

FADE IN:

EXT. PLAINS OF SOUTH DAKOTA - PAST. DAY

A beautiful sight to behold as the sun streams down on a tribe of Lakotas who go about their happy lives. The wind tosses tumbleweeds about and ripples the fabric of a dozen tipis.

Children play in the fields. Dogs bark and chase each other's tails. Mothers clean their clothes on a tiny river that winds through the plains and casts glistening diamonds on the women as they share stories among themselves.

A father laughs as he watches his son try to round up a pony. Another father shows his son and daughter how to throw a spear.

SO MUCH JOY.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
(Light) Dad...dad.

CUT TO:

EXT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE - PRESENT. NIGHT

An elderly Lakota man, RAYMOND YELLOW THUNDER, sits on a worn and withered chair that matches his worn and withered face.

The landscape, the house, everything is blanketed in the night. The windows, covered in torn tarp, flutter.

He stares out into a darkness that is only penetrated by a brilliant moon above. His breath gives sign that it is an extremely cold night. It comes out in small puffs through his nose.

The woman's voice belongs to his middle-aged daughter, FLORENCE. She carries a small blanket.

FLORENCE
Dad. You alright?

He turns in her direction and forces a smile through depressed lips.

RAYMOND
Hi, honey. Was just thinking. It's all going to be gone soon. All of it.

He turns his attention back to the hidden plains. She walks over to him and places the blanket on him. She drapes her arm around his shoulder and kneels down.

FLORENCE
Come inside, Dad. It's freezing. You'll freeze out--

RAYMOND

No! No... We were tough once.
Strong. They take everything else
away but no... the least I can do
is sit.

He looks at her with warmth. She leans in and kisses his
cheek, plants a soft hug around his slouching shoulders, gets
up and walks towards the front door.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

Honey.

She turns around.

RAYMOND (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. (Beat.) I'm sorry I
couldn't have been better for you
and the kids. I tried--

He looks back into the plains. The laugh of children wafts in
the air, the "whinney" of an ancient horse.

FLORENCE

Take all the time you need. See you
tomorrow.

She walks inside.

Beat.

EXT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE - YARD. SAME

Raymond gets up and walks out into the night. His feet crunch
under alternating portions of snow and dirt.

He makes his way towards a make-shift outhouse. Its wooden
door opens and bangs in small bursts. A pile of trash leans
up against its left wall; small cans clatter to the ground.

He enters.

Beat.

The moon hovers overhead. A coyote howls. From inside the
stall Raymond begins to sing an old Lakota song. His crackly
voice surprisingly somber, yet humorous.

The door opens and he walks out. The song still rises as he
shuffles his feet back to--

A LARGE UNSEEN HAND COVERS HIS MOUTH. It may stifle his
screams, but his eyes reveal his terror.

The hands of another stranger grab for his legs and pick him
up.

EXT. TRUCK. SAME

The two shadows in dark drag Raymond as he squirms to get free.

The voices belong to FRANK and BEN, two lumbering ranchers whose cowboy boots crunch under the weight of heavy shoulders and filled beer bellies.

Raymond is thrown to the ground on his stomach. A large piece of duct tape stretches forcibly across his mouth cutting into the bottom of his nose.

Voices come in quick, antsy whispers.

BEN
Fucker won't hold still, Frank.

Beat.

FRANK (TO RAYMOND)
You got family in there?

Raymond's body settles.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Thought so. One more move and your whole fucking tribe joins all the other dead reds. Now: in the back.

Raymond makes his way into the back. A smaller man, BENJI, comes out of the cab and looks in the back.

BENJI
Shit, guys. No, no, no. What are you doing?

Frank jumps in the driver seat. Ben pushes Benji back in.

BENJI
Jesus...

Frank fingers the radio and blares Hank Williams Jr. as he floors it. The truck speeds ahead. It kicks up plumes of dust that quickly catch the soft red glow of tail lights.

CUT TO:

EXT. AMERICAN LEGION HALL. SAME

The truck comes to an abrupt stop outside the AMERICAN LEGION HALL. From inside the building a party is in full swing. A few revelers look to the truck as the doors open but soon return to their chats and smokes.

Raymond lays on his side in the back. He is bundled up as best he can under a tarp. The three men in the truck get out. Frank comes towards the back and opens the door.

FRANK
 Why don't you come on inside, get a
 drink. It's party time.

Frank reaches in and grabs at Raymond's ankles.

Raymond jerks up. Frank and Ben start to laugh. They pull him
 out and pull the tape off in one ripping motion.

CUT TO:

INT. AMERICAN LEGION HALL. SAME

The door opens and the four walk in. Country music plays,
 drinks in everyone's hands.

Benji lowers his head and scampers off into the middle of the
 crowd. He reaches a girl and whispers into her ear. Her happy
 smile becomes a frown as she looks towards Frank and Ben with
 Raymond between them.

A couple men and women begin to walk towards Raymond. Some
 others put their drinks down and head out the doors, worried
 expressions on the their faces.

One of the men, STAN, takes a long swig of beer and pushes
 the bottle into Raymond's face.

STAN
 Fuckin Ingin' doing here?

FRANK
 (Loud to everyone) Caught him
 breaking into George's car. He's
 ours for the night.

Stan drops the beer on the floor and pushes Raymond towards
 the middle of the crowd.

Raymond tries to pull away quickly but is overpowered. Terror
 creeps across his face.

STAN (CONT'D)
 Hell naw you gonna escape. (Beat)
 Hey Billy, take red's moccasins off
 so he can't get away.

Billy gets down and rips the shoes off. He tosses them
 towards some empty tables.

The crowd is getting agitated, excited.

MANY VOICES over the music

VOICES (O.S.)
 This ain't right-- I' kill 'em-- we
 gotta go-- wigwam bitch--

Billy, still on the floor. He shouts up.

BILLY

Guys, guys. You ever heard dem say dat' they can walk on fire. I wanna check it out. Who got some smokes?

Some other men and a few ladies walk over. They put Raymond on his back. He kicks and wiggles. They hold him down.

RAYMOND

Please, don't. I'm sorry for anything. Please don't hurt me.

MAN IN CROWD

Nah, this ain't gonna hurt. You one of them fire walkers. You gonna love this, Geronimo.

A line of about eight people is formed. They each take drags of their cigars and cigarettes then proceed to --

BURN THEM INTO RAYMOND'S FEET.

Raymond tries to hold the pain in, his face is tight as each fires PEELS BACK THE SKIN on his feet. His face is full of sweat; his eyes clenched holding the tears back.

A woman comes over and, with a pair of scissors, cuts Raymond's ponytail off.

Raymond keeps the rage in.

FRANK

Goddamn. Gramps here is a tough lil' fuck.

VOICE

Leave 'em the hell alone, Frank. Jesus.

Frank doesn't listen. He looks into the crowd at a smiling woman, JUDITH.

FRANK

Judy, whatcha think? You always wanted to see the pecker on one of these things, right.

A laugh goes up. Judith looks embarrassed but is having a good time and goes along.

JUDITH

Bigger than your's, I'm sure.

Frank smiles and takes a drink of beer.

FRANK

Well, let's take a look.

Two of the men begin to take off Raymond's clothes.

They stand him up NAKED.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 So, Judy. C'mon on over here. Let's
 see you smokem this peace-a-pipe.

Judith gives a mocking, disgusted look. More laughter. Some
 people leave.

BEN
 Lookie there red. You're dick is
 scarin' 'em away.

FRANK
 Alright, ladies and gentlemen.
 We'll leave you be. Take red here;
 keep him locked up 'til tomorrow.

The crowd erupts.

WOMAN IN CROWD
 Get 'em outta here.

MAN IN CROWD
 Hope he gets life in there.

Four men, including Ben and Frank, push Raymond into a back
 kitchen.

EXT. AMERICAN LEGION HALL - BACK. SAME

The door bursts open. Raymond and the four men stumble
 outside. The ground is slick with ice. It has begun to snow.

FRANK
 Give me the keys to the car, John.

John reaches into his pocket. The men laugh.

Snow sticks to Raymond's naked body.

JOHN
 Sure, man. Lock his ass up.

Frank pushes Raymond forward towards an old sedan.

RAYMOND
 Help, help me--

A bottle comes crashing down on the back of his head. A
 couple of passerbys keep on walking.

The car trunk opens and three of the men pick Raymond up as
 he struggles. Their breaths come out in tough bursts of
 vapor.

IT IS FREEZING.

The snow continues to come down.

They stash Raymond in the back of the trunk and lock him in.

They make their way back to the party.

The SCREAMS of Raymond are drowned out by the music and laughing voices inside.

FADE OUT.

CAPTION: *This Film is Based on a True Story.*

Beat.

CAPTION: *South Dakota. 1973.*

FADE IN:

INT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE - BEDROOM. DAY

JOSEPH CORBET runs through his house, frantic. He wrestles with the last few buttons of his untucked, plaid shirt that covers a muscular frame. A rosary dangles from the handle of a dresser; a few crosses on the wall.

A tiny gold crucifix just manages to peak out of Joseph's shirt and pick up a small reflection of sunlight.

JOSEPH
 Claire! Hey Claire have you seen
 the keys. I'm late...

INT. LIVING ROOM

He walks to the front of the house. CLAIRE and her young daughter, ABBIE, stand at the door. Claire's arms drape over the front of Abbie's chest.

JOSEPH
 Oh, hey. Have you seen...

He moves about, unaware of the two suitcases that stand next to the girls.

CLAIRE
 They're in the bathroom. (Beat)
 We're leaving.

JOSEPH
 'K. I should be back sometime
 tonight.

Claire reaches down for a suitcase.

CLAIRE
 I'm not sorry, Joe.

He finally comes to a stop. He takes it in.

JOSEPH
 If this is about last night. I said
 I was sorry. They kept me late.

CLAIRE
 You could care less about us. (To
 Abbie) Honey, go wait for Mommy
 outside.

Abbie, bundled up in winter clothes, grabs her tiny suitcase
 and walks to the porch. She sits down.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
 All you care about is work. Just
 that fucking paper. That big story.

Joseph walks over to Claire. She takes a few steps back.

JOSEPH
 No. No. C'mon. Stay. Don't take
 Abbie.

CLAIRE
 She's my daughter. Not yours.

The phone rings. Joseph turns towards it, Claire takes a step
 back.

JOSEPH
 Not now. I love Abbie... and you.
 Don't pretend that you didn't know
 about my job and what it means for
 us.

CLAIRE
Us? Us?

The phone rings again.

EXT. JOSEPH'S HOUSE - PORCH. SAME

Claire walks to her daughter and nudges her to get up.

Joseph leans down to Abbie. He looks into her eyes. She
 smiles back. He gives her a big hug.

Claire pulls Abbie away. Joe hangs on for as long as he can.
 Her tiny fingers stretch out to him.

CLAIRE
 It was a simple prayer every night.
 That you would just be there--
 once. Just once when we needed you.

Joseph looks back at the ringing phone. He needs to pick it
 up. It's so loud. Claire meets his eyes and knows.

Joe watches as they get into the car. Claire doesn't look in
 Joseph's direction. Abbie does. She waves goodbye. Joseph
 waves back. We See that he misses her already.

Beat.

He runs into the house and picks up the phone. WALLY MOORE,
 his editor, bellows out.

WALLY
Where the fuck are you?

JOSEPH
I'm on my way.

WALLY
Don't bother.

JOSEPH
I'm fired?

WALLY
No. I got a story. They found some
Indian. Wandered off the
reservation.

JOSEPH
An Indian story? Are you trying to
get me killed?

WALLY
I know. I know. But this is a bad
one. He froze to death; stashed in
some guy's trunk.

JOSEPH
Shit. The cops?

WALLY
You know how it is around here.
Just get me something for tomorrow.

CUT TO:

EXT. SALOON. MID-DAY

Joseph, head down and hands in pockets, tries to keep out of the way of the blistering wind that howls down the streets. He walks into an old watering hole.

A SIGN IN FRONT READS:

"WE DON'T SERVE REDS!"

INT. SALOON

A few patrons line the edge of the bar. Two engage in small talk about sports. A couple others are transfixed on their drinks and misery.

The news is playing on a TV that hangs in the corner.

REPORTER ON NEWS
...In Georgia today the body of an
Indian boy was found hanged in the
Spartan Woods near Augusta. This is
the third time in the past six
months that an Indian has been
killed in the state.

Joseph saddles up to the bar. The bartender, MAX, greets him.

MAX
Fuck me. Long time no see, Joey.

JOSEPH
Yeah, I know. Trying to become
civil again. Had to move on.

He cracks a tired smile. Max laughs.

MAX
How's your girl?

Joseph stares blankly.

MAX (CONT'D)
Oh man, I'm sorry. Uh-- What'd it
be?

JOSEPH
Just a beer. On a story about the
poor guy--

The doors to the bar open. Nobody notices.

MAX
--in the car. Yeah, my sis was
there last night. Says that red was
acting up and shit. I mean, it was
a shame and all but you know how
they are.

A man's voice, LOUIS DOG BEAR, booms up.

LOUIS
He didn't do anything!

Everyone turns around to see a Native American standing
inside.

MAX
The fuck you doing in here. You
read my sign. Betcha can't read--

Louis walks over to the bar. Joseph pretends not to notice,
he shifts his weight, keeps his head down.

MAX (CONT'D)
Two more steps, try me.

Max turns his back and walks over to a phone. Joseph quietly
turns to Louis, touches his hand and mouths "Not here."

MAX (CONT'D)
I'm gonna call the cops.

Louis yanks his hand from Joseph.

LOUIS
I was just coming in to get a
drink. I didn't see your fucking
sign!

MAX
You come in here again. I'll kill
you. You hear me? Cut you up.

Louis purses his lips. The anger sizzles . He walks outside.

Max mutters to himself as he gives Joseph his beer then
proceeds to wash the counter.

MAX (CONT'D)
Mother fu-- stab that fu--- of a
bitch.

Joseph looks at the beer, then outside. He meets the accusing
stare of several patrons.

JOSEPH
Hey, Max. I gotta run. Some work
down at the office I forgot.

He grabs his wallet, pulls some bills, and tosses them on the
counter.

EXT. RAPID CITY STREETS. SAME

Joseph rushes down the street and catches up to Louis.

JOSEPH
(Loud whisper) Hey! Hey!

Louis looks back but keeps on walking. Joseph runs up to him.

LOUIS
The fuck you want?

They keep moving.

JOSEPH
Look, I'm a reporter. I'm doing a
story on Raymond.

LOUIS
Since when do you people write on
us? (Beat) I gotta work.

JOSEPH
Then tonight? After?

He stops. Joseph looks around nervously. Bystanders talk in
hushed tones, they point.

LOUIS
Fine.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROADS OF PINE RIDGE. DAY

A brown Chevy drives through the horrid conditions of the Pine Ridge reservation and many of its unsavory sights.

People sleep in the streets. A fight ensues. Kids toss bottles through run-down homes and shops. Dogs fight.

Drunks stumble, vomit.

White men in fatigues and men without carry assault rifles near a gaggle of protestors who hold up signs declaring: "IMPEACH WILSON NOW!" and "OUR LAND NOT SAM'S!"

EXT. LONE STRETCH OF PINE RIDGE. SAME

The car pulls next to a stand that sells Native jewelry.

CHRISTINE, a beautiful mixed-Sioux woman, very much out of place in an area like this, dabs her eyes. Her shiny black hair cascades down the back of her dark green jacket. Her beauty is a blend of Caucasian and Native.

Christine gets out of the car and makes her way to the stand. She picks at some trinkets and something she likes.

CHRISTINE

Hello?

A woman, GLADYS, steps out from behind the back of the stand.

GLADYS

I'm here. That will be...Sparrow?
Ruby Sparrow, is that you? Where
have you been this whole time?

She embraces Christine.

CHRISTINE

Yeah, it's me. It's just Christine
now.

She stands back, a smile on her face, and looks Christine up and down.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)

It has been a while.

A young boy, four, steps out from behind the stand.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)

My goodness, is this your boy? He's
gotten so much bigger.

GLADYS

I know. His hair should be much
longer but you know how school is.

(MORE)

GLADYS (CONT'D)

Some of the rules from Tribal Council here have been tougher than others especially since Dickie Wilson and his Goon squad took over. (Beat) But, my it is so good to see you. I'm sorry about your grandfather...

Christine nods and bites her lip. She kneels down to the young boy who hides shyly behind his mother.

CHRISTINE

It'll be alright.

She rubs the boys cheeks. The boy laughs. She gently rubs the back of his cut hair.

CUT TO:

EXT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE. SAME

One house as far as the eye can see. Not a tree in sight. Patches of muddy snow covers half the area.

The house is a mess. Trash bags and plastic material cover most of the windows. They flutter and tear in the frigid wind. Piles of lumber lie rotted in heaps. A family of mice scurry about.

Nobody could live here.

INT. CAR

Christine just stares at the house and takes in the disaster.

Florence comes out and looks to the car. She waits. Christine gets out and runs to her mother.

EXT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE

They hold each other. Florence weeps. Christine struggles to hold it in, to keep it together.

CHRISTINE

I know mom. I'm here now. I'm here.

FLORENCE

They won't let me see him. They won't let anyone even see him one last time.

Christine's father, RANDY EAGLE SKY, from inside, comes out and wraps his arms around his family. The wind picks up.

CUT TO:

INT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE. EARLY EVENING

The wind has died outside. A fire burns in a crumbling fireplace. Some candles are lit and the sun that comes inside lights the area. Bottles of beer are scattered on the floor.

There is no electricity. There is no fridge.

Eagle Sky, the dark brown of his face an indication of sun and time, sits on a couch that sags in the middle and has lost three of its legs.

Christine drinks tea from a chipped mug.

EAGLE
We missed you.

CHRISTINE
Missed you, too. (Beat) I'm at a hospital now.

FLORENCE
That's wonderful. You got here fast.

CHRISTINE
I mean, it's small-- got some med stuff in the car. But it is good a place to start as any.

EAGLE
When are you coming home, Sparrow?

CHRISTINE
Dad, don't. Please. (Beat) It's just Christine now.

FLORENCE
Well, now that grandfather has passed-- we just hoped.

Christine puts her cup down.

CHRISTINE
I wanted you to come back with me. Get you outta here.

EAGLE
This is our house, Sparrow. We can't leave. We won't.

CHRISTINE
No Dad! The land is going. The factories are coming. What have they done to you?

EAGLE
What do you care? You've never cared about the ways of your people.

FLORENCE

Eagle! You know that's a lie.

CHRISTINE

I always cared until (Beat)... You should be one to talk! This whole area. This place isn't...It's not living. It's dying slowly. Do you know what they call this place out there? When Dickie and his spies aren't listening? This is a concentration camp, Dad. This is a holocaust and nobody gives a damn!

EXT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE

A black truck idles a hundred yards from the house. Two men inside.

INT. TRUCK

A white man, MIKE, and a Lakota, CID, stare at the house.

MIKE

New car. Should we do something?

INT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE

The door to the house opens on an arguing family.

Mike and Cid walk into the middle. Christine stands up between them and her parents.

Before anyone can say anything Cid declares

CID

You know the rules. Any suspicious activity. If we catch three or more of you together that's grounds for seizure.

EAGLE

It's just my daughter--

Cid looks with recognition.

CID

Shut the fuck up! Your daughter? Not the way I hear it. Not with this *half-breed*.

CHRISTINE

Get out of our house, Goon!

Cid pulls out a switch blade and walks over to Christine.

CID

Goon? That's right you little hippie bitch.

(MORE)

CID (CONT'D)
 Guardians of the Oglala Nation. We
 keep the peace around here, around
 our people, Half Breed.

Cid hands the knife to Mike who chuckles.

MIKE
 Goon, baby. Goon.

CID
 We missed you here, sweetie. Never
 gave the boys a kiss goodbye.

Christine slaps Cid across the face.

CID (CONT'D)
 Bitch!

Christine takes the chipped mug and breaks it over Cid's
 head. It only dazes him for a few moments.

Eagle tries to get up but is pushed over hard as Cid runs to
 Christine. He grabs his leg in pain as he hits the floor.

Cid grabs her by the hair and pushes her towards the bedroom.

MIKE
 Take your time!

A CAR HONKS OUTSIDE!

Cid lets go of Christine and runs to the window. He peers
 through the torn tarp.

The sun's last rays of shine reveal Joseph laying on the
 horn.

JOSEPH
 Hello? Hello! Anyone home? I'm from
 the Reader.

MIKE
 Shit. Fuckin' reporter.

Cid and Mike look at each other and Christine who still
 stands, her hair a piled mess. Florence comforts Eagle.

Cid snatches the blade that has fallen to the ground and
 points it at each of the family members.

CID
 You: donkey shit. I'll cut you all
 up and nobody in the world will
 give a squirrel's piss. Whitey on
 the other hand-- you keep your
 fucking mouths shut.

The two bullies head outside.

MIKE
 Wilson is gonna hear about this
 one! You're all done for!

EXT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE. SAME

Mike and Cid jog to their truck and head off. Joseph looks in their direction and back to the house.

Christine comes to the door, strong under the circumstances.

CHRISTINE
Leave us alone, please! We didn't
do anything!

Joseph takes a few steps towards her.

JOSEPH
Hold on there. Are you alright? I'm
just here to ask a couple
questions. You and your family. I'm
a reporter.

She rubs her arm where she was grabbed. It is starting to bruise.

CHRISTINE
No more of this.

JOSEPH
I'm just trying to find out what
happened last night. I was told
Raymond--

She sizes Joseph up and closes her eyes. She fixes her hair as best she can and sighs. The sun disappears over the horizon.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRIBAL COUNCIL BUILDING OF PINE RIDGE. NIGHT

A typical looking building has been refurbished to resemble a military complex. Several mounds of sandbags are piled around. Make-shift planks and barbed wire have been installed as a perimeter.

Some patrol guards wander about, machine guns in hand. Two .50 Caliber guns sit atop the building.

A search light scans the area.

Underneath a sign that says "Tribal Council Office" a wooden sign has been erected. Painted with red it warns:

"WELCOME TO FORT WILSON."

INT. TRIBAL COUNCIL BUILDING OF PINE RIDGE

More Marshals and Federal agents wander the fluorescent hallways. Shotguns and other weapons decorate the interior.

INT. DICKIE WILSON'S OFFICE

A big-boned man with short, black hair, DICKIE WILSON, sits behind a desk with scattered papers about; blueprints; building permits; Work orders.

A pair of glasses is perched on his nose.

He is on the phone talking business as usual to an anonymous CALLER.

DICKIE

Yes sir, I have the plans you sent over and I can assure you, as usual, the land is yours at a reasonable price. (Response) Just here to support what is best for everybody. (Response) I agree. Thank you, sir. I'll do my best.

Dickie hangs up the phone and begins to write down notes on a pad of paper. Cid and Mike walk in; dried blood on Cid's face.

Dickie looks up and puts his pen back in its holder. He takes his glasses off and lets them hang around his neck.

DICKIE (CONT'D)

Where the hell you been? First, those sons of bitches from the American Indian Movement sneak up to the Capitol. And if they ain't protesting up there we got our own instigators in town who want me to hang for a job I got fair and square.

He starts to laugh.

DICKIE (CONT'D)

Alright, tell me. The fuck happened to your face.

CID

Raymond's granddaughter. We were just keeping tabs like always.

MIKE

There was a reporter. From the Reader.

DICKIE

Fuck. See? If it's not one thing it's a goddamn 'nuther. Last thing I need is for some pencil pusher digging his nose up my troubled ass.

Beat.

Dickie looks at both men and thinks. He smiles and picks up the phone.

CUT TO:

INT. DILAPIDATED HOUSE. NIGHT

Christine and Joseph sit in two wooden chairs at a card table with a small hole on the surface.

Florence walks in. She has changed into pajamas.

FLORENCE
Your father's asleep.

CHRISTINE
I'll check him again in a couple hours, Mom. Don't worry. Get some sleep.

FLORENCE (TO JOSEPH)
Mister--

JOSEPH
Joseph.

FLORENCE
My Dad isn't here but I hear his screams inside. (Beat) Thank you.

She walks into the bedroom with Eagle and shuts the door.

The candles and fireplace flicker. Joseph packs up some of his belongings and eases his chair back as he proceeds to leave.

CHRISTINE
They're gonna let them off.
Whoever they catch. They're gonna let them go.

Beat.

Joseph takes that in. They walk towards the door.

JOSEPH
I'm very sorry this happened. I don't think I could hold it together as well as you.

He reaches into his pocket for a business card. He gives it to her.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
If you decide to stick around; have any more information...

She looks at the card. Joseph nods and lets the slamming of the door signal his goodbye.

INT. DELAPIDATED HOUSE - BEDROOM. SAME

Christine inches into her parent's bedroom quiet as a mouse.

The lightest of breezes comes from a window with no window. There are holes in the ceiling, small icicles in a corner.

Eagle begins to lightly shake under torn and tattered blankets. His teeth chatter.

Christine comes to his side and pulls the blanket higher on his body.

She hangs her head.

CUT TO:

EXT. TWO BLOCKS FROM THE READER. NIGHT

Joseph's car comes to a slow pace as he sees the flashing red lights of an ambulance up ahead.

As he passes the scene he notices someone standing nearby.

He comes to a stop.

JOSEPH
Charlie! Hey, it's Joseph.

A scrawny kid runs up to Joseph. He sticks his head down to the window.

CHARLIE
Oh hey, Joe.

JOSEPH
There a story here?

CHARLIE
Nah. Don't think so. Looks like a mugging. Maybe a fight with the wife. Knifed 'em good. Didn't scalp 'em though...

The color drains from Joseph's face. He throws the car into park and opens the door. Charlie stumbles back a couple of feet.

Joseph, shoes scraping the concrete in a slow jog, makes his way over to the gurney that holds the body. One of the medics tries to stop him.

JOSEPH
I'm a reporter. Please.

He moves in and pulls the sheet away from the face of LOUIS DOG BEAR.

Joseph peeks under more of the sheet to see multiple stab wounds. Some blood makes its way to his fingers.

MEDIC

Did you know him? From the looks of
it poor guy got stabbed (Beat)
enough...

The medic puts the sheet back and Joseph looks on in
disbelief as the body is loaded and the ambulance pulls away.

CUT TO:

INT. RAPID CITY READER - EDITOR'S OFFICE. SAME

Joseph walks into Wally's office. He covers his face with his
hands and exhales.

He sits on Wally's leather couch. Typewriters "clickity-
clack" outside.

JOSEPH

Just give me a couple of hours. I
got your story.

WALLY

No you don't.

JOSEPH

Sure I do. One of my contacts was
just killed.

WALLY

Yeah, OK, sorry. But the story is
still a no-go.

JOSEPH

Couple hours, tops. I'm on it.

WALLY

Jesus, Joe. Give it a break. We got
another story. I told you. It was
filler to begin with.

JOSEPH

Who's this coming from? Those two
guys with the girl?

Joseph stands up and looks at the telephone. He points as he
walks over to the desk.

WALLY

Fuck you! Listen to you. I don't
take orders from no one.

JOSEPH

I bet. Someone got to you. Since
when do we kill a story about a
murder.

WALLY

About that. It ain't gonna be about
a murder to begin with. So you got
nothing.

JOSEPH
What are you talking about?

WALLY
Your Ingin' "murder" was an
accident. That's the official word.

JOSEPH
He was stashed in the trunk of a
car for chrissakes.

WALLY
Don't shoot the messenger, pal.
When you were about doing whatever
I got the charge. 2nd Degree-
Manslaughter. That's it.

Joseph is taken aback.

WALLY (CONT'D)
You know how it is around here,
Joe.

JOSEPH
Nobody in this fucking state has
ever even spent one single day in
jail for a fucked up charge like
that. Not one day!

WALLY
Look, I'm sorry. I really am. For
everyone here, for your own good
just give it a break. It was just
one guy.

JOSEPH
Two. Two guys now. (Mockingly) Poor
drunkin' Ingin' done fell on his
tomahawk. (Beat) Wally, you're
right. I know how this place is.

Joseph storms out.

INT. RAPID CITY READER

Joseph heads over to his desk. A SECRETARY passes by.

SECRETARY
Joe, some girl named Christine
called. No home line. A motel.
Number's on the phone.

Joseph walks over to his phone, picks up the note, and dials.

Christine answers.

JOSEPH
Hey, it's Joseph.

CHRISTINE
Good. You got my message.

JOSEPH
They pulled the story. You were
right. They got off.

Beat.

Joseph looks down to his blood tinged finger tips.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
You need to be careful. Things are
getting worse out there.

CHRISTINE
I know some people. We're having a
meeting tomorrow at Calico Hall.
It's off the rez and more safe.
You're welcome to come...

JOSEPH
Thanks. But with everything-- I
can't get involved. Sorry.

CUT TO:

EXT. CALICO HALL. AFTERNOON

About two hundred people move about Calico Hall. Cars are
parked on the sides of the road; anywhere there is a space.

A LARGE MIX OF VARIOUS TYPES OF PEOPLE; some white; some
black; Asian; many Indians; young and old alike.

Though some appear serious the general vibe is JOYOUS. People
smile and laugh. Some elderly sit in cars or on benches.
Children run around and play.

A young Indian girl kisses a boy on the cheek.

The sun, though only a couple hours from setting, shines
bright and makes the sky above a soft hue of pink and purple.

INT. CALICO HALL

The place is packed; some spots elbow to elbow. A baby cries
in the midst, people talk over each other.

Christine looks to the door with an expectant look on her
face.

From behind her comes the voice of a young Indian man named
BUDDY LAMONT.

BUDDY
You waiting on someone?

CHRISTINE
Not at all.

She turns around. SURPRISE SURPRISE! She throws her arms around Buddy.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
Buddy. Oh my! Where have you been?
I missed you.

BUDDY
With AIM. Causing loads of mischief
and shit as always. The fuck you
run off to? Everyone missed the
hell out of you.

CHRISTINE
You know how it is. Had to find
myself.

BUDDY
You get lost?

A man takes the stage-- AIM activist DENNIS BANKS.

DENNIS
Ladies and Gentlemen. My brothers.
My sisters.

He smiles. His voice booms but it is not as intimidating as it is prolific.

DENNIS (CONT'D)
If everyone could make their way
in. What a turn out, my goodness.
I'm told I have a big mouth but I
don't know if it's big enough to
get to everyone outside.

The crowd laughs.

DENNIS (CONT'D)
My name is Dennis Banks. I am just
one member of AIM; just another
voice who got tired of watching the
evils that have befallen all of us
from East to West. (Beat) I am up
here not as a leader but as a
friend. I am up here with the good
people, the good leaders of the
Lakota people who have just had
about enough of Dickie Wilson and
his Nazi tactics.

The crowd erupts. A few fists pump the air. A tribal cry comes from several men and women.

DENNIS (CONT'D)
I see your young men, your boys who
have been stripped of their
culture. I see my beautiful sisters
beaten and victimized by, I hate to
say it but it is too true, my own
people. If we sing, we get
arrested. If we dance, we are beat
within an inch of our lives.
(MORE)

DENNIS (CONT'D)

The peace of our culture has been made the enemy of the State. (Beat) And yet, there is hope. Tonight we look for that hope in you.

He puts the mic down and opens the floor to the people. A woman's voice, ELLEN MOVES CAMP, comes up from the crowd.

ELLEN

My name is Ellen Moves Camp. On behalf of the women here I say-- shame on all you men!

The crowd mumbles.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

I say shame that our men have become boys and have not been there for the women when we needed you most. We Lakota ladies are a strong bunch.

An "amen" comes from someone. The crowd laughs.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

But we are part of you. When our half is lost, we are only a fraction. Do something now. Do something and we will not stand behind you...we will stand by you!

More Indian calls, the room is ecstatic. Dennis nods his head in approval.

An aging man, wrinkles etched in red, burnt stone, paces to Dennis. Dennis grabs the mic and holds it reverently to LEONARD CROW DOG.

Everyone goes silent with respect. His voice slow, deliberate, Leonard is the vision of a time past.

LEONARD

I see so much tonight. In face and body the colors of the rainbow. In face and body I see those who have served this country. There, men who fought in the Second Great War. Over there, men who came back scarred from the war that still rages in Vietnam. In face and body I see the mothers of our people who have fought to keep going as their lives crumbled by death after death. (Beat) But In heart I see change. I see my people who have been scattered coming together as one with new brothers and with new sisters.

Silence.

Some sniff. Some cry. Some say silent prayers that have been kept in too long.

JOSEPH WALKS IN FROM THE BACK DOOR. Christine pretends not to notice. Joseph makes his way over to her and apologizes without a word.

DENNIS

With your approval AIM would dare say that we go show Dickie Wilson and his Goon Squad that we are not afraid anymore. We march on the once sacred Tribal ground that he has corrupted and stop him and his bully tactics. The U.S. government put him in his position and now it is time we put him in his place. Take back the land and our ways!

The crowd erupts. "Yeah!" "Let's go!"

ELLEN

NO!!

Silence.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

Listen to yourselves. Those bastards are looking for any reason to kill us all and if we go there-- we'll be walking right into their gun sights.

The crowd takes that in.

VOICE

What should we do?

Christine looks to Joseph and then proceeds to walk to the stage.

CHRISTINE

Some of you know me. (Beat) My Grandfather...our Grandfather Yellow Thunder was taken from us and we all know that it will be soon forgotten. (Beat) Forty years ago a people were beaten and killed for who they are. For being alive Jews were slaughtered. One hundred years ago our people were slaughtered at a place we know as Wounded Knee. Since that massacre an ongoing Holocaust has befallen us. If anybody is to not forget, then we must give them a reason to remember that we are here. And we are still alive.

EXT. CALICO HALL. NIGHT

The sun has set. People rush out and pile into their cars. Headlights flare up, tribal calls go into the air.

There is electricity.

As the cars pull out and form into a line, as they drive into the darkness, dust floats to the heavens.

CLOSE UP on hall doors as Joseph walks out, the last cars leave the parking lot. He makes his way to his car, a forlorn look on his face, and leaves IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRIBAL COUNCIL BUILDING - PINE RIDGE. SAME

Marshalls and policemen look into the distance. A STREAM OF CARS comes in their direction.

A POLICEMAN gets on his walkie-talkie.

POLICEMAN
Wilson, we may have a situation.

INT. DICKIE WILSON'S OFFICE - PINE RIDGE

Wilson looks out his second-story window and sees, from his vantage point, a parade of headlights. He jumps up and grabs a shotgun on the wall.

EXT. TRIBAL COUNCIL BUILDING- PINE RIDGE

Wilson, along with several men, burst out of the doors. They meet up with about a dozen Federal and local enforcers with itchy trigger fingers.

WILSON
I warned you faggots that this would happen.

The Goons take aim. CLOSE UP on triggers. The spotlights over the building shine into the darkness at the approaching vehicles.

.50 Caliber guns are locked and loaded.

An FBI AGENT speaks up.

FBI AGENT
Fuck, Wilson. Don't do something until something happens.

The cars are getting closer. Closer. The dust rises. The sweat of these men glisten in the spotlight.

WILSON
Fuck off Fed, this is my situation.

FBI
Men, do not fire until fired upon.

The cars descend upon them like a flock of metal birds. HORNS BLARE, YELLS of victory go into the starry night.

The young and old alike, of different backgrounds, lean out their car windows and give a tribal shout.

The Goons and Feds put their guns down, slowly. Some more slowly than others as they hold their aim just waiting for the right moment to blow the head off one of the instigators.

GOON #1

What now?

Wilson looks as the cars still go on by.

Beat.

He is infuriated as he runs back into the building.

FADE OUT.

CAPTION: *Day One.*

FADE IN:

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE SETTLEMENT. NIGHT

The stars sparkle and shine -- ON THE GROUND. It is a lengthy trail of lights that extends for several miles.

All the cars, 54 of them, park near the small town of Wounded Knee.

The town is made up of about ten small to medium buildings, THE CHURCH OF THE SACRED HEART, and a general store.

It is dark and the only way the town can be seen is because of the headlights and a few street lights near a couple of the buildings.

INT. BUDDY'S CAR

Christine and Buddy sit in their vehicles along with two other men, DANIEL and GERALD.

Slowly, some of the cars empty out and move to the outside edges of town.

BUDDY

Well, here we are.

CHRISTINE

Think it'll work out?

BUDDY

Do you mean do you think we'll make it out alive? (Beat) Probably not. Better say a prayer to the ancestors.

CHRISTINE
You do the praying. I'll actually
get something done.

BUDDY
Ahh, my little doubter.

One of the other men in the car speaks up.

GERALD
So, umm-- my name is Gerald by the
way. Friends call me Jerry. This
is...What's your name again?

DANIEL
Daniel. Nice to meet you.

CHRISTINE
How's it going.

GERALD
So nobody has any weapons, huh?

CHRISTINE
Nope. We're going into this clean.

BUDDY
General store has some stuff. Me
and some others will head over
there.

DANIEL
Then what are we doing again?

INT. A WOUNDED KNEE HOUSE

A family sits around the dinner table unaware of the
situation brewing outside.

There is a knock at the door. The husband, *TERRENCE*, looks
rattled, more nervous than the others.

The mother, *TRUDY*, gets up. Terrence grabs at her wrist. She
pulls away.

TRUDY
I'll get it.

She opens the door to Christine and the two other men. They
look intimidating.

Trudy looks somewhat *STARTLED* until...

TRUDY (CONT'D)
Oh my (beat). You got here faster
than we thought. Thank you for
calling.

One of her children calls up.

CHILD
Mom, is that them.

TRUDY
Yes sweetie, get your stuff. We're
gonna go stay at the church for
some time.

The kids, two of them, run into the corner and grab a couple
of packed suitcases.

TRUDY (CONT'D)
Sparrow, it's nice to see you
again.

They embrace.

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE

A group of men make their way to the back of the buildings.
Dennis is with them.

DENNIS
Alright, let's start that digging
boys and girls. Hope you brought
enough shovels and strength. Gonna
be a long night.

Several groups of men and women every other hundred yards or
so are in the same process.

They all begin to unpack shovels, toss picks around, and
begin to dig trenches.

Sandbags and cinder blocks, brought from other buildings, are
placed about twenty feet in front of the church. More
trenches and bunkers are dug around the perimeter.

Another group makes its way past these to the light posts and
any lines that come outside of the building.

VOICE #1
Save the phone lines.

VOICE #2
No prob. I tell you, it's a fucking
lot easier to do this when there's
no Charlies shooting your head off.

VOICE #1
Maybe no Charlies but just wait.

VOICE #2
Lights out.

With quick SNIP SNIPS they begin to cut. Wounded Knee goes
dark.

EXT. FIVE HUNDRED YARDS FROM WOUNDED KNEE. SAME

Patrol cars show up. Dickie Wilson and his Goons with them.

A few dozen marshals and Feds step out, guns unholstered, flak jackets on everyone's bodies.

The group looks into darkness.

FED #1
When's help going to be here?

DICKIE
Set up a roadblock, something!
Don't just sit around!

FED #1
Fuck off, Wilson. We got it covered.

Dickie Wilson grabs the man by the collar and shoves him against the car.

DICKIE
No! It's me and my men who got it covered.

The agent pulls away; dusts himself off.

FED #1
You're crazy.

A couple suit-wearing Feds make their way a few feet towards Wounded Knee. They hold a pair of binoculars.

FED #2
Oh yeah. It's dark.

Some of the men get back in their cars; some sit on the roofs. They watch. They wait.

EXT. GENERAL STORE

A small group, including Buddy, moves to the outside of the General store. They knock on the door. When no one answers they try the handle.

INT. GENERAL STORE

The store is filled with odds and ends. A fraction needed to sustain the 200 souls outside.

BUDDY
Nobody touch a thing. Treat this place and everything else with respect. Understood?

VOICES
Yeah, Got it.

Buddy moves towards the back of the building and finds a closet space.

He opens it up and pulls the cord of a light.

A DOZEN OLD RIFLES GREET HIM.

MAN
It ain't much. Shit, my grandmother
has a better selection.

BUDDY
Too bad she's not here. This is all
we got.

He pulls them from the rack and passes them back.

MAN
Think it'll be enough?

BUDDY
For what's coming? (Beat) Your
grandmother still around?

INT. SACRED HEART CHURCH

A dozen or more people wander the pews of the adequate Catholic church. Jesus looks down from his position in the back.

A couple of people have fallen asleep on the pews; others on the floor.

Christine stares up at Jesus in a mix of awe and questioning. From behind her comes Anthony.

ANTHONY
Christine?

She wheels around.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Sorry. Interrupting?

She shakes her head "no."

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
They want you down stairs. There
might be a problem.

INT. SACRED HEART BASMENT

Christine makes her way to the packed basement. Cots have been set up. An expressionless Trudy and her children sit on one. Some other families and singles are nearby.

TRUDY
He just left.

Christine sits down next to her.

CHRISTINE
Who left? Not Terrence.

Trudy pulls her children in closer, lightly placing her hands on their ears. Her eyes are red and puffy.

TRUDY
Uh-huh. Said he couldn't take it. Scared to death and all. I told 'em it'd be alright, that you all ain't doing nothing we wouldn't do-- but he's gone.

CHRISTINE
Oh hon, I'm so sorry.

Christine looks to the other "hostages." Nobody is terribly concerned, nobody is panicked, everyone is calm except for FATHER MALCOLM who holds a Bible in shaking hands.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
Folks, friends. If you were brought down here you have already been told that you can leave whenever you want. Even some of our people have decided that their fight is best at home. And that's alright. There's no point being here together if we're not all here together.

Christine walks over to MALCOLM.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
We got some food upstairs. Some hot coffee. Father--

She puts a hand on his shoulder.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
It's going to be alright.

He looks up sheepishly.

Buddy comes over and pats Christine on the shoulder.

She makes her exit and walks with Dennis and a few others, including Leonard Crow Dog and Ellen, to the corner.

BUDDY
Always the diplomat.

LEONARD
And the healer. Bless the ancestors for sending you back to us.

DENNIS
Alright everyone. Start spreading the word-- friends, family, pets, whatever. Get the word out quick that we're gonna need some help-- clothes, food, anything.

LEONARD
 Those we lost on this land will
 protect us. They hear our prayers.

Christine gives a non-believing glance.

BUDDY
 So, where's your friend?

CUT TO:

EXT. WALLY'S HOUSE. NIGHT

Joseph's car eases into the driveway of a nondescript two story.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. CALICO HALL. EVENING - EARLIER

The meeting has ended. People exit.

CHRISTINE
 Buddy, this is Joseph. He's a
 reporter.

Buddy fumes.

BUDDY
 I'm outta here. I hate--

Beat.

He starts to laugh, tosses a soft hand on Joseph's shoulders.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
 Kidding. Good to have you.
 Christine is a good old friend so
 if she says you're alright.

CHRISTINE (TO JOSEPH)
 Might make a helluva story.

JOSEPH
 This is crazy.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. WALLY'S HOUSE. NIGHT

Joe gets out of his car and walks to the door. He knocks hard.

CHRISTINE (V.O.)
 It's not crazy. Needed. If you're
 going to tuck your tail--

JOSEPH (V.O.)
 Shut up for five seconds will ya'?
 I'll do what I can. In the meantime
 I suggest you find religion again.

Wally opens the door wearing a brown and black robe over a pair of plaid pajama bottoms. The robe is open at the chest showing the hint of a wife-beater.

The glass of beer in his hand reflects off the soft light and TV reflection coming from inside.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
 I'm going to give you one more shot.

WALLY
 Me a shot? You...

JOSEPH
 There's a story. Big.

WALLY
 How big?

JOSEPH
 Vietnam big. But I need your help.

WALLY
 Is this about your reds?

JOSEPH
 Fuck you and yeah. It is.

WALLY
 No way. See you tomorrow.

Wally closes the door. Joseph continues to talk.

JOSEPH
 They've taken over Wounded Knee.
 Only 200 of them. And I can get in.

The door opens. Wally looks intrigued.

WALLY
 Vietnam big?

JOSEPH
 Yep. How do you want to do this?

WALLY
 How long you going to be in?

JOSEPH
 Week. Tops.

WALLY
 Call it in. I'll see what I can do
 with it. I'm not promising
 anything.

JOSEPH
Fine. Now about tomorrow.

CUT TO:

EXT. SACRED HEART CHURCH. MORNING

CAPTION: *Day Two.*

The sun erupts over the horizon casting rays in all directions. A couple men walk around the perimeter of the church, guns perched on their hips.

The bunkers are a mix of dug holes, mounds of dirt, very tall stacks of lumber, stacked cinder blocks. Inside each bunker are guards and scouts-- MEN AND WOMEN. Most wear red bandannas with some red paint on their faces.

Two men lead Buddy and Christine to one of the other buildings. They point.

A DOZEN BULLET HOLES.

MAN #1
Sometime around midnight last night. Someone heard a car over there then shots.

He points to a road opposite the Marshals. A wide open space.

MAN #1 (CONT'D)
Looks like some of Wilson's men want to send us a message.

Christine puts her fingers on the holes. Wisps of steam escape her pink, plain lips.

She looks into the direction of the staked-out Marshals and sees new black vehicles.

CHRISTINE
Those are new.

BUDDY
More Feds. Alright, looks like the cavalry is slowly pulling in. Good ol' cowboys and Indians; 1890 all over again.

Christine looks around, pats her pockets, then sees on the ground A WHITE, LONG RAG.

CHRISTINE (TO BUDDY)
Where are your keys?

CUT TO:

INT. BUDDY'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Buddy sits behind the wheel of his car as it makes its way across the dry landscape, Christine in the passenger seat.

THE WHITE RAG IS TIED AROUND THE FRONT ANTENNA.

EXT. ROADBLOCK

There is a rustle of movement among the cop's vehicles. Some men reach for their holstered weapons.

As Buddy pulls to a stop a hundred feet from the roadblock FBI agents, SLANZE and KROGER, step out of one of the black, tinted cars.

Dickie tries to approach. Kroger shoots him down with an icy stare and pointed finger.

Buddy throws the car into park and both Christine and Buddy reach their hands out of the car windows as a sign of peace.

They step out and walk a few feet towards Slanze and Kroger. Kroger reaches gently for his gun.

Buddy and Christine stop.

BUDDY
No need for that. We're unarmed and just want to talk.

KROGER
Unarmed? Just stay right there and I'll stay unarmed too.

SLANZE
Just turn yourselves in already.

CHRISTINE
Not until our land is returned and our people's rights are restored.

SLANZE
You will never make it out of this. Trust me lady. You have no idea what is coming if you piss off the wrong people.

BUDDY
In a couple hours all of this will be settled on the news. Just please, keep your men away. No one is going to get hurt no--

SLANZE
News already says different.

Slanze walks back to his car and pulls out a newspaper. He walks towards Buddy and tosses it the rest of the way.

Christine and Buddy read whatever is on the page. Their eyes go wide.

BUDDY
This is bullshit. This isn't--

SLANZE
Then come with us and let's clear everything up.

Christine folds the paper in her hands. She turns around and proceeds to walk back to the car. Buddy follows.

The FBI guys become irritated.

KROGER (O.S.)
Fine, go fuck yourselves. No one will ever listen to you. Turn your back on me?

Louder.

KROGER (CONT'D)
Talk about your rights? Fuck that! The 14th Amendment says you sons of bitches have no goddamn rights. You have started this and we

LOUDER.

KROGER (CONT'D)
We'll fucking wipe you out!

Christine and Buddy pull the car away. Christine stares at the white cloth that flutters in the cold breeze and shakes her head in disgust.

CUT TO:

INT. SACRED HEART CHURCH BASEMENT. SAME

A TV play. The elders and others are gathered around. The ANCHOR has begun the story.

ANCHOR
A local South Dakota man escaped last night after a group of vigilante Indians, led by activist and suspected hostile group, AIM, descended in the middle of the night upon the tiny, peaceful hamlet of Wounded Knee. The man, who wishes to remain anonymous, asserts that the one-thousand or so Indians are not only armed and extremely dangerous but have some twenty hostages under their guard, including his wife and two children whom he quotes "prays for every minute."

Beat.

ANCHOR (CONT'D)
More as this breaking story
develops.

A hand turns the volume down. The basement is a cacophony of mixed emotions.

CHRISTINE
Nobody will listen if they think we
have hostages.

BUDDY
Your friend did this?

CHRISTINE
No... I don't. No. He went out to
help.

VOICE
I bet he did. Fell for it.

BUDDY
Then where's the help? First nobody
shows for the press conference, and
now this? He's just like the rest.

LEONARD
Peace everyone. Calm. Our people
have been through much worse.

The voices die down.

BUDDY
And I think we're about to join
them.

CUT TO:

INT. JOSEPH'S CAR. SAME

Joseph drives his car towards Wounded Knee. The RADIO plays the local news.

RADIO
--Dickie Wilson had this briefly to
offer on the situation.

WILSON ON RADIO
They are communists, and they are
implementing Communist tactics
plain and simple. These people
cannot tolerate leadership and know
nothing but anarchy.

The program drones on but Joseph's attention is turned forward, down the road.

A line of cars has been stopped. Men with guns go car to car.

JOSEPH
Shit.

Cars from the front of the line turn around and head home. They zoom past Joseph.

A Marshal draws his weapon and points it at the driver of a car two cars down.

Moments later the doors come open and the people inside are VIOLENTLY MAN-HANDLED.

A WOMAN is dragged from the car and pulled across the gravel and dirt. Her shirt goes up; her bra shows.

A COP interrupts Joseph's watching.

COP
Sir, turn around.

JOSEPH
Huh...no. I'm a reporter. I'm on...

COP
Not today you ain't. Turn around.

Beat. Confliction.

Joseph puts the car in drive AND TURNS AROUND.

Beat. What to do?

He looks in the rearview and sees the innocent, unarmed victims being forced on the ground, face down.

He hears the radio.

RADIO
--hostiles at it again-- typical
behavior-- 7th Calvary heroes of
1890 encountered reds--

HE TURNS THE CAR AROUND AND RUSHES PAST THE ROADBLOCK.

A trickle of sweat on his brow as he looks back to see dumbfounded Marshals. A FEW CARS FOLLOW HIS LEAD.

His eyes catch something else. INCOMING TRUCKS in the distance.

JOSEPH
Jesus, Mary, Joseph.

CUT TO:

INT. SACRED HEART CHURCH. SAME

Joseph comes through the front doors. Christine and Buddy rush up to him.

CHRISTINE
Where the hell have you been?

JOSEPH
Nice to see you, too.

BUDDY
Great job out there.

JOSEPH
It's not over yet. Just give it
some time. It looks bad now.

BUDDY
You think?

JOSEPH
The news has gotten wind and if I
know anything about this business.

CHRISTINE
Yeah, they're going to keep on
lying.

JOSEPH
Maybe. But the sooner they get here
the sooner we stand a chance with
what's coming down the road.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROADBLOCK. SAME

The ground begins to rumble as a half dozen Army trucks make
their way to the front of the roadblock.

They pass on the skirt of the road and come to halt.

Thirty armed men in CIVILIAN CLOTHES jump out with machine
guns and grenades attached to their belts.

COLONELS VOLNEY and POTTER make their way towards the front
of the line.

Dickie comes over to greet them as they continue to walk.

DICKIE
Colonels, glad you could finally
show. I'm--

VOLNEY
We know who you are, Wilson. Just
keep out of our way.

DICKIE
This is my land. My rules. I--

POTTER
Got us into the mess. We agree.
When you are needed you will be
called upon. Now disappear.

Wilson stops dead in his tracks.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE BUNKER. SAME

Several bunker GUARDS pass binoculars around. A few families and others wander around outside. They eye the Army trucks.

GUARD #1
That's weird.

CHRISTINE (O.S.)
What?

Christine and Joseph step down into the bunker. The binoculars are passed to Joseph.

GUARD #1
They're in normal clothes but those aren't normal guys and those are military trucks. I should know.

GUARD #2
Since when does the Army wear civilian clothes on duty?

GUARD #1
Never when I was serving. Looks like we're a first.

Joseph squints into the binoculars. Some playing children scurry about.

From the POV of the binoculars is seen the Army men quickly aiming their M-16's.

THE WORLD IS SILENT.

JOSEPH
Oh no! Get...!!

OUT OF NOWHERE THOUSANDS OF BULLETS "WHIZZ" BY.

RAT-A-TAT-TA-TAT.

The delayed sound of the shots reach Wounded Knee in a few seconds. The echo with the nearby bullet impact of the buildings is deafening. Bullets graze the ground digging intermittent holes in a line towards their targets.

The families drop to the ground; some roll themselves into the makeshift bunkers.

Screams and panic fills the air. The children cry. Some men rush out to save them. They keep their heads down.

One of the guards tries in vain to raise his gun. He's scared. As he steadies his aim a bullet rips off two of his fingers.

Blood covers his arms and jacket.

EXT. SIDE OF THE CHURCH.

Everyone starts to scream. Wood from the church comes off in chunks. White flecks spray into the air.

EXT. ROADBLOCK

The men are lined up. Their guns shoot hundred of rounds a minute.

Shells pile at their feet in a rain of bronze, smoking metal.

CUT TO:

INT. WOUNDED KNEE HOSPITAL. SAME

The door to the hospital bursts open and dozens of people swarm in.

A few gurneys have been set up, and a couple of trays with a handful of equipment lie about. But, for all intents this hospital only skims by on its purpose.

The wounded guard walks in; his free arm draped over that of another man.

The guard breezes through his nose as a line of perspiration dots his wrinkled brow.

Several people inside begin to sit down away from the walls. Breathing and anxiety go down to a minimal.

GUARD #1
I'm fine. I'm fine. Just put me
down.

Christine comes up to him and gives a look.

CHRISTINE
Sorry. Looks like you're only to be
counting to eight from now on.

Small chuckles move about UNTIL

A little girl is brought in, her once white dress underneath a winter coat now soiled with blood and mud.

Her FATHER places her on a gurney as her mother cries in the background.

FATHER
She wasn't near anything-- she was
inside and...

Christine quickly reaches to a nearby table for a pair of scissors and begins to cut the dress. She looks for a wound.

CHRISTINE

I can't find-- I don't see a wound.

She moves the child about carefully but quickly.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)

Give me that rag. Wet.

She is handed the rag and wipes. And then sees A DEEP GRAZE.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)

It's OK. She. The bullet missed.
Here. It got close, real close. But
not too close. (Beat) She. She'll
be OK.

The father hugs the mother. In the corner Ellen Moves Camp, hands folded in prayer, opens her eyes.

ELLEN

Our ancestors have protected this
little girl. They will protect us
and keep us in ways we could not
see.

Christine turns to the little girl whose eyes are open to the size of a sliver. She cleans the wound and patches her up.

CHRISTINE (WHISPER TO LITTLE GIRL)

Too bad you got shot at all. (Beat)
(To the room)
Sounds like they stopped shooting.

The girl's parents come over and stand over her. Christine makes her way towards a back closet.

A couple of men, including Joseph, inch towards a window and peek out. The three turn around and give the room a smile.

Joseph can't find Christine.

INT. CLOSET

Christine shuts the door and starts to breathe heavily. She stretches her fingers; shakes her hands.

GET A HOLD OF YOURSELF.

She puts her head against the door and keeps it all shoved in.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROADBLOCK. SAME

Several news vans, each proclaiming its affiliate in bold letters, sit still on and off the road.

A few reporters and camera crews are already out and setting up their equipment.

Volney runs up to one of them and puts his hardened hand on the lens.

VOLNEY
No, no! This is unacceptable.
This is a controlled situation.

The cameraman swings his camera away and pays no mind.

VOLNEY (CONT'D)
Ladies and gentlemen, it is unsafe to be here. Please turn around and go home. The White House will be more than happy to fill you in--

A reporter, STACIE QUELL, untangles some wires and situates her mic.

STACIE
That's fine, Colonel. But as long as you're here then we're here.

Another reporter chirps up.

REPORTER #1
The American people have a right to know what hostiles are doing on American soil.

Stacie looks at the reporter then back to her cameraman, KEN.

STACIE
You believe this? We'll see.

Yards away, Wilson and a few of his men whisper together. They turn to the reporters and the Army personnel and give them all cold stares.

Wilson tightens a fist next to his side, a soft crack of the knuckle barely audible.

CUT TO:

INT. SACRED HEART BASEMENT. AFTERNOON

CAPTION: Day Six.

Buddy and Joseph sit together drinking coffee. They both watch Christine as she walks about and converses with the "hostage" and others.

Always a smile on her face.

BUDDY
Don't let the warmth fool you.
She's a tough one that one.

JOSEPH
Really? Couldn't tell.

BUDDY

It's no wonder the elders like her so much. But then again, most of the women here got bigger balls than you and me.

They laugh.

He slaps Joseph on the back hard enough to make Joseph's coffee trickle down the side of his cup.

JOSEPH

So, Buddy, why are you in all this?

BUDDY

Oh, am I being interviewed? Hmm... I can count on my fingers how many guys I know who know any of the basic customs.

JOSEPH

And you blame who for that?

Beat.

BUDDY

Someone once said that the greatest punishment is forced isolation; solitary confinement and all that. Well, Joe. There's a reason we call our "reservations" concentration camps. Break something long enough and you're fucked counting the pieces.

Christine sneaks into the conversation, a look of anticipation on her face.

CHRISTINE

They're almost done in there.

She points to an office with a closed door.

JOSEPH

They've been on the phone quite a while.

CHRISTINE

Well, it's been a few days. With the news, maybe people are talking.

BUDDY

Maybe.

The office door swings opens. Dennis and several elders walk out.

Each in their own way, they just shake their heads in disappointment.

Buddy crumples up his paper cup and tosses it into a nearby trash basket.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
 Ding, ding, ding. Round one. Hope
 you're both in it for the long
 bout.

Buddy walks upstairs.

CUT TO:

INT. SACRED HEART CHURCH. SAME

Christine and Joseph walk into the foyer and follow the
 elders as they head out a side door.

OUTSIDE A BLIZZARD HOWLS STRONG.

Joseph and Christine try to shut the door as strong gusts of
 wind force it open.

They pull hard. It shuts.

EXT. SIDE OF SACRED HEART

The wind howls and screams. New snow packs high and wide all
 around. Drifts ascend six feet on the sides of the church.

The handful of elders plow through, heads high, unabashed and
 unwavering.

JOSEPH (V.O.)
 How many sweat lodges have they
 built?

CHRISTINE (V.O.)
 Enough. First day here and I think
 they started building those things
 before anything else.

JOSEPH (V.O.)
 And you don't like that?

CHRISTINE (V.O.)
 I love that they love it. But it's
 for them.

The elders reach the small, rounded sweat lodge, its brown
 and red exterior hidden under snow.

They open the door and step inside. Steam escapes and flows
 THICK AND HEAVY into the air, overpowering.

INT. SWEAT LODGE

It's quiet. The blizzard gone inside.

Small prayers and chants go spoken. Somber indeed but the
 occasional smile passes around; a small pat on the back or
 leg.

JOSEPH (V.O.)
 Maybe it works. I'm starting to
 think that maybe all you and your
 people have here is a prayer.

More steam.

More prayers from inside. Some more laughs as the ancestors
 have let the elders in on a hidden secret that is told in
 silence.

The sweat increases. Some elders have fallen into deep
 trances, their bodies sway gently.

JOSEPH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 You did good...great the other day
 with that kid.

CHRISTINE (V.O.)
 Thanks. Don't tell anyone, but I
 think I prayed. (Beat) For a
 second.

Laugh and steam.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARMY TENT AT ROADBLOCK. SAME

Outside the snow has begun to lighten. The flaps of the large
 green tent shutter when the wind picks up.

INT. ARMY TENT AT ROADBLOCK

Men lie around on cots. Some sleep. Others try their hand at
 a game of cards or dice.

In the back corner a section of tent has been made into a
 medium sized OFFICE. Aerial photos of Wounded Knee are tacked
 up. Stacks of papers line a table that serves as a desk.

INT. VOLNEY AND POTTER OFFICE

Dickie Wilson, Volney, sit down in chairs as Potter points to
 some of the photos and walks around the office.

POTTER
 Our reconnaissance planes show we
 got about two hundred of 'em at any
 given time. They are mostly
 isolated here.

He points to the church.

POTTER (CONT'D)
 But they come and go. Pretty much
 go about life as normal it would
 seem.

Wilson shifts his weight.

WILSON

It wouldn't seem. Know something about us Indians, Colonel. We're still here. You haven't pressed hard enough.

POTTER

Listen here, Dick--ie. The Pentagon and President Nixon will give us anything we need to "press." But this is going to be over by next week. The food that was in there? It's up. Nothing is getting in. Nothing out. And starvation is a nasty thing.

WILSON

We'll see.

Potter takes a step towards Wilson who stands up. They go toe to toe.

POTTER

You're a fucking nuisance, Wilson. You're only here as a favor and not even a very good one.

WILSON

And you and you're men are bureaucratic bullshitters who can't do much but barely get their guns off.

POTTER

We're not in this to shoot to kill.

WILSON

And that's why they'll still be there.

Beat.

Potter looks at Volney. Volney gets out of his chair and walks out. Wilson follows his direction with his eyes and turns his attention to Potter.

Potter whispers condescendingly.

POTTER

OK. The U.S. Army has no way of monitoring all activities especially among red low-lives such as yourself.

Wilson catches his drift and relaxes.

WILSON

What's the catch?

POTTER
 Stay the fuck out of Wounded Knee.
 I don't need your ugly face
 plastered on the news anymore than
 it is.

A knowing silence passes between them. From outside the office, Volney looks in periodically.

An OFFICER walks in.

OFFICER
 Sir, the blizzard has stopped.
 Visibility is back.

Potter gives a nod.

POTTER
 Thank you. Get the men ready.

The officer exits. Men scuttle around, pick up their weapons and walk outside.

WILSON
 My way.

POTTER
 I have no idea what you're talking
 about.

Potter puts on a coat and walks out.

Wilson looks at the pictures of Wounded Knee and smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. SACRED HEART CHURCH. SAME

Christine and Joseph are in the same spot they were earlier in their talks. Two men walk quickly inside with serious looks on their faces.

The hundred or so people inside begin to tense up, expectant.

An INDIAN MAN looks to his family and smiles as he gives a protective bear hug.

INDIAN MAN
 Don't worry. The walls our
 ancestors have provided will keep
 us.

Christine and Joseph look out to the sweat lodge where the elders still reside.

Moments later bullets pummel all the buildings of Wounded Knee including the outside of the church.

They skim close enough to the sweat lodge roof to drill holes in the piled snow.

CUT TO:

EXT. GENERAL STORE. EARLY EVENING

CAPTION: *Day Fifteen.*

The sun shines. Most of the snow has melted. Slushy, mushy mud puddles dot the terrain.

Joseph walks with Stacie Quell and her cameraman on the side of the building.

He puts up a hand for them to wait. Men and women in a nearby bunker lower their heads but continue in their conversation.

A small family, as if expecting something, begins to hurry their pace. One of the children is picked up.

A few seconds later MACHINE GUN fire erupts all around.

Stacie and Ken instinctively hit the ground and cover their ears. After only a brief round of a thousand or more shells the firing ends.

Joseph lowers his hand and smiles. Life resumes as normal.

INT. GENERAL STORE

Once plentiful, shelves are now EMPTY.

Joseph, Stacie and Ken walk around the general store. Ken continues to film anything and everything.

A Polish couple, FRACIE and GERETH, stand behind the counter. They give sluggish, shy grins and wave as the camera pans in their direction.

STACIE

Why you doing this, Joe?

JOSPEH

The tour? Well, the closer you point your cameras in our direction the better we stand a chance of keeping our heads.

STACIE

No, Joe.

JOSPEH

When this is all done there's going to be a spot for my Pulitzer.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR. EVENING

CAPTION: *New York.*

A middle-aged Jewish man, BILL ZIMMERMAN, nurses a beer as he and a few friends, MICKEY AND ANDY, ham it up.

Bill looks up to the TV.

BILL
Hey, Mack. Turn it up. Turn the TV
up.

He "shushes" his friends.

BILL (CONT'D)
Hey guys, guys keep it down. Check
this out. They're actually inside
now.

MICKEY
My wife is obsessed with this whole
thing.

ANDY
Who isn't?

ALL ATTENTION TURNS TO THE TELEVISION as Stacie Quell gives her report.

STACIE
... by all accounts everyone in
Wounded Knee is here freely. Here
at the general store a local Polish
couple has even been assigned the
job as store managers.

The scene changes to that of Gareth who can barely speak any English.

GARETH
Is not bad, here. Me and my wife do
fine. Been treated good.

Someone at the bar yells out.

VOICE
Look at 'em, he's scared shitless.
And did you see they had a guy with
a gun in the back.

VOICE #2
No way. He looks fine.

BILL
Shut up!

STACIE
I had the chance to interview AIM
spokesman Dennis Banks earlier who
had this to add to the ongoing
scenario.

The screen changes to a large close-up of Dennis.

DENNIS

In 1868 the Black Hills land was promised to us. Open up a history book; ask your Senators. You'll see. But, through corruption and greed, our land has been stolen and sold over the years to the United States Government. All we want is for the promises...

Dennis begins to tear up.

DENNIS (CONT'D)

The many, many promises made to our people to be kept. And I speak not just for promises made to the Lakotas of South Dakota. No. There are nearly 70 tribes represented here at Wounded Knee and we simply want those promises to be kept.

Back to Stacie's stand-up.

STACIE

Whether or not Mr. Banks' comments ring true to White House ears remains to be seen. One thing that is for certain is that, though the Constitution forbids the Army to engage its own civilians, the U.S Army stands, now one hundred and fifty men strong and growing, with machine guns pointed, (Beat) and they are not afraid to use them. In just the past two days we have estimated nearly twenty-thousand rounds shot at the two hundred men, women, and children of Wounded Knee. (Beat)
Stay tuned for more following these words.

The news-station music cues up and fades into a commercial for Alka Seltzer.

The crowded bar begins to discuss what they had just seen. Most of the dialogue is in favor of the siege.

MICKEY

Shit, Bill. It's messed up out there.

ANDY

I dunno, my wife was saying...maybe we should pitch in.

Bill takes a last swig of his beer.

BILL

Those days are over, boys. Let someone else clean up Uncle Sam's shit.

He slams the glass down and marches out.

CUT TO:

INT. ZIMMERMAN'S HOME. NIGHT

The door quietly shuts behind Bill as he slightly stumbles in. The beer has taken a tiny hold of his motor skills.

He flicks on a light switch and tosses his keys a little too hard on a nearby table. They bounce off a lamp and "clang" to the ground.

From the other room, with television in the background, comes the voice of Bill's wife, MILLY.

MILLY
Bill. Is that you? Come in and look
at this.

INT. ZIMMERMAN LIVING ROOM

Bill walks in, a television blares news from Wounded Knee. Milly sits transfixed. She can't take her eyes off the screen. Riveted.

MILLY
Every channel now, Bill. This is
huge. I think I saw one story on
'nam. Those poor people in there.
You ever seen how poor they all are
out there? And we know the Indiana
Affairs could care less. I say good
for them. Fight.

Bill looks to the screen and shakes his head. He walks over to some old photos that line a mantle.

PHOTOS OF BILL SERVING IN WORLD WAR II. In the cockpit of a plane; with his platoon; getting married; kissing Milly in his army uniform.

Several MENORAHS are placed about.

Milly still watches the screen.

MILLY (CONT'D)
I was thinking we should, ya' know,
maybe send some canned goods there
or something.

Beat.

MILLY (CONT'D)
Hon?

Bill comes out of his revelry of war days.

BILL
Huh? Sure. I dunno. Nah...

Bill begins to walk out of the room.

MILLY
Well I got the idea 'cause-- well,
remember Frank, the carpenter--
Frank Clearwater and his gal down
in Carolina?

She finally turns her attention to her husband and gives the
biggest "gosh darn" smile.

MILLY (CONT'D)
You'll never guess what
they're planning on doing.

FADE OUT.

CAPTION: *Day Nineteen.*

FADE IN:

INT. GENERAL STORE. AFTERNOON

The shelves are barren, empty boxes and cans of food overflow
in trash cans.

INT. WOUNDED KNEE HOUSE

A few families eat small cups of soup. A mother and father
look to their children who giggle. They look down at their
SMALL bowls still filled with soup and push them over to
their kids who continue to eat.

INT. SACRED HEART CHURCH

Everyone is quiet. Some hold their stomachs.

Dennis steps to the front of the church.

DENNIS
Hope I can talk over my stomach.
Negotiations are still being
denied, but the government said
they will provide baby food. (Beat)
So we told them we had one hundred
infants.

The crowd laughs.

DENNIS (CONT'D)
But please, eat small. It will only
last for a couple days and then...

Leonard Crow Dog begins to speak from the front of the
church.

LOUIS
At this point, everyone, we must
look to our blessings.
(MORE)

LOUIS (CONT'D)

The news has been told of why we are here. The world is beginning to see our atrocities. I only ask you all, whatever you believe, to offer up a prayer for food and safety. Thank you.

A few elders take the stage and continue to talk.

A hundred rounds of bullets echo outside. A stray one smashes through a window at the top of the church. It embeds itself a few inches from the watchful Jesus.

NOBODY NOTICES.

Christine, who listens in the back, makes her way downstairs.

INT. SACRED HEART BASMENT

She grabs a rag and begins to clean the tables. She starts to pick up empty food containers and take them to the trash.

As she picks up more and more, she grows frustrated.

She kicks over a trash can and slumps in a chair. She puts her head on the table and covers herself with her arms.

JOSEPH (O.S.)

Low blood sugar?

Christine looks up, her face flushed.

CHRISTINE

I don't know how long I can do this. Three weeks now. And they're up there saying "pray."

JOSEPH

So?

CHRISTINE

So? So? So there are little children up there and they may die. Three of the women are pregnant.

JOSEPH

They're not going to die.

CHRISTINE

They might.

Beat.

JOSEPH

You're the last person I thought would crack so quick.

CHRISTINE

I'm not cracking.

JOSEPH
 Sure, yeah. Always head above
 waters.

CHRISTINE
 Ahh, the outsider. Thinks he knows
 everyone by asking all the right
 questions.

He leans across the table.

JOSEPH
 Have you looked around lately? No
 food. A military situation. But
 listen.

They quiet themselves and soon from upstairs hundreds of
 hands come together as a growing community.

LAUGHS AND APPLAUDS.

JOSEPH
 If that ain't a miracle I don't
 know what is.

Joseph reaches across the table and grabs one of Christine's
 hands.

CUT TO:

CAPTION: *Day Twenty-Two.*

EXT. ARMY BASE CAMP. EARLY EVENING

The Army is in full swing as more CIVILIAN CLOTHED PERSONNEL
 and arms are added to the growing campaign.

The camp has grown. Now SIX LARGE APC's, armored military
 carriers, are stationed around.

New tents have been set up and nearly three hundred men come
 and go.

Outside, men, shivering in the cold, play with their M-16's.
 They take practice aim at anything and everything. Their
 coldness cannot be denied.

From one truck, an officer hands down dozens of GRENADE
 LAUNCHERS.

Two searchlights are put at opposite ends of the camp. They
 are turned "on, off, on, off" for test purposes.

One officer, with a stack of papers, hurries about and enters
 the Base Camp HQ.

INT. VOLNEY AND POTTER OFFICE

The officer runs to Volney and Potter and smacks papers and photos down.

OFFICER
Sirs, we may have a problem.

The two men scan the photos, Volney picks one up.

VOLNEY
How did this happen?

OFFICER
We don't know, sir.

POTTER
But the roads.

OFFICER
Yes, all blocked off. (Beat) But there it is.

Potter looks over the photos.

POTTER
There it is. But not for long.
Where's Wilson?

CUT TO:

INT. SACRED HEART CHURCH. SAME

FRANK CLEARWATER puts out his hand in a hearty handshake to Buddy, Joseph and Christine. His southern drawl an odd sound from an Indian.

FRANK
Hi. Frank Clearwater. This is my
fiance, Sara.

Sara offers a nod. Her hands full with a box of supplies.

CHRISTINE
How did you get here?

FRANK
For starters it wasn't easy. Got
roadblocks all around. But somehow
we made it through. And so did all
these people.

A new slew of people make their way into the church. They are greeted by the elders and others.

Each of them carry boxes, bags, or hold in their hands supplies of food, diapers, and other essentials.

SARA
 Everyone out there just thinks what
 you all are doing is fabulous.
 Frank is Native. I guess it was our
 time too. To help out.

Buddy grabs the box from her hands and walks them down to the
 basement.

INT. SACRED HEART BASMENT

Everyone makes their way around finding spots for the new
 food.

BUDDY
 This is HQ most of the time.

SARA
 Nice.

BUDDY
 Be careful if you have to go
 outside. They got itchy trigger
 fingers. They shoot everyday.

SARA
 We've heard. On the news.

BUDDY
 So far we've been lucky. They fire,
 but usually just to scare us.

FRANK
 Doesn't seem to be working. You all
 should scare 'em back.

CHRISTINE
 All we have is a few hunting, one-
 shot deals. Nothing special.

FRANK
 Nothing at all? To make 'em think?
 Play with 'em?

CHRISTINE
 No. Nobody brought anything in.

A Kiowa, BOBBY, speaks up as he washes dishes in the
 background.

BOBBY
 Excuse me.

He puts the dishes down and dries his hands.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
 That may not be exactly true.

CUT TO:

INT. A WOUNDED KNEE HOUSE. SAME

Frank, Joseph, Christine, and a few others watch as Bobby opens up an old trunk in the corner.

He turns around and shows off

AN AK-47.

BOBBY
I was in 'nam up until last year.
Thing barely works.

He holds it out, barrel down.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
Old thing was souvenir. Only has a
few dozen rounds.

Christine walks over and takes it from him.

CHRISTINE
You should not have this here. You
knew the rules.

Bobby takes the blame in his face.

BOBBY
I know. Just thought--

CHRISTINE
Good thing some rules are made to
be broken.

She gives him a sly wink.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
So. Antique gun. Few bullets.
Barely works. Now what?

She looks to Frank.

FRANK
Give me a couple hours. Any lumber
around here?

CUT TO:

INT. WOUNDED KNEE SHED. MOMENTS LATER

Frank, Buddy and a couple men cut at stacks of lumber.

Joseph walks in followed by several scouts. They each hold old several hunting rifles in their hands. Joseph holds two buckets.

JOSEPH
Got 'em all here. And found a
couple buckets of paint.

FRANK
That'll do. Now to play doctor.

EXT. BASE CAMP

Colonel Volney and Potter look through binoculars.

VOLNEY
Something got 'em all excited out there. Why they in that one building?

POTTER
Don't ask.

From the quick, blurry POV movement of binoculars we see all the men from the shed coming out.

THEY HOLD AK-47's.

POTTER (CONT'D)
Shit! Where did they get AK's? I thought you said they had rifles.

VOLNEY
They fucking did! I don't--

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE

Each man, excluding Joseph, holds his gun proudly. Joseph simply whispers under his breath.

JOSPEH
They're cardboard cut-outs.

BUDDY
This is fucking great!

Scouts fan out to their respective bunkers holding their rifles that now have wood attached to them to make them look like AK's.

Bobby sits in one bunker.

BOBBY
Here goes.

He and the guards inside hold their AK's up in the air. He fires.

As quickly as he shoots he scrambles up and out using all available cover to hide his movement.

He drops in another bunker and SHOOTS MORE ROUNDS.

He repeats.

EXT. BASE CAMP

Volney and Potter watch. From their POV they see each bunker firing these new, powerful weapons into the air.

VOLNEY
Shit! They're loaded. Get me
Commander Haig on the phone.

FADE OUT.

CAPTION: *Day Twenty-Five.*

CUT TO:

INT. WOUNDED KNEE. AFTERNOON

Joseph and Christine walk together along the edges of the buildings.

CHRISTINE
Frank wanted me to tell you thanks
for helping with the rifles.

JOSEPH
He shouldn't.

CHRISTINE
No. Buddy, everyone thought it--

JOSEPH
No. You don't understand. I'm here
watching. I can't get involved. I
screwed up.

CHRISTINE
Right. Rules. (beat) You screw up
coming here at all?

JOSEPH
Stop putting words in my mouth.
Each day I feel I'm this much
closer to... I got a job out
there. Friends. A girlfriend--

CHRISTINE
--Who left.

JOSEPH
Then I have someone waiting for me.
And I want to live to see it.

Christine turns on her heels and heads in the opposite direction.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
Hey wai--

Too late. She's gone.

Beat.

Joseph looks around, taking in the community.

A door opens at the edge of town. Out run two small children, a boy and a little girl.

Joseph watches. The girl turns in his direction and waves. He waves back.

A FLASHBACK TO ABBIE WAVING GOODBYE.

The children play.

Beat.

From the Army base camp in the distance a large truck barrels down the hill towards the Knee. The children.

Joseph looks to the bunkers. Nobody pays attention. He starts to yell and RUN TOWARDS THE CHILDREN.

Joseph picks them both up and looks over his shoulder.

THE TRUCK HAS STOPPED and turned around.

From outside the back several Army men aim new types of weapons.

CLOSE UP ON GAS GRENADE GUNS.

They fire. Poof. Poof. Poof.

Canisters of tear gas fall just a few feet from Joseph.

The truck peels away. The town is consumed in gray smoke.

A stranger runs up to Joseph. They take off their coats and put it around the children's heads. The stranger takes the boy from Joseph.

Bullets from Base Camp start to fire at the town. The stranger holding the child GOES FALLING as his leg is hit. He does not let go of the child. Joseph puts his weight against the man and keeps him moving, standing.

People cough, eyes water.

INT. SACRED HEART CHURCH

The doors burst open, tear gas quickly flows into the church. People clutch their eyes and shake their heads.

A stray bullet flies in and hits the arm of a woman in the back of the church. She goes down and looks at the wound in shock.

WOMAN
I'm OK...I think...I'm 'k.

Medics rush to her and the injured stranger. One elder waves a stick with a plethora of feathers above the injured and chants.

The crowd opens a path for everyone to come in. When everyone is in the doors shut.

Joseph looks around, breathing hard.

Massive shock across his face.

CUT TO:

INT. WOUNDED KNEE BUILDING. NIGHT

Joseph talks heatedly on the phone.

JOSEPH

It's me. Here's the latest. I'm done Wally. I'm leaving tonight.

WALLY

Save it, Joe. Just pack it in with your Tipi dwellers.

JOSEPH

What?

WALLY

The feds were down here today. They found evidence in your house.

JOSEPH

What evidence? They raided my place?

WALLY

You should have been straight with me. I knew you were hiding something. I knew there was a reason you were so antsy about your reds.

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE BUILDING - OUTSIDE DOOR

Christine has her ear to the door.

JOSEPH

Whatever they found it's a lie. They planted it.

WALLY

Whose side you on Joe?

The phone goes dead. Joseph hangs up.

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE BUILDING - OUTSIDE DOOR

Christine takes a few steps back. She fakes not eavesdropping.

The door opens. Joe looks at the door, to her. He can tell. He takes a few steps towards her.

CHRISTINE
Were you going to tell anyone? Or just up and...

JOSEPH
I was going to tell you.

CHRISTINE
So noble. Thanks for nothing! Just vanish.

JOSEPH
That I made a mistake.

CHRISTINE
No, I made the mistake. We never--

JOSEPH
--my home and friends aren't out there!!! They're not there...

FADE OUT.

CAPTION: *Day Thirty-One.*

FADE IN on a A TV NEWSCAST.

In a tight shot, Leonard Dog Crow stands poised in the middle; three on his right, three on his left.

LEONARD
We seek peace and are engaged in acts of aggression. We seek dialogue and are scorned. Our men, women and children, under a white flag are shot at and injured. But today, a growing community of all nations, of all colors, men, women and children stripped of their most basic rights as citizens declares itself to the world that if we are to be engaged as the enemy, if a war is to be brought to our doorstep then so be it.

The camera zooms back to an EPIC scene inside the Sacred Heart Church of two-hundred and fifty people.

LEONARD (CONT'D)
Today our borders are new. Today we are an independent nation and will act and react accordingly.

CUT TO BLACK.

CUT TO:

INT. WOUNDED KNEE HOSPITAL. AFTERNOON

Close up on the face of a Lakota woman as she SCREAMS IN PAIN. Pull back and we see she is giving birth.

Christine performs the procedure. Her smock has streaks of blood.

Two elders stand on both sides offering up incense and prayers.

CHRISTINE
Almost there. Just a few more.

The woman pushes and pushes. She squeezes the hand of her husband hard. His face displays comical anguish.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
Almost and--

A baby's cry of life fills the room. Everyone cheers. Christine takes the baby to her new mother and hands her over.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
A new life in the Knee.
Congratulations.

She looks over and smiles to Sara, who acts as a nurse's assistant, and begins to laugh.

CUT TO:

The following MONTAGE ensues under ENERGETIC, UPLIFTING MUSIC OF THE LAKOTAS.

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE. DAY

More people from the outside world make their way into Wounded Knee, always with supplies.

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE. NIGHT

A large Bonfire is set up in the middle of town. Everyone dances around it. Singing. Clapping.

INT. TELEVISION. NIGHT

STACIE

In other news, the "Godfather" himself, Marlon Brando, garnered many threats and "boos" tonight when he had an Indian woman accept his Academy Award in order to bring recognition and support to those still protesting in Wounded Knee South Dakota.

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE. MID-DAY

More media are walked through town. Media report from the outside.

Families play; with snow they build small snow-men. Guards and scouts in bunkers laugh.

EXT. ARMY BASE HQ. NIGHT

The Army increases its presence. More trucks. Almost four hundred soldiers watch.

They fire. Then life resumes at Wounded Knee.

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE. DAY

A herd of cattle happens to wander nearby. Everyone shrugs as to where they came from. Several get together and begin to round up the steer. The next thing we see is them eating meat around a large camp fire.

INT. SACRED HEART CHURCH. AFTERNOON

Frank, while in the kitchen, sees an old, large stove-pipe. He grabs some black paint. Frank situates the stove-pipe in one of the bunkers.

CUT TO:

INT. VOLNEY AND POTTER OFFICE. MOMENTS LATER

An officer comes in.

OFFICER

Sir, they have what appears to be a rocket launcher aimed our way.

CUT TO:

INT. WOUNDED KNEE BUILDING. DAY

Frank and Sara get married with Joseph and Christine by their side.

EXT. SIDE OF CHURCH. EARLY EVENING

Some people ask Christine to join them in the sweat lodge. She declines. Joseph goes for it, rips his shirt off, and enters.

INT. WOUNDED KNEE HOSPITAL. AFTERNOON

Christine treats the numerous wounds of children and adults.

THE LAKOTA MUSIC FADES. MONTAGE ENDS.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE WOUNDED KNEE. NIGHT

CAPTION: *Day Forty-One.*

It is so black, so thick with midnight. Nothing to be seen.

Beat.

A BRIGHT, RED, STREAKING FLARE SHOOTS UP AND OUT FROM BASE CAMP towards the Knee.

PISSSH-- Another flare. And another.

Goons, blanketed in shadow, the pink light barely touches them. They raise rifles towards Wounded Knee.

GOON #1
I wish I could fuck them all over
good.

GOON #2
You'll get your chance. Not
tonight.

GOON #1
Yeah.

They turn their weapons TOWARDS THE ARMY and fire.

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE BUNKER

Wounded Knee and the sparse plains that surround it are continuously aglow in soft red and pink.

Below the pink and red Joseph and Buddy sit watching in a bunker. Buddy wears a bandana.

They hear bullets coming from the distance. Moments later, yells from the Army followed by shooting at the Knee and THOUSANDS OF BRILLIANT TRACERS.

INT. BUNKER

The two clink bottles of beer together, they are tipsy.

BUDDY
Fourth of Fucking July.

Joseph takes another drink of beer.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
I think we should ambush the fuckers. They think we're gonna always pull shit. Shit, we should actually pull shit.

More red. Buddy and Joseph are the same tone.

JOSEPH
So is everything here how you planned?

BUDDY
Aww, give the reporter thing a break for a second. Not everything has to be an interview.

JOSEPH
I got canned.

BUDDY
So? I'm sure you'd like to be back inside.

CHRISTINE (O.S.)
He's a big baby.

They both jump a little as Christine's unexpected entrance startles them.

BUDDY
I almost pissed myself.

CHRISTINE
So, what do you think? Red my color? You boys looks lovely in it.

She grabs the beer from Joseph and takes a drink.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
So tell me, Buddy. How's ol' Joe here?

BUDDY
Still a tight ass. (Beat) But yeah, he's fine.

JOSEPH
The beer helps. Baby? Looks who's
talking.

They chuckle and let awkward silence go between them.

A low SINGING floats to their bunker.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
Shh...what is that?

They strain and hear the song more.

BUDDY
Fuck. That sounds like our
ancestor's ghosts man.

Christine and Joseph look at each other and laugh.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
No, seriously. Three hundred of
them were slaughtered right under
our feet. Maybe--

As if to answer his inquisitive superstition LAUGHS AND
SHOUTS go into the air.

Just people of the Knee from another bunker. MEN AND WOMEN.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
Oh. Guess they're enjoying their
beer too. Oh well.

He reaches down and grabs a bull-horn and points it towards
Army Base Camp.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
So, Army boys. How's the weather
out there? Mighty warm here. C'mon.
Drink it up with us. Let bygones be
bygones.

Joseph reaches over and grabs the horn. He looks mad.

JOSEPH
Cut that shit out!

Beat.

He speaks into it with his eyes on Christine, the blow horn
the opposite way towards camp and smiles...

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
And a bunch of warm women. Right
now, I got the hottest Lakota
giving me the "love" stare.

CHRISTINE
Idiots. They can't hear you.

JOSEPH
Could you?

He tosses the horn down and they all laugh.

A flare goes up bright enough to reveal a twinkle of interest in Joseph and Christine as they momentarily get lost in each other's eyes.

The song from the other bunker resumes.

A flare goes--

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. MILES FROM WOUNDED KNEE. NIGHT

Up.

Way off in the distance a small area is lighted red. That is Wounded Knee. It appears that this is the same day until this

CAPTION: *Day Forty-Five.*

On the ground a Ute family walks together. The father, CLEMENT, turns to his wife, SANDEY, and his two children, MICHAEL and JEN.

CLEMENT

See that spot? We're almost there.

HEADLIGHTS OF A PARKED CAR APPEAR OUT OF NOWHERE.

The family stops, startled. Clement pulls his children closer. They put their hands up to shield their eyes, their breaths now more apparent.

Car doors squeak open, three men get out, and a familiar voice returns.

CID (O.S.)

Sorry about that.

The three Goons are Cid, Mike, and another.

A moment later the headlights are gone. The moon above, cigarettes from the men's mouths, and the faint red in the distance the only source of light.

CID (CONT'D)

Looks like you brought the whole brood there.

CLEMENT

We just brought some food for--

The men inch closer. They are hidden in the dark, but the ground under their feet and the movement of cigarettes gives them away.

CID

Fucking dangerous where your heading, you know that?

CLEMENT

We don't want no trouble.

They inch closer. The family pulls back.

CID

No trouble? Helping militia groups
and no trouble?

MIKE

Fucking liars is what.

THE SLOW COCKING OF SEMI-AUTOMATIC WEAPONS.

SANDEY

Please, don't do anything. We'll go
home.

CID

No. No. Helping the enemy is in
your blood. The blood's gotta go.

CLICK. BOOM.

Clement is down. He holds his side. The children begin to
scream.

SANDEY

Michael, Jen! Run! Please don't do
anything. They're children.

The two run off in the distance.

CID

Fuckers. Go get 'em. We got orders.

Mike and the goon take off after them. Sandey tries to get up
but is pushed down by Cid. A few feet away Clement rolls over
on his side, hanging on with bloody fingers to a thin thread
of life.

WHACK. Sandey's face is punched with the butt of the gun.

A hundred yards away two tiny POPS of gun shots. Sandey
screams and cries.

ZIIIP. Cid undoes his belt and forces himself on top of
Sandey who struggles to get up.

He shoves her back down but Sandey, in one last hope of
desperation, kicks Cid in the groin hard. His gun gets lost
in the scuffle.

Cid doubles in pain. Sandey gets up to run, but turns around
to see her husband still moving.

She runs over to him and starts to pull him up when

THREE BULLETS. TWO HIT HER. ONE HITS HIM.

She falls over the shoulder of Clement who dies in a sitting
position. It is an awkward, devastating sight.

Mike and the other goon inch closer.

MIKE
Fuck Cid. Can't even handle a
woman.

Cid pulls himself up, coughing.

CID
Get the shovels.

CUT TO:

EXT. A MASS GRAVE. LATER

Cid, Mike, and the other goon drag the four bodies of the family.

Shovels hit the ground and start to dig.

As they continue to dig new graves, the camera pans and we see that several other, freshly covered holes are scattered all about.

A MASS GRAVE.

CUT TO:

INT. WOUNDED KNEE BUILDING. MORNING

Stacie Quells and Joseph argue.

STACIE
I'm sorry. I really am.

CAPTION: *Day Fifty.*

JOSEPH
And it's everybody? Just like that?

He snaps his fingers.

STACIE
Some will stick around, I guess.
I'm sorry. People see you all and
think it's going great. There's
other stories, that's all.

JOSPEH
What others-- doing great?

STACIE
Look, I'll talk to some of the
other crews. I'll tell 'em to put
in a good final stand-up.

Stacie grabs a bag of belongings and heads for the door.

STACIE (CONT'D)
 Joe, you know this biz. Memory and
 perseverance among our viewers?
 You're a sandwich now. Vietnam here
 and this Watergate thing over here.

The door opens before Stacie can get to it. In walks
 Christine with a plate of food.

JOSEPH
 Hey Joe, got some...

She almost bumps into Stacie who politely nods her head.

STACIE
 Everyone was very nice.

She walks out. Christine looks at Joseph who hangs his head.
 She puts the tray of food down and walks over to him.

Like a good friend, she wraps her arms around him. His remain
 at his side, defeated.

JOSEPH
 Doesn't get easier, does it?

CUT TO:

EXT. BASE CAMP HQ. SAME

The Camp has once again grown. Almost five hundred Army
 personnel and rising. Trucks come and go, Army Jeeps idle
 nearby.

Volney and Potter watch as the last of the news trucks,
 antennas on top, slowly disappear into the horizon.

Volney sips from a steaming mug and grunts approvingly.

POTTER
 Now we end this. How long will it
 take?

CUT TO:

INT. ZIMMERMAN HOME. NIGHT

Bill eats a sandwich alone at the kitchen table. He reads
 over a newspaper.

His wife walks in.

MILLY
 The news. They just stopped. Every
 station.

BILL
 And you're surprised? It probably
 is over, hon. They've been out
 there for over a month.

MILLY
Listen to yourself.

Zimmerman can barely take his eyes off his paper. He doesn't read it, but he has trouble looking at the accusing stare of his wife.

BILL
Milly, I am listening. I've been listening since the thing started and they can get themselves out.

Beat.

MILLY
You shmuck.

She crosses her arms over her sleeping gown.

MILLY (CONT'D)
Well, it's a good thing nobody thought that way when they went in and saved you and your men.

She turns on her heels and exits.

Zimmerman puts the sandwich to his mouth but tosses it on the plate; too disgusted to eat.

He hangs his head.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE. NIGHT.

No flares this night.

Four shadows dart between buildings, hidden. Their movement is proficient, coordinated. ARMY.

CAPTION: *Day Fifty-Two.*

They hold machine guns and quicken their pace.

INT. SACRED HEART CHURCH

Joseph and Christine talk together. Softly.

CHRISTINE
Do you know what being a half-breed means? It means they took turns.

Beat.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
After I could walk again I ran. And I never looked back. Out there... out there looking in is when I woke up.

EXT. SACRED HEART CHURCH

The Army men move slowly on the church bunker. Inside the guards don't see what is coming...

INT. SACRED HEART CHURCH

CHRISTINE

I was so mad that people turned
their backs on the things in here.
But when I left...

JOSEPH

You turned your back yourself.

The church doors open and in walk the Army men, guns at their sides. Seemingly menacing, overpowering.

Everyone gasps. Joseph and Christine get up defensive.

From behind the men come a few guards and scouts from the bunkers.

GUARD

No, don't worry. We checked. Their
guns aren't even loaded.

The squad leader, Native GARY FECK, takes a step forward.

GARY

Who is in charge here?

Leonard Crow Dog hobbles towards him. Gary begins to speak in Lakota.

GARY (CONT'D)

We wish you the best in all of
this. You have more support than
you'll know.

Christine begins to understand what he says and swallows hard.

GARY (CONT'D)

We don't want to see anymore get
hurt. We urge you to leave. They
will stop at nothing.

Leonard responds in Lakota.

LEONARD

I thank you. We thank you but we
must remain. For those who have
already fallen.

Beat.

GARY
Then the ancestors be with you
tomorrow.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASE CAMP. MORNING

Peace and quiet on the Wounded Knee plains.

RUMBLE. RUMBLE.

From behind the camp a massive machine makes its way up and over the embankment leading toward Wounded Knee.

A TANK.

The lumbering behemoth adds a new sound of domination. It rolls forward, its huge barrel pointed at Wounded Knee.

INT. TANK

The men inside shout commands and orders.

EXT. BASE CAMP

Potter and Volney stand at a safe distance, arms folded. They wait.

The tank inches closer. It flattens small trees and crushes scattered mounds of snow.

IT STOPS.

VOLNEY
What the hell are they doing?

They wait. The tank begins to back up.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. SACRED HEART CHURCH. NIGHT

The Army men leave the church.

JOSEPH
Anyone got any bright ideas?

Glances and silence is tossed around. Frank shrugs his shoulders.

CHRISTINE
How many trash cans do we have?

CUT TO:

INT. SACRED HEART BASMENT. SAME

Seven metal trash cans are brought in. Frank and a couple other men carry in large hand and electric saws.

They start to cut the cans.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. BASE CAMP. MORNING

The Tank has made its way back to the front of the camp. The driver sits outside.

VOLNEY
Land mines? Land mines? Fuck Fuck
Fuck!!!

DRIVER
Yes sir, take a look for yourself.
You can see 'em, just buried
enough. Shoddy job. It's new. But
there's no getting this thing in
there.

Volney storms off.

A few yards away Gary and his men pretend to oil up their weapons. Smiles and knowing grins pass between them.

CUT TO:

INT. WOUNDED KNEE BUILDING. SAME

Christine and Joseph stand back from a window. The dozen people inside give a mighty shout and applause.

JOSEPH
They fell for it! They left!

Joseph quickly reaches over to Christine.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
You're a genius.

They look into each other's eyes for a moment longer than is allowed between just friends.

Some people walk over and give congrats to Christine.

Sara approaches and whispers to them.

SARA
I hate to ruin the celebration,
but...

CUT TO:

INT. SACRED HEART BASMENT. MOMENTS LATER

Sara, Frank, Joseph, Buddy and Christine stand in a large freezer/pantry.

CHRISTINE
What else do we got? Anything?

SARA
You don't want to know.

JOSEPH
What is it?

SARA
Just hope you're real, real hungry tomorrow.

They close the pantry door. Frank heads over to the negotiations office.

INT. OFFICE

He slowly opens it. He sees a phone and picks up the receiver.

Looking at no one in particular he dials.

FRANK
Pray.

Sara "crosses" herself.

CUT TO:

INT. ZIMMERMAN'S HOME. NIGHT

Milly slowly hangs up the phone. Curious, Bill walks into the room.

BILL
What was that all about?

Milly turns around, coyly.

MILLY
Now honey, I know what you're going to say. But please hear me out.

BILL
Was that Frank? Is he still in there? Jesus.

Milly walks over and places soft hands on her husband's shoulders. She mildly plays with lint and the seams of his coat.

BILL (CONT'D)
 Well, what is it? No, let me guess.
 They need our help for something.
 Shit--

Beat.

BILL (CONT'D)
 Why didn't they call sooner?

He plants a wet one on Milly's flabbergasted lips.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL AIRFIELD. AFTERNOON

A small Cessna lands in the distance. It kicks up plumes of melted snow water on a glowing tarmac.

Bill Zimmerman stands with GREEN SCHNELL, a black man wearing dirty coveralls.

GREEN
 You doing what Bill? I don't know.

BILL
 I just need a plane. Alright? I know some wholesale guys and they got all the food for us.

Green wipes his trousers.

GREEN
 It's suicide.

BILL
 No it ain't, Green. C'mon, I flew tougher sorties in the war. This is cake. Besides, those people need us.

Green shakes his head and wipes his hands on his trousers again. They start to walk to a nearby office as another plane's tires splash a few hundred yards away. The sun glistens bright.

GREEN
 I don't got a plane, Bill. For that much food and stuff-- I don't got it.

BILL
 Fine but--

GREEN
 With that much food and stuff you need *three* planes. (Beat) I *got* three planes you crazy sonofabitch.

Bill extends his hand and Green shakes it vigorously with a defiant laugh into the air.

CUT TO:

INT. ZIMMERMAN'S HOME. EARLY EVENING

Bill slams the phone down. His aged hands flex into fists.

Milly walks in.

BILL
So close, Milly. This close.

He squeezes his thumb and index finger together.

MILLY
What now?

BILL
Too heavy. We need cargo nets.
Maybe a couple more chutes. We got
more than a ton of food and for
what?

He plops down in his antique recliner. Milly brushes past him with a wave of the hand.

MILLY
Oh ya' big baby. I mean seriously,
how'd you ever make it in the real
world to begin with?

She picks up the phone and dials.

MILLY (CONT'D)
Suze, hon? Milly. I need a favor.

CUT TO:

INT. ZIMMERMAN'S HOME. NIGHT

A knock at the door.

Milly opens it slightly. Her best friend, SUZANNE MATHE, enters in the crack of the door frame.

Suzanne plays with her faux-pearl necklace neurotically.

SUZZANE
Milly... I hope you don't mind.

Milly opens the door wider to reveal ONE DOZEN NEIGHBORHOOD WOMEN on her lawn with SEWING MACHINES.

SUZZANE (CONT'D)
Just like a snowball. All the girls
wanted in.

CUT TO:

INT. ZIMMERMAN'S BASEMENT. SAME

A dozen women work furiously at their machines. They Knit madly, putting finished CARGO NETS in tidy little stacks.

Milly supervises, going from one girl to the next.

Bill walks down into the basement, a blank stare on his face.

ZIMMERMAN

Hon?

Milly doesn't have time to look up and can barely hear Bill above the constant, incessant clatter of girl talk and punching needles.

MILLY

Oh yes, Bill. Some snacks would be nice. Some tea?

The women chime in "yes."

BILL

Yes. Tea and snacks. Right.

He walks back upstairs.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL AIRFIELD. MORNING

Dark clouds roll in, lighting flashes. Thunder growls.

Three, six-passenger planes stand in a row; engines loud.

INT. PLANE CABIN. SAME

Bill checks some switches and dials. His copilot, MORGAN, walks into the back to make sure the bags are secure. All the seats have been taken out. Bags are secured.

Over Bill's head-set.

GREEN

Nice day.

BILL

Didn't notice.

The third pilot, LOGAN, checks in over the radio.

LOGAN

I just met you guys. You sure about this?

Morgan sits down next to Bill.

MORGAN

Bill, maybe another day? Weather's bad all the way to Chicago.

Zimmerman ponders it for a moment. He puts on a kippuh.

BILL

Then we'd better make it to Chicago fast. (Beat) See you in the air fellows.

A moment later the first of three planes ascends into an ever increasing, violent thunder-storm.

The plane is swallowed up in dark clouds with no silver lining.

CUT TO:

INT. SACRED HEART BASMENT. MORNING

Everyone eats their food, quietly.

JOSEPH

You know, this might very well be the best meal for us.

He reaches down and grabs a small handful of brown, clumpy oats, wheat and nuts.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

I mean

He shoves the food in his mouth, gulping it down with a glass of water.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Cow food. Can it be any healthier?

His friends look at him in annoyance as they chomp down on their own mounds of cow food.

Beat. Silent.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)

Moooo...

Christine, halfway through a swallow of water, spews it up in laughter. Buddy and Joseph, like two college buddies, point and laugh.

Christine can't stop laughing. Soon, people around her join in.

VOICES

Moooo.

CHRISTINE

I think this is closer to nature than I wanted to be.

She bursts out.

BUDDY
I don't believe it. A laugh and a
joke.

Frank and Sara come barreling down the stairs, ecstatic looks
on their faces.

SARA
They're early.

FRANK
Few days we thought. But God...
It's here. The food is coming!

EXT. SACRED HEART CHURCH

The doors to all sides of the church come open. A few people
run to the other buildings. Next, those doors open and people
come out, happy yet suspicious.

Frank points.

FRANK
You can see 'em. Just barely. But
those are the planes.

JOSEPH
What kind were they flying?

FRANK
I don't know. Umm...the passenger
jet ones. You know, puddle jumpers.

The roar of the jets has reached Wounded Knee. Some people
start to clap and hug each other.

Christine takes a few steps out and squints.

CHRISTINE
Those are coming in too fast.

FRANK
Nah.

JOSEPH
Are they supposed to be that low?

FRANK
Nah...no. Not that I...

The jets, before anyone has time to react are ALREADY AT THE
TOWN.

They are not Zimmerman planes--

THEY ARE SUPER-SONIC PHANTOM JETS.

BOOOOMMMMMM.

The sheer sonic blast of it all is enough to pick up some people, in the path of the jets, right off their feet.

Shingles and long pieces of wood on the buildings are ripped off and thrown treacherously around.

One board smacks a young man in the face.

Chunks of dirt and snow are flung. A few tiny trees are ripped from their roots.

Everyone puts their hands over their ears but all they can hear now is a high

RIIIINNNNGGGIIINNNNNGGGG

Church windows crack and break. Other building windows explode inward on the unsuspecting.

The ringing won't stop. People stumble around-- DISORIENTED; smacking into each other; groping for doors; shaking their heads; sticking their fingers in their ears to regain their hearing.

Leonard Crow Dog falls to the ground. Blood comes out of his ears.

Christine runs over to pick him up.

Joseph points at something. Yells. But nobody hears a thing.

BOOOOOOMMMMMM

THE WORLD GOES IN SLOW MOTION.

The jets make a second come about. More destruction. More chaos.

Christine hits the deck for a moment and shields her head with her arms. She pulls her head up a moment later. Mud clings to her face, hair and clothes.

She shakes her head, and tries to get the hair out of her face with trembling hands.

HER EARS BLEED TOO.

Glass comes down all around her from nowhere.

She gets to Leonard Crow Dog and is able to pick him up; he is barely conscious.

THE RINGING CONTINUES.

Everyone scatters about, bumping into one another, trying to help those that have fallen.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASE CAMP HQ. SAME

The Army watches. They give high fives; the usual rowdy behavior.

VOICES
 Fucking ants, man. Little ants.
 Look at 'em all running and shit.

Gary hangs his head in shame and goes back to cleaning his rifle. He smokes a cigarette.

Two pair of feet fall in front of him. They belong to two MP's.

Gary gets up, gazes at the Knee, takes one last, long drag of his cigarette...

GRANT (IN LAKOTA)
 Peace and protection from the dead.
 Stay strong my family.

... and allows himself to be escorted away.

CUT TO:

INT. LARGE AIR-FIELD. NIGHT

CAPTION: *Day Sixty.*

Bill and his crew of five walk towards an airport office. An AIRFIELD MANAGER walks with them.

AIRFIELD MANAGER
 Now, forgive me for asking again,
 but what music group do you belong
 to?

BILL
 Look, my guys. They've been playing
 gig after gig and we've been
 stranded in Chicago for three days
 now.

AIRFIELD MANAGER
 I understand, Mr. Zimmerman. It's
 just a little unusual and all.

They enter the office.

INT. AIRFIELD OFFICE

The crew starts to unpack, situating small beds on the floor, in chairs.

BILL
 Look, we'll be gone by morning. Big
 show in the Dakotas.

He sits in a chair and covers his eyes with his cap.

AIRFIELD MANAGER
Then you'd better fly quickly,
Mr. Zimmerman. Looks like there
could be another blizzard any day
now. Three in three months.

Zimmerman and the rest of his crew stop what they are doing.

ZIMMERMAN
Anyone got a problem with that?

Beat.

GREEN
Rock and Roll.

MORGAM
Fuck an A.

Zimmerman smiles and goes to sleep.

CUT TO:

INT. LARGE AIR-FIELD. EARLY MORNING

CAPTION. *Day Sixty-One.*

Zimmerman and crew pack up their belongings, taxi, and fly off.

INT. OFFICE AT LARGE AIR-FIELD

The Airfield Manager sits at a desk, a lamp light hangs low to the top.

He fingers copies of Zimmerman's and crew's licences. The blurry, black and white faces, numbers and letters stare back at him.

He picks up a phone and dials.

AIRFIELD MANAGER
Marty, I have a favor to ask.

CUT TO:

INT. ARMY BASE CAMP HQ. MORNING

At a row of communication terminals a RADIO OFFICER writes down information on a pad of paper.

He signs off, tears the paper, and rushes to Volney's and Potter's room.

INT. VOLNEY AND POTTER OFFICE

The Radio Officer comes in and hands the piece of paper to Volney.

Volney looks down then up.

VOLNEY
How reliable?

RADIO OFFICER
Very, sirs. It went through a few ears but a field manager in Colorado got suspicious.

VOLNEY
We know their route?

RADIO OFFICER
Sir.

VOLNEY
Then we'd better lay out a welcome mat. When they're in range give them warning to turn around. I'll brief you in thirty.

RADIO OFFICER
Sir.

The officer leaves.

Potter and Volney let the silence in between them.

POTTER
Nothing's worked so far. They just keep coming in.

Volney gets up and looks at surveillance photos. Some aerial.
MORE PHOTOS OF THE MANY DIFFERENT PEOPLE IN THE KNEE.

VOLNEY
Resilient bunch. (Beat) Orders are orders.

Volney traces his finger across photos of the many smiles.

POTTER
And if they get here?

VOLNEY
If? If?! Haven't you learned anything?

CUT TO:

INT. ZIMMERMAN PLANE CABIN. AFTERNOON

Zimmerman and Morgan flick switches.

MORGAN
ETA. Thirty in.

Zimmerman relays the information to the other pilots. Morgan gets up and goes in back to ready the cargo.

INT. GREEN'S PLANE CABIN

His co-pilot does the same.

GREEN
Sky's clear, Bill. Storm's late.

BILL
We're lucky.

A voice comes over the head-set.

RADIO OFFICER
Attention! You are entering
restricted air space. Please turn
about. Be advised. This is
restricted air-space.

BILL
We are on a mission of peace. We
hold only food for the inhabitants
of Wounded Knee. Only food and
essential supplies. No weapons.

RADIO OFFICER
This is restricted air-space. Be
advised--

Zimmerman shakes his head. He turns the radio off.

CUT TO:

EXT. FLAT PLAINS. SAME

Trucks and Jeeps comes to a halt. Army men jump out.

A MASSIVE DEFENSE IS SET UP.

The Army has pulled no punches. About one-fifth of their
stationed troops, one hundred men, armed and ready point
their machine guns to the sky at an angle.

Four, .50 Caliber guns are placed. Their gunners shove long
lines of golden rounds into the gun.

Lock. Load. Turn. Aim. Wait.

And nothing.

The sun glares. The wind whistles and stops. A tumbleweed
scatters, some loose ice flakes from snow mounds tinkle down.

The men wait. Index fingers molest triggers. Eyes squint,
getting the perfect shot.

THEN

The low, tiny rumble of three passenger jets comes out of a low patch of clouds due south

CUT TO:

INT. ZIMMERMAN PLANE CABIN. SAME

Zimmerman looks over the dash down below. From his vantage he sees the defense.

GREEN
Bill, I don't like the looks of this, man.

BILL
This is not restricted space. They're just fucking with us.

Morgan comes up from behind. He looks out and down and quickly gets in his seat.

BILL (CONT'D)
No way, son. This ain't over. Get your ass back there.

MORGAN
We're still dropping?

Zimmerman puts his hand on the throttle and pushes it.

GREEN
We're still dropping?

LOGAN
We're still dropping?

Zimmerman gets an aged determination in his eyes. His voice to the point.

BILL
Fast and straight. We stay together. Follow my lead. (Beat) Get your men back there. Open those doors.

GREEN
What if they start shooting?

BILL
They won't--

TOO SOON. The bullets start all around. Miraculously they "zing" and "ping" outside but don't hit anything.

Below the men continue to aim and follow the path of planes.

LOGAN
Shit! I'm outta here. I got a wife and kids--

BILL
We all got that. Don't! Stay. Fast
and straight.

EXT. FLAT PLAINS

The .50 Caliber guns turn and follow
AND FIRE.

INT. GREEN'S PLANE CABIN

The front of Green's plane, the entire nose comes off in
chunks.

GREEN
Shit! Shit! Shit!

Green's co-pilot stands in back bracing himself with what he
can.

GREEN (CONT'D)
Goddamn, Bill. I'm hit.

BILL
I can see you. You'll make it.

The steering jerks and pulls in Green's hands but he hangs
on, his arm and face muscles flexing under the intense
pressure.

INT. ZIMMERMAN PLANE CABIN

Zimmerman throws his glance in the back. Morgan has shoved
his face into the bags.

BILL
Get up! Open up! We're almost
there.

Morgan looks up, shakes it off, and goes towards the hatch.

EXT. FLAT PLAINS

The Army men slowly lower their guns. The planes zoom out of
range.

A COMMANDING OFFICER gets on the radio.

COMMANDING OFFICER
Sirs, we have a problem.

VOLNEY
No we don't.

INT. LOGAN'S PLANE CABIN

A cold sweat is on Logan's face. His eyes wide.

LOGAN
This is great. Wow! Shit. Who are
you guys?!?

He starts a quiet laugh to the point of maniacal. His Co-Pilot in back follows.

INT. ZIMMERMAN PLANE CABIN

Zimmerman starts to laugh; his face void of sweat. Focused.

BILL
See, boys. Ain't nothing to it.

From the back.

MORGAN
Bill, we're ready.

GREEN
You owe me, Bill. Big time.
Everybody OK?

Zimmerman smiles and looks to the instrument panel. The GAS LIGHT pops up. The needle slowly, very slowly, drops.

He looks out the window.

BILL
Let's finish this. Fast and
straight.

EXT. ZIMMERMAN PLANE

We see a small patch of bullet holes on the side hull.

GAS LEAKS OUT.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE. SAME

Frank, Christine, Joe and others stand on the church porch steps.

JOSEPH
Sure this time?

Frank gives a thumbs-up.

CHRISTINE
Just wait. Let's see.

INT. ZIMMERMAN PLANE CABIN

Morgan pushes one bag out at a time.

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE

From their vantage, bags fall and float to the ground with parachutes. They land closer and closer to town.

CHRISTINE
Just a little more.

She watches all three planes as several bags come out.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
Get the flags. Let's go.

INT. ZIMMERMAN PLANE CABIN

Zimmerman looks below and sees the Wounded Knee inhabitants running out to the bags.

They pass over the town and head out.

BILL
YEEESSS!!!

GREEN
Hell yeah!

BILL
OK. One more pass, then we bolt.

GREEN
Roger.

LOGAN
Fine by me.

Each heads their own, safe way. The planes start to make their turns to head back.

One bag from Zimmerman's plane begins to slide out. The parachute gets caught on the inside but not hard enough.

Morgan reaches. Too late.

It tumbles out.

THE PARACHUTE OPENS IMMEDIATELY. It flys back and gets wrapped around the tail of the plane.

Zimmerman notices a change.

BILL
The hell was that?

GREEN
Shit, Bill. I see it from here.

EXT. ZIMMERMAN'S PLANE

The parachute flaps and rips. The bag bangs every which way but loose.

With one final bang against the outside fuselage the bag falls AND TAKES PART OF THE TAIL WITH IT.

INT. ZIMMERMAN PLANE CABIN

Morgan comes running up.

MORGAN
One of the bags. It got caught.

BILL
I know, I know.

Zimmerman stays focused, both hands firmly clenched on the shaking throttle.

BILL (CONT'D)
Just get back there.

Morgan hesitates but returns to the back.

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE. SAME

Several people pull the duffel bags in from the edge of town. More bags land to the ground.

THUMP.

Their parachutes touch down and blow in the breeze seconds later.

Joseph and Christine spot one bag near the middle of town.

Joseph points.

They start to run over to it when Joseph looks around behind him. He stares at Zimmerman's plane.

From his point he can see pieces of parachute dangling off the back of a plane which is missing a portion of tail.

JOSEPH
Christine, look at that. He's still flying.

But Christine's attention is on something else. She stays silent. Joseph asks again over his shoulder.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
Christine?

Beat.

He turns around and meets her stare and shocked expression.

They come low and fast.

THREE HUEY HELICOPTERS -- side doors open; door-gunners ready.

Within seconds they are on the town. They spread out and form a hovering triangle; each Huey marking one point.

The town is surrounded.

They hover, high enough off the ground to only kick up a little dust and debris.

They wait.

The town has frozen. They all have seen these, too.

The propellers spin.

INT. ZIMMERMAN PLANE CABIN

Zimmerman sees the Huey's as he flies back.

BILL
 This I was not expecting. Morgan!
 Strap in. Green, Logan. Boys, if
 you want to head home now's the
 time.

In each plane the pilot's contemplate.

Time stands still.

But not long enough for Green to answer.

GREEN
 Fast

LOGAN
 And Straight.

EXT. THE PLANES

They each aim the planes straight for town. The Co-pilots jump in back and start to push out the last of the bags.

The bags fall. Each one closer and closer to town.

All three planes head directly for the Huey's. But then, with the last bag dropped... They pull up! Their wind sheer bounces the Huey's just a bit.

The planes head out.

Two of the copters give chase.

INT. ZIMMERMAN PLANE CABIN

BILL
Here they come.

They're fired upon. Each plane takes a few rounds.

BILL (CONT'D)
That field. 2 O'clock. (Beat) Safe landings.

Zimmerman switches on his radio.

BILL (CONT'D)
We are landing. Please call your men off. Again, I repeat, our business here is done. We are landing. Over.

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE

The last helicopter waits at the entrance to town. Everyone is still frozen.

As the last two copters disappear the people begin to move again. They all hold their hands up but move to the different bags.

Joseph and Christine walk slowly; deliberately. No one takes their eyes off the copter.

Some people return back to the buildings. Some walk backwards, bumping into walls.

INT. HUEY CABIN

The HUEY PILOT takes his hand down from his ear piece. He turns to the gunner.

HUEY PILOT
You got that?

The gunner pulls back on the gun and starts to fire.

He comes close, sometimes to close to the people below who scatter around.

His bullets riddle the ground but still allow everyone to move about.

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE

Joseph and Christine still keep their hands up. They grab the duffel bag.

CHRISTINE
We should leave it!

Joseph looks. She's right. He drops the bag.

JOSPEH

Fuck.

Seconds later the bag is eviscerated.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARMY BASE CAMP. SAME

The Army has wheeled out all its .50 Caliber guns. Twenty. The bullets are gigantic. They hang out of each weapon and roll to the ground.

Beat.

The triggers are pulled and the peaceful hamlet of Wounded Knee South Dakota--

EXT. WOUNED KNEE

IS DECIMATED.

The screams fill the air. People hit the dirt. Even the Huey gunner stops for a moment.

The town becomes a fraction of itself-- the church; the general store; the buildings. ARMORED PIERCING BULLETS give no second thought as they gut and rip and burrow through everything in their paths.

LARGE HOLES-- nothing small about them-- are taken out of the buildings.

All bullets fly THREE FEET ABOVE THE HEADS OF THE WOUNED KNEE INHABITANTS.

Joseph and Christine head to the church. Joseph pulls Christine in close. She clings to him.

He stumbles and falls. She is quick to pull him up.

They move on.

INT. SACRED HEART CHURCH

Inside, light pours in through the new but unwelcome skylights.

People hide underneath pews, shielding their heads.

A few children cry. Their parents comfort them, whispering good things in their ears. Couples hold themselves in an embrace that could be their last.

CLOSE UP-- BULLETS START TO RICOCHET.

They hit metal parts of the building and bounce every which way.

Joseph and Christine come in and make their way to the middle of the church.

JOSPEH
Get everyone underneath--

BUDDY
Basement's full!

A Scout shuts the door.

SCOUT
We're all in! We're all here!

Christine sits on the ground and makes eyes with Leonard Crow Dog.

HIS LIPS MOVE IN AN OLD SONG.

Without thinking, CHRISTINE'S LIPS MOVE TOO. She begins to match the old Lakota Song.

SILENCE.

Bullets still come in. But ALL WE HEAR is this song that is shared between Leonard and Christine.

Joseph and Christine hold on to each other, each as tight as the next.

It is a gorgeous song and for an eternity the world goes away.

A SONG OF STRENGTH.

Beat.

Christine closes her eyes. A few moments later, Joseph pulls her from her trance.

JOSPEH
You OK? They just stopped.

Christine pulls herself up. She can't say much.

Each person regathers themselves.

BUDDY
Everyone OK? We all here?

Slow. Shaken.

VOICES
Yes. I think so. We're alright.

A sound comes from below the church. From the basement stairs. A muffled CRY.

CHRISTINE
Did you hear that?

JOSEPH
I'm not sure.

INT. SACRED HEART CHURCH BASEMENT

Joseph and Christine and others rush downstairs. People are exiting.

CHRISTINE
They stopped up here. Is everyone
alri--

There is blood everywhere. Too much.

Joseph and Christine look around. THE ROOM IS A BLUR.

They see Sara. SHE CLUTCHES A DEAD FRANK.

Christine rushes over to her. Sara is covered in blood. She sits in a small, still forming pool of red.

Sara slowly rocks with Frank, pulling him towards her.

FRANK HAS NO FACE.

Christine tries to move Sara.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
Sara, we should--

SARA
NO!!

CHRISTINE
OK, OK. Stay with Frank. I'm sorry.

Christine pulls back. Trudy comes to her and whispers.

TRUDY
They were bouncing everywhere in
here. From up there. Just
ricochetting.

JOSEPH
Someone get a blanket.

TRUDY
She won't move. Took his head off.

Christine rushes to the Negotiations Office and opens the door. Chunks of wood all around are missing.

INT. NEGOTIATIONS OFFICE

She slams the door behind her. She picks up the receiver to a radio and starts to YELL.

CHRISTINE
 May-day! May-day! Cease fire Cease
 fire! We have a man down.

She's breaking apart.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
 I repeat. I'm a medic. A man-- you.
 His head. Man-down.

She slams her back against the wall.

EXT. SACRED HEART BASMENT

Everyone listens. The yelling still comes from the office. Sara continues to sob. Someone has draped a yellow blanket across her shoulders. The edges of the blanket soak up some blood.

Buddy walks towards the office. Joseph gently grabs his elbow; shakes his head.

Through a blown away chunk of office door Joseph can see Christine.

INT. NEGOTIATIONS OFFICE

CHRISTINE
 He's dead. Man down. May-day.
 Please stop...

She slides down the wall. She drops the receiver

AND STARTS TO CRY.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
 Please. Don't hurt us. Don't hurt
 us. Please...

She buries her face in her arms.

FADE OUT.

CAPTION: *Day Sixty-Three.*

FADE IN:

INT. SACRED HEART CHURCH. NIGHT

Joseph comes up from the basement. Looks around. He sees Buddy.

JOSEPH
 We got some good-- alright--- some
 news. Some news. Where is she?

BUDDY
 I couldn't stop her. I'm sorry.

JOSEPH

When?

BUDDY

Just a few minutes ago. That way.

He points to the side church door.

EXT. SACRED HEART CHURCH - SIDE

Joseph comes out. Squints in the dark.

Red flares go up to reveal FALLING SNOW.

Joseph shakes his head in defeat. When he looks up again he spots the sweat lodge and CHRISTINE'S BAGS outside.

INT. SWEAT LODGE

Joseph comes in. Christine sits inside. She looks up and offers a tired smile.

JOSEPH

I thought we'd lost you.

CHRISTINE

You did. They did. But I got this far and then-- I couldn't.

JOSEPH

You have every reason in the world to go.

CHRISTINE

Yep. And even more to stay. I left my family once.

She lowers her head. Her black hair sticks to her forehead.

JOSEPH

The Army. Since... They've called a complete cease fire. At least, for the service tomorrow.

Joseph's shirt starts to get darker. The sweat increases. Her head still down.

CHRISTINE

Good.

Joseph gets up to go. He opens the door. A cold draft comes in.

He turns around and walks over to Christine. He pauses. He kisses the top of her head.

He turns and walks out. The door shuts behind him. Christine looks up.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE. AFTERNOON

CAPTION: *Day Sixty-Four.*

The landscape has drastically changed.

A BLIZZARD.

The ground is covered; the snow falls gently.

A large mass of Wounded Knee inhabitants walk towards the front of the town. They are all bundled up, staying warm.

They are silent. The elders lead them, dressed in traditional attire.

EXT. GRAVE SITE

A large mound of earth, six feet deep, has been dug. The new dirt dusted with snow.

TWO LARGE POLES WITH WHITE FLAGS are posted on each side of the hole.

The inhabitants gather around. Joseph, Buddy, Bobby, and a black man carry the body of Frank Clearwater, wrapped.

EXT. ARMY BASE CAMP

Volney and Potter do nothing but watch, their hands crossed over their chests; in their pockets. Only a few dozen troops sit on the ridge that overlooks the Knee.

Volney takes a sip of coffee, makes a disgusted look, and dumps the rest out. The snow melts brown.

VOLNEY
Coffee's shit.

POTTER
Just figure that out?

VOLNEY
I'm going back in.

POTTER
And them?

VOLNEY
The men have their orders. They'll keep an eye out.

POTTER
Right. It's a shame.

Beat.

POTTER (CONT'D)
About the coffee.

EXT. GRAVE SITE

Leonard Crow Dog and Ellen Moves Camp circle the body, reciting traditional blessings. They wave incense and branches around the body.

They finish.

Christine walks to the front. Her eloquent words are lost in the wind and snow.

EXT. ARMY BASE CAMP

A LONE FIGURE, hidden, walks to the front lines. He kneels down and positions

A SNIPER RIFLE.

Several men around him point and nod knowingly. They look in the other direction.

The barrel of the gun is aimed at the people of Wounded Knee.

EXT. GRAVE SITE

Christine still talks. The snow has begun to taper off.

The elders offer a continuation of their religious ruminations.

Frank is lowered into the ground and covered over.

Everyone prays in their own special way.

EXT. ARMY BASE CAMP

POV of the sniper rifle. Cross-hairs trained. Cross-hairs looking for one person...

EXT. GRAVE SITE

Everyone makes their way back into town. They sing among themselves.

The last few trickle away.

BUT BUDDY REMAINS.

He kneels down next to the grave and says something softly. He sticks two fingers into the fresh dirt, wetted with snow, and pulls out a small clump of mud.

He applies it to his face.

Joseph and Christine walk away. Nobody notices Buddy.

He stands up and faces the Army. With both hands he reaches for his hair and ties it in a tight bun; a warrior's expression on his face.

He only takes a few steps forward; the two white flags positioned next to him.

NO WORDS.

A WARRIOR CHANT.

He shouts it to the heavens! He shouts it to the Army!

Everyone turns around. They give Buddy his space.

Buddy points to the Army. He points to the ground; at Frank.

He shouts the prayer. He dances a few steps to the left, a few to the right.

His voice begins to crackle. He reaches down and grabs dirt. He clutches it to his heart. Something sacred in the dirt-- the earth, the land.

Buddy's face is not smeared by the snow. He is crying. He turns around. Faces the Knee. For strength he clutches onto the pole and bows his head.

Beat.

PING. The smallest of sounds; undetectable by distance and wind.

Buddy raises his head. Shock. He looks down.

From behind, we see A SMALL HOLE in his back. He has been shot.

A blur of movement. So fast.

He collapses. The town realizes this and begins to take cover.

SCOUT

Nooo!!

The scout rushes towards a nearby bunker and grabs a weapon. He points it towards the Army.

LEONARD

Don't--

It's too late. The Scout pulls the trigger.

EXT. ARMY BASE CAMP

A Marshal is shot in the back. He goes down, pulling on the tarp of the army camp. Some men come over to help him up.

SOLDIER #1
Fuckers are shooting!

SOLDER #2
The fuck you waiting for? You heard
the Colonel!

Soldiers hit the deck; some stand. Snipers on the ground
fire.

PING. PING.

Wave after wave of bullets fly.

EXT. GRAVE SITE

One of the poles next to the grave comes down in splinters;
the white flag buried in snow.

Everyone takes cover. Buddy remains still.

EXT. SIDE BUILDING

Joseph and Christine are huddled together with several
others.

Christine peers over the edge towards Buddy.

CHRISTINE
They shot him! They fucking killed
him! It was a cease fire!

She pulls her head back a split second before a piece of the
building gets blown off.

Joseph ducks down to stick his own head out.

He looks at Buddy.

BUDDY MOVES.

Just barely. His head tilts to the side, getting his mouth
out of the snow and dirt.

Joseph pulls himself back in.

JOSEPH
He's alive.

CHRISTINE
What?

JOSEPH
He just moved. He's still alive.

CHRISTINE
Then we need to get out there. Now!

Joseph turns to one of the others nearby and points.

JOSEPH
Get to the radio. Get someone to
call.

The person nods his head and runs off.

Joseph looks at her, then around the edge.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
We're going to die.

CHRISTINE
Where's your faith?

They get on their hands and knees and make their way towards
Buddy.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
They're not stopping!

Joseph plows forward; his face covered in snow. He spits some
out.

Christine follows his path made in the snow. Her hair is
beginning to turn white.

EXT. ARMY BASE CAMP

Some of the soldiers begin to lower their weapons.

SOLDIER
They got a man down. Hey! They're
trying to get 'em...

Only a few listen. The firing continues.

INT. NEGOTIATIONS OFFICE

Dennis Banks speaks into the radio.

DENNIS
This is Dennis Banks. I repeat.
AIM. Dennis Banks. You have shot
one of our men. A medic is coming
to him. I repeat-- man down. Medic.
Cease fire. Ce--

INT. VOLNEY AND POTTER OFFICE

The voice of Dennis comes over the radio.

DENNIS
--ase fire!!

Volney reaches over and turns the radio off.

EXT. GRAVE SITE

Joseph and Christine come upon the body. Christine uses all her strength to roll him over.

There is a large puddle of blood on the snow; a small lake around his body. Clothes covered. A small trickle of blood on his mouth.

Buddy opens his eyes slowly and smiles weakly. His voice holds on.

BUDDY
Hey. Missed you guys.

Christine tries to laugh through her tears.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
Is it that bad?

CHRISTINE
No, hon. Let me do what I do. Stay with me.

Joseph has taken off his jacket. He applies pressure to the wound.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
Good, keep the pressure.

She looks around; digs through her pockets.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
Damn it!

Buddy begins to close his eyes, sleepily.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
No, Buddy. Stay with me. Don't leave me. I'm right here. (To Joseph) I don't have the tools.

Buddy closes his eyes then jolts them open.

BUDDY
Don't worry, Sparrow. I'll be here.

Joseph looks around, desperately. He grabs the fallen white flag that is now streaked with tiny bits of blood.

Bullets continue.

CHRISTINE
What are you doing?

JOSEPH
If we don't move him--

CHRISTINE
They're going to kill you, too.

Beat.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
Get back to my stuff. Just bring it
back here.

Joseph agrees. He starts to crawl but only gets a few feet
until his path is cut off by gun fire. He waits. Tries again.
Bullets. Christine watches.

They will not let him through.

He quickly backs up.

Christine and Joseph look to Buddy. His body starts to shake.
Small convulsions.

Joseph puts a bloodied arm on him to hold him down.

Christine starts to clean his face of mud and blood. They
huddle together to stay warm. They wrap their limbs around
each other.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
You warm there?

All of Buddy's words come out short, in gasps, straining.

BUDDY
Can you hear them, Joe?

Joseph look to Christine.

JOSEPH
I think--

CHRISTINE
Yes, we can Buddy.

BUDDY
Three hundred. Right here. I feel
blessed to join them.

Buddy is slipping.

CHRISTINE
Buddy, stay with me!!

BUDDY
Listen. Right here.

TRACK IN slow to Buddy's face. Breath...breath...breath.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
Can you? H...ear...

Breath.....

Christine's body blocks the view for a few moments. The clothes change slightly, they darken, become older, more natural.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE - SAME LOCATION - PAST. AFTERNOON

A Lakota woman, RAIN, holds onto her young child who has fallen. It is bitterly cold. Snow comes down.

VOICE (O.S)
Back with your people!

The woman looks up and sees a large horse and one of Custer's 7th Calvary, COLONEL FORSYTH, who peers down.

FORSYTH
Now!

He reaches over the side of the horse and grabs at her collar.

She reacts. She does not speak English. She points to her child who is motionless.

FORSYTH (CONT'D)
I'm cold too!

Forsyth kicks Rain back towards her people. The boy is trampled over by the horse. When Forsyth moves away a strong Lakota man picks up the boy but he is dead. His head and arms hang limp.

WIDE SHOT

THREE HUNDRED LAKOTAS in a massive circle, A DOZEN TIPIS, AND 500 7th CALVARY SOLDIERS who walk or ride around the perimeter armed with rifles that drip with icicles.

On an overlooking ridge many Hotchkiss guns, a small form of cannon, are loaded with 3.2 inch shells.

The Lakotas look around, scared. The children are pulled close. Men grab their women. Many are sick and cough. Some Lakotas lie on the ground, dead or dying. Loved ones pray over them.

Forsyth marches his horse around. Domination.

FORSYTH (CONT'D)
Bring the translator.

A Sioux man, PHILIP WELLS, is pulled over.

FORSYTH (CONT'D)
Translate. We have learned that some of you are smuggling--

Philip translates, loud.

FORSYTH (CONT'D)
Weapons. This unit orders you to
pass them forward or suffer the
consequences.

Philip stops. A man next to Philip speaks up.

FORSYTH (CONT'D)
What is he saying?

PHILIP
We have small stones; a few tiny
axes. They are only used for food.

Forsyth points a pistol at the man and fires.

FORSYTH
The 7th Calvary does not tolerate
conspirators or *uncooperatives*.
(Beat) Men! Find me my weapons.

Many Calvary get off their horses and start to walk among the
Lakotas. They search under blankets, push and shove. They
take knives to the tipis.

But find nothing.

A Lakota begins to dance in a circle.

FORSYTH (CONT'D)
What is he doing?

PHILIP
A dance for peace.

FORSYTH
Lies. I order him to stop.

The dancing man does not listen.

In the midst a SOLDIER picks up a DEAF LAKOTA. A rifle drops
from his side.

SOLDIER
Sir, we found one. We found one!

Outside the area Calvary guns go up, hammers back. They aim.

READY.

The Deaf Lakota reacts, his gestures off kilter, odd. He
won't give up the weapon.

PHILIP
He cannot hear you. He is deaf. He
thinks he is in trouble--

FORSYTH
Take the weapons!!

The other Lakota continues to dance.

A murmur goes through the crowds. They begin to reach into their pockets. Many shuffle, looking.

The Calvary passes glances all around. They look suspicious, nervous. Their guns go about, following all movement.

Near one horse we see a small girl. CLOSE UP on her foot. She steps back on a few twigs.

At once, together, the dancing Lakota tosses some dust into the air. The twigs SNAP. The Deaf Lakota's rifle discharges.

A frightened soldier next to the little girl aims down and fires point blank at her without hesitation. His startled horse rises into the air and knocks off the rider.

THE UNIT FIRES ON THE LAKOTAS.

Lakota men try to overtake the fallen soldier. They are seen and shot.

Women and children begin to run away. Soldiers chase them down and shoot.

Other Indians make their escape. Others fight back with stones and knives.

Many soldiers, scared as can be, accidentally fire on each other.

THE HOTCKISS GUNS ARE UNLEASHED. They mow down everything in their path. The tipis and Lakotas inside are ripped to shreds.

Native men and women try to fight back. They yell into the air, they jump a couple horses and men.

The smoke mixes with the snow. Everything is hidden except the horrible sounds of death all around.

When the smoke clears, the ground is covered with hundreds of bodies; a couple dozen soldiers.

Forsyth surveys the damage. A soldier, SMITH, comes up to him.

SMITH

What do we do, sir? The bodies.

Forsyth looks to the sky then to his men.

FORSYTH

We take care of our own. These savages will soon be forgotten. As a testament to their sins and your courage let them freeze for all the world to see.

Forsyth and the men, several who hold their sides or legs from gunshot wounds, gallop into the distance and leave.

From the sky looking down we see:

THREE HUNDRED DEAD, FREEZING BODIES. They begin to stiffen; each part of their body locking in icy place.

The snow slows.

Slowly each body disappears into thin air, one by one, until we go forward in time to

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. GRAVE SITE. SAME

The same spot where Joseph and Buddy and Christine remain.

A CAPTION: *Three hours later.*

Only a few lone bullets fly by.

Joseph and Christine lie over Buddy. They are covered in light snow. Ice clings to parts of their clothes.

Christine opens her eyes and looks down at Buddy.

She puts her cheek to him and holds on one last time to a good friend.

Joseph's eyes open. He bows his head.

His hand follows Buddy's arm until it finds a hand. Joseph gently opens the frigid hand, puts his in, and squeezes.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

INT. SACRED HEART CHURCH. AFTERNOON

Light streams in from the holes all around. Candles flicker at the altar.

Christine looks up at the statue of Jesus. It hangs in fragments. An arm missing; a foot gone. One eye stares back down.

Joseph comes up from behind. He wraps a friendly, platonic arm around her shoulder and pulls her next to him.

Christine looks at Jesus. She pleads, searching for assurance.

CHRISTINE
We didn't give up.

JOSEPH
No. Your elders are right.

CHRISTINE
 We can't bury anymore of our
 people.

She turns to Joseph.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)
 Please tell me...

JOSEPH
 (Deliberate)
 They would have killed us all
 without hesitation. A few days
 more. A massacre all over again.

CHRISTINE
 We did the right thing. We did?

JOSEPH
 Look at me. I couldn't even hold
 down a relationship. What did you
 do to me?

Beat.

Leonard Crow Dog comes up to them. He looks to Christine and
 places a hand on her face; lets it slowly fall to her
 shoulder.

LEONARD
 Christine.

CHRISTINE
 Sparrow.

LEONARD
 Sparrow.

Leonard leans in and gives a hug.

LEONARD (CONT'D)
 So strong. Such a strong spirit.

Beat.

She hugs back.

LEONARD (CONT'D)
 It's all over.

CUT TO:

EXT. WHITE TENT. SAME

A large white tent has been set up a few hundred yards from
 the Knee. Several people duck inside.

INT. WHITE TENT

Christine and Leonard enter. Leonard makes his way to the middle. Christine joins the spectators.

About twenty people, mostly elders, some AIM, sit and stand on one side; their faces dirty, their clothes the worst for wear.

Another dozen Army and government officials wearing clean suits and polished medals sit and stand across from them.

TWO VERY DIFFERENT WORLDS.

Nobody speaks.

U.S. Representative, GEORGE MILLEN, looks at Christine then back to Leonard who stands in front of him.

EXT. WHITE TENT

Joseph makes his way to the outside of the tent. He listens in.

INT. WHITE TENT

George drones on.

GEORGE
 Alright. Let's get this over with.
 On behalf of the United States
 government we are willing to honor
 the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty by
 giving back your land...

Those of Wounded Knee tense up, smiles on their faces.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 And not press any charges of any
 kind.

The crowd claps lightly; whispers to each other their excitement.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 On the-- ON THE grounds--

The crowd goes silent.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 That each and every person here at
 Wounded Knee voluntarily turns in
 his arms in three days time.

Leonard turns to his people. They are all very happy. He smiles. He turns back.

LEONARD
 My people and my ancestors accept.

He sticks his hand out. George takes it half-heartedly and shakes.

The tent erupts in joy and exuberance.

Joseph pushes aside the front flap, sees Christine and runs over to her. He picks her up and spins her around.

They look into each other's eyes and laugh.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOUNDED KNEE. MORNING

CAPTION: *Day Seventy-One.*

It is a bright, crisp morning.

Doors open all around the Knee. Nearly three hundred begin to pour out. They carry bags, each other. Children play games of tag.

They walk toward the Army camp.

EXT. ARMY BASE CAMP

Volney and Potter walk outside as the people near.

Potter walks to the ridge and puts up a hand.

They stop. He points to a spot on the ground.

POTTER

Weapons.

A few men, including Joseph, walk forward with a pithy lot of guns. They toss them down in a small pile.

Potter looks to the pile, then to Volney, then to the people.

POTTER (CONT'D)

The rest!

JOSEPH

That's all sir. That's all there is.

Potter chuckles to himself.

POTTER

Fine. Fine, fine, fine. (To the soldiers) Men!

A swarm of soldiers circle the large group. With machine guns drawn, they move in quick and move the people in a uniform direction.

CHRISTINE

What are they--

Joseph tosses his head around. He watches.

JOSEPH
I don't know...just do as they say.

A large school bus pulls up and comes to a stop. The doors open with a "whoosh". The soldiers push them towards it.

Everyone begins to look around. They move in a slow and confused mass.

The bus fills quickly with sixty people; standing room only.

The cramped quarters, the smushed bodies resemble A HOLOCAUST TRANSPORT TRAIN.

The doors shut as a mother and father are put in, their young daughter left behind. They begin to scream through the closed doors.

Joseph runs up the door and bangs.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
One more. Let her in!

The driver pays no mind. He puts the bus in drive.

The parents are hysterical. Joseph picks up the crying child and carries her.

JOSEPH (CONT'D)
Hey sweetie, hey sweetie. It'll be alright. See mom and dad real soon.

A soldier yells to Volney.

SOLDIER
Sir, all full.

VOLNEY
Then they march. Get 'em outta here!

The soldiers train their rifles.

SOLDIERS
Move goddamn red bitches! Fucking walk! Don't even look at me the wrong way!

The bus drives away while two-hundred and forty follow behind.

Beat.

Dickie Wilson watches as they leave. He walks over to Volney and Potter.

DICKIE
Get the fuck off my land!

Beat.

Volney and Potter walk over to a nearby Jeep. Potter gets in and starts the ignition.

Volney leans out the passenger window. He points to Wounded Knee.

HE GIVES A THUMBS DOWN.

DICKIE (CONT'D)
It's fucking history.

He "flips off" the jeep as it speeds away.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF RAPID CITY SOUTH DAKOTA. LATER

The bus pulls into town.

Hundreds of people are gathered on the streets. They hold signs of support. They are going wild.

SUPPORTERS
Yeah! Wounded Knee! We love you
guys! Stay strong.

In the crowd are anti-Wounded Knee protestors. They taunt the Natives.

A man takes a bottle on the ground and throws it at the group. It hits a man in the face. He goes down for a second. He comes up, his face bloodied.

Joseph still holds the child whose face is buried in his shoulder.

The screen freezes on the massive turn-out.

TITLE CARD:

Two hundred men, women, and children went into Wounded Knee. Three hundred came out.

During the 71 day siege the Army had at their disposal 17 armored personal carriers, 130,000 rounds of M-16 ammunition, 41,000 rounds of M-1 ammunition, 24,000 flares, 12 M-79 grenade launchers, 600 cases of CS gas, 100 rounds of M-40 explosives, as well as helicopters, Phantom jets, and more.

Most of which they used.

Motion resumes.

JOSEPH
Maybe they didn't forget us after
all.

The crowd cheers. The Knee people are tightly packed together as they walk slowly.

The soldiers try to keep the excited spectators back.

Beat.

Joseph looks as protestors shout racial slurs and make derogatory comments. They have their own signs: RED = DEAD.

With his free hand he brings Christine close. He kisses her head and smiles through eyes that begin to swell.

The screen freezes on Joseph and Christine.

TITLE CARD:

The promises made at the final negotiations were never honored. The land was never returned and more than 600 charges were soon filed.

Motion resumes.

People push and shove.

EXT. POLICE STATION

The bus comes to a stop outside a police station. Many guards line the gutters and steps, batons in hand. Some are on horses-- they resemble the 7th Calvary.

Joseph looks up at the prison. The people are led inside. They are yanked off the bus. Some fall to the ground.

He says something.

Christine forces a laugh.

The parents of the young child run up to Joseph. He hands her over. They thank him.

The crowd of supporters are in a frenzy. News trucks are parked. Reporters, including Stacie, are outside weighing in on the situation.

Joseph and Christine hang on to each other.

COMMOTION. CHAOS.

The screen freezes on the law enforcement.

TITLE CARD:

In those 71 days two were killed, dozens were wounded, and even more went missing.

Over the next two years, 70 Native Americans on the Pine Ridge reservation disappeared; even more were victimized. Little or no investigations were ever conducted during this so-called "Reign of Terror."

INT. POLICE STATION JAIL

Motion resumes.

All the prison doors are open. Guards bring down the men, women and children, and push them inside.

Packed. Squished.

They go quiet. The sounds of support come from outside.

Beat.

Christine, softly at first, begins to sing a Lakota song of joy.

Those around her join in.

Those of Wounded Knee look around. They wipe away tears of sadness and smile with tears of joy.

The song grows louder. The walls echo. Prison guards come down and shout.

PRISON GUARD #1
Shut up!

PRISON GUARD #2
This jail can't hold 'em. We gotta
get rid of 'em!

But their voices are drowned. EVERYTHING IS DROWNED BUT THIS SONG, THESE UNIFIED VOICES.

TITLE CARD:

Because of the stand, a new era was born that brought to light the atrocities against the Native American people.

EXT. STREETS OF RAPID CITY SOUTH DAKOTA

The protestors and supporters continue, but all we hear is the song.

TITLE CARD:

Eventually all charges brought against those in the Knee were dropped.

To this day the participants of the 71 day occupation call it the happiest time of their lives.

FADE OUT.

THE END.