

Potter's Ground

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. OPEN PLAINS - NORTHERN CALIFORNIA - DUSK

Title: 450 MILES EAST OF SAN FRANCISCO, SEPTEMBER, 1888

30 wagons in a static circle. Smoke rising from cooking fires. The sounds of children playing.

EXT. OPEN PLAINS - OUTSIDE WAGON RING - DUSK

Looking to the Western horizon - TAO CHEUNG (65), OAKLEY (30), and the wagon master, KELLOGG (45).

KELLOGG

How long?

OAKLEY

Three hours.

KELLOGG

Alone?

OAKLEY

Father sent her to fetch water from the creek.

TAO

Alone? Why would he do that?

KELLOGG

Get Potter.

INT. COVERED WAGON - DUSK

DULE POTTER (50), and his son AMIS (12). The glass on Dule's army pocket watch is cracked, but it keeps good time.

DULE

Go.

Dule "clicks" the stopwatch mechanism. Amis reassembles a Smith & Wesson .44 double action revolver.

Amis completes the task; Dule stops the timer.

DULE (CONT'D)

Best guess?

AMIS

53 seconds. 54?

DULE

42.

AMIS  
I don't believe you.

Dule shows him the watch face.

DULE  
I ain't lying.

AMIS  
Fastest I ever done was 48.

DULE  
So... again.

Amis disassembles the revolver.

Tao pulls back the tarp. Looks at Dule.

EXT. OUTSIDE WAGON RING - DUSK

Dule and Tao walking past the edge of the circle. Dule slings a bow over his shoulder; loads his sawn-off.

TAO  
Alice Ziegler, 16 years old. The creek's a half hour walk at most. Should have been back by now.

They meet with Kellogg and Oakley. Dule looks West through a spyglass. RUTH ZIEGLER (40), and JACOB ZIEGLER (40), hurry toward the scene.

TAO (CONT'D)  
Want me to gather up the men?

DULE  
Put out the fires. Place lanterns in a circle round the camp, thirty feet out. If you hear a sound near a lantern - shoot the glass. Oil'll light up your target but good.

JACOB  
Where is my Daughter?  
(to Kellogg)  
You're the Wagon Master - what are you doing about -

KELLOGG  
Dr. Ziegler, I'm here to -

DULE

Put the children in a wagon at the centre of camp. Eight pairs of sentries inside the perimeter.

Dule walks away from camp; rest of the men stay put.

JACOB

Really? Is no one else willing to go out there with -

RUTH

Shut up Jacob. Mr. Potter!

Dule stops; looks back at Ruth.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Bring back my Alice.

Dule walks away from camp, his eyes fixed on Alice's tracks. After a moment his pace quickens and he jogs forward.

EXT. OPEN PLAINS - RIVERBANK - NIGHT

Dule creeps silently in the moonlight. He approaches the creek - sees a pail lying on its side. He inspects the ground, observing hoof marks in the dirt. He wades across the river; picks up the tracks on the far side of the creek.

Moving through the brush, Dule spies a torn piece of cloth on a thorn bush. It's clearly from a sleeve; spots of blood on the edges; Dule pockets it; moves on.

He arrives at a rock escarpment. The obvious hoof marks in the dirt are no longer visible on the rock, which stretches off to the horizon. Dule listens to the darkness.

He observes the sky, the vastness of the Milky Way above. Dule sighs; heads back towards the creek.

EXT. OPEN PLAINS - DAWN

Dule walking back toward camp. A circle of lanterns flicker around the perimeter of the wagon train.

EXT. EDGE OF THE CAMP - DAWN

Tao and Oakley on watch. Tao sees Dule.

TAO

Hey! Hey - it's Dule.

EVERYBODY comes out. Ruth approaches Dule.

DULE

6 unshod horses. 5 men. 2 of 'em barefoot.

OAKLEY

Indians. Motherfucking Indians - I knew it!

JACOB

(to Kellogg)

You said this was a safe route - "the safest", that's what you said.

KELLOGG

It ain't on me that the US Army done scatter every tribe to the four winds. No route is completely safe - I remember mentioning that particular point to all of you.

RUTH

Mr. Potter. What will they... what will the Indians do to my daughter?

DULE

I'm sorry, Mam, I can't say.

JACOB

Don't lie to me Mr. Potter - people say you rode with the Blackfoot scouts on Sherman's march. You know! Tell me!

DULE

Party of Braves, no doubt. But nothing I found tells me which tribe. Indians ain't all the same.

TAO

How far you track 'em?

DULE

13 miles southeast. They shifted off dirt onto rock. Can't track an unshod horse over rock.

JACOB

You've been out there all night - you must have found something else. What did you find?

DULE

I know your daughter walked out of camp with a heavy limp.

(MORE)

DULE (CONT'D)

Maybe if you didn't beat on her so hard she could've run faster.

INT. DULE'S WAGON - DAWN

Dule enters; Amis wakes. Dule looks at the piece of cloth from Alice's dress - the blood on the edges.

DULE

You didn't sleep with the others?

Amis pulls back the covers, revealing a Colt .38.

DULE (CONT'D)

Next time I say you do something... better be done.

Dule opens a drawer: his eyes are held by a photograph of a beautiful, Blackfoot woman, APANI (25).

AMIS

You find young Alice?

Dule places the piece of cloth inside; shuts the drawer.

DULE

I did not.

AMIS

So... they ain't gonna find her.

DULE

No. They will not.

EXT. OPEN PLAINS II - DAY

ARMED SETTLERS crossing the scrubland - calling out "Alice", "Alice Ziegler".

EXT. DULE'S WAGON - DUSK

Amis pumping the bellows of a small forge. Dule pours molten steel into a cast-line of arrowheads. The Armed Settlers returning to camp. Kellogg approaches Dule.

KELLOGG

Three days...

Dule submerges the arrowheads in a bucket; sees Ruth and Jacob Ziegler returning to camp, clearly forlorn.

KELLOGG (CONT'D)

And nothing.

Dule presents the arrowheads to Amis. Amis SNIPS them apart with a pliers; passes an arrowhead to his father. Dule works the edges with a sanding stone.

KELLOGG (CONT'D)

We're not going to find her. Not like this. I seen it before. A'times, nothing is the hardest thing to do. So folks get to some business. Anything. 'Cept for what can be done... NOTHING. Is it wrong to pray for a young girl to be dead? 'Cause I swear... that's what I been prayin'. For her sake.

(then)

Averagin' 10 miles a day, San Fran's still 45 days out, Dule.

(then)

Rest days take that to 50, easy. Only, 30 days from tomorrow is October 1st. Rainy season comin'.

Dule hands the arrowhead to Amis. Amis nicks the tip of the arrowhead off his thumb - it draws blood. He tosses it next to a pile of feathers; hands a second arrowhead to Dule.

KELLOGG (CONT'D)

I mean, hope is hope... but time is time. And God ain't making any more of that for Alice Ziegler.

(then)

Rain could bog down them 50 days into 70, 75 - no doubt. And we ain't provisioned for that - in goods nor gold neither. We need to start moving again. Only...

DULE

Only what?

KELLOGG

Somebody needs to talk to the Zieglers. Set them straight on the facts. There's 29 other families here held up on this.

AMIS

So go tell 'em.

Dule smiles.

KELLOGG

Son, I wish it was that simple.  
Only, this situation has one  
bearing on the Zieglers and another  
on us. There's other lives at stake  
here if we don't move on. They need  
to understand that.

DULE

What I'm understanding, Mr.  
Kellogg, is that you don't have the  
stomach to tell a grieving mother  
her only child ain't coming back...  
nor the stones to ask me to my face  
to do your dirty work.

EXT. OPEN PLAINS III - DAY

The wagon train snakes across the scrubland. Ruth Ziegler  
weeps silently beside her husband as he drives their wagon  
forward. On the horizon: dark clouds - rain falling on  
distant mountains.

EXT. DULE'S WAGON - NIGHT

Amis looking up at the Milky Way. Dule beside him sharpening  
the edge of his bowie knife. Somewhere in camp, a woman is  
singing a soft, Appalachian lament.

AMIS

Pa... what are stars?

DULE

Truth... I can guide by 'em. Tell  
'em apart. But sayin' that... I do  
not know what they are.

AMIS

You think anybody knows?

DULE

Man that don't know something, he's  
ignorant. No shame in that. Then  
there's those that say they know  
something when in fact they do  
not... that man's a fool.

AMIS

What you mean by that?

DULE

I heard folks say they knew what  
the stars was. Just nothing that  
might be believed.



AMIS

You think Momma is up there... with the stars?

(then)

From here looks like a fierce, cold and lonely place. From here.

DULE

You ain't up there, son. No telling what it's like. If I was to choose to be poetic, put some feelin' up on them stars... "cold and lonely" I would not choose.

AMIS

What would you choose?

DULE

I... well... not that anyhow.

AMIS

When we get to San Francisco, will there be men lookin' for you, like they was in Boston?

DULE

Where we go, whenever. You'll never be alone. You look, I'll be there. No matter what. I promise you that.

AMIS

Does that mean I won't be going back to school?

DULE

Nice try.

AMIS

But Pa - I hate all that -

DULE

You will go to school. End of. I followed the path I was shown. You're going to follow the one you choose. Day will come when you realize just how different a life can be when there's more than one way to live it.

EXT. BLACKCROSS - NORTHERN CALIFORNIA - DAY

The wagon train creeps into the town of Blackcross - pulling up in a line next to Kohler's Livery Yard.

Ruth and Jacob Ziegler stare at Dule. Dule dismounts; spies the Sheriff's office. Amis notices the way the Zieglers are looking at his father.

AMIS

What did you say to 'em, that time?

DULE

Stay with the horses.

Dule walks into town. He observes a US Post & telegraph office; watches as a locomotive comes to a halt close to IRISH RAIL-WORKERS constructing a new section of track. A crew of CHINESE RAIL-WORKERS jump down from open carriages and look around - not sure where to go. BOSS KENNEDY (50), steps forward, gestures towards the camp.

BOSS KENNEDY

*Qiánjìn dào yíngdì. Jìxù qiánjìn.*  
Move forward to the camp.

ART COBB (25), and the gunman, JOHN LISZT (45), drive through the sea of Chinese Rail-Workers on a three wheeled Benz Patent-Motorwagen. It's the first time the Chinese Workers have seen a horseless carriage, and they point and stare at the vehicle as it passes.

BOSS KENNEDY (CONT'D)

Hey! Hey! *Jìxù yídòng.* Keep moving.  
It ain't magic. It's science, you  
fucking morons. You just need to  
*Jìxù* the fuck *yídòng.* Move!

Dule watches as the Benz motors towards a CROWD listening to the politician, CY COBB (60). Dule turns his attention to the wanted posters nailed to the Sheriff's office:

"Boxcar Joe, Georgia", "Fast Talking Fanny, California", "Lon Longley, Oklahoma", "Kid Kearney, Louisiana", "Razor Totin' Jim, Pennsylvania". All \$500: dead or alive.

On the podium behind Cy Cobb: 12 PINKERTON STRIKE BREAKERS. Watching the speech from a distance: the brothel keeper - CHINA MAY (40), her barkeep, PROUD EAGLE (45), and the sporting girl, LING WEI (19).

CY COBB

... and that is why I support  
Senator Benjamin Harrison for  
President: because he is for  
tariffs on cheap Chinese imports  
and for the Scott Act - which will  
ensure that when Chinese workers go  
home - they STAY HOME!

The Crowd CHEER. Art Cobb and Liszt dismount the Benz and climb the stage behind Cy.

CY COBB (CONT'D)  
 And you already know why I'm  
 building Blackcross a brand new  
 railroad - you know why.

Wild CHEERS from the Crowd.

CY COBB (CONT'D)  
 Because today we are the end of the  
 line... for somebody else's  
 railroad. That's right! But not  
 anymore. When I extend the line 400  
 miles to San Francisco - then the  
 world opens up to Blackcross. And  
 that means jobs. Well paid factory  
 jobs for every Jack man in this  
 crowd. That's right!

More wild CHEERING.

CY COBB (CONT'D)  
 And we're going to build those  
 factories - so fast it'll make your  
 head spin. We are. Believe me.

SOMEONE shouts "Cobb for President" - the crowd cheer.

CY COBB (CONT'D)  
 That is why - THIS YEAR - we are  
 going to ensure William Harrison  
 secures our state's 8 electoral  
 votes - and why I am running for re-  
 election as Senator of the great  
 state of California. God bless you  
 all - and God bless the United  
 States of America!

The Crowd CHEER. Art Cobb applauds halfheartedly. Cy Cobb approaches Art, leans in with a forced smile.

CY COBB (CONT'D)  
 I'm speaking to the common man  
 here, and you roll up in that  
 \$1,000 contraption. I'll fucking  
 lay you out on the street, boy,  
 next time you pull a stunt like  
 that. Y'follow?  
 (to Liszt)  
 My son is a moral imbecile, Mr.  
 Liszt.

(MORE)

CY COBB (CONT'D)

You think I pay you silver dollars  
to ALLOW him to embarrass me like  
this? Do your fucking job!

CY turns back - smiles broadly; waves at the CHEERING Mob.

SHERIFF WALKER (50), and DEP KELLY (30), walk out of the  
office. Walker sees Dule looking at the posters.

SHERIFF WALKER

You a bounty hunter?

DULE

Georgia, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania...  
lot of these folks ain't from  
'round here.

SHERIFF WALKER

Railroad done that. Progress.

DULE

Blackcross ain't the only town with  
a railroad. Why they come here?

SHERIFF WALKER

'Bout 30 miles West we got them  
lava beds. Can't track an unshod  
horse over rock. More hidden caves  
than you can shake shit at.

(then)

If you're with that there wagon  
train my advice would be to get  
across them beds in a hurry.

DULE

Much obliged, Sheriff.

DEP KELLY

You never said if you was a bounty  
hunter...

DULE

I'm a family man, Deputy. Some  
lines of work don't hold with that.

EXT. PLAINS OUTSIDE BLACKCROSS - DAY

The wagon train passes an oil field. Thick black smoke pours  
from the refinery chimneys. WORKERS building a pipeline.

EXT. LAKE MODOC - DAY

The wagon train traversing the lake's edge. Dule keeps an  
attentive eye on the tree line.

BANG! BANG! One of Tao's horses is shot. The second mare rears up, overturning the wagon - blocking the path. Wagon train halts. The SETTLERS take cover behind their wagons.

DULE

Tao - you OK?

TAO

Busted my leg. But I can still shoot Goddamnit! Believe that.

BOXCAR JOE (OS)

We got 20 rifles. You got 5 minutes to gather up all your gold and paper money. 5 minutes - then we shoot the rest of them horses. Then how you get them wagons Westward?

KELLOGG

Don't shoot - we got women and children down here.

BOXCAR JOE (OS)

We ain't fixin' to shoot your children. Nor your women. Just the horses. 5 minutes!

EXT. WOODED HILL ABOVE LAKE MODOC - DAY

BOXCAR JOE (50), is kneeling behind a high thicket with LONGLEY (35), and KID KEARNEY (18). Joe and Longley have rifles; Kid Kearney armed with a holstered pistol only.

KID KEARNEY

I ain't shootin' no woman.

BOXCAR JOE

You'll shoot what you're told to shoot. But we ain't there yet.

EXT. LAKE MODOC - STATIC WAGON TRAIN - DAY

KELLOGG

What you make of it?

DULE

I reckon 3 or 4 men, up on that rise there.

KELLOGG

3 or 4? He said "20 rifles".

DULE

If I had such a force I'd show it.  
He's bluffing.

KELLOGG

What do we do?

DULE

What time you got?

KELLOGG

Dead on 3 o'clock.

DULE

Make a show of collecting the money  
down the far end there. At exactly  
5 minutes past, holler up: ask how  
they want the money handed over.

KELLOGG

What you going to do?

DULE

Just do as I say.

Kellogg steps forward.

KELLOGG

Alright! Alright! I'm going to get  
a sack, and go round to each and  
every wagon. Don't shoot!

BOXCAR JOE (OS)

Don't play me for no fool, neither!  
I count 30 wagons, times at least  
\$35 per wagon makes -

EXT. WOODED HILL ABOVE LAKE MODOC - DAY

BOXCAR JOE

(to Longley)

... how much that come to?

LONGLEY

Do I look like the brains of this  
fucking operation?

KID KEARNEY

(shouts)

\$1,050.

Boxcar Joe and Longley look at Kid Kearney.

KID KEARNEY (CONT'D)  
 What? I should be ashamed I got  
 some schooling? Fuck y'all.

EXT. LAKE MODOC - STATIC WAGON TRAIN - DAY

KELLOGG  
 Don't shoot, now - y'hear. I'm  
 going. Don't shoot.

Kellogg makes his way towards the far end of the convoy.

EXT. DULE'S WAGON - DAY

DULE  
 (to Amis)  
 Fetch me my sawed-off.

AMIS  
 Pa, I'm coming with -

DULE  
 You're stayin' put. I don't want  
 you seein' this. Not when there's a  
 choice. Promise me. Swear it.

AMIS  
 (under his breath)  
 I promise.

DULE  
 Amis - I ain't foolin'.

AMIS  
 I promise.

DULE  
 Alright. Now get.

EXT. WOODED HILL ABOVE LAKE MODOC - DAY

Joe looks down on the scene - sees Kellogg going from wagon  
 to wagon to collect the cash.

LONGLEY  
 What's he doin'?

BOXCAR JOE  
 (shouts)  
 You got 4 minutes! Then I order my  
 men to shoot. All 20 rifles!  
 (to Longley)  
 He's doin' it. Just like I said.

EXT. DULE'S WAGON - DAY

Dule looks up to the HILL through his spyglass; seeing Longley disappear back under the brow of the ledge he dashes immediately for the treeline - vanishing into the woods.

Amis waits for a moment, then grabs his father's bow; he quickly puts on a gun belt; slides a .38 into the holster.

Amis takes a deep breath, then runs into the woods.

EXT. DEEP WOODS I - DAY

Moving through the trees, Dule spies three horses below the ridge. Makes his way towards a path at the foot of the rise.

EXT. LAKE MODOC - STATIC WAGON TRAIN - DAY

Kellogg looks at his watch: it's exactly 3.05.

KELLOGG

HEY - up there. I've got your money. What now?

EXT. WOODED HILL ABOVE LAKE MODOC - DAY

Joe, Longley and Kearney rise up to look at Kellogg.

BOXCAR JOE

Throw that sack in the woods and -

Behind them: a loud, metallic CLICK. They turn. Dule has them cold, sawn-off in hand.

BOXCAR JOE (CONT'D)

Don't panic boys. Only two barrels on that there sawed-off... there's three of us. If he shoots he knows he's going to die. THIRD man's gonna kill him.

DULE

So... I have a choice to make.

BOXCAR JOE

Now wait a second -

BOOM - BOOM: Dule shoots Boxcar Joe and Longley.

EXT. DEEP WOODS II - DAY

Amis loading the .38 with shaking fingers. BOOM! BOOM! Startled by the shots he drops a bullet.



EXT. WOODED HILL ABOVE LAKE MODOC - DAY

Dule drops the sawn-off. Kid Kearney's hand goes to his side.

DULE

You got an '88 New Model Army in  
that holster. Single action.

EXT. DEEP WOODS II - DAY

Amis finishes loading; snaps the cylinder shut. He hears a  
horse WHINNY - runs in that direction.

EXT. WOODED HILL ABOVE LAKE MODOC - DAY

DULE

You got to thumb bust the hammer in  
the draw. I don't.

EXT. DEEP WOODS III - DAY

Amis sees the horses in the distance; runs forward.

EXT. WOODED HILL ABOVE LAKE MODOC - DAY

Keeping his eyes on Kearney, Dule nods to his holster.

DULE

That there's a Smith & Wesson -  
double action 44. Hammer cocks off  
the trigger movement. First shot's  
gonna be mine. Even if you outdraw  
me. Think on that, son.

EXT. DEEP WOODS IV - DAY

Amis running closer to the Outlaw's horses.

DULE (VO)

You been took early into the world  
of men. I see that. But you ain't  
too young to die. There ain't no  
such thing as that.

EXT. WOODED HILL ABOVE LAKE MODOC - DAY

KID KEARNEY

I ain't afeared of dyin'.

DULE

You ain't dyin' yet.

Kid Kearney hesitates - then draws. Dule draws - BANG!

EXT. DEEP WOODS V - DAY

The gunfire makes one of the HORSES start - she WHINNIES and KICKS out hard: knocking Amis to the ground.

EXT. WOODED HILL ABOVE LAKE MODOC - DAY

Kid Kearney falls; rolls over; puts his hand to his side.

KID KEARNEY

Jesus... Jesus fucking Christ,  
mister. Jesus fucking Christ. I'm -  
I'm bleeding... blood's burning my  
hand like a fire.

EXT. DEEP WOODS V - DAY

Amis stands. The kick from the horse has snapped his bow in half - and it falls from his shoulder.

AMIS

(softly)  
Daddy... I'm... my head hurts...

Blood drips from Amis' ear onto his neck. He walks back towards the wagon train on unsteady feet.

EXT. LAKE MODOC - STATIC WAGON TRAIN - DAY

Kellogg shouts up to the rise -

KELLOGG

DULE! Dule - what's happening?

DULE (OS)

Mount up - we're getting out of  
here. Quick as.

KELLOGG

Alright people - you heard the man -  
get that horse off the trail.

EXT. DEEP WOODS II - DAY

Amis collapses within sight of the tree line.

EXT. WOODED HILL ABOVE LAKE MODOC - DAY

Kid Kearney lying against a rock.

KID KEARNEY

Mister, I'm dyin', ain't I?

DULE  
You're dyin'.

KID KEARNEY  
You don't know that!

DULE  
Bullet hit your upper right side.  
Dark blood seepin' out. Liver shot.

KID KEARNEY  
You ain't no doctor...

DULE  
No. But this I know.

KID KEARNEY  
I'm... mister, I'm afraid.

DULE  
I know.

Dule lights a cigarillo. Holds it to Kid Kearney's lips. Kid Kearney draws in the smoke. Blows it out smoothly.

KID KEARNEY  
I was faster than you. You saw  
that. The gun beat me. Not the man.  
You know that. Don'tcha?

DULE  
Sure, kid. Sure.

EXT. LAKE MODOC - STATIC WAGON TRAIN - DAY

The MEN drag Tao's horse off the trail and right his wagon.  
Tao's leg is being tied in a splint by Jacob Ziegler.

JACOB  
Steady yourself.

Jacob tightens the splint.

TAO  
Aow! Jesus Christ, Doc.

KELLOGG  
(shouts up the line)  
Who's got whiskey?

Oakley arrives - hands Kellogg a tin box: "Dr. Parke & Davis'  
- Anaesthetic Cocaine Powder".

KELLOGG (CONT'D)  
What in hell's this?

OAKLEY  
Cocaine powder.

KELLOGG  
Ain't you got whiskey?

OAKLEY  
It's better than whiskey. You snort  
it. Like snuff. I swear to God!

Tao grabs the tin.

TAO  
Give it here Goddamnit.

Tao snorts the powder directly from the tin. Dule arrives.

DULE  
Can he drive a team like that?

TAO  
I can drive!

Dr. Ziegler looks at Dule: nods "no". Tao snorts more coke.

TAO (CONT'D)  
Goddamn!

KELLOGG  
What happened up there?

DULE  
There's three horses belonged to  
'em - back in the woods. Guess  
they're Tao's now.

KELLOGG  
Motherfuckers. Tell me they died  
painful.

DULE  
Ever killed a man Mr. Kellogg?

KELLOGG  
No. I have not.

DULE  
Ain't you the lucky one.

Dule walks to his wagon. Looks inside: no Amis. Dule looks up  
along the line, spies Oakley.

DULE (CONT'D)  
You seen Amis?

OAKLEY  
Ain't he with you?

Dule looks back to his wagon: sees his bow is gone. Dule runs to the tree line - searching for tracks.

DULE  
Amis! AMIS!

SEVERAL WOMEN notice Dule hollering out. They shout out "Amis" into the woods. Dule finds Amis' tracks - follows them into the woods.

DULE (CONT'D)  
Amis! Call out! AMIS! Call out now!

EXT. DEEP WOODS V - DAY

Dule reaches the outlaw's horses. Sees the broken bow - and a trail of blood spots.

DULE  
Amis! AMIS!

Dule follows the blood spots.

DULE (CONT'D)  
Amis - call out!

KELLOGG (OS)  
Here! Dule - he's here!

EXT. DEEP WOODS II - DAY

Dule runs towards Kellogg's voice - sees Amis on the ground; sprints forward; drops to his knees; grabs up his son.

DULE  
Amis. Amis. Wake up, son. You hear me WAKE up. Amis - wake up! Amis - please don't die. Please God don't let my boy die. Amis! AMIS!

SMASH CUT:

EXT. LAKE MODOC - STATIC WAGON TRAIN - NIGHT

Heavy, brutal rain. The wagons exactly where they were.

INT. TAO'S WAGON - NIGHT

Tao is unconscious: shivering. Jacob Ziegler lifts Tao's blanket to observe the splint - recoils from the smell.

KELLOGG  
Gangrene?

JACOB  
No question.

KELLOGG  
Fuck. Fuck.

JACOB  
I need to debride the infected tissue. Otherwise he'll die.

KELLOGG  
Debride?

JACOB  
Amputate his foot.

KELLOGG  
Fuck. What do you need?

JACOB  
My surgical implements. Whiskey.  
Five strong stomachs.

Kellogg looks quizzically at Dr. Ziegler.

JACOB (CONT'D)  
I need men who won't flinch... to hold him down.

KELLOGG  
Right. I'll get Pot-  
(then)  
I'll see who I can find.

Kellogg makes to open the tarp.

JACOB  
We waited three days for my Alice.  
How many more do we wait, here? The boy is dead. Why abide?

Outside the wagon, Kellogg sees Dule digging a grave in the woods. He's punishing the ground - one shovelful at a time.

KELLOGG  
Not much longer now, I reckon.

EXT. DULE'S WAGON - DAY

Kellogg and Oakley approaching Dule. Dule is ripping wood panels from the side of his wagon.

Kellogg and Oakley see that Dule is making a COFFIN on a workbench. Dule has used canvas strips from the roof of his wagon to wrap Amis' body, which now lies next to an open grave in a clearing in the woods.

On the ground, close to Dule: 5 large sacks of grain, a plough and 3 barrels of wine.

DULE

Grain belongs to the Baners. Tao's plough. The doctor's wine.

Kellogg looks at Oakley - not sure what to make of this.

DULE (CONT'D)

I ain't carrying for them no more.

Dule checks the size of the floor of the coffin. Satisfied, he begins nailing the floor to the frame.

OAKLEY

Well... Tao won't be working no plough come Spring. Doc had to take his foot off last night.

DULE

Someone sure was screaming.

KELLOGG

Dule... there ain't no easy way of sayin' this, but, well, you need to remember what you said to the Ziegler's when their Alice -

DULE

You don't know what I said to the Ziegler's. I'll tell you. I said your daughter is DEAD. And you will be joining her once this train moves on without you. And it is moving on. So come with, or stay here and DIE. Your choice.

OAKLEY

Jesus, Dule. Surely you didn't have to... God forgive you for speakin' such, to a grieving mother.

DULE

As to what you're askin', I will heed my own words. Count on it.

KELLOGG

Alright. OK! When you reckon you'll be fit to drive on? We're thinkin' -

DULE

Drive on? That ain't it.

KELLOGG

I... I don't follow.

DULE

I ain't leaving my son out here. Not alone. No... I ain't.

KELLOGG

C'mon now, Dule. Be sincere. I mean, there's no reason to throw -

DULE

Quickly now. Tell your people come get what's theirs.

(then)

Then get the fuck off my land.

EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - BLACKCROSS - DAY

The body of Boxcar Joe SLAMS onto the boardwalk. Sheriff Walker and Dep Kelly come out of the office as Dule takes the wanted posters for Boxcar Joe, Longley and Kid Kearney off the wall. He hands them to Sheriff Walker. Dule tosses the bodies of Longley and Kid Kearney onto the dirt.

DULE

Boxcar Joe, Sam Longley, Kid Kearney. \$1,500: dead or alive.

SHERIFF WALKER

Kid Kearney... 18 years old.

DULE

Poster says \$500. Ain't no other number to think on, Sheriff.

DEP KELLY

Thought you said you were a family man...

DULE

When I said it, it weren't no lie.



INT. LAND REGISTRY OFFICE - DAY

Dule opens out a map - then TAPS his finger on Lake Modoc. He checks the register against the coordinates. The land is owned by Art Cobb.

DULE

(to Thadeus Overton)

You there... where do I find a Mr. Art Cobb hereabouts?

The County Clerk, THADEUS OVERTON (55), looks up at Dule.

THADEUS OVERTON

Well, it's after 3 o'clock. I'd say China May's.

DULE

Where's that?

THADEUS OVERTON

Chinese quarter.

DULE

Blackcross got a Chinese quarter?

THADEUS OVERTON

Way things are going, Blackcross'll soon have a white quarter. You know their hearts are yellow. Not an animal on God's earth they won't eat. As for China May, two words: WHITE SLAVER. Brings opium in for the labourers via San Francisco. Sends white girls back to Hong Kong as payment. God's truth.

(then)

Folks say China May was sold into a bordello herself, in Bodie. During the rush of '78. January of '82 she walks into Blackcross with 3 pounds of gold ingots. Hid in a hollowed out bible. Walked the 400 miles from Bodie, BAREFOOT. In the dead Winter. Yes! So they say.

DULE

Would have thought the law might have something to say about town girls being sold overseas?

THADEUS OVERTON

Oh yes! Of course. Only, nobody knows how she comes by her, cargo.

DULE

This Art Cobb fella... he owns them lava beds outright. Why? Land ain't got no worth.

THADEUS OVERTON

Don't you know? His father is Cy Cobb. Senator Cobb.

DULE

What of it?

THADEUS OVERTON

The Senator can't profit from a compulsory federal land purchase.

DULE

I don't follow.

THADEUS OVERTON

The railroad, sir. The railroad! Before the final Blackcross to San Francisco route was settled upon, Cy Cobb bought two corridors of land. For pennies. One to the East, here. One to the West - here.

Thadeus points at a map overlaid with TWO PROPOSED routes. The WESTERN route crosses Captain Jack's Canyon, then runs along the shore of Lake Modoc (by Amis' grave).

THADEUS OVERTON (CONT'D)

One or other would have to be bought by the government for the railroad. People say the Senator made \$200,000 from the sale.

DULE

Father bought it. Son's name.

THADEUS OVERTON

Indeed! Only, the Western corridor, where you're looking right there - it's WORTHLESS now. Tracks not goin' through there.

(then)

Just as well! The waters of that lake, Lake Modoc... poisoned by Indian medicine. If a man's looking for bad luck, that's where he'll find it. Believe me.

INT. CHINA MAY'S - SALOON - DAY

Proud Eagle at the bar. At a poker table: Art Cobb, NATE KOHLER (40), and 4 GAMBLERS. China May dealing. Working on a crossword at an adjacent table: John Liszt.

\$500 in the pot. Everyone's out except for Art and Nate. Art smiling blithely; Nate thinking about his next move.

NATE KOHLER

I call.

Nate tosses \$200 into the pot.

CHINA MAY

Mr. Cobb...

ART COBB

Going to play honest today, Mr. Kohler. THREE of your finest Kings, please, Miss China May.

CHINA MAY

Three cards... Mr. Kohler?

NATE KOHLER

Smokin'.

CHINA MAY

No cards. Mr. Cobb, your bet.

ART COBB

Smokin' Nate Kohler - whooooo! I need me the antidote...

Art kisses a YOUNG PROSTITUTE (18); gropes at her crotch.

ART COBB (CONT'D)

Mmmmm - I do like to be a little hard when making a big decision. Don't you like it like that, Nate? Little semi on afore you pull the trigger. Whoooo! Hold on now -

Art takes a toke of cocaine off a tiny spoon.

ART COBB (CONT'D)

Ooh Lordy. Even harder now! That's the biscuit! Alright. Alright. Alright. What you say to \$25,000, Nate? Or are YOU hard enough?

Art tosses three huge rolls of cash onto the table. John Liszt looks at Art - "what the fuck"?

NATE KOHLER  
\$25,000?! I can't cover that.

ART COBB  
Ain't that YOUR name - in big, bold  
letters on that fine livery yard  
'cross the street? And you got that  
Hispanic ranch, out Ceda way...

NATE KOHLER  
But that's everything I got.

ART COBB  
And that's everything I got on me.  
Well, how hard is you, Mr. Kohler?  
Guess we're about to find out...

Dule enters. Ling Wei, approaches him. She swings her skirt as she places her foot on a chair, allowing Dule to briefly see the intricate DRAGON TATTOO on her thigh.

LING WEI  
You looking for a ride, cowboy?

DULE  
Beg pardon, Mam. I am not.

Dule walks to the bar; leans in to Proud Eagle.

DULE (CONT'D)  
I'm looking for a fella named -

CON COLEMAN  
ART COBB!

Dule turns around to see CON COLEMAN (35), RED COLEMAN (25), and BILLY COLEMAN (19), standing; ready to draw.

CON COLEMAN (CONT'D)  
This ain't got nothing to do with  
you, Mr. Liszt. Keep out. This is  
between me, my brothers and this  
rapist son-of-a-bitch right here.

John Liszt stays seated. Proud Eagle reaches for a shotgun.

RED COLEMAN  
Proud Eagle, respect you as I do. I  
will shoot your head off your  
fucking shoulders if you so much as  
stroke that iron.

Proud Eagle steps back. Art is clearly terrified.

CON COLEMAN  
Stand up, boy. I said - STAND UP!

Art stands.

CON COLEMAN (CONT'D)  
Rest of you. Clear out.

Everyone else at the poker table backs away.

CON COLEMAN (CONT'D)  
You raped our sister. And now  
you're gonna die. Draw.

ART COBB  
Listen... boys, you may have heard  
some vicious, spiteful rumor that -

CON COLEMAN  
Draw!

JOHN LISZT  
Any of you boys know how to read?

RED COLEMAN  
What?

JOHN LISZT  
Can you read? It's a simple  
question.

CON COLEMAN  
I don't see how -

JOHN LISZT  
It's a yes. Or a no.

CON COLEMAN  
Well enough to read his gravestone  
in the morning. That satisfy you?

JOHN LISZT  
There's this devilish new puzzle in  
the Blackcross Herald. It's called  
the "word cross". Have you seen it?  
No? Well - there's a series of  
numbered questions. Half across the  
game grid, half down.

(then)  
The answers intersect. Letters  
placed on the horizontal thus  
providing putative, additional  
clues to the answers vertical.

(MORE)

JOHN LISZT (CONT'D)

Thus, your SPELLING will either reward or RETARD all progress.

(then)

There's this ONE question that's been vexing me. Sorely! 4 down, 11 letters: *Town in the New Mexico Territory occupied by Sibley during the Civil War, starts with "a"*. The answer of course is Albuquerque. What I can't resolve is if it's spelled A-l-b-q-u-e-r-u-q-u-e or A-l-b-u-q-u-e-r-q-u-e... it's the u-q-u's that I just can't get my -

Liszt DRAWS at lightening speed - BANG! BANG! BANG!

The three brothers fall. Red's gun goes off - BANG - shooting Nate Kohler in the face. Kohler falls dead. John Liszt walks towards Con, who's still alive - now crawling for the door.

Liszt shoots him in the back - BANG!

Liszt sees Dule: his hand by his holster. Dule and Liszt's eyes lock, both recognizing the type.

JOHN LISZT (CONT'D)

(to Dule)

Man that can spell Albuquerque and shoot at the same time... I've yet to meet him.

DULE

I'll be sure and remember that.

Art sees Nate Kohler's bloodied corpse.

ART COBB

Kohler's DEAD! He never called me! The pot's mine. That's right May - you know that's right. He didn't call me. And the rules say if you don't call - hand's cooked - and he didn't call. Ain't that right...

CHINA MAY

Sure, Art. Sure.

ART COBB

Hot dawg! Whooooo!

INT. CHINA MAY'S - PRIVATE DINING ROOM - DAY

Art pouring a tall brandy. John Liszt by the door.

ART COBB

Raped their sister? Bullshit! I ain't raped no white woman since, hell, '84. And she was beggin' for it. Begging. She was. Truth!

Art gulps back the brandy; snorts a line of coke.

JOHN LISZT

That was an extremely foolish thing you did.

ART COBB

Pushin' the 25? I won didn't I?

JOHN LISZT

You won because Nate Kohler was shot in the mouth. He could have called you. Could you have beaten his straight? A house? Two pair?

ART COBB

Don't you know, Mr. Liszt, in the game of poker... nothin' beats a pair of balls.

JOHN LISZT

Your father gave you that \$25,000 to give to Boss Kennedy. A month's payroll for the 200 Irish and 600 Chinese working on your daddy's new railroad. How were you proposing to tell him if you'd lost? "Sorry, Daddy, I had a semi"?

ART COBB

Mr. Liszt, you may have shot 23 white men - who's even counting niggers and squaws... but don't you EVER talk to me like that. You will remember always just who is the servant here, and who the master.

KNOCK on the door.

ART COBB (CONT'D)

What?

China May steps in.

CHINA MAY

Mr. Cobb, there's a man to see you.

ART COBB

I ain't receiving visitors today,  
Miss May. Whoever it be - tell him  
to go fuck a horse. Or something  
less poetic, if it come to you.

CHINA MAY

Your month's bill is due, tomorrow.  
\$1,035.95 owed. Yes?

ART COBB

(lying through his teeth)  
You know I'm good for it! You know  
I am, May. What of it!?

CHINA MAY

This man says he has \$1,500... with  
your name on every red cent.

ART COBB

That right? Well good. Why wouldn't  
I see such a fellow. Send him right  
in. I'll hear the fellow out.

Dule enters. China May closes the door as she exits.

ART COBB (CONT'D)

Miss China May implied you're  
looking to do business with me.  
What kind of business?

DULE

Land deal.

ART COBB

A land deal! Hear that, Mr. Liszt,  
the cowboy wants to buy some land.  
What land would that be?

Dule makes to remove something from his coat. John Liszt  
bristles. Slowly, Dule produces a map; lays it on the table.  
Points to the "Western Corridor".

DULE

This land.

ART COBB

How much of it do you want?

DULE

All of it.

ART COBB

"All of it". Greedy cowboy!



DULE

Nothing grows on it. Cattle can't cross it. Only mineral that ever came out of the ground is rock.

ART COBB

(to Liszt)

This true?

JOHN LISZT

Honestly... he's overselling it.

DULE

You bought 4,074 acres at 9¢ an acre. I'll give you \$1,500 cash. 4 times what you paid.

Dule tosses the \$1,500 roll onto the map.

ART COBB

So... a mysterious stranger - that's you. Offers 4 times what a young, handsome entrepreneur paid - that's me, for an apparently worthless, 4,000 acre spread. Curious - wouldn't you say?

DULE

You're asking why I want it.

ART COBB

(to Liszt)

Should I ask?

JOHN LISZT

I believe you should.

DULE

It's a personal matter.

Silence. Art bursts out laughing.

ART COBB

Fuck it - SURE! Why not!? Who else is ever going to want it?

Dule steps forward with the paperwork. Art makes to sign.

JOHN LISZT

Mr. Cobb, just a moment, sir, I -

ART COBB

You think I'm a fool!? Track's already being laid to the East.

Art signs. Dule immediately pockets the contract.

ART COBB (CONT'D)  
 Meaning - as the fella said - it  
 ain't nothing but rock. Worthless.  
 'Cept to this, wandering cowboy.

Dule makes for the door.

ART COBB (CONT'D)  
 Wander no more, lonely cowboy,  
 enjoy your fortress of rock.

John Liszt takes a hold of Dule's arm.

JOHN LISZT  
 If you know something that you're  
 keeping from me. We'll meet again.

Dule looks at Liszt's hand on his arm. Liszt releases him.  
 Dule exits. Liszt looks disapprovingly at Art.

ART COBB  
 What? I'm up \$1,500 - not including  
 Kohler's pot. Why do I even care  
 what you think?  
 (shouts)  
 Hello! China May! What is the point  
 of you if there are no whores  
 sitting on my face?

EXT. LAKE MODOC - NIGHT

Two wagons close to Amis' grave. Dule rides up; dismounts;  
 walks to the grave.

DULE  
 This is your land now. Yours alone.  
 If you can forgive me for failin'  
 you as I did... this where I'll be.  
 If you can't forgive... this where  
 I'll be. I swear it.

Dule walks to TAO'S WAGON; climbs inside. Tao wakes.

DULE (CONT'D)  
 Got back soon as I could.

Dule hands Tao a bottle of bourbon. Tao necks it.

DULE (CONT'D)  
 How you been?

TAO

Thirsty. How you been?

Tao gulps the whiskey.

TAO (CONT'D)

Man needs to keep still if he's to heal. I'd 'a died on the trail, Dule. You done a Christian thing allowing me to abide.

DULE

You rest up.

Dule exits the wagon; fetches a lantern. Dule makes his way to the edge of the woods; starts chopping down a tree.

EXT. RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION CAMP - EASTERN CORRIDOR - DAY

Chinese and Irish workers laying sleepers. Boss Kennedy walks with chief engineer RUPERT BOSWELL (40). A locomotive, drawing two freight cars full of Labourers and supplies creeps along the track behind Kennedy & Boswell.

RUPERT BOSWELL

Mr. Kennedy - what you're asking is not possible. I NEED more men.

BOSS KENNEDY

Senator Cobb is doin' the askin', not me. So you just see it's done.

RUPERT BOSWELL

In order to accommodate freight traffic the gradient can't exceed 1.5°. That means shifting thousands of cubic yards of earth and rock, for every mile of track laid.

BOSS KENNEDY

As we got 370 miles to go, sounds like you best beat to the Devil.

RUPERT BOSWELL

800 men can not lay a mile of track a day at a gradient of 1.5°. You're going to have to choose - either a mile a day or a 1.5° gradient - or you find me another 400 men.

BOSS KENNEDY

No, Mr. Boswell. You're going to choose. Between doin' your fucking job or a cracked skull that'll -

CRACK! A noise so profoundly loud the Labourers stop what they're doing and look around. CRACK!

BOSS KENNEDY (CONT'D)  
What the fuck -

CRACK! A total collapse of the earth beneath the locomotive - opening up a massive hole in the ground. The track is now a tightrope, suspending the locomotive above a 50 foot drop.

The locomotive sways on the line.

LOCOMOTIVE DRIVER  
Holy Mary - mother of God...

Labourers JUMP OFF the freight cars.

TANG! TANG! TANG! - the spikes holding the rails to the sleepers shoot out of the timber like bullets, the locomotive tumbles into the abyss - dragging the freight cars behind it.

Labourers run toward the sinkhole.

RUPERT BOSWELL  
Hey! No - GET BACK.

BOOM! The locomotive explodes - killing several Labourers. Boss Kennedy surveys the scene, utterly aghast.

EXT. LAKE MODOC - DAY

Dule HAMMERING the last nails into the roof of the log cabin he's built in the woods, next to Amis' grave. Tao approaches, carrying a brace of rabbits (Tao now sporting a strap-on, wooden leg). Rumble of THUNDER in the distance.

Tao looks from the cabin to Amis' grave, then to Dule.

TAO  
Don't recall you ever speaking of  
the boy's mother.  
(then)  
What was her name?

DULE  
Apani.

TAO  
Blackfoot. From *Apaniwa*...  
"butterfly", I believe. She have  
any other names? I mean, you know  
what them Blackfeet be like -  
everybody gettin' a new name every  
other month. Seems like.

DULE  
*Ninastoko*. Mountain Chief.

TAO  
 Ain't that a man's name?

DULE  
 Yes.

TAO  
 How'd she come by it?

DULE  
 When you fight the way Apani  
 fought... that's what you get.

TAO  
 So Amis was half Indian.

DULE  
 That's right.

TAO  
 I never thought, even considered he  
 were... well, you know what I mean.

DULE  
 Pale skinned. Mother passed. No  
 need to tell nobody. The boy  
 neither. For his own good.

TAO  
 Mixed blood sure don't have no  
 white welcome... way you saw it,  
 you were protectin' him. Way I see  
 it, is that no man -

DULE  
 Leg's healed up real good. You'll  
 be moving on soon, I reckon.

Dule comes down off the roof; walks into the cabin.

EXT. RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION CAMP - EASTERN CORRIDOR - DAY

Boss Kennedy and Rupert Boswell being lowered into the sink-  
 hole on ropes by Chinese Labourers.

BOSS KENNEDY  
*Qing qing de*. Gently. Gently now.

Kennedy and Boswell reach the floor of the cavern. Mutilated  
 bodies strewn about. Boswell retches.

BOSS KENNEDY (CONT'D)  
 Don't you see the yellow man  
 watching? Pull yourself together!

Boswell looks up to see the Chinese Labourers looking down.

BOSS KENNEDY (CONT'D)  
 What the fuck happened here?

Boswell examines a set of bulbous structures on the wall.

RUPERT BOSWELL  
 Lavacicles.

BOSS KENNEDY  
 Lava-what?

RUPERT BOSWELL  
 Lavacicles. As the lava cooled, the  
 molten rock dripping to the floor  
 hardened. This is a lava tube. God  
 knows how many more there are.

Boswell lights a torch and throws it into the darkness,  
 revealing a massive, essentially infinite tunnel.

BOSS KENNEDY  
 That's the line of the track.

RUPERT BOSWELL  
 Dead on it.

EXT. FORTIFIED ADOBE HOUSE - LAVA BEDS - DAY

RAZOR TOTIN' JIM (50), walks out of his cottage; fetches  
 water from a well.

He's being watched through the sniper-scope on Dule's Lee  
 Metford, British army rifle.

Dule checks the wanted poster for Razor Totin' Jim: "Dead or  
 Alive - \$500". Dule takes aim, and is about to fire when Jim  
 runs out of his scope.

Dule sees Jim running towards a dirt road to intercept a  
 COVERED WAGON speeding along the track.

In the drivers position: two slumped over NUNS; arrows in  
 their backs. Arrows also across the frame of the wagon.

Jim grabs the lead HORSE, bringing the wagon to a halt. He  
 inspects the Nuns - they're both dead.

He slings back the tarp to see what's inside the wagon when a YOUNG WOMAN leaps out and ATTACKS him. Jim draws out a large bowie knife - makes to stab the Young Woman.

DULE

Shit.

Dule fires - just missing Jim. Jim dives for cover. The Young Woman runs into the brush.

DULE (CONT'D)

Shit.

Dule looks at the wind blowing up dust around Jim's position.

DULE (CONT'D)

1,800 yards. 90° crosswind: 1 foot per second. Right... there.

Dule fires - BANG - hits Jim in the throat. Jim falls dead.

EXT. NUN'S WAGON - DAY

Dule looks at the slumped over Nuns. Notices something odd on one of their arms. He pulls up her sleeve - revealing an intricate serpent tattoo. He lifts up her skirt - seeing a DRAGON TATTOO on her thigh. He pulls back the nun's headdress - confirming this is the prostitute from May's, Ling Wei.

Dule removes one of the arrows from Ling Wei's back. He snaps it in half; smells the wood. Inspects the fletching.

DULE

Huh. That's how...

Dule scans the horizon with his spyglass. If a party of Braves were pursuing Ling Wei, they're no longer doing so.

EXT. SCRUBLAND - DAY

Dule follows in the path of the Young Woman. He creeps through the brush. Hears MOVEMENT; stops. The Young Woman jumps out of the bushes; ATTACKS Dule viciously: punching, kicking, scratching. Dule slaps her - she falls backwards, WHACKS her head off a rock. Out cold.

DULE

What'd you have to... shit.

INT. CY COBBS OFFICE - NIGHT

On the walls: "Cobb for Senator" posters; maps rolled out on a large oak table.

Cy Cobb playing Wagner's "Lohengrin" on the piano. Boss Kennedy, Rupert Boswell, the Pinkerton Strike Breakers, Art Cobb, John Liszt and China May in attendance.

CY COBB

How much... like for like replacement?

RUPERT BOSWELL

Senator, I'm sorry, but that's the least of the costs we're -

CY COBB

My shiny new locomotive... now a cheap mess of scrap metal at the bottom of a sinkhole... how much?

Cobb shifts from playing "Lohengrin" into Sullivan's "Where Did You Get That Hat?"

RUPERT BOSWELL

To replace... \$125,000.

CY COBB

\$125,000? 400 miles of railroad is costing me \$600,000 to build. How in fuck can a locomotive cost me an additional 20% of my entire capital expenditure!? Fuck!

Cy slams the piano lid closed. Silence in the room.

CY COBB (CONT'D)

The election fund... I'll take cash from the campaign. Put it into the railroad. Without Jerusalem, King David - shit, he would have been just another politician. True power is given to the man who builds.

BOSS KENNEDY

There's also, well, the men. We got 24 dead, 52 injured.

CY COBB

24 dead! Every MONTH, De Lesseps loses 200 men. 17,000 dead, in 7 years. And still he BUILDS. New York to Los Angeles, round the Cape Horn - 12,000 miles. When the Panama Canal opens - 4,000 miles. Fuck the MEN. Men don't build. MONEY builds. The difference between men and money being -

(MORE)



CY COBB (CONT'D)

(then)

There's ALWAYS more men.

CHINA MAY

Just say the number.

RUPERT BOSWELL

I'm sorry, Mam, but the problem we're facing here is bigger than a labour deficit. A lot bigger.

BOSS KENNEDY

We can't continue along the Eastern line. We need to shift, out West.

Art Cobb looks at John Liszt - HORROR in his eyes.

RUPERT BOSWELL

The rock in those caves is like honeycomb. What happened today will happen again. No question.

CY COBB

Only, the Western route was too expensive. That's why we went East.

Boswell points at a MAP and a BRIDGE DESIGN drawing.

RUPERT BOSWELL

There is one viable Western route. We build a bridge here - below lake Modoc, over Captain Jack's Canyon. Span: 480 feet. 285 feet high. The material cost will be... punitive.

CY COBB

How long to build?

RUPERT BOSWELL

We'll have the span by mid December. But shoring up is what takes the time. You could put a locomotive across her, February.

CY COBB

4 MONTHS from now!? That'd put us 120 miles BEHIND schedule. No! No!

(then)

If my investors heard THAT they'd pull their money out. GONE! No, fuck that. We resurvey the Eastern route, build around the fractured -

ART COBB

That's it! A NEW survey. Yes! Build  
around the caves. Problem solved!

Art senses his Father's disapproval at being interrupted.

ART COBB (CONT'D)

I apologize, Father. It's just -  
I... I agree with you. We build!

BOSS KENNEDY

Survey of that kind would take  
longer than building the bridge.

RUPERT BOSWELL

Lake Modoc exists due to a collapse  
of the Western cave system. There's  
no lava tubes by the lake - that's  
guaranteed. That exact route is our  
only way out of this mess. Senator,  
we go by the lake - or we go bust.

CY COBB

The cost - in labour?

RUPERT BOSWELL

We'll need another... 800 men.

CY COBB

And additional \$25,000 a month in  
labour costs? Why not just say I  
should rip my own cock off - to  
fuck myself in the ass, because you  
two fucking morons couldn't build a  
fucking child's train set!

RUPERT BOSWELL

The extra men are just until the  
bridge is finished.

BOSS KENNEDY

We'll shift the labour we have now  
onto the bridge, right away. When  
the new men arrive they'll carry on  
laying the track. When they join up  
we lay off the weakest crews.

Cy looks at China May.

CHINA MAY

800... it can be done.

RUPERT BOSWELL

The Western route's already been plotted. All I have to do is retrieve the maps from -

ART COBB

No! This is intolerable. What would De Lesseps say - were he here? "No", he would say. FORWARD! Along the EASTERN corridor. Build or die!

CY COBB

(to Rupert)  
Do it.

ART COBB

But father - I -

CY COBB

What the fuck do you care, boy? When I want your opinion, I'll wait 'till I need whores-a-picking. Otherwise, shut the fuck up.

Art exits followed by John Liszt.

INT. ANTEROOM OUTSIDE CY COBB'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Liszt grabs Art's arm.

JOHN LISZT

You realize what's going to happen when he finds out he can't go West.

ART COBB

I do. Meanin' you'd better get your shit together, Mr. Liszt, and find me Dule Potter. Pronto.

INT. DULE'S CABIN - NIGHT

Tao packing up his belongings. Dule comes in, the Young Woman slung over his shoulder. Tao doesn't look up.

TAO

I'll be heading for Blackcross in the morning. If I get a good price for the team I'll easy get as far -

Tao sees Dule toss the Young Woman onto his bed. Dule opens a drawer - locates the piece of cloth from the torn dress.

Dule places the cloth over a hole in the sleeve of the Young Woman's dress: it's a perfect fit.

DULE  
Fetch bandages, hot water.

TAO  
Jesus, Dule. That's Alice Ziegler.

DULE  
I know.

TAO  
How in the name of -

DULE  
Bandages. Hot Water.

Tao puts a kettle on the fire. Dule opens a second drawer, revealing Amis' clothes. He hesitates...

DULE (CONT'D)  
You can dress her with these.

Dule makes for the door.

TAO  
Where you going?

DULE  
There's a couple of bodies outside.

TAO  
Right. Course there are.

INT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - NIGHT

A TELEGRAPH OPERATOR (40), finishes up writing a message that's coming down the wire. Hands it to John Liszt.

JOHN LISZT  
(reading from page)  
"SGT. Matthew Potter. AKA, Dule  
Potter. Massacre at Ebenezer Creek.  
Wanted, dead or alive... \$15,000".

INT. DULE'S CABIN - NIGHT

Tao, SNORING in a chair by the door. Dule eating a plate of beans. Alice Ziegler wakes. She looks around the room. Sees she's dressed in unfamiliar, boy's clothes. She spies a machete on the wall. Leaps out of bed; grabs the weapon. Tao falls backwards off his chair. Slowly gets to his feet.

TAO  
Easy, child. Easy now.

Alice runs at Dule. He draws his .44 - she hesitates - then SCREAMS and runs at him again. He catches her machete hand.

She PUNCHES him hard in the face. Dule holsters his gun. Alice grabs for it. Tao comes to Dule's aid. Alice KICKS Tao's wooden leg - knocking him to the floor. Her machete hand comes free; she swings the blade - cutting Dule's cheek.

Dule steps back, blood running down his face.

TAO (CONT'D)

ALICE! That's right! We know who you are. Alice Ziegler. Listen now, we ain't going to hurt you. Dule here, he rescued you from -

ALICE ZIEGLER

But he DIDN'T. Did you? I SAW you. You looked right at me. Then you walked away. Back into the night. Leaving me... with those men.

TAO

No - you got it wrong, Alice. Dule just saved you. Not 5 hours ago.

DULE

She ain't talking about tonight.

ALICE ZIEGLER

You're a coward. I saw you. Saw the fear in your eyes. You knew we were there, and you just - COWARD!

DULE

I didn't see you, Alice. I lost the track. That's why I went back.

ALICE ZIEGLER

LIAR! You left me there. Why did you leave me?

DULE

In the dark it can appear like someone's lookin' at you, only -

ALICE ZIEGLER

Liar! Fuck you!

Alice hurls the machete at Dule - he sidesteps it. Alice runs at him. He snap punches her - knocking her out cold.

TAO

I never ONCE heard Dr. Ziegler swear. Did you? Where'd a nice Jewish girl learn that kind of language? Honestly.

DULE

Honestly... shut up.

INT. CHINA MAY'S - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Art fucking the male prostitute, CHENG BAI (20). At the same time, Art is groping the breasts of a FEMALE PROSTITUTE (20).

John Liszt comes in the door.

JOHN LISZT

Jesus Christ!

Liszt steps OUTSIDE - closes the door; his face aghast.

ART COBB (OS)

Hold up there, cowboy!

(then)

Cheng Bai - you're a very, VERY bad boy. Now, git your ass out of here.

(then)

Daddy's got to work!

The Prostitutes come out through the door. Liszt walks back into the bedroom, seeing Art now lying in bed, smoking.

JOHN LISZT

A fucking boy? Do you have a death wish? Really, I'm asking?!

ART COBB

I'm tired. What do you want?

Liszt tosses a ream of telegrams on Art's chest.

JOHN LISZT

Good news. Bad news. Worse news.

ART COBB

You expect me to make sense of this shit? Talk.

Art flings the telegrams to the floor.

JOHN LISZT

Good news - Dule Potter, aka, MATTHEW Potter is a wanted man. \$15,000 bounty.

ART COBB

That is good news. We get the law  
to hunt him down. Good. Good.

JOHN LISZT

Bad news is he could be anywhere.  
Maybe he's on the land he bought,  
maybe not. Who's looking is one  
thing. Finding him be another.

Art goes to a basin, bathes his genitals.

ART COBB

You said "worse news".

JOHN LISZT

Back in '64, Potter was a Sergeant.  
Union XIV Corps - do you mind not  
doing that while I'm talking...

ART COBB

Squeamish? Really?

Art pulls on a pair of long johns.

JOHN LISZT

They crossed the Ebenezer Creek, in  
December, over a pontoon bridge.

EXT. EBENEZER CREEK - DAY (FLASHBACK)

The creek is an icy torrent - 160 feet wide. An improvised  
PONTOON BRIDGE spans the river, over which a small band of  
UNION SOLDIERS are marching. Behind them, on the far side of  
the creek: 600 FREED SLAVES, mostly WOMEN and CHILDREN.

As soon as the Union Soldiers cross over - they immediately  
start CHOPPING at the rope moorings with axes.

JOHN LISZT (VO)

Only, the commanding officer,  
General Jefferson C. Davis,  
deliberately ordered the bridge be  
cut loose - trapping 600 freed  
slaves on the opposite side of the  
creek. They'd been coming in to  
camp, at night, begging for food.  
And he wanted rid of 'em. He knew  
full well the cavalry of "Fighting  
Joe" Wheeler was right on his tail.

JOE WHEELER (28), leads a platoon of CONFEDERATE CAVALRY over  
a rise - they immediately OPEN FIRE on the Freed Slaves.

JOHN LISZT (VO) (CONT'D)  
It was a straight death sentence.

The Freed Slaves dash into the RIVER as the Cavalry approach - SCREAMING from the cold; HOLLERING out to one another.

Those that stay on dry land are MOWED DOWN by a deliberate CAVALRY CHARGE. 50 Freed Slaves run across the Pontoon - but it's suddenly cut free; they're swept away by the current.

JOHN LISZT (VO) (CONT'D)  
Hundreds were drowned. Those that weren't hacked down or shot - were returned into slavery.

DULE POTTER (26), wearing a Union Sergeant's uniform is sitting in camp with a BLACKFOOT SCOUTING PARTY that includes APANI POTTER (26). They're startled by the sudden sound of GUNFIRE and SCREAMS coming from the creek.

It's clear as day to Dule what's happened when he sees the carnage by the creek. He looks to the COMMAND POST, where he spies GENERAL JEFFERSON C. DAVIS (36), looking down at the river. Davis is smiling; shaking hands with his STAFF.

Without a moment's hesitation, Dule marches for the Command Post; Apani and the other Blackfoot run for the creek - where they help pull MOTHERS and CHILDREN from the river.

JOHN LISZT (VO) (CONT'D)  
Reason Potter is a wanted man... is having seen what Davis did.

EXT. COMMAND POST - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Dule walks right through the STAFF, pulls his pistol and starts SMASHING the face of General Davis.

JOHN LISZT  
Potter pistol whipped the General.  
Right in front of his staff.

The Staff rush to the General's aid - but they struggle to pull Dule off their commanding officer. By the time it's over - Davis is bloody, unconscious and missing several teeth.

INT. CHINA MAY'S - BEDROOM - NIGHT

ART COBB  
Jesus!

JOHN LISZT  
He was court-martialed. Sentenced to hang.  
(MORE)



JOHN LISZT (CONT'D)

Only, he was sprung by a Blackfoot raiding party, that included his wife. Fugitive ever since.

ART COBB

Don't this mean we can get the army onto this? I mean - they got to have thousands of men in the territory, right?

JOHN LISZT

You're not listening to me. Dule Potter has killed over 30 men. He beat out the teeth of his commanding officer.

ART COBB

Easily provoked. Good to know.

Art snorts a line of coke through a \$5 dollar bill.

JOHN LISZT

Art, this man has no fear. At all. Do you understand what it means, to go up against a man like this?

ART COBB

You're looking at this all wrong, Mr. Liszt. It's the man who stands and fights that's the easiest to kill. The yellow bastard who runs away - they're the ones you can't put in the fucking ground. This ain't worse news. It's the best.

INT. DULE'S CABIN - MORNING

Tao stirring a pan of steak and onions. The smell WAKES Alice. Tao takes the pan to a table, serves the contents onto a plate. Next to the plate is the machete. On the far side of the table: Dule.

TAO

(to Dule)

You sure about this?

Tao looks at Alice, then walks to the cabin door; opens it.

DULE

I see it like this: you go out that door, you'll die in the wilderness. Stay here, you'll live. Livin' soul gotta eat. You want to kill me first... there's the blade.

Alice walks to the table. Looks at her choices: the DOOR, the STEAK, the MACHETE. She snatches up the blade, holding it close to Dule's throat. Dule doesn't flinch.

Alice drops the machete; devours the steak with her hands. Dule walks to Tao; breathes out.

TAO

Now what?

DULE

Way she's set to that steak. Reckon you'd best fry another.

TAO

I still don't understand, Dule. What in hell happened to her?

DULE

I got a fair reckoning on that. Only, first things first. Got a telegram to send.

INT. LAND REGISTRY OFFICE - DAY

Cy Cobb, Rupert Boswell and the 12 Pinkerton Strike Breakers, stood looking at Thadeus Overton.

RUPERT BOSWELL

(to Cy)

I requested the topographical maps of the Western corridor from Mr. Overton, here, like we discussed last night, only, well...

(to Thadeus overton)

You tell him...

INT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY

The Telegraph Operator hands Dule a note.

TELEGRAPH OPERATOR

Your reply, sir.

DULE

(reading from page)

"Exeter Hotel, San Francisco. Regret to inform, 1 week past, Jacob and Ruth Ziegler poisoned by charcoal fumes at boarding house. Died peacefully in sleep. Kellogg".

INT. LAND REGISTRY OFFICE - DAY

CY COBB  
 (to Rupert)  
 Where is my son?

THADEUS OVERTON  
 Well, Senator... um, it is past 3  
 o'clock...

INT. CHINA MAY'S - SALOON - DAY

Proud Eagle at the bar. At a poker table: Art Cobb, JOE SAVITCH (50), and 3 GAMBLERS. China May dealing. At an adjacent table: John Liszt - crossword in hand.

JOE SAVITCH  
 Call.

Joe throws \$500 into the pot. Art turns over his cards.

ART COBB  
 Flushing diamonds - boom! Ace high.

Art makes to grab the pot.

JOE SAVITCH  
 Hold up. 7's over 9's.

CHINA MAY  
 House. Mr. Savitch wins.

ART COBB  
 Motherfucker. Motherfucker! This  
 bastard's cheating. There's no  
 other explanation.

CHINA MAY  
 Mr. Cobb, I'm dealing.

ART COBB  
 Then you're the fucking cheat!  
 You're in it together. That means  
 I'm due my money back - you gimme  
 back my \$4,000. Right now. I -

Art looks to the door, his mouth wide open. Standing there, with a DEAD NUN over his shoulder: Dule.

Dule dumps Ling Wei's body on the floor - approaches China May. John Liszt stands - but Dule produces his sawn-off from beneath his coat. China May stands, Dule PUNCHES her - she flies back over the table. Proud Eagle grabs for his shotgun, but Dule draws his .44, points it at Proud Eagle.

DULE

(to China May)

I know you sent 2 of your sporting girls to purchase Alice Ziegler from the APACHE war party you got stalking the wagon trains. Same tribe as your barkeep - that ain't no coincidence. Dressed your girls as nuns, to avoid the suspicions of folks wonderin' why 2 Chinese women might be driving a wagon through them badlands. Only, the arrows stuck in her back: mulberry shaft, straight fletched. Them's Apache arrows. Guess your business partners thought if procuring slaves for you weren't no thing... neither was double-crossing you.

(then)

Now, you can provide the good Senator with all the Chinese labour he needs, and them with all the opium they desire. But if you ever again trade in American women... I'll kill you with my bare hands.

ART COBB

(shouts to the room)

This here's a wanted man - bounty of \$15,000! MATTHEW "Dule" Potter, that's him - right there. Any man want to be rich, draw. Shoot him!

COWBOYS stand - eyeing up Dule. Dule points the sawn-off AND the .44 at Art.

DULE

Man wants to be responsible for the death of the Senator's son, grab your pistol. You draw. Art Cobb dies. Takers?

ART COBB

Alright - OK. New deal, Mr. Potter - Matthew. What say you to \$20,000 in cash - I'll give it to you, right now. That land I sold you, I need it back. \$20,000.

Dule moves toward a door by the side of the bar.

DULE

Any man comes after me through this door... he dies.

ART COBB

I'll give you \$25,000 - plus 4,000 acres to the East. Same as what you got to the West, plus \$25,000. C'mon? How can you say no to that?

CHINA MAY

You SOLD the Western corridor - to this asshole? What the fuck were you thinking?

DULE

\$25,000 be a lot of money.  
(to Liszt)  
Should I ask him why?

JOHN LISZT

I believe you should.

ART COBB

There's been a mistake. I need it back. You don't understand, see - it's - it's a personal matter.

DULE

The railroad.

ART COBB

Yes - yes, the railroad. \$35,000. That's over 20 times what you paid. Wait! \$40,000. Today. Cash.

CY COBB (OS)

(shouting)  
Art! Art Cobb! Where the fuck are you, boy?

Dule sees Cy Cobb storming towards the main saloon door.

DULE

Sounds like you're gonna pay alright. One way or another.

Cy Cobb comes in; Dule slips out. Cy steps over the body of Ling Wei as if she wasn't even there.

CY COBB

(to Art)  
You stupid son-of-a-bitch.

John Liszt runs after Dule.

CY COBB (CONT'D)

Hold firm, Mr. Liszt.

The 12 Pinkerton Strike Breakers come in behind Cy.

JOHN LISZT  
Senator - you don't understand.

CY COBB  
Shut your fucking mouth.

ART COBB  
Father - thank God - you're just in  
time! The man who conned me into  
selling the Western Corri-

Cy PUNCHES Art in the mouth: a real haymaker. Art goes down.

CY COBB  
Do you have any fucking idea what  
you've done? Do you? Any idea?

JOHN LISZT  
Senator - please -

CY COBB  
(to the Pinkertons)  
One more word out of that man's  
mouth and you fill it with lead.

The Pinkerton's raise up their rifles on Liszt. Cy KICKS Art  
in the stomach - again and again.

CY COBB (CONT'D)  
You did this... to pay... your  
fucking... bar bill. You  
degenerate... useless... child!

EXT. KOHLER'S LIVERY YARD - DAY

Dule mounts his horse; gallops out of town.

INT. CHINA MAY'S - SALOON - DAY

CY COBB  
The compulsory purchase window has  
closed. You know what that means?  
If this man won't sell the land  
back - there ain't going to be a  
railroad. Everything I have -  
EVERYTHING, is tied up in that  
railway. So you tell me, right now,  
boy... just who in the fuck is Dule  
fucking Potter?

CHINA MAY  
Senator.

Cy kicks Art. Art HOWLS in pain; tears rolling down his face.

CY COBB  
Tell me!

CHINA MAY  
SENATOR!

CY COBB  
WHAT?!

CHINA MAY  
Potter just walked out that door.

CY COBB  
What?

CHINA MAY  
He was just here.

CY COBB  
Then why in the FUCK didn't  
somebody tell me!?

EXT. PLAINS - DUSK

Dule gallops through the brush. He reaches a high point and looks back - sees the 12 Pinkertons riding after him.

DULE  
C'mon.

Dule kicks hard, presses on.

EXT. WOODLAND - DUSK

Dule dismounts. Searches the base of the trees for a mark. Finding it, he dusts back the earth - uncovering a crate.

EXT. WOODLAND - NIGHT

The 12 Pinkertons walking through the woods. They see a strange light ahead, so approach with caution. In the canopy above them: 30 oil lanterns (hung at various heights on twine) sway in the breeze.

The Pinkertons look at each other - confused, on edge.

BANG! - one of the lanterns is shot out, spraying burning oil onto the forest floor, lighting the Pinkertons up. BANG - one of the Pinkertons is shot in the head.

The Pinkertons fire into the dark. From a concealed rise, Dule shoots out several more lanterns. The woods are now ablaze. The Pinkertons fall to Dule's rifle, one by one.

EXT. ESCARPMENT - DAWN

Dule rides to the edge of the lava beds, where the dirt track becomes rock. He looks back. Something's not right.

EXT. BRUSH CLOSE TO THE ESCARPMENT - DAWN

Proud Eagle watching Dule.

EXT. WOODLAND - DAY

The scene of the Pinkerton massacre. Scorched, smoking earth. Bodies all round. Riding in from the South: Cy Cobb, Boss Kennedy, China May, Art Cobb and John Liszt.

CY COBB

Jesus H. Christ. Who is this man?

Liszt looks reproachfully at Art.

A NOISE in the near distance. Liszt and China May raise their rifles. Proud Eagle emerges from the bushes on his PONY.

CHINA MAY

You know where he is?

PROUD EAGLE

You're not going to believe this.

Proud eagle holds up a 3 inch nail.

CY COBB

Am I supposed to deduce something from that?

PROUD EAGLE

Before he rode up onto the rock... man took his horseshoes off.

ART COBB

So what? Did you track him or not?

Everyone looks at Art for the idiot he is.

ART COBB (CONT'D)

What?



CY COBB

Mr. Liszt, get the word out. US  
Marshals, Army Rangers, bounty  
hunters, Mexicanos, Indian scouts.  
I will skin alive the man who  
brings me Dule Potter dead. The man  
who brings me Potter ALIVE...  
\$50,000. Y'follow?

Liszt turns and rides back for town. Hard rain comes down.

CHINA MAY

Our Hong Kong investors arrive next  
week. What are you going to do? If  
you can't buy that land -

CY COBB

We build. West. We build.

EXT. DULE'S CABIN - DAY

Dule walking; his horse is limping. Tao on the stoop.

TAO

What's a man gotten up to that  
loses him 4 horseshoes?

Dule takes the horseshoes from a saddlebag; tosses them on  
the ground; ties up his horse.

TAO (CONT'D)

And the Zieglers?

INT. DULE'S CABIN - DAY

Dule enters. Alice washing her dress. She looks at Dule.

ALICE ZIEGLER

When?

DULE

Week ago.

ALICE ZIEGLER

How?

DULE

Peacefully.

Alice carries on washing her dress.

ALICE ZIEGLER

Mother used to say "all bad things must come to an end". Guess she proved herself right on that.

Tao comes in.

ALICE ZIEGLER (CONT'D)

Father said I was a "tearaway". That I brought great shame on our house, for loving a "shegetz". Conor O'Loughlin. No shame on the father for beating his daughter to within an inch of her life. Nor on the mother for holding her down.

(then)

It's 'cause of me we were out here. Escaping the "stain on our name". I come to believe, in the end, what it was down to - the violence he put on me, every day... well, let me ask you Mr. Potter, when I got took... my Father offer to go out into the night with you, or not?

Dule looks at the floor.

ALICE ZIEGLER (CONT'D)

Didn't think so. Strangest thing... as afeared as I was, when I saw you that night, and as angry when you fell back... it was still the first time in my life I felt somebody believed I was worth a damn.

(then)

You risked your life for me, Dule Potter. That's more than my own father ever did. Sorry for trying to kill you. Wouldn't have been just if I had.

DULE

You can't stay here, Alice.

(to Tao)

You neither.

TAO

Why would that be?

DULE

Man I bought this land off, well, he wants it back. Bad. Somehow, he knows by my GIVEN name. That means he knows my...

(MORE)

DULE (CONT'D)

means when he comes for me, he  
won't be coming alone. Y'all need  
to get as far away from me, and  
this place as you can.

TAO

But that don't make no -

DULE

Railroad's comin', Tao. I seen the  
route in the land office. But that  
AIN'T what this land is for. That  
ain't gonna happen. From here, it's  
370 miles to San Fran. I'll see you  
both right that far. Rest is on -

A NOISE outside the door. SMASH! Door flies open - TWO BOUNTY  
HUNTERS storm forward. Dule draws - BANG, BANG! The Bounty  
Hunters fall. BANG! Dule shot in the arm by a third Bounty  
Hunter. Dule Falls. Alice grabs the machete - plants it in  
the forehead of the third Bounty Hunter. Alice is sprayed  
with his blood - but does not flinch. The third Bounty Hunter  
falls dead. Tao runs to Dule.

TAO

Dule - Jesus - you alright?

DULE

I'll live.

TAO

Bounty hunters you think? How'd  
they find you?

DULE

Couldn't have. Must have thought it  
was somebody else in here.

ALICE ZIEGLER

What matters... is they won't be  
the last.

INT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - NIGHT

John Liszt reading a telegram transcript.

JOHN LISZT

"US Marshals - Incoming x 75. Fort  
Bizarre - Deploying 450 Cavalry.  
Pinkerton Agents - Inbound x 40".

TELEGRAPH OPERATOR #2  
I reckon a piece of that reward  
might rightly go to the fella that  
helps track this man down...

JOHN LISZT  
Yes. What of it?

TELEGRAPH OPERATOR #2  
I was doin' the books back there:  
found this -

The Telegraph Operator hands Liszt the telegram received by  
Dule from Kellogg, about the death of Alice's parents.

JOHN LISZT  
"Ziegler"... Potter said that name  
in the saloon... he said the girl  
taken by the Apaches, her name was:  
Alice Ziegler. What is this?

TELEGRAPH OPERATOR #2  
Received as reply, right in this  
here office, by Mr. Dule Potter.  
Kellogg - he's the wagon master on  
the train Potter rode into town  
with. Ziegler's too.

JOHN LISZT  
Potter telegraphed Kellogg? When?

TELEGRAPH OPERATOR #2  
3 days ago.

JOHN LISZT  
Same day he came into China May's.  
"Kellogg. Exeter Hotel, San  
Francisco". Son-of-a-bitch.

EXT. DULE'S CABIN - NIGHT

Dule sitting by Amis' grave, looking up at the Milky Way.  
Alice comes out of the cabin. Tao waiting by the door.

ALICE ZIEGLER  
Tao and me... we've been talking.  
We want to know how you figure your  
dyin' alone out here is going to  
stop that railroad?

DULE  
I swear to God, Alice - do not test  
me - do not do that.

ALICE ZIEGLER

I ain't testing you, Dule Potter.  
I'm asking you what you WANT.  
'Cause if you don't care one way or  
the other, just sell them the  
fucking land. *Mishegas!*

TAO

I ain't sayin' she's not lippy...  
but the girl has a point.

DULE

You ever had someone die on your  
account? I have. You're not stayin'  
- neither of you. That ain't  
happenin'. Damn it, Tao, you think  
that whiskey gonna drink itself.

Tao brings the bottle. Dule drinks.

ALICE ZIEGLER

Why'd Sherman march the 250 miles  
from Atlanta to Savannah? You were  
there. Why'd he do that?

DULE

My march ended in Effingham County.  
But that's a whole other story.  
(then)

Only, I heard Sherman speak this  
one time, out on the Decatur road.  
He said "Boys, only man I ever met  
had a romantic appetite for war,  
was a man never been in one. Our  
job... is to make Georgia howl."

ALICE ZIEGLER

How?

DULE

Free their slaves. Burn their  
stores: cotton, arables. Tear down  
their factories. Smash their  
railroads. Hell, most of it was -

ALICE ZIEGLER

How'd you locate their railroads?

DULE

How'd we... quit your mischief,  
child. Get to what you mean to say.

ALICE ZIEGLER

There's but one way to stop Cobb's  
railroad crossin' this ground,  
Dule. That's to empty his pockets,  
before the line reaches the lake.

TAO

We can't beat an army, but we sure-  
as-shit can break the bank. By  
tearin' up what he already put  
down. And when he lays that track  
over... we tear it up again.

DULE

Smash the Senator's railroad...

ALICE ZEIGLER

There's 45 miles of track already  
laid, runnin' out of Blackcross. We  
go back along the line, tear that  
shit up 'til he can't afford to fix  
what we cost him. Our job... is to  
make Senator Cobb howl.

DULE

I know how to fuck up a railroad.  
Do you? Either of you?

(then)

I made promises. I'm bound to this  
ground. You're not. Dead weight's  
all you'd be. Both of you.

ALICE ZIEGLER

Neither of us be alive if it  
weren't for you, Dule. That means  
if your standin' on this ground...  
we're standin' - and we're fightin'  
with you. That's our promise.

TAO

You fight alone, here... they'll  
kill you. Build their railroad  
right over your grave. You know  
they will, Dule. You do.

DULE

(to Alice)

Shit, maybe I'll just sell the land  
to you. Goin' price is \$40,000.  
Couple more sips here, I may even  
be open to negotiate.

Alice takes the bottle from Dule; drinks like a pro.

ALICE ZIEGLER

Buy this piece of shit land? Son,  
you have been drinking.

EXT. DULE'S CABIN - DAY

Tao weaving reeds into square frames. Dule digging a trench with a pick and shovel. Alice is practicing drawing Dule's .44 from a holster belt.

ALICE ZIEGLER

Why can't I be taught to shoot  
before I've learned to -

The gun slips from Alice's hand; falls in the mud.

DULE

First, you get that part right.  
Rest'll come easy.

ALICE ZIEGLER

Why you diggin' that ditch 'long  
the lake? Ain't nobody gonna be  
shooting from that direction.

TAO

After the rain... comes the snow.

ALICE ZIEGLER

What does that even mean?

TAO

Means stop askin' questions, child,  
and carry on slingin'.

The gun slips from Alice's hand, lands next to Dule. He picks it up; hands it back to her.

DULE

(softly)  
First time's not easy for anyone.

ALICE ZIEGLER

Dule... we crossed Missouri,  
Nebraska, Wyoming, Utah and Nevada  
in the same wagon train. I knew who  
you was. Everybody did. Only, in  
that whole time, you never once  
looked at me, never mind in the  
eye... why you never do that?

(then)

I know you're not a mean person.  
That ain't why.

TAO

Wagon train is a social enterprise.  
Safety in numbers. Socializing  
don't come into it, for some.

ALICE ZIEGLER

That ain't an answer.

TAO

You weren't gonna get one from him.  
Thought I might chip in, sorta  
friendly like. You're welcome.

DULE

We are going to be found. Just a  
matter of time. If we're not ready,  
we'll die. Before we strike out we  
have to know we can defend this  
ground... any other questions?

ALICE ZIEGLER

Is the real reason there ain't no  
bullets in this gun so I don't  
shoot you, for being such an  
almighty fucking ball-breaker.

DULE

Yes. That is why.

EXT. RAILROAD - CLOSE TO BLACKCROSS - DAY

A locomotive pulls a luxury caboose away from town.

INT. LUXURY CABOOSE - DAY (MOVING)

Cy Cobb, Art Cobb, John Liszt, Boss Kennedy, China May and 3  
x HONG KONG INVESTORS and their BODYGUARD x 5.

CY COBB

Gentlemen... change is inevitable.  
The Ojai Oil Company now produces  
more kerosene in a week... than  
does the nation's ENTIRE whaling  
fleet - in a YEAR. Them sailors  
better get to night school - 'cause  
their future been harpooned by the  
oil men. Whalin' boats - shit!  
Firewood. That's all they're good  
for now. Luck can make a man rich.  
That is true. But only the gift of  
foresight can make a man a FORTUNE.  
And YOU gentlemen, have that gift.

(MORE)



CY COBB (CONT'D)

The railroad you're financing - that we're travelling on right now - will no doubt see your names written in history books, alongside the Emperors that built the Roman roads that... well, I'm sure them Chinese Emperors built a few roads of their own, up to that great wall they got - am I right?

Cy smiles; the Investors do not.

HONG KONG INVESTOR #1

Senator Cobb, our sources have informed us that our capital inflows are close to exhaustion, due to some, technical issues?

Cy looks at China May. She's absolutely unembarrassed.

CY COBB

Sir, I can assure you, any PREVIOUS difficulties have now been resolved by the tremendous progress we're making. Simply tremendous -

INT. LOCOMOTIVE ENGINE - DAY (MOVING)

The ENGINEER jams the brake.

INT. LUXURY CABOOSE - DAY (MOVING)

The sudden, violent DECELERATION causes Art to fall from his seat. Decanters of brandy crash off shelves. The train comes to a SCREECHING halt. Cy Cobb makes for the door.

EXT. BEND ON THE RAILROAD - DAY

Ahead: a mile long section of the track is ablaze. The sleepers have been soaked in oil, and are burning so ferociously that the iron rails have buckled from the heat.

The carriage empties - everyone now looking at the INFERNO.

BOSS KENNEDY

Jesus fucking Christ.

China May in a huddle with the Investors.

CY COBB

(to Liszt)

I want his head on a stake. You hear me. Fuck the title. Potter's head. On a fucking stake.

EXT. RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION CAMP - CAPTAIN JACK'S CREEK - DAY

On the Eastern side of the canyon, the bridge is beginning to take shape - but it's not yet reached the Western side.

Alice on a high ridge looking down through a spyglass. She's observing an argument between Cy Cobb and 3 x CHINESE GUARDS. Behind Cy Cobb: China May and Boss Kennedy. The Hong Kong Investors watch the altercation play out.

Dule arrives; lies down beside Alice. Dule notices she's wearing a .38 in a holster belt.

DULE

You ready to wear that?

ALICE ZIEGLER

Like you said, gun ain't heavy in a strong hand. I been practicing, just like you showed me.

DULE

You find it?

ALICE ZIEGLER

It's the shack to the right, behind the latrines.

Dule sees a LABOURER exit the SHACK with a T-handle detonator and a roll of cable.

China May suddenly and violently pushes two of the Guards off the lip of the bridge. They fall 285 feet to their death.

ALICE ZIEGLER (CONT'D)

Shit... did she just...

DULE

She did.

The 3rd Guard falls to his knees, begging for his life. China May kicks him in the chest - he falls into the canyon.

ALICE ZIEGLER

Someone sure is pissed.

DULE

That's China May.

ALICE ZIEGLER

The woman meanin' to sell me?

DULE

Real sweetheart, ain't she.

ALICE ZIEGLER

Those were Chinese workers she  
flung into the canyon.

DULE

They were.

ALICE ZIEGLER

Don't care much for her own kind.

DULE

You think Senator Cobb cares any  
more for his Irish labourers...  
'cause they're "his kind"? You  
should know better, child.

ALICE ZIEGLER

What you mean by that?

DULE

China May and Senator Cobb - to  
them, there's only two kinds of  
people in the world. People that  
want what they have, and people who  
have what they want.

TAO (OS)

If you want what they have, they'll  
sell it to you. For a price.

Alice looks around to see Tao arriving with 2 pack mules.

TAO (CONT'D)

Those that have what they want,  
they'll take it from 'em. Whatever  
the cost. Rich folk... if they  
haven't fucked you yet, it's only  
'cause they ain't had the chance.

Tao spits into the dirt.

DULE

Let's get to work.

EXT. RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION CAMP - CAPTAIN JACK'S CREEK - NIGHT

The camp is silent - snow falling. Dule and Alice creep  
amongst the tents, avoiding the ARMED CHINESE GUARDS.

INT. TNT SHACK - NIGHT

Dule and Alice slip inside. They grab a T-handle detonator,  
rolls of cord and several crates of TNT.

As they open the door to leave, Dule sees a drunken IRISH LABOURER (30), rushing desperately for the latrine.

IRISH LABOURER #1  
 Jesus Fucking Christ, I knew I  
 shouldn't have had that chow mein.

Dule shuts the door. Silence as Dule and Alice wait.

ALICE ZIEGLER  
 Why were you on the wagon train?

DULE  
 You want talk about this, here?

Dule gestures to the crates of TNT surrounding them.

ALICE ZIEGLER  
 What? Your words gonna catch fire?

Dule looks out at the latrine. The Irish Labourer is inside:

IRISH LABOURER #1 (OS)  
 Oh Jesus... Mary... and Joseph!

Dule closes the door.

DULE  
 Some people were lookin' for me.  
 Bad people. Weren't gonna stop.  
 Amis and me had a couple of close  
 calls. Time to put some distance.

ALICE ZIEGLER  
 Why were bad people lookin' for  
 you? What did you do?

DULE  
 We freed thousands of slaves on  
 Sherman's march. Only, we didn't  
 leave them nothin' to survive on.  
 We burned every store we didn't  
 carry away. A party of around 600  
 freed slaves were following our  
 path, comin' into camp at night,  
 begging for food, for their  
 children. General Davis wanted 'em  
 gone. So, at the Ebenezer Creek, he  
 took to that. River was swollen  
 right up, 10 feet deep, 160 feet  
 wide. Engineers built a pontoon  
 bridge. When we crossed over he  
 ordered the bridge be cut loose.  
 (MORE)

DULE (CONT'D)

Trappin' them slaves on the opposite side of that icy torrent, just as Wheeler's reb cavalry arrived. It was a cold blooded massacre. 9th of December, 1864. Well, seein' clear as light the conduct of my commanding officer, I took the butt of my pistol, and smashed in the General's face.

ALICE ZIEGLER

You whooped a General? Shit, Dule.  
(then)  
Was it worth it?

DULE

Worth don't come into it. Thing should be done, or it shouldn't.

Dule checks outside: The Labourer is walking away.

IRISH LABOURER #1

"Oh Danny Boy, the pipes they are a flowing, out from my arse, and down the mountain side..."

EXT. SCRUBLAND CLOSE TO THE WORK CAMP - NIGHT

Tao securing several crates of TNT onto pack mules. Dule and Alice arrive with the rest of the loot.

DULE

Sun up in a half hour. We're done.

The engineer, Rupert Boswell, emerges from the bushes with a CHINESE PROSTITUTE (20). Dule draws his .44.

DULE (CONT'D)

Hands.

Boswell puts his hands up.

DULE (CONT'D)

Not like that.

Boswell is confused, then presents his hands to Dule. Dule inspects them.

DULE (CONT'D)

You ain't no labourer.

RUPERT BOSWELL

I'm just an engineer.

DULE  
 "Just an engineer".

Dule plunges his bowie knife into Boswell, twists it. Boswell falls dead. Dule looks at the prostitute, swings the blade - cuts her throat. She falls. Alice and Tao look at Dule.

DULE (CONT'D)  
 Ain't no such thing as some of the war. It's none of the war... or all of it.  
 (to Alice)  
 You wanted this. Here it is.

INT. KOHLER'S LIVERY BARN - NIGHT

WHACK! John Liszt has punched someone in the face. Behind Liszt: PINKERTON AGENTS x 10.

JOHN LISZT  
 Now these gentlemen have done me a true turn, bringing you all the way they have. So, I believe it would be rude of you to carry on holding out on me like this...

REVEAL: it's Kellogg, the wagon master.

JOHN LISZT (CONT'D)  
 So, right this minute, you're going to tell me everything you know about Dule Potter. And exactly where the fuck he's at.

EXT. WOODS NEAR LAKE MODOC - DAY

Deep snow on the ground. Tao on watch, looking down towards Captain Jack's Creek. Sees a posse approaching. At the front - Kellogg is DIRECTING the party. Tao falls back.

INT. DULE'S CABIN - DAY

Alice reassembling Dule's Lee Metford sniper rifle. Alice completes the task. Dule stops the timer on his watch. He looks at the dial, hesitates.

ALICE ZEIGLER  
 What?  
 (then)  
 Dule?

DULE  
 42 seconds.

ALICE ZEIGLER

That's good, right?

Alice senses Dule's discomfort. She's suddenly, keenly aware of the fact she's wearing Amis's clothes. Dule looks at the watch face... then resets the timer to zero.

DULE

So... again.

Alice starts to disassemble the rifle - then stops.

ALICE ZEIGLER

Don't want to scorch them beans.

Alice makes her way to the stove; stirs a pot. A heavy silence hangs in the air.

DULE

A'times, a man has his choices took from him. A'times, a hard choice is all he's got. I ain't whinin', that's just the way of it.

ALICE ZEIGLER

Quit your mischief, Dule Potter. Get to what you mean to say.

DULE

You have a choice here. You can live to fight another day, Alice. I'll pack your saddlebags myself - and be proud to say I did it. The old world is dyin'. You're young. You got a chance in the new one. A life in front of you. This ain't no time to be stubborn. Be smart. Get out of here. Just... go.

Alice turns; looks at Dule. She's about to speak when Tao comes through the door.

TAO

They got Kellogg. I don't know how, but they got him.

DULE

The telegraph... must'a been.

TAO

We got 10 minutes, tops.

Alice reassembles the sniper rifle, double time, then slings it over her shoulder. Alice looks at Dule. Dule hesitates, then nods at her. Alice and Tao exit the cabin.

EXT. LAKE MODOC - DAY

Riding slowly towards Dule's cabin: Kellogg, Cy Cobb, Art Cobb, John Liszt and Pinkerton Agents x 25.

Dule emerges from the cabin, walks slowly forward. Stops. Looks at Kellogg. Kellogg can't return his gaze.

CY COBB

Harrison made President. Cleveland won the popular vote, but Harrison took the state count 20 to 18. Bein' up here, thought you might not get a lot of current affairs. Now you're all caught up. The subject, however, of our conver-

DULE

The subject is blood. You know it.

JOHN LISZT

Your son is buried here. We get it. The Senator is willing to forgive all your past... transgressions. Sell him the land. Name your price. He promises to "respect" the resting place of the boy. It will be untouched, absolutely. You're a soldier, Dule. War's over.

EXT. WOODS ABOVE LAKE - DAY

In the woods to Dule's left: China May and PINKERTON AGENTS x 5, quietly setting aim with a GATLING GUN.

EXT. DULE'S CABIN - DAY

CY COBB

Locomotives will run on my track at 60mph. Blackcross to San Fran: 7 hours. Same run will take a wagon train 45 days. We're 150 times faster. 150! Your son wouldn't have died out here if he'd been on one of my trains. No. He would not. We're safer too. Safer, faster, cheaper. Mr. Kellogg here, his whole way of life is over. Progress can not be stopped by any man.

(MORE)



CY COBB (CONT'D)

If you think you're different,  
somehow... that's vanity.

DULE

It ain't my progress. I don't want  
it. And you may call it progress,  
Senator, like it's some force of  
nature. But it's you and men like  
you... that's what's coming. It  
ain't progress askin' me to break  
promises made. No. That'd be you.

CY COBB

Potter... you think these woods  
ain't TEEMING with men? That I'd  
ride up here, like this, without 20  
rifles aimed at your back?

DULE

No other way.

CY COBB

Then why you standing there being  
so ornery? We found you. You've  
lost your ONLY advantage. No shame  
in surrender, son.

DULE

Shame for you, Senator, is how I  
made a will. I die here today -  
this land will NEVER be yours.

EXT. WOODLAND BEHIND DULE'S CABIN - DAY

On a rise behind the cabin, Alice looks at Senator Cobb  
through the scope on Dule's sniper rifle.

ALICE ZIEGLER

Count?

Tao looking through the spyglass at a set of black stones set  
in a row by the tree line.

TAO

13.

Alice adjusts the scope. Snow's coming down now, making the  
Senator harder to see.

ALICE ZIEGLER

Wind?

Tao looks at a cup anemometer on the roof of the cabin. Two  
of the three cups have been painted white, one black.

Tao counts the rotations of the black cup - then checks the direction of a small flag, fluttering by the lake's edge.

TAO

1 foot per second, 90° angle.

ALICE ZIEGLER

1,200 feet plus 10 times 13: 1,330 feet distant. 1 foot per second, 90° angle. Set. Clear scope.

Tao wipes the moisture off the far end of the scope.

EXT. DULE'S CABIN - DAY

CY COBB

Nothing's gonna save the man you left this land to. You know that. Your will ain't nothing but a death sentence to them named within.

DULE

No, Senator, you got it all wrong. See, I left this land to a people, not a man.

ART COBB

What in fuck that supposed to mean?

DULE

Amis' mother, Apani, was the bravest, fiercest Blackfoot warrior I ever knew. The grave that holds her son be an Indian grave. Figured it was right to leave it to the Canadian Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, on behalf of the Blackfoot. I die - you're going to be in a cross border legal battle that'll last 20 years. If you can wait that long to build your railroad, say so... I'll shoot myself, save you the trouble.

Liszt notices a row of black stones by the lake's edge, and a corresponding set along the tree line. The stones are spaced exactly 10 feet apart: set up to form a grid. He looks around - sees the cup anemometer on the cabin roof, and the flag.

CY COBB

So... you figure on being more than just a reckless, murdering, terrorist. To that you want to add being a fucking wise-ass.

(MORE)

CY COBB (CONT'D)

Let me tell you something, when they come to write the book on -

JOHN LISZT

Senator, something's not right here, why is there a -

CY COBB

Shut up! Now, I'd like to resolve this matter clean, Mr. Potter, but if it has to be ugly, so be it. Sell or die, Potter. You got 10 seconds. Then my men open fire.

(then)

Times up.

DULE

So be it.

Dule hops to his left - disappearing at once through a HIDDEN TRAPDOOR buried beneath the snow.

BANG! Alice's sniper shot hits Cy's horse - throwing him to the ground. IN THE WOODS TO THE LEFT - China May opens up on Dule's last position with the gatling gun. The Pinkerton Agents FIRE wildly at the cabin.

Art fires - BANG - but he accidentally shoots Kellogg in the throat. Art looks at this father - but when a second bullet SMASHES close to his head - he turns and flees. Liszt jumps to the Senator's aid; drags him behind his horse.

INT. COVERED TRENCH - DAY

Hidden by a wicker-work, reed roof beneath the snow, Dule runs along a trench towards the back of the cabin.

EXT. WOODLAND BEHIND DULE'S CABIN - DAY

Alice aiming at the Senator.

ALICE ZIEGLER

Count.

TAO

14. 1 foot per second. 45° angle

ALICE ZIEGLER

1,340 feet. Set.

Alice shoots at Senator Cobb for a 3rd time - misses again.

EXT. WOODS ABOVE LAKE - DAY

China May sees Alice; fires the gatling gun in her direction.

EXT. WOODLAND BEHIND DULE'S CABIN - DAY

The Pinkerton's open up on the ridge just as Dule emerges from the hidden trench, next to Alice and Tao.

DULE

Fall back.

Dule, Tao and Alice make their way towards their horses and mount up. Pinkerton Agents x 5 arrive & open fire. Dule & Alice shoot them dead. Dule, Tao and Alice flee.

EXT. DULE'S CABIN - DAY

Pinkerton Agents run up towards the rise. Liszt looks at the black stones by the lake's edge as Cy stands.

JOHN LISZT

Distance markers. It was a goddamn shooting range. Son-of-a-bitch.

CY COBB

Get me a shovel, Mr. Liszt.

JOHN LISZT

Senator - we can track them through the snow, they got no way to -

One of the Pinkerton Agents kicks in the door of the cabin - but it's been rigged with a T-handle detonator: immediately exploding a crate of TNT - BOOOOOOM - destroying the entire structure - killing several Agents.

JOHN LISZT (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ.

CY COBB

(screams)

Get me a Goddamn, fucking SHOVEL.  
Right the fuck now!

EXT. CAVES - LAVA BEDS - DAY

Dule, Tao and Alice dismount - then lead their horses inside the cave.

They make their way deep into the cave system, arriving finally at a well provisioned sanctuary.

TAO

Well, I guess this is home for -

Tao collapses. Alice runs to him. Blood on his coat.

ALICE ZIEGLER

Tao - TAO! He's been shot.

DULE

Where?

ALICE ZIEGLER

Belly.

Dule rips open Tao's shirt.

DULE

Have to dig it out. Light a fire.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Alice sleeping. Tao - now with a bandage around his gut, also asleep. Dule on watch. A SOUND. Dule disappears into the shadows. Another SOUND... then, entering the firelight, YOUNG INDIANS x 7 (TEENAGE BOYS and GIRLS) creep into the cave.

The Indians approach carefully, signalling to each other. When they're in position close to Alice and Tao, another, OLDER INDIAN creeps into the firelight behind them. The Young Indians look at him, then draw their weapons.

He's about to give the order to attack - when: CLICK!

DULE (OS)

Easy now.

The leader of the war party freezes. The Young Braves look into the darkness - but can't see Dule.

DULE (CONT'D)

Alice!

Alice wakes - sees The Braves, pulls a .38 from under her blanket; cocks the hammer.

DULE (CONT'D)

Steady girl.

(then)

Alice... meet Keme. Keme - say  
hello to Alice.

Dule emerges from the shadows. Keme smiles.

KEME

*Megedagik*. It is good to see you.

DULE

Young looking war party.

KEME

All the men are dead.

DULE

I know.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CAVE - AROUND THE FIRE - NIGHT

Alice, Dule & Keme sitting together. The Young Braves devouring beef jerky. Tao snoozing.

KEME

I received a telegram from Chief Little Plume, saying -

ALICE ZIEGLER

The Indians got the telegraph now?

KEME

It's the folks with the long beards - the Amish, that claim the telegraph is the devil's work. Blackfoot: no beards. Telegraph.

Dule smiles at Alice.

KEME (CONT'D)

Says some crazy man left a 4,000 acre parcel of land to the Nation, via the office of the Canadian Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs. Man by the name of Dule Potter. I replied, saying I never heard of no Dule Potter. Matthew Potter - *Megedagik*, that man I know. He's an asshole.

ALICE ZIEGLER

"Meg-edag-ik". What does that mean?

KEME

It means... kills many.

(then)

So, Chief Little Plume asks me to go seek out this Dule Potter and visit the land bequeathed.

One of The Young Braves stops eating.

TIHKOOSUE

Like Chief Little Plume suspected,  
land: total piece of shit.

ALICE ZIEGLER

How do you two know each other?

DULE

Keme's my brother-in-law.

ALICE ZIEGLER

Apani's brother?

KEME

Yes.

ALICE ZIEGLER

What happened to her?

KEME

When she was giving birth... the  
doctor gave her too much  
chloroform. She never saw her son.  
If I heard right... the doctor  
never saw the dawn.

Alice looks at Dule. Sees that he senses Keme is about to ask  
"where is my nephew"?

ALICE ZIEGLER

Um - so, uh, Keme, how'd you find  
us - I mean here, in the cave?

KEME

We were camped in the woods,  
waiting out the snow... heard a lot  
of shooting. When we moved closer,  
we saw you three ride off, in the  
distance. Thought it strange those  
other men didn't track you.

DULE

Someone'd have figured we were  
heading for the caves. Once we got  
in, ahead of 'em, be foolish to  
come in after us. 'Specially after  
how we rigged that cabin.

KEME

We watched them leave, then  
followed your trail.

(MORE)

KEME (CONT'D)

(then)  
I heard you called the boy Amis.

DULE

That was his name. Yes.

(then)  
He's buried, down by that cabin.

Keme's expression changes dramatically. He stands.

KEME

*Nitsáápani!*

(then)  
That's why they did what they  
did... fucking SAVAGES.

DULE

Why they did what?

EXT. BLACKCROSS - MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Riding into town: Cy Cobb, Art Cobb, John Liszt, China May  
and Pinkerton Agents x 20. On the back of a wagon driven by  
two Pinkertons is the dirt stained COFFIN DULE MADE FOR AMIS.

Riding out of town: Sheriff Walker and Dep Kelly. The two  
parties stop where they meet.

CY COBB

Sheriff.

SHERIFF WALKER

Senator.

Sheriff Walker sees Amis' coffin; he's confused.

CY COBB

Why chase a man across an open  
wilderness... when you know how to  
draw him into the lion's den.

SHERIFF WALKER

Beg pardon, Senator, I don't quite  
follow what you're -

CY COBB

Your understanding is not required.

(then)  
Mr. Liszt'll be coordinating the  
security arrangements in town for  
the next couple of days, Sheriff.  
You can stand down.



SHERIFF WALKER  
 Senator, I -

CY COBB  
 I said, stand down.

Sheriff Walker and Dep Kelly turn and ride away.

CY COBB (CONT'D)  
 (to Liszt)  
 Set torches, leadin' right up to  
 the front of May's. Clear out the  
 saloon, set the coffin in the  
 centre of the -

CHINA MAY  
 No.

A beat. Everyone looks at May.

CY COBB  
 Could have sworn you said something  
 there, May?

CHINA MAY  
 I said "no". Not in my house.

CY COBB  
 Not in your house... where you sell  
 the flesh of women, and boys...  
 (Cy glances at Art)  
 Under which roof you also deal in  
 opium... in slavery. That's the  
 house this gonna lay a stain on?

CHINA MAY  
 Every house built on stolen ground  
 has blood on its walls. Every house  
 in America. Yours and mine. But  
 even in a lawless land, some things  
 must still be sacred. I will have  
 no part in this... truly, Senator,  
 if God has sent only men like you,  
 to build this country... then God  
 help us all.

China May rides on to her saloon.

CY COBB  
 You have drunk the blood of the  
 lamb, May. Do you think by placing  
 the cup lightly down you can wash  
 the blood from out your mouth? You  
 have drunk the same blood as I.  
 (MORE)

CY COBB (CONT'D)

The same! Nobody wakes up pure in the morning, May. You of all people should know that.

(to Liszt)

They're all the same.... Chinese... women... fucking whores. Pussies.

(then)

Where else we got?

JOHN LISZT

Only man in town not going to object to such a "display", frankly, is a dead man.

(then)

Kohler's Barn works.

CY COBB

See to it.

Cy rides into town - followed by Art.

PINKERTON AGENT #1

God forgive him for what he's done.

JOHN LISZT

You resigning your commission?

PINKERTON AGENT #1

I... no, sir.

JOHN LISZT

Then shut the fuck up.

(then)

Besides, ain't the wrath of God we prepare to meet tonight. Truly.

John Liszt looks back in the direction of the Lake.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Dule loading ALL the guns. Throughout: intercut with the preparations being made in town by Liszt and the Pinkertons.

ALICE ZIEGLER

Dule - listen to me, you can't go back there... you can't. It's what they want. It's why they did this.

DULE

I'll need a pack mule. Fetch one.

ALICE ZIEGLER

No - Dule, you can't -

DULE  
 (shouts)  
 DO AS I SAY!

Tao stirs; Alice doesn't budge.

TAO  
 (half asleep)  
 It's always in the last place you  
 looked... 'cause after you find  
 it... you stop lookin'.

Dule tosses a roll of cable into a pail of whitewash.

DULE  
 Who does a thing like that? Who?  
 What kind of man would even -  
 (then, to Alice)  
 I know you're right. This is what  
 they want. But I made a promise to  
 my son. And I'm keeping it.

KEME  
*Megedagik*, we're coming with you.

DULE  
 No. This I do alone.

KEME  
 You think the men looking to steal  
 your land didn't steal it from  
 someone before you? Captain Jack's  
 Creek, below the bridge. It ain't  
 named for any white man. "Captain  
 Jack" was Kintpuash, Chief of the  
 Modoc. He held off 1,000 soldiers,  
 with just 53 braves, for 7 months  
 during the Modoc Wars. Holed up in  
 these very caves.

DULE  
 I know who Kintpuash is. Killed a  
 General. Man after my own heart.

KEME  
 You're walking into a trap made  
 just for you. If we ride together -

DULE  
 Keme - I don't have time for -

KEME  
 Amis is my sister's blood. My  
 blood. I ain't asking.

DULE

Forgive me, brother. Of course. I should have...

(then)

Together.

KEME

Together.

ALICE ZIEGLER

Then I'm coming too.

DULE

You need to stay here, with Tao.

ALICE ZIEGLER

No way! I'm not letting you -

DULE

Alice, please. Please. Amis died for not doin' what I told him at a time JUST like this. I can't be... you're all I... please. Stay here.

Dule makes for the exit.

ALICE ZIEGLER

Ain't you going to say goodbye? This is the last time we're going to see each other in this life. You know that, Dule Potter.

DULE

I'm bringing my boy back. I'll see you when that's done.

ALICE ZIEGLER

You saved me for this? To walk away from me, into the night, AGAIN? What was any of this worth, if you're gone and I'm alone? Answer me that. What was any of it for?

Dule hesitates by the exit. Looks back...

DULE

Alice... you may have a point.

EXT. BLACKCROSS - MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Driving snow. Whiteout. Lanterns swing along the boardwalk. Pinkerton Agents looking out from storefronts.

INT. CY COBB'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Cy Cobb drinking brandy. He plays Sullivan's "The Lost Chord" on the piano. Art walks in.

ART COBB  
 Father... I... I need to ask you  
 something...

INT. KOHLER'S LIVERY BARN - NIGHT

Amis' coffin, lit by torches. 3 x Pinkerton Agents waiting in the loft above.

ART COBB (VO)  
 If this situation were backward. If  
 Potter had dug my body out of the  
 ground... left it rotting in a  
 barn... to draw you into town...

INT. CY COBB'S OFFICE - NIGHT

ART COBB  
 Would you risk dyin', for me? Like  
 he's gonna. For his only son. Would  
 you do right by me, Father?

CY COBB  
 "Do right", by you? Don't you even  
 know you're askin' the wrong  
 question? Wrong entirely. See, in a  
 time of progress such as we live  
 in... the difference between what  
 is "right" - between good and evil,  
 becomes ever more... unremarkable.

INT. CHINA MAY'S - PRIVATE RECEPTION ROOM - NIGHT

China May overseeing a party for the Hong Kong Investors.  
 PROSTITUTES x 10 mingle with the Investors.

CY COBB (VO)  
 Until, in fact, no one can tell the  
 difference between the two...

China May excuses herself, walks into -

INT. CHINA MAY'S - PRIVATE BEDROOM - NIGHT

China May looks out the window; sees the Pinkerton Agents along the rooftops and in every alleyway.

CY COBB (VO)

At which point they become the same. There is no good, no evil. There is only the WILL to overcome your enemy. The will... to power.

INT. LAND REGISTRY OFFICE - NIGHT

John Liszt looking at a map of Blackcross, marked with the positions of the Pinkerton Agents.

CY COBB (VO)

Knowing this, a man discovers whether or not he is capable, truly, of committing any act - any act, in the realization of his will. In this moment, he discovers what he truly is. He is a man...

Liszt looks to his crossword: 10 across, 9 letters, "Obtain, as retribution", 2nd letter "e", 7th letter "n".

Liszt writes in the word: "VENGEANCE".

CY COBB (VO) (CONT'D)

Or, he is but a boy. Capable of nothing but a rage, impotent. Because the world will not give him what he wants... and he has not the stomach to take it.

INT. CY COBB'S OFFICE - NIGHT

CY COBB

In any "new world", the WINNING of it is all that matters. Not HOW it is won. Moses did not build Jerusalem. King David did that. Because he led his people not into the desert... but to VICTORY over the Jebusites. Securing the land of his people for 400 years. I will prevail in this war of wills. And if that means a child's corpse, moulderin' in a barn as bait to a father bear... so... be... it.

Cy stops playing; pours himself a brandy.

ART COBB

I didn't ask you that. I asked: would you come for me? Would you?

CY COBB

I'll answer your question - when you answer me this... in your heart, boy, what part of yourself do you believe, is worth saving?

ART COBB

May was right... this is a lawless land. But that don't frighten me. It don't. What really frightens me, is just how lawless your soul has become. Your lawless, empty soul.

Cy resumes playing. Art makes to leave.

CY COBB

There's a young Chinese boy, works at May's. Cheng Bai...

Art stops dead in his tracks.

CY COBB (CONT'D)

Anywise, last week, a bunch of Mexican buscaderos got to askin' quietly in May's about a special kind of want some of them boys had. They fucked Cheng Bai in the ass, 9 of 'em, for 4 hours straight. And he let them. He fucking LET them. Imagine that. Allowing that.

(then)

What kind of soul you think he got?

EXT. BLACKCROSS - MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Art trudges through the deep drifts - heading for May's.

John Liszt sees Art through the window of the land registry office - heads out after him.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF BLACKCROSS - NIGHT

Pinkerton Agents x 5 standing watch. A hail of ARROWS fly out of the darkness, killing them. Dule appears, bow in hand. He nods - Keme and The Young Braves go ahead of him into town.

INT. CHINA MAY'S - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Art comes up the stairs - storms into a BEDROOM. Cheng Bai wakes - sees Art; smiles warmly. Art SLAMS the door closed.

John Liszt comes up the stairs - hears Art shouting at Cheng Bai through the door:

ART COBB (OS)  
 He told me what you did. Liar! You  
 swore to me you wouldn't. Swore to  
 me! Liar! LIAR!

Liszt hears the sound of Art SLAPPING Cheng Bai. Cheng Bai  
 CRIES and WAILS. Liszt sighs; pulls up a chair; sits quietly.

EXT. BLACKCROSS - MAIN STREET - NIGHT

A light glowing in the distance. As it approaches it becomes  
 clear it's a PACK MULE, walking slowly. Suspended above its  
 saddle: two lanterns. Behind these - an object on a stake.

As the MULE walks through the centre of town it becomes clear  
 the object is a head.

Several Pinkerton Agents come from their positions - stopping  
 the MULE. The head is that of Boss Kennedy.

PINKERTON AGENT #1  
 Jesus Christ.

A second Pinkerton notices that behind the MULE, hidden in  
 the SNOW, is a cord (that's been stained with whitewash). He  
 picks it up, realizing the MULE has been dragging this line  
 forward as it walked. Several more Agents approach.

PINKERTON AGENT #2  
 (shouts)  
 Get back! Get ba-

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF BLACKCROSS - NIGHT

Dule plunges a T-handle detonator: EXPLODING the TNT strapped  
 to the MULE - killing at least 6 Pinkerton Agents.

INT. CHINA MAY'S - PRIVATE RECEPTION ROOM - NIGHT

The EXPLOSION shatters the window. The Hong Kong Investors  
 are blown to the floor - then rush to the window to observe  
 the carnage below.

China May walks in - glass shards in her face.

CHINA MAY  
*Ni xuyào líkai zhèli. Xiànzài.*

HONG KONG INVESTOR #1  
 There's three feet of snow outside.  
 Where do you expect us to go?

CHINA MAY  
 You want to be cold, or dead?



INT. CHINA MAY'S - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

John Liszt BURSTS through Art's door.

JOHN LISZT

Art - we need to -

Liszt sees that Art has strangled Cheng Bai with a leather belt. Art is in a corner of the room, crying.

ART COBB

I loved him so much. I loved him so much. I'm sorry... I'm so sorry!

EXT. CHINA MAY'S - BACK ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The Hong Kong Investors and their Bodyguard rush out into the yard. The Bodyguard are immediately met by a stream of ARROW fire; fall dead in the snow.

HONG KONG INVESTOR #1

Who's there!? Look! We have money!

Keme and The Young Braves approach the back entrance. Killing the Chinese Investors with tomahawks as they pass them by.

INT. CHINA MAY'S - PRIVATE BEDROOM - NIGHT

China May removes a Chinese broad sword from under her bed.

INT. CHINA MAY'S - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

John Liszt closes the door to Art's bedroom. Thinks about staying in May's... then makes for the exit.

INT. CHINA MAY'S - PRIVATE BEDROOM - NIGHT

China May realizes someone's in the room behind her. She turns - fear and horror written on her face.

CHINA MAY

I refused to allow him to be brought here. I refused that.

Dule steps out of the shadows; machete in hand.

CHINA MAY (CONT'D)

I don't know where he is.

May swings her sword, but it's snapped in half by Dule's machete. She makes to stab him - but he grabs her hand. His other hand grabs her throat. He throttles her until her sword hand falls limp, dropping the blade. He lets her hand flop to her side. Then releasing her throat, she falls dead.

INT. ART'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Keme and The Young Braves enter the room. Art SCREAMS like a child as they drag him outside.

EXT. CHINA MAY'S - NIGHT

China May's is an inferno. Dule is silhouetted as he walks past the front of the building; something oblong and bulky carried over his shoulder.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF BLACKCROSS - NIGHT

Keme and The Young Braves take Art out of town - past the bodies of the Pinkerton Agents. Keme stops. Looks back.

Proud Eagle emerges from the shadows. Keme nods at The Young Braves; they carry on - leaving Keme to face Proud Eagle.

EXT. CY COBB'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Pinkerton Agents x 5 at the entrance to Cy Cobb's office, looking at the flames rising over China May's.

Dule opens up with China May's gatling gun - annihilating the front of the building - killing the 5 agents. More Pinkerton Agents come out FIRING. Dule kills them all.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF BLACKCROSS - NIGHT

Proud Eagle produces a bowie knife; slips off his gun belt - dropping it into the snow.

PROUD EAGLE

Like men.

Keme draws his .44 - shoots Proud Eagle.

KEME

Like white men.

Keme runs after The Young Braves.

INT. CY COBB'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Cy Cobb playing "The Lost Chord". A decanter smashes across the piano - showering the keys with shards of glass.

Cy looks around to see Dule, sawn-off in hand.

DULE

Right now... a party of Blackfoot  
braves are waiting outside town.

(MORE)

DULE (CONT'D)

If I don't show with my son's  
coffin in 15 minutes they're going  
to nail your boy to a cross.  
Crucify him.

(then)

Where is my son?

Cy looks at the glass shards on the keyboard. He touches a splinter - cutting his finger.

CY COBB

In just 13 years, Emperor Claudius  
conquered Britain... constructed a  
vast canal from the Rhine to the  
North Sea; a 200 mile road - over  
the Alps, from Italy to Germany -  
and built the Port of Ostia - the  
harbour of Rome. In just 13 years.

Cy plays "The Lost Chord". Every key-stroke cuts his hands,  
until the keyboard is dripping with blood.

CY COBB (CONT'D)

He was a sickly child - half deaf,  
half lame... but he had a special  
power. The power to form the world  
around him into an EXPRESSION of  
his WILL. In his lifetime he was  
worshipped as a God by the very  
people whose lands he stole. At the  
Temple of Claudius, in Colchester.

DULE

Where is my son?

CY COBB

The people of Britain bowed down in  
awe. At the feet of the man who  
BENT the arc of THEIR history - to  
HIS WILL. They knew! Truly! God is  
whoever you surrender to. God takes  
YOUR land. He builds, on YOUR land.  
God does not surrender to you. God  
is many things. Yes! But one thing  
alone - NEVER! God, is not a loser.

(then)

The very idea that a man like YOU  
would DARE to threaten a man like  
ME?! Would dare to come before me  
in DEFIANCE of the TRUE ORDER of -

BOOM! BOOM! Dule shoots Cy - both barrels in the chest.

Dule takes a moment; SPITS on Cy's body; exits.

EXT. BLACKCROSS - MAIN STREET - NIGHT

The Sheriff steps out onto the boardwalk and is immediately drawn upon by two Pinkerton Agents.

SHERIFF WALKER

Wait - WAIT! Sheriff Walker! I'm the Sheriff.

PINKERTON AGENT #3

Get the fuck off the street.

The Sheriff steps back into his office. Pours a stiff drink; downs it in one. Turns around - sees Dule.

DULE

Where is my son?

SHERIFF WALKER

Kohler's barn.

WHAM! Due knocks the Sheriff out cold.

INT. KOHLER'S LIVERY BARN - NIGHT

3 x Pinkerton Agents in the loft above Amis' coffin.

They hear a strange sound; look out the loft window.

The Benz Patent-Motorwagen putt-putts down a backstreet: the body of Cy Cobb has been tied to the driver's seat - the vehicle is ON FIRE. The engine EXPLODES, bringing the automobile to a halt at the rear of the barn.

Dule appears behind the Agents, machete in hand - slays the 3 Agents silently.

Dule climbs down; inspects Amis' coffin.

He fetches a rope; ties it around the coffin; places the coffin on the ground; drags it to the back door.

EXT. KOHLER'S LIVERY BARN - BACK ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Dule opens the door - checks the laneway outside, then begins dragging the coffin through the quietest streets.

EXT. EXTREME EDGE OF TOWN - NIGHT

Dule stops to evade Pinkerton Agents x 4. He can see the darkness beyond the edge of town. He's almost out...

When the coast is clear Dule moves forward; he is just about to pass into the pitch darkness, when -

BANG!

Shot in the shoulder, Dule falls. He goes for his gun - BANG!  
Shot in the hand - his gun disappears in the snow.

Dule stands - makes to drag the coffin further. BANG! Shot in  
the ribs. He falls again.

John Liszt appears.

Dule stands, makes to pull the coffin. Liszt shoots him in  
the thigh. Dule falls to his knees, next to the coffin.

JOHN LISZT

You'll forgive me for not observing  
the more gentlemanly traditions of  
the duel, only... I believe you can  
spell Albuquerque.

Dule pulls his bowie knife, throws it at Liszt - but it  
doesn't even make half the distance. Dule falls on his back.  
Liszt looks to the flames rising over the town centre.

JOHN LISZT (CONT'D)

Don't know if I'd call it  
"progress" exactly... but a change  
has come to Blackcross. Truly.

Liszt reloads his pistol.

JOHN LISZT (CONT'D)

Tell you what else will have  
changed. The bounty on your head.  
That's why I'm going to roll your  
body up in the snow... wait and see  
what the reward is on a man who  
murdered a US Senator. Or do you  
deny doing that? No? Alright. So,  
when the price goes up I'll drag  
your frozen carcass into town for  
the dogs to piss on... and the  
Christian folk to gawk. I reckon  
\$30,000. What you think, Dule?

DULE

When it's done, bury me with my  
boy. I'm asking that. Please.

Liszt raises his pistol on Dule.

JOHN LISZT

It was always going to end like  
this - between you and me.

(MORE)

JOHN LISZT (CONT'D)

This is the future, right here, you never had the power to change.

DULE

Do as I ask!

JOHN LISZT

Mr. Potter, what makes you think you're in a position to tell anybody what to -

FFFFFFFPT! The sound of a bullet cutting the air - then a plume of blood from Liszt's belly, followed immediately by the sound of a distant gunshot - CRACK!

John Liszt looks to his gut: blood pouring out. He falls to his knees. He still has hold of his gun; raises it at Dule.

FFFFFFFPT! Liszt's hand is shot clean off. Liszt HOWLS. Dule looks to see a silhouetted figure on horseback approaching.

JOHN LISZT (CONT'D)

My fucking hand, you shot my fucking hand off you motherfucker!

Liszt looks up - sees Alice on the horse, Dule's Lee Metford sniper rifle resting on the fork of her saddle.

JOHN LISZT (CONT'D)

You?! A fucking girl. I've been shot by a fucking girl.

ALICE ZEIGLER

Hurts like a bitch, don't it.

Alice shoots Liszt in the head. She dismounts; goes to Dule.

ALICE ZEIGLER (CONT'D)

Jesus, Dule. You're a mess.

DULE

Do you even know how to do what you're told?

ALICE ZEIGLER

Nope. You taught me that.

DULE

Tao?

ALICE ZEIGLER

He said he'd be the one to shoot me if I didn't come down here.

DULE  
Stand me up.

Alice helps Dule to his feet.

DULE (CONT'D)  
Hand me that rope.

Alice hesitates.

ALICE ZEIGLER  
Dule, you don't mean to -

DULE  
Alice. Please.

Alice looks at Dule: he needs to do this. Alice retrieves his .44 from the snow; places it in his holster. She then hands him the rope. Dule pulls the coffin out of town. Alice follows Dule somberly, under the light of the Milky Way.

EXT. PLAINS OUTSIDE BLACKCROSS - DAWN

Dule drags the coffin over a shallow rise. Sees Art Cobb nailed to a crucifix (constructed from railway sleepers). A raven pecking at Art's eyes.

Keme and The Young Braves watch as Dule drags the coffin closer. Dule falls. Tihkoosue approaches and makes to help Dule with his load.

DULE  
Get the fuck away from me!

Dule stands. Carries on. Keme, Tihkoosue and The Young Braves walk with Alice behind Dule.

EXT. PLAINS OUTSIDE BLACKCROSS II - DAWN

Dule is visibly paler, now leaving blood in his footsteps.

EXT. OIL FIELDS - DAWN

Dule drags the coffin over an oil slick - causing the coffin to leave a black wake behind it. Dule walks on...

EXT. CAPTAIN JACK'S CREEK - BRIDGE - DAWN

The bridge span has been completed - but there is clearly still a huge amount of work to be done. Chinese and Irish Workers make preparations to lay the track.

One by one the Workers turn to see a man crossing over the bridge, dragging a coffin behind him.

They stare at Dule, mouths wide.

When he reaches the centre of the bridge, Dule stops. He regards the work camp - all 800 labourers now looking at him.

DULE

You men! Senator Cobb is dead.  
China May, dead. Boss Kennedy,  
dead. I killed 'em all.

(then)

Tomorrow, I'm coming back. And I  
will kill every motherfucker I find  
on this ground. I swear to God I  
will. Any man don't want to die...  
clear out. Man want to die... I'll  
see him here, tomorrow.

From inside the canyon work camp, 285 feet below, IRISH  
LABOURER #1 steps forward.

IRISH LABOURER #1

(shouts)

Mister, you'll need to be learnin'  
a thing or two about putting the  
fear of God in an Irishman.

Dule quick-draws his .44; shoots the Irish Labourer in the  
head. It's a stunning shot - freezing every LABOURER where he  
stands. LABOURERS look at each other in genuine dread.

IRISH LABOURER #2 drops his shovel; runs off the bridge.  
Followed by another, and another. MEN stream off the bridge.

In the canyon below - LABOURERS rush suddenly to gather up  
their belongings.

Dule carries on across the bridge.

EXT. LAKE MODOC - MORNING

Dule drags the coffin to the grave's edge. He carefully lays  
Amis' coffin back into the earth. Then falls to his knees.

DULE

Son... Amis... I -

Dule falls into the grave. His arm across the coffin.

Snow falls, covering the Father and the son in white.

Alice, Keme and The Young Braves arrive.



KEME

*Megedagik*, your family is together now. And we are in the world. Be at PEACE, now that you have found what can not be known in this land, because men, are here.

Alice dismounts; picks up a shovel.

ALICE ZEIGLER

That's why we're going to have to dig another grave.

Alice walks into the woods. Keme and Tihkoosue pick up tools from the ground; follow Alice.

EXT. BLACKCROSS - MAIN STREET - DAY

By the train station, PINKERTON AGENTS gather in a huge posse as BOUNTY HUNTERS stream into town. The Bounty Hunters take "Wanted Dead or Alive" posters from Dep Kelly as they pass him by: the bounty on Dule is now \$150,000.

Alice, wearing the dress she washed, walks along Main Street. Her bearing is proud, resolute.

She passes by the ruins of China May's. LABOURERS throw the BODIES and the debris onto piles of thawing snow.

Outside the Sheriff's office, laid in a row: the bodies of John Liszt, Proud Eagle and several Pinkerton Agents. CROWDS stare at the bodies. A dog pisses on the corpse of Liszt.

INT. LAND REGISTRY OFFICE - DAY

Thadeus Overton seated, looking at Alice. Sheriff Walker enters (his head bandaged from Dule's blow).

SHERIFF WALKER

This better be important, Mr. Overton. I got every bounty hunter in a 300 mile radius banging on my office door. Ain't you heard?

THADEUS OVERTON

Heard what?

SHERIFF WALKER

Bounty on Potter is \$150,000. Guaranteed by the federal government. Dead or alive.

THADEUS OVERTON

Well then, I'm certain, all the more, you're going to want to hear what this young woman has to say...

Thadeus hands Walker a piece of paper. Walker scans the page - then scans it again. "What the fuck"?

SHERIFF WALKER

This is real?

THADEUS OVERTON

I checked the signature against the register... it's a perfect match. Unquestionably, this is a proper, legally binding contract.

SHERIFF WALKER

(to Overton)

Potter SOLD the land?

ALICE ZIEGLER

Yes.

SHERIFF WALKER

To you?

ALICE ZIEGLER

Yes.

SHERIFF WALKER

4 days ago...

ALICE ZIEGLER

Yes.

SHERIFF WALKER

Same day he came into town and burned half of Blackcross to the ground, killin' 19 men.

ALICE ZIEGLER

Yes.

SHERIFF WALKER

For 79¢?

ALICE ZIEGLER

It was all I had on me.

SHERIFF WALKER

The same land he wouldn't sell to Senator Cobb for all the money in the world?

ALICE ZIEGLER

The same.

SHERIFF WALKER

And on your passing, you're leaving  
it to the -

(reading)

*Sik - Siki-ka... Sik-si-ka* people?  
Who in the fuck's that?

ALICE ZIEGLER

The Blackfoot.

SHERIFF WALKER

The whole 4,000 acres...

ALICE ZIEGLER

4,074 acres, yes.

Walker makes to say something, but no words come out. Alice stands; walks to the door.

ALICE ZIEGLER (CONT'D)

Being as it is, private property,  
and aware as you are of the  
trespass laws in California, please  
inform your so-called bounty  
hunters, Pinkerton Agents and any  
other private citizen who may have  
an interest in finding Mr.  
Potter... that any man steps foot  
on my land will be shot.

(then)

And Sheriff: allowing Cobb to bring  
a child's body into YOUR town as  
bait for a grieving Father. When  
you're the law. Let me say to you  
clearly... you wish to step foot on  
my property, I'll see a warrant  
first... or I will shoot you down  
like the DOG you are.

(then)

Good day Mr. Overton.

EXT. LAKE MODOC - DAY

A bright, Spring morning. Alice and Tao working together on  
rebuilding the cabin. These are the final touches; they stand  
back to admire their work.

Alice wearing Amis' clothes; Dule's 44. in a holster.

From the woods FOUR MEN emerge. Well armed, mean looking.

ALICE ZIEGLER

Go inside.

TAO

But Miss Alice -

ALICE ZIEGLER

Do as I say.

Tao walks to the cabin.

Alice approaches the Men. Makes sure they see the .44 in her holster. The men smirk at this unsubtle display.

LITTLE WALTER

Nice little homestead you got there, Missy.

ALICE ZIEGLER

This is private land. Best go on now. Back the way you came.

LITTLE WALTER

There's this rumor. I don't know if you heard it... anyway, story goes that the body of a man worth \$150,000 is buried somewheres 'bout these parts. He's wanted DEAD or alive, see... only, let's just say we ain't squeamish on how he's holdin' up - given his long term condition. Who-eee!

Little Walter pinches his nostrils.

The Men laugh. Alice looks at the Men. One of them is just a BOY. He looks nervous, as if a hostage to the situation.

LITTLE WALTER (CONT'D)

What we gentlemen share is a burning curiosity for the truth of the matter - so... we'll be surveyin', as it were, this ground. That's all there is to it.

ALICE ZIEGLER

I ain't sayin' it's so every place you go. But here you ain't welcome.

LITTLE WALTER

Private property, yeah. You said that. So, little lady, what if I said I couldn't give two shits for your welcome?

The Men laugh. Little Walter spits on the ground.

LITTLE WALTER (CONT'D)  
What on that - Miss Bossy Britches?

ALICE ZIEGLER  
I'd simply ask, if you've thought  
rightly on what you're requestin'?

LITTLE WALTER  
Oh, I have done that. You can  
believe me. I want to stay.

ALICE ZEIGLER  
You want, to stay.

LITTLE WALTER  
I do.

ALICE ZIEGLER  
Alright then...

Alice draws - BANG! BANG! BANG!

Little Walter and 2 of his Men fall dead, leaving just the  
Boy, now clearly petrified.

ALICE ZIEGLER (CONT'D)  
... you can stay.

Alice points her pistol at the Boy.

ALICE ZIEGLER (CONT'D)  
As for you, son... get the fuck off  
my land.

FADE OUT: