleshell  
rattle...

RAY  
Crow Horse, listen –

CROW HORSE  
Where's Maggie? Where'd ya take her.

RAY  
Nowhere. I'm trying to find her.

CROW HORSE  
You got Jimmy. Let her go.

RAY  
Crow Horse, listen. You have to come  
with me.

CROW HORSE  
Why? So you can get rid of me, too?

RAY  
No. So we can do what the old man  
said. Red Deer Table, Walter. We  
have to go.

Crow Horse lies there, breathing heavy. Ray on top of him,  
still clutching his gun.

INT. LE BARON - TRAVELING - NIGHT

Ray and Crow Horse are quiet as they eat up the dirt roads.

CROW HORSE  
Maybe the old man's visions are still  
strong.

Ray nods, concentrating. After a time:

RAY  
Do they come in dreams, these visions?

CROW HORSE



Oh yeah. Dreams. Sometimes durin'  
sickness. Vision quest. Sweat Lodge.  
Ya never know when.

RAY

Just before we caught Jimmy... I had  
a dream that I was being chased. And  
I was running with other people. Old-  
fashion Indian people. I got shot in  
the back. Like Leo.

When Crow Horse doesn't respond, Ray looks over and finds  
him staring. He looks back to the road. And when he looks  
back at Crow Horse, he is still staring at him.

CROW HORSE

Where was this?

RAY

At Wounded Knee. I mean, that's where  
I was, and that's where the dream  
was. Why?

CROW HORSE

You were running with the old ones.  
At The Knee. Heavy duty.

RAY

Well, it was just a dream, I –

CROW HORSE

Sonuvabuck! What's with you, Man?  
Who are you?

RAY

What do you mean?

CROW HORSE

Nothin'. Forget it.

Crow Horse looks out the window as if to avoid Ray who is  
confused by the Indian's smoldering. After a moment, Crow  
Horse looks at him.

CROW HORSE

You had a vision. You had yourself a vision. A man waits a long time for a vision. Might go his whole lifetime and never get one. And along comes some instant Indian with a Mastercard and brand-new shoes, has himself a vision.

RAY

Sorry.

CROW HORSE

I'm a full-blood Oglala.

RAY

We've driven a long way. Where is this place?

CROW HORSE

Maybe it was just a dream. Ya know, just one of them, what do ya call 'em, fitful dreams?

RAY

Yeah. Fitful dreams.

Crow Horse feels better. He looks out the window, nodding. But it doesn't last long.

CROW HORSE

Bullshit. You had a vision. You got sign from the old ones.

RAY

What the hell do you want me to do?!

CROW HORSE

Stop.

Ray brakes. Crow Horse is looking past him. Ray turns. The spectacular mesa that we have admired with every sunrise, looms massive now that we are under it. Moonlight falls on it. And the HEARTBEAT DRUM pulses from it.

EXT. WHERE-THE-ELK-PEOPLE-USED-TO-LIVE - NIGHT

The land behind Red Deer Table is Badlands. Badlands pierced by a few rutted old wagon roads. At a place between two grotesque buttes, Crow Horse stops, looking uneasy.

He digs into his pocket, pulls out some loose tobacco and spills it on the ground. Then he walks on.

Ray observes this, starting forward, then stopping long enough to fish a cigarette out from his pocket and drop it next to Crow Horse's offering.

## THROUGH THE BADLANDS

Ray and Crow Horse walk, carefully under a full moon, scanning the area. Crow Horse stops, checks out some tracks. Ray walks on, looking up at the table. He shines his flashlight up and it illuminates –

A RED RIBBON, tied on stakes on a ridge. Ten stakes. Twenty stakes. Ribbons blowing in the wind.

RAY

What's that?

CROW HORSE

Ain't prayer flags, that's for sure.

Ray sweeps the light along, walking faster, and then something frightening occurs. Something... some unseen thing snags him by the leg, sucking him into the Earth with a horrible GUSHING SOUND.

Ray is drawn into a hole up to his hips, a bluish-black slime, oozing out around him. Crow Horse grabs him, struggling to pull him up. He does, stumbling back and stepping into a hole himself.

The two men are wheeling, throwing flashlight beams around, slapping through a wet jelly, and finally getting their bearings.

Ray touches the ground where a blue-black chemical solution oozes out with water from the aquifer below. His flashlight scans –

TWENTY DRILLED HOLES IN THE EARTH. A uranium strip-mining grid laid out in a 50 x 60 pattern. The far side is fenced by flagged stakes.

RAY  
Jesus. Oil?

CROW HORSE  
Uranium. Test holes. Somebody came in from the Nebraska side, and did some shotgun testin'. They're gettin' ready to suck this baby dry.

RAY  
1868...

CROW HORSE  
What?

RAY  
That's what we're doing here. National interest. National security. Only this time it's not gold. It's uranium.

CROW HORSE  
We're standin' on broken treaty ground, Ray. This ain't supposed to be here. It'll poison the water.

RAY  
Leo knew about it. Tried to tell Jimmy, get the Warriors involved.

CROW HORSE  
So they took care of Leo.

RAY  
Listen to the water... the river keeps goin' down then rising again.

Ray goes to another hole and sticks his arm in up to the elbow, sniffs the solution.

CROW HORSE

They're drainin' our water table.  
That's our life, man...

Ray is looking past Crow Horse at –

Something strange in the moonlight. COYOTES. Some forty yards away, on a flat stretch of stoney ground. Six Coyotes, dancing in the shadows of rock formations. MOVING IN ON THEM as Ray walks forward, they circle... scatter... run back... circle again. Look straight at Ray, eyes glowing.

And run.

REVERSE - RAY

and Crow Horse walk toward them. To the place they just left. A place in the dirt, they were digging up. When they reach it, they stare down into the dirt.

A BODY

lies there, face down. Denim jacket and a shock of black hair, thrown into tangles and dirt. It was buried. Until the coyote caught wind. Crow Horse bends down, touches the jacket... turns the body over And almost vomits when he sees Maggie Eagle Bear.

RAY

looks down in disbelief.

RAY  
No. No...

Ray steps back, his boots squishing in solution and sealant and soiled water. He covers his mouth, stopping himself from getting sick. And then he explodes, YELLING.

LONG SHOT - RED DEER TABLE

in the moonlight. And RAY'S YELLING ECHOING up out of the rocks

EXT. BEAR CREEK VILLAGE - NIGHT

The sordid little village the feds first drove through sits sleepy on the rim of sunrise.

A DOG BARKS hollow as the Crow Horse motorcycle chutters down and coasts up in front of one of the little homes – rundown but it has a satellite dish and a decent car like so many. The Le Baron pulls up behind it.

INT. LE BARON - NIGHT

Crow Horse walks over to Ray's window, his jeans and boots muddy. No one speaks for a long moment, the night filled by crickets. And that one dog.

RAY

This Clear Moon's house?

CROW HORSE

Yeah. It's time to beat the drum.  
You better wait here. He don't trust  
the white man.

Crow Horse crosses the street. Ray sits there, and he looks almost hurt by this statement. But he is the white man. But he is Indian. He lets a long breath escape, rubs at a temple. He takes out a smoke. Tries to light it. His hands are shaking too badly. But he gets it lit, and sits tense, looking in his rearview.

INT. CLEAR MOON HOUSE - NIGHT

Oliver Clear Moon sits in a chair, his strong Indian mouth, beginning to tighten at the jowls.

Across from him, Crow Horse sits on the edge of a couch. MRS. CLEAR MOON, a rotund, gentle woman brings him a coffee. A TEENAGE GIRL in a men's extra-large T-shirt stands in the hall, looking at him.

Clear Moon in pajamas, rises, and with a coffee in hand, starts walking in slow steps toward the kitchen. He loses control before he gets there and hurls the cup across the room into the sink, smashing it. He wheels and faces Crow Horse. He SPEAKS LAKOTA. Asking questions. Crow Horse SPEAKS LAKOTA. Answering him.

Mrs. Clear Moon, understanding, shakes her head in disbelief and her eyes begin to well. Oliver, walking back to his chair, sits, and thinks for a moment. MORE LAKOTA. He gets up, goes to a drawer and rummages. He sits again, and tosses something onto the coffee table. It is a badge. A tribal police badge.

INT. LE BARON - PARKED - CLEAR MOON'S - DAWN

Ray nervously awaits Crow Horse's words as he appears at the window again. The Indian shows hope in his tired eyes.

CROW HORSE

Alright. Shit's comin' down. He's callin' council fire. All the old chiefs and the warriors, too. I gotta be at Grandpa's place in two hours. We need to get the tribe together. We need to block this thing.

RAY

What we need... is Richard Yellow Bird.

Crow Horse looks at Ray who stares dead ahead.

EXT. YELLOW BIRD'S SHACK - RES - DAWN

The shack is just as Ray left it earlier, kerosene flickers dancing yellow through the gapped boards. Ray and Crow Horse with guns drawn, approach the front door.

CROW HORSE

I thought it was a rare case of a brother getting a break in the courts. We did an honorin' song for him and everything.

RAY

He's looking at a few hundred years in Leavenworth. He's not gonna come out without a fight.

Crow Horse snakes around toward the rear of the shack.

Ray knocks at the front door. It is unlatched and it creaks open a little. Ray pushes it open and sees –

INT. YELLOW BIRD SHACK

An empty wheelchair.

EXT. YELLOW BIRD SHACK

Ray steps away from the door, looking around the vast plains as the sun comes up out of the Black Hills. He is roadblocked, and it shows in his eyes. It's all getting too big.

Crow Horse leans against the shack, watching Ray. And then RADIO STATIC from inside the Le Baron. Ray pivots and stares at it as if someone is inside the car. His call signal is being paged. But he just stands there, looking at it.

RADIO  
X21. Read. X21...

Ray reaches inside the car and lifts the handset. He takes a breath before pressing it to his lips.

RAY  
X21. Come back.

RADIO  
Ray. What's your 20?

Ray looks at Crow Horse who looks equally spooked. The agent clears his throat.

RAY  
Reservation.

A long, unnerving pause. No response from the other side.

RADIO  
What are you doing on the reservation?

RAY  
I'm on my way back in. Over.

Ray holds the handset down at his side, looking over the top



of the car toward the Black Hills.

CROW HORSE

Ray. Ray, don't let go now, Man.  
Ray...

RAY

You go to the council fire. I'm going  
back in.

CROW HORSE

Ray.

Ray swings in behind the wheel, starts the car, and barrels off recklessly down the rutted road, leaving Crow Horse behind.

CROW HORSE

Ray!

The Le Baron is already out to where sight reaches farther than sound and silent white dust mushrooms skyward.

EXT. BUFFALO BUTTE MOTEL - MORNING

A RAVEN is sentinel on a telephone wire that crosses the road from the bar to motel. A few trucks remain parked in front of the joint.

Ray approaches room 13, looking shell-shocked. His boots leave blue mud prints all the way to the door. He unlocks it.

INT. BUFFALO BUTTE MOTEL - ROOM

Ray has cast off his field clothes and is halfway into one of his cleaner suits. He looks haggard but still buoyant, his eyes piercing. The connecting door creaks open and Cooch walks in. The SAC is freshly showered and he is fidgeting with a Windsor knot. He studies his number two man, says nothing for a moment but is obviously holding something down. His face is a red hue.

COOCH

(extra casual)

Couldn't sleep, Ray?

Ray looks at Cooch. When he speaks, his voice is dry.

RAY

No...

Cooch crosses the room, and picks up Ray's jeans which look like they went through a sandlot tackle match in a mud hole. Ray tucks his clean shirt in; watching Cooch.

RAY

I had to finish something with Crow Horse.

Cooch walks up to Ray slowly and takes his face in his hand, turning it toward lamp light to study the bruise along his left eye, a residual from a Crow Horse hook.

COOCH

That's where you were. You had to go back and have it out with the Indian law...

Ray nods, and Cooch slowly breaks a smile. An insecure smile but a smile just the same. He starts to laugh.

COOCH

You fucking hot head, we can get in trouble for that.

Cooch laughs in amusement and Ray's face crinkles into a grin as he lowers his eyes, wiping a paper towel over his face. And then, suddenly, Ray lunges at Cooch.

He slams the Agent in Charge against the hollow wall, and holds him there. His eyes wild.

RAY

Why didn't you tell me what we were doing here?

Cooch is stunned.

RAY

We're running a cover-up and you didn't –

Cooch suddenly explodes, throwing Ray off of him and sending him reeling back against the sink. He points a finger at his charge.

COOCH

You ever put your hands on me again and you'll be doing the books for a baitshop in the fucking Everglades, Mister.

RAY

You didn't tell me about Red Deer Table –

COOCH

– what the hell is Red Deer Table?

RAY

What is it? It's genocide, that's what it is. It's a Pay Zone for some U.S. corporation and a Dead Zone for the people here. Uranium, Cooch.

Cooch's eyes go frighteningly cold. He can't believe what he's hearing.

COOCH

Jesus Christ. What are you doing? What the hell were you doing out there?

Ray says nothing. He just stands there, against the sink, breathing like a fighter against the turnbuckle.

COOCH

This was a Selective Operations Unit, Agent Levoi. There is classified information pertaining to our national security. You don't question that, you don't go digging into that shit – that's insubordination. Jesus Christ –

RAY

– if they mine uranium there, these people will have no place left to go...

COOCH

We were sworn in on the Constitution to protect federal matters, Ray. I don't know about uranium, I don't know about Red Dog Table – all I know is we did our job. It's over.

RAY

We neutralized anybody with a voice. Leo, Jimmy... Eagle Bear. Anyone who was standing in the way of the land. Is that it?

COOCH

No. We neutralized enemies of the United States. Anti-American radicals who have killed federal officers out here!

Ray turns to the sink, turns the faucet on to get some water on his face. The water only trickles into the basin.

COOCH

Jesus, Ray. You think I don't like the Indians? Not true. These were noble people but their day is gone. They're a conquered nation. They want all of America back but they can't even keep the garbage out of their own front yards. It's sad, Ray. But it's just the way it is. We have to function as a colonial police force out here.

Ray leans on the sink, watching the water start to spurt free. He shuts it off. Turns to look at Cooch. And it is then the door opens – some knocking after the door is already opened – and SA Miles enters.

MILES

You gentlemen ready – hi, Ray.

COOCH

Yeah, we're ready.

Ray doesn't turn from the sink.

EXT. RESERVATION ROAD - TOWARD GRANDPA REACHES -  
MORNING

Crow Horse chugs along on his motorbike toward the council, his long hair and eagle feather trailing in the wind.

EXT. BUFFALO BUTTE MOTEL - MORNING

Two federal vehicles are waiting in front of Cooch's Chevy and Ray's Le Baron. One is an FBI van where Sherman helps THREE AGENTS load file boxes and computers.

Cooch walks with Ray toward the Le Baron, looking at him as they go. Ray looks better as he breathes the morning air. As they pass the second fed car, the back window power glides down, and someone looks out with a friendly smile.

CLEAR MOON

Ah, there you are. The Sioux.

Ray stops dead. Beholds the Tribal President who wears a western cut jacket and a strained expression behind his smile. He holds a hand out to Ray.

CLEAR MOON

You got the troublemakers off our land. Good, Was-te.

Ray stares at him, speechless. Horrified. What is he doing here? What about the council fire? Ray somehow nods. Then walks on to the Le Baron. Cooch gets behind the wheel of the car that Clear Moon sits in. Clear Moon's eyes follow Ray to the car.

EXT. RES ROAD - TO GRANDPA REACHES

Crow Horse guns past a little shack. As he does, he looks in his side mirror then out across the grasslands. Then quickly

IN HIS MIRROR: a car has pulled out from behind the shack.  
CROW HORSE observes this. Then twists the fuel throttle hard.

INT. LE BARON

Ray gets behind the wheel, looks at his watch. He is panicking. He starts the car, reverses, slams into drive.

RAY'S POV: swerving and reckless as he races forward. Sherman, walking around to one of the cars has to run out of the way. The other agents clear out, looking in confusion as Ray cuts a hard U – sweeps PAST THE BAR, SMASHES INTO AND THROUGH the old hitching post – and HEADS TOWARD the reservation which lies vast before him.

EXT. BUFFALO BUTTE MOTEL

With agents scrambling about, looking after the car, Cooch gets out, looking into the dust Ray left behind. HEARTBEAT DRUM.

COOCH

RAY!

Sherman appears beside Cooch aiming a questioning look. When Cooch quickly gets back behind the wheel, Sherman pulls his radio up and starts yelling into it.

Cooch reaches out the window and grabs his radio arm.

COOCH

No, damn it. You call teams in and this is gonna be a fucking media event. Get me three cars, six agents, block all reservation exits. It's under control.

And Cooch squeals out with a petrified Clear Moon in the backseat, inquiring nervously.

EXT. ROAD TO GRANDPA REACHES

Crow Horse passes by an abandoned horse trailer. When he does, another car pulls out. And follows. The first car passes

by.

Crow Horse sees he's being followed. He cranks his throttle and the engine grinds then dies. He heels his kickstart on the fly, and keeps it alive. But his old horse is no match for the big engines coming up fast behind him.

#### INT. LE BARON - TRAVELING

Ray is leaving little transitional developments and trailers behind. His eyes bore into the road before him, looking for a sign of Crow Horse, and in the rearview for a sign of his FBI mentor.

#### EXT. ROAD TO GRANDPA REACHES - BADLANDS

Crow Horse has the throttle open. But the two cars are coming up on both sides, trying to sandwich him. To his right the Badlands loom deep, a drop into a caliche netherworld of jagged rock.

He throws the bike right, trying to ride the thin ribbon of shoulder.

#### THE FIRST CAR

floors it, and swipes him, and the bike goes over the edge, launched into –

#### THE BADLANDS

where it does a violent triple flip, throwing Crow Horse then smashing into a tent shaped dune.

#### A RIFLE

sticks out from a window and punches the Badlands with **THREE SHOTS.**

#### EXT. ROAD TO GRANDPA REACHES

The Le Baron rifles past the abandoned horse trailer. Black smoke drifts in a wind ahead.

Ray veers onto the shoulder, barely gets the car in park

before bailing and running wildly down into the Badlands.

EXT. BADLANDS

Ray runs, stumbles through the rock and gypsum, searching the area. He runs around the burning motorcycle, looking left and right.

RAY  
Crow Horse!

CROW HORSE

lies on his back in the Badlands, eyes open, fixed unmoving on the sky. Ray comes out of the flame-waves, running with his .45 held high. He throws himself to his knees beside the injured Indian.

RAY  
Crow Horse!

Crow Horse rolls his eyes toward the FBI agent. He has a gash behind his ear, and pink sand clings to the blood. He lifts his head, tries to form words.

CROW HORSE  
Ain't no Council Fire, Brother. Clear  
Moon...

RAY  
I know. Come on. We gotta get off  
the reservation or we're dead.

CROW HORSE  
Hoka Hey. It's a good day to die.

RAY  
Bullshit, let's get outta here,

Ray gets an arm under the big Indian, helps him up out of a jagged crevice.

CROW HORSE  
Grandpa...



## EXT. RESERVATION ROAD

Cooch's car speeds down the stretch. Followed by Sherman's. The FBI van. All at one-hundred and five. Gravel and dirt flies.

## INT. LE BARON - TRAVELING

With Crow Horse half-passed out in the passenger seat, Ray keeps the wheel steady. And then his RADIO STATICS.

### RADIO

X21, please read. Ray. Ray. X21, please read. This is Cooch. Please come in, Ray. Where are you?

Ray just stares down at the radio, keeps the pedal floored. The throws the wheel left.

## EXT. GRANDPA REACHES TRAILER

The Le Baron fish-tails in a cloud of dust and Ray leaps out of the car, runs toward the little trailer, gun in hand. The windows are all busted, and the door is wide open. Ray runs in. Then straight back out, shaking his head to Crow Horse.

Crow Horse hangs his head out the passenger window.

### RAY

He's gone.

### CROW HORSE

He hasn't left this place in twenty years. They got him.

Ray starts to get back in then hesitates. He looks out across the plains to see –

THREE FED CARS in the distance, fast approaching, dust rising.

Ray gets in quickly.

## EXT. RESERVATION EXIT

Cooch's car is parked in a roadblock. Clear Moon stands near

him, and addresses UNIFORMED TRIBAL POLICE as they spill out from a van, carrying rifles and shotguns.

COOCH  
(into radio)  
X21. Ray. Ray, please come in.

Cooch has torn his tie away, his shirt is open, and he is sweat soaked. Miles gets out of a car that pulls up.

MILES  
We have a renegade agent, Cooch? He gets off the reservation...

COOCH  
– he's not getting off the reservation.

And Cooch gets back in the car, drives off.

INT. LE BARON - TRAVELING

With Ray driving like a maniac, Crow Horse is turned around in his seat, watching the federal cars spreading out, the chopper moving in.

CROW HORSE  
They got us sealed. What are we gonna do?

RAY  
We're going for The Stronghold.

Crow Horse looks at him.

RADIO  
(Cooch)  
Ray. Can you hear me? You are fucked. There's no way out of this. If you won't listen to your own laws, then listen to this:  
(static: a new voice)  
This is President Clear Moon. This nation does not want your sympathy. You cannot use this reservation as a

sanctuary. Stop where you are now.

Ray and Crow Horse exchange a look.

RADIO

(Cooch)

Whatever you are trying to do is futile, Raymond. You have nothing. Nothing.

Ray picks up the mic as he cranes to keep an eye on the rearview.

RAY

Yellow bird... is gonna sing.

RADIO

(Cooch)

Yellow Bird committed suicide at three o'clock this morning. Some gung-ho agent from D.C. pushed him into a corner. You're playing a losing game. Pull over.

Ray takes the mic and for some reason, he's putting it inside his jacket near his shoulder where he keeps his leather. Crow Horse looks at him, puzzled. And then the sound comes forth, the static crackling of a micro-cassette recorder.

RECORDER

(Ray)

How the hell do you know?

(Yellow Bird)

I blew his back out with a buffalo gun, that's how I know. And now you're gonna say I didn't and put me back in solitary?!

Ray keeps the tape running into the radio as he drives through rugged Badlands. Crow Horse, stunned by the voice, eyes Ray as the tape rolls.

INT. CHEVY - TRAVELING

Cooch and Clear Moon stare in horror at the radio.

RADIO  
(Yellow Bird)  
You people tol' me I could beat nine  
years if I helped you. I helped you!  
(rewinding)  
I could beat nine years if I helped  
you. I helped you!

Cooch is shaking his head in vitrified disbelief. He slams the pedal almost through the floor.

INT. LE BARON - TRAVELING

The tape ends and Ray now lifts the mic to his mouth.

RAY  
(into mic)  
Fuck you.

And he too, buries the accelerator.

EXT. BADLANDS ROAD , TO THE STRONGHOLD

The Le Baron burns forward and we SWEEP UP TO A MIND-BLOWING AERIAL VIEW of the Badlands as four fed cars spread out in formation, following.

INT. LE BARON - TRAVELING

Crow Horse is turned around, looking at the pursuit.

RAY  
Walter.

Crow Horse turns, sees what Ray is looking at.

POV: The Stronghold – a narrow opening in hulking rock formations. Large enough for a car to get in, and keep followers out.

CROW HORSE  
That's it. The Stronghold. Get us in  
there, we got a chance.

RAY

We're in there. We're in there –

just ahead, the earth is gone. A wavering heat pond turns out to be a crevice and they nose down into it, burying the front end in sand and rock. WINDSHIELD SHATTERS.

EXT. THE STRONGHOLD

The Le Baron is stuck, wheels spinning out. Ray and Cooch bail. Guns drawn, they start running for the Stronghold.

AT THE EDGE OF THE ARROYO

the caravan slides in recklessly, two of the fed cars coming dangerously close to going over the edge. The regional officers and six Clear Moon goons empty out, running down the dip, rifles and shotguns ready.

Three more field agents come down from another direction, followed by Cooch. Sherman hands a bullhorn to him.

COOCH

(via bullhorn)

FREEZE! NOW!

The sound of FIFTEEN PRIMING FIREARMS stops Ray and Crow Horse in their tracks. Just twenty feet from The Stronghold. Crow Horse, windless, stumbles to a knee. Ray turns slowly, facing the small army.

COOCH

DROP IT.

Crow Horse, rises, sucking wind, and ditches his gun in the Badlands. Ray holds onto his .45 a moment longer. Then drops it. He stares at –

THE WALL OF MEN

Cooch, SA Miles, SA Sherman, Six regional officers, six Clear Moon goons. And now, coming out of the backseat of Cooch's Chevy, Oliver Clear Moon, walking tentatively, cautiously.

Cooch lowers the bullhorn. He takes the opportunity to stare

at Ray. To let Ray stare at him. The older agent looks broken.

COOCH

Crow Horse, get your face in the dirt. Ray... come forward. Let it go. Let's just let it go...

AT THE STRONGHOLD ENTRANCE

Crow Horse lowers himself to a knee then lies face down. Ray just stands there, the wind against him.

COOCH (O.S.)

Come on, Ray. Come forward.

RAY

No way, Cooch.

Ray refuses to move.

COOCH

sweating, tries to keep control. All around him, hands are on guns. Cooch is walking toward Ray.

COOCH

Ray. I'm coming to talk to you. I'm gonna walk you out of here. And we're gonna get the hell outta this place.

Cooch walks toward him, a gun hanging at one side, bullhorn at the other. The agents behind him, around him, all raise rifles, all take aim.

Sherman, looking sick, gets to a knee and sets aim. The sound of clacking steel, all around. But Cooch seems disturbed by the sound. Because its coming from above. He raises an eye from the rifle sight to see –

ALONG THE EDGE OF THE BUTTE

FIFTEEN INDIANS, training rifles and shotguns down below.

SHERMAN

looks up from his rifle, bewildered. Then alarmed.

## ALONG THE EDGE OF THE BUTTE

We PAN across fifteen Indians – old people, women, kids. Their weapons are weak but many.

And at the end of the row, Maisy Blue Legs rises, clutching a rifle. And PAST HER, ANOTHER. TRADITIONAL PEOPLE, many from the trading post porch, rise to the edge, armed. Silent.

Twenty, twenty-five, thirty traditionals, forming a line along the ridge, a line that runs in a circle, broken by the Stronghold entrance, then starting again on the next butte. Thirty-five, forty of them. And more, standing along the opposite craggy rock, some wearing tractor caps, some cowboy hats, some just long hair blowing in the wind. Fifty, sixty, SEVENTY-FIVE RESERVATION PEOPLE forming a circle on the rocks; it's Little Big Horn revisited. A fourteen year-old boy struggles to keep a huge shotgun at his shoulder.

## DOWN BELOW

Clear Moon's mouth is as dry as Badlands soil. Cooch is panicking, his eyes running along the high edge.

## RAY

stands equally astonished, assessing the back-up.

## CROW HORSE

lifts himself, stands, taking in the sight.

## AT THE EDGE OF THE BUTTE

stepping stiffly but steadily through the line of armed locals, pushing his way to the very edge so as to look down, Grandpa Sam Reaches. The wind makes feathery tails out of his long thinning strips of white hair.

## DOWN BELOW

Ray looks up at the old man, then turns to face Cooch.

RAY

You're right, Cooch. It's over.

Cooch slowly, lets the bullhorn fall. Then the rifle. He looks back at Sherman who does the same, and all the way down the line, everyone dropping their arms under the threat of a lot more guns from above. And now Ray walks forward, collecting his gun. Anderson Chasing Hawk, one of the Warriors, runs down to Ray, breathless.

CHASING HAWK

All the exits are blocked. There's  
two more fed cars tryin' to get in.  
And some press.

Ray notices that Cooch is staring at him, hard. He shakes his head slowly. Strongly.

COOCH

Ray...

RAY

Let the press through.

Chasing Hawk takes off, running, and Cooch watches in consternation. Ray just stands eye to eye with him, holding his ground.

UP TO ARIEL VIEW - OVER STRONGHOLD

And along the ridge, Grandpa and the locals don't budge, watching every move.

CLIMBING HIGHER, we rise above the circle of proud Sioux to see, on the inside of the Stronghold, thirty old trucks and res cars.

CLIMBING HIGHER into and through the fast-moving clouds that the Lakota call The Grandfathers as the HEARTBEAT DRUM and LAKOTA SINGERS takes over all sound.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BEAR CREEK RESERVATION - MAIN SETTLEMENT - LATER



The HIGH WINDS of THREE MEDIA HELICOPTERS are delighting a storm of Indian children and BARKING DOGS, running through the streets past junked cars on blocks.

Over on a little plot of grass and dirt, a pair of hands are digging a small hole. Ray lays a pine cone in the hole and looks down at it for a moment... before hand-plowing the dirt back over it and patting it flat. He rises, knocking dirt off his knees and hands.

Crow Horse walks over, bandaged and favoring wounds, and Ray falls in with him, walking down the middle of the village road. His eyes are tired. But hopeful.

CROW HORSE

The people are already talkin' about  
their vote for a new tribal prez.  
They wanna vote for Jimmy.

Ray nods, encouraged as they walk along. His eyes follow the helicopters.

RAY

What about the water...

CROW HORSE

You bought her some time, Kola. Ain't  
never gonna be over... but you bought  
her some time.

RAY

Some Indian time?

They reach the dusty, dented Le Baron and stand there, looking at each other.

CROW HORSE

Indian time.

Crow Horse offers a hand to Ray. He takes it in a white man's shake then follows Walter's cue into the Indian "allies" grip and slap. They hold it there, looking into each other's eyes.

CROW HORSE

(concerned)  
Where ya gonna go, Ray?

Ray ponders for a moment.

RAY  
I'll have to see what the visions  
say about that one.

CROW HORSE  
You didn't have another vision...

Ray shrugs. Crow Horse discreetly gestures below his belt.

CROW HORSE  
Yeah, right here.

Ray cracks a smile, a long time coming.

RAY  
You take care.

CROW HORSE  
If you ever need a place to come  
back to and listen to the trees a  
little... we'll be here.

Ray stands looking at him, searching for words.

CROW HORSE  
Ain't no word in Sioux for goodbye.

Ray goes to get in his car. But he sees someone sitting across the street on the trading post porch. The old man.

Ray considers him for a moment then walks over. They lock eyes. Grandpa stares at Ray as if he's never seen him before, and then arcs a brow. He touches his sleeve at the wrist. Ray rolls his sleeve back to reveal his Rolex. Grandpa smiles and Ray strips it off. He hands it to the old man and his face crinkles into caliche earth.

Grandpa holds the watch up in the light, admires it then puts it in his shirt pocket. He moves a flat hand through the air in the "done deal" sign language. Ray, a little

surprised that he gets nothing in the trade, returns the smile and walks away.

He gets to his car and wipes away two inches of dust from the broken windshield.

#### INT. LE BARON

After THREE TRIES, he gets the engine started. He pulls his gun off his waistband, goes to lay it on the passenger seat and finds something there.

Grandpa's sacred caanunpa. The Pipe. Symbol of truth. Ray looks out the window at the old man who is watching him with those sharp black eyes. Ray lifts his hand, holds it flat, and does the Sioux done deal sign.

#### EXT. BEAR CREEK RESERVATION - DAY

The Le Baron eats up the dirt road at a moderate, gravel crunching pace. It slows as it passes Maggie Eagle Bear's quiet home on the river. Children walk with the old woman, carrying buckets from the river.

The Le Baron slows to a crawl, then drives on.

CUT TO:

#### THE TRADING POST PORCH

where the elders sit, watching the dust blow.

CROW HORSE (V.O.)  
(voice lingering)  
We will be here.

CUT TO:

CROW HORSE walking off down the road. He stops, and looks over his shoulder, trying to glimpse the distance.

CUT TO:

THE LE BARON driving off the res, under big sky as it ascends a rough hill, waddles through potholes, negotiates with some

horses in the road and rolls on toward the reservation line where the sun throws shadows that look like an old man dancing.

AT THE PLACE IN THE ROAD

where West goes to Rapid City, and East back to Bear Creek, Ray stops like the bullet-punched sign orders. He doesn't go West. Doesn't go East. He sits there. Fishes a smoke out from a pocket, clicks a lighter, and fires up. He sits there, smoking.

Deliberating.

SUDDEN CUT TO BLACK.

And after a long silent beat, A DRUM. Like a heart.

END CREDITS.

THE END