

THE GHOST OF THE RIO GRANDE

The man they tried to Erase

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Confidential Draft

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Polished & Formatted Draft

FADE IN:

SCENE 1: INT. UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS – HISTORY LECTURE HALL – DAY

A packed lecture hall bathed in late afternoon sunlight filtering through high stained-glass windows. Shadows dance subtly across the faces of captivated students.

At the podium stands PROFESSOR MENDOZA (Jimmy Smits), commanding, eloquent, deeply knowledgeable, clicking through slides with practiced ease.

A black-and-white photo fills the large screen behind him: Pancho Villa astride a horse, confident and defiant.

PROFESSOR MENDOZA "On March 9, 1916, Pancho Villa led his infamous raid on Columbus, New Mexico, leaving seventeen Americans dead. President Wilson responded by sending General Pershing into Mexico. It became an eleven-month embarrassment—Villa vanished into legend, and America withdrew empty-handed."

BETO GARCIA (Manuel Garcia Rulfo), sharp, intense, restless, sits near the back beside YOLANDA (Jenna Ortega), calm, subtly playful. She notices Beto's clenched fists, elbows him gently.

YOLANDA (whispering, teasing) "You're gonna sprain something."

BETO (quietly) "It's all wrong. They erased the truth."

Mendoza clicks the remote, displaying the infamous Zimmermann Telegram.

PROFESSOR MENDOZA "Then came Germany's Zimmermann Telegram, absurdly offering Mexico territory like Texas, New Mexico, Nevada, California and Arizona if they joined World War I. Such reckless proposals birthed legends: secret German gold, espionage rings across Texas, even a phantom hero—an outlaw known only as 'El Fantasma,' The Ghost. They built his legend to stoke the entertainment peddled in the news because people had little else to inspire their passion and creative imagination back then."

Mendoza pauses, eyes twinkling with academic amusement.

PROFESSOR MENDOZA (CONT'D) "Yet, history teaches us to differentiate fact from fantasy. Coronado chased mythical golden cities across deserts, finding only disappointment. Stories

of Robin Hood, Zorro, even your Rio Grande Ghost—they're alluring myths invented to explain away inconvenient truths."

Beto's hand shoots up defiantly. Mendoza eyes him curiously.

PROFESSOR MENDOZA "Mr. Garcia? Ready to defend these ghost stories, you seem perplexed?"

Scattered chuckles from classmates. Beto rises, posture proud, voice steady.

BETO "History isn't just facts, Professor. It's about who decides which facts survive. Coronado found no gold because it didn't exist, but that gold in the telegram existed—it was confiscated by Fabriciano Garcia, my ancestor, to thwart German sabotage. He didn't vanish—he was erased, deliberately. Your history speaks nothing of the plunder, lawfare, tyranny, and heinous murders of innocent Tejanos, or the stealing of their lands by rich politically supported white ranchers."

Murmurs ripple through the class. Mendoza smirks slightly, intrigued yet skeptical.

BETO (Manuel Garcia Rulfo) (fired up)

"He was no newspaper fictional outlaw, Professor! He was a real hero of our people—the Tejano people. They erased him from history to cover the blood on their hands from their greed. The oil fortune gained by the robber barons of Texas through murder, treason, and theft. Fabriciano Garcia opposed them, exposed them, and even foiled the Kaiser of Germany, Carranza of Mexico, and the Emperor of Japan—who wanted to use the Mexican border crisis to keep America out of World War I, setting up their global conquests. The Kaiser sent that gold to pay Mexico to conduct Pancho Villa's raid to further instigate instability along our border!"

PROFESSOR MENDOZA "A compelling theory, Mr. Garcia. But legends like your Ghost ancestor—outlaws dressed as heroes—exist precisely because people need folk tales. Real heroes make it into history books, not myths whispered in cantinas. You see these stories back then sold newspapers, just as our media today spews gossip not facts to get eyeballs and ears that enrich their advertisers."

BETO "Then explain the Plan of San Diego—Germany's funding of insurrection, Governor Ferguson's collaboration, ranch dynasties like the Wallace's using Texas Rangers as private armies. Thousands of Tejanos lynched, their lands stolen, history whitewashed, Judge Garrett used his bought and paid for verdicts and writs to justify the atrocities. Fabriciano Garcia wasn't an outlaw—he was our Robin Hood, our Zorro, fighting injustice. The truth isn't convenient, but it's still true."

Mendoza's smirk fades. Yolanda grips Beto's arm gently.

YOLANDA (playful, diffusing tension) "Easy, Beto—don't martyr yourself first day of class. You need this class to graduate. Remember you are bound for medical school not teaching history."

Mendoza, momentarily thoughtful, regains composure.

PROFESSOR MENDOZA "Admirable passion, Mr. Garcia. But like Coronado's golden cities, your claims need evidence, not passion. Show me tangible proof, and I promise I'll reconsider my own thoughts. To date I know of nothing that can prove these wild theories and urban legends."

Yolanda leans forward, eyes glinting confidently.

YOLANDA "Maybe proof's closer than you think, Professor. Maybe it's just waiting for the right time to allow you to see the evidence."

Mendoza's eyes narrow, intrigued by her subtle challenge.

BETO "Come to McDonald's after class, Professor. My Abuelita has Fabriciano Garcia's journal—the real map to your missing truth, that is if you care about the real facts, not being a pawn for the covering up the crimes of the past."

The class sits in tense, captivated silence. Mendoza slowly nods, impressed despite himself.

PROFESSOR MENDOZA "Very well. Let's see if your journal is the map that leads to mythical gold—or just more desert and empty conspiracy theories."

CUT TO:

SCENE 2: INT. ABUELITA'S BEDROOM – SAME TIME

ABUELITA (Eva Longoria) answers a ringing phone. Warm smile, eyes soft and wise with a subtle confidence.

ABUELITA "Sí, mijo, I'll bring the journal. Perhaps your professor will believe our story when he reads it himself."

She reaches into her bedside drawer, pulls out a weathered cigar box. Her fingers trace faded lettering on the lid: She opens it and peers at the weathered leather journal inside.

"Fabriciano Garcia, 1916."

She clutches it close, eyes determined and then walks back towards the kitchen door.

 FADE TO BLACK.

SCENE 3: INT. McDONALD'S – NIGHT

The familiar golden arches glow against the inky sky. Fluorescent lights buzz softly, casting an impersonal glow over the nearly empty dining area. Quiet tension hangs heavily in the air.

BETO GARCIA (Rulfo), visibly intense yet resolute, sits at a corner booth next to YOLANDA (Jenna Ortega), who watches him closely, intrigued yet skeptical. Two Big Macs, golden fries, and Coca-Colas sit half-eaten between them, bright McDonald's branding subtly present.

BETO (intensely) Yo, history didn't just erase him. It buried him under lies. My great-grandfather wasn't some legend. He was real—and they feared what he knew.

YOLANDA (smiling softly) You really believe this, huh? Gold heists, cattle rustling, secret plots—sounds like the movies.

BETO (quietly passionate) Maybe that's why it's easy to ignore. But real people suffered. Men like Wallace lynched innocent people to take their land. It's time someone exposed the truth.

Before Yolanda responds, ABUELITA-GRANNY (Eva Longoria) enters. Her quiet authority and knowing eyes command instant respect. She holds a weathered cigar box protectively close.

ABUELITA (warm, maternal yet cautious) Beto, mi amor, couldn't you have picked somewhere more private?

YOLANDA (playfully) Secrets taste better with fries and a Coke, Abuelita.

Abuelita gives a gentle smile and carefully places the box on the table. She opens the box slowly, revealing an aged leather journal, an ornate Swiss fountain pen, a gold JLC pocket watch with a gold braided chain, and an old black-and-white photo of a mysterious, strikingly beautiful woman.

Yolanda is immediately struck.

YOLANDA Is that your mother, Abuelita? She's beautiful.

BETO No, her name is Maria Salazar. She's central to this mystery.

Abuelita nods solemnly, confirming Beto's words.

Abuelita "I fear she was not only my grandfather's first childhood love...she was a person he would love for the rest of his life in secrecy a forbidden soulmate, tormented with guilt because he loved my grandmother just as much but for different reasons. He was torn between two worlds and two women. The guilt consumed him."

BETO (reverently waited for her to finish) Let's begin. The truth he feared would vanish if he didn't write it down. Everything's written in here. He wanted there to be a master failsafe in case history was altered.

Yolanda leans in, fascinated, yet apprehensive. She leans on Beto's shoulder looking over him at the journal.

YOLANDA (softly) Then let's see the truth.

As Beto gently opens the journal, a shadow looms over their booth. PROFESSOR MENDOZA (Jimmy Smits), stern yet intrigued, stands beside them, his eyes immediately drawn to the journal.

PROFESSOR MENDOZA (skeptical but deeply intrigued) If this journal is factual, you're rewriting history—or opening doors you can't close. Are you prepared for the consequences?

BETO (defiant, resolute) History already buried us once. We're done hiding from ghosts. It's time to put names and locations on all the graves in the graveyard.

Mendoza sits, his gaze piercing.

PROFESSOR MENDOZA OK, then let's prove me wrong.

Beto turns the pages carefully, stopping at vivid sketches—brands, maps, faces that stare hauntingly from the past. Yolanda's eyes widen, absorbing the gravity. Abuelita watches quietly, anxiety visible in her expression.

BETO (reading emotionally) "They called me El Fantasma—the Ghost. But I was flesh and blood, confronting monsters disguised as men. If this journal survives, truth survives with it. Maria made me seem larger than life with her journalism stories, but I was just a normal man with hopes and dreams!"

A profound silence envelops the table. Mendoza is visibly shaken yet captivated.

YOLANDA (moved, whispering) This is real. I feel it. Your Great Grandfather just lept off the pages and I could almost hear him speaking. I felt him...he has a kind soul.

Beto gently pulls from the journal a "Most Wanted Man in Texas" poster of Fabriciano dressed in in dusty vaquero hat and wearing his infamous skull face scarf, dated 1916. He then carefully withdraws an envelope embossed with the White House seal and hands it to Mendoza.

BETO Before we go further, Professor, read this.

Mendoza's hands tremble as he opens the envelope.

PROFESSOR MENDOZA (slowly, profoundly shaken) "I, President Woodrow Wilson, hereby declare Fabriciano Garcia, also known as the Ghost, exonerated and pardoned from all crimes, alleged or convicted, by executive decree of the President of the United States. Furthermore, I award him the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his extraordinary service to our nation during these dark days before and after the Great War. Dated November 11, 1919."

Mendoza looks pale, deeply disturbed as the irony of what he just read sinks in.

PROFESSOR MENDOZA Do you understand what you've found? Men with power have concealed this for generations. Uncovering it puts you directly in their sights. They don't want light shown upon what really happened. They will want to extinguish this truth.

BETO (quietly determined) Then we must learn to deal with them. I won't let them bury this again.

Mendoza continues to flip through the pages and comes to a telegram in between one of the pages:

"Western Union: September 13, 2016; British Consulate Military Affairs Office, To: LaBorde, Phillippe-Jean-Baptiste-La Borde, Rio Grande City, Texas: "I have been made aware that you have intervened and intercepted the German gold sent from the Kaiser to the Mexican puppet...Jolly good old chap! Suggest you make good use of it. Cheers, Winston Churchill."

Mendoza looks up and seems shocked and then a smile creeps across his face.

"By God, that Frenchie is one smart man, he turned the Germans and Mexicans against each other over their love of gold. Zimmerman gave him the intel he needed to act." Mendoza looked genuinely impressed as he pondered this new discovery.

ABUELITA (grave, resolute, and a twinkle in her eye) We've paid enough already Professor. Truth demands courage, Professor. History owes us answers.

Mendoza turns his gaze to the window. Shadows from the golden arches play ominously across his conflicted face as his mind races with thoughts.

PROFESSOR MENDOZA (soberly, quietly ominous) Then let's dig deep. But understand this clearly: you're awakening ghosts far more dangerous than mere legends.

Outside, headlights from a parked car that has just pulled into the parking lot turn off, plunging shadows deeper. The golden arches shine, resonating an eerie glow—silent, unaware of the storm ready to strike as the group huddles closer, turning pages that may change their lives forever.

Fade to Black:

SCENE 4: INT. GARCIA FAMILY HOME – NIGHT

Soft golden lamplight casts warm shadows across the cozy, modestly decorated living room. BETO (Manuel Garcia Rulfo) sits with YOLANDA (Jenna Ortega) beside ABUELITA-GRANNY (Eva Longoria), the cigar box and its historic contents carefully placed on a polished wooden table before them, meticulously arranged like evidence on a crime scene detective's desk.

Beto cautiously examines the ornate Swiss fountain pen, his fingers trembling slightly. Yolanda studies the photograph of MARIA, mesmerized by the woman's compelling beauty and presence. She flips it over and examines the handwriting in blue ink inscribed on it. "Maria Salazar-1917, taken by Augustin Victor Casaola, Mexico City"

YOLANDA (amazed, softly) Maria... Why haven't we heard of her before?

ABUELITA (soft, introspective) Some stories are only whispered, hija. Maria was Fabriciano's greatest first and perhaps greatest love, but their lives were complicated—bound by secrecy and the revolution. He loved my Grandmother Manuella, but Maria was the other woman, one he could not give up. So, Manuella never spoke of her, you might say she buried her history as well.

Beto reverently opens Fabriciano's leather-bound journal, stopping at a beautifully sketched emblem: a Templar Cross. His eyes widen. Next to it is another drawing of two knights riding on one horse.

BETO (fascinated) It says here that Father Bernard taught them about—the Knights Templar. Men who walked between faith and shadows and protected great secrets from being misused by powerful men of the church and the Monarchs.

YOLANDA (confused) Father Bernard? He was a priest, where?

ABUELITA (grave, reflective) Yes. He guided Fabriciano, Eli, and Maria in secrets few understood. A hidden world where courage, faith, and stealth fought against powerful enemies. They met him at the Cistercian Mission near the border.

The quiet knock at the door interrupts them. PROFESSOR MENDOZA (Jimmy Smits) enters, removing his hat respectfully. He glances at Abuelita and his eyes sparkle, their chemistry is unmistakable.

PROFESSOR MENDOZA (carefully) I've found something troubling. Silas Graves, the Pinkerton detective—his investigation went deeper than we imagined, and it was never concluded. It cost him dearly.

Yolanda exchanges a look of apprehension with Beto.

YOLANDA (quietly) How dangerous could this be?

ABUELITA (serious, protective) Very, just as I have feared. Those who sought truth paid heavy prices.

Mendoza hesitates, his gaze flickering to the journal.

PROFESSOR MENDOZA (soberly) Everything we discover risks waking old enemies. There are powerful people who prefer history remains buried, especially if it challenges their own fortune.

Beto meets Mendoza's eyes, determined.

BETO (resolute) The truth deserves to be told, Professor.

Outside, distant headlights flicker briefly before vanishing into darkness. The room grows quiet, charged with anticipation and the weight of history's hidden shadows. Abuelita glances toward the window, sensing an eerie surreal presence.

ABUELITA (gently but firmly) We must be careful. The past is never truly gone—it waits patiently for a time to ignite the next powder keg.

Yolanda grips the photograph, her eyes filled with wonder and anxiety, as Beto turns another page of the journal, ready to confront the unseen path ahead.

Mendoza reaches into his inner jacket pocket and feels for the old photograph he has from his own collection, then he withdraws his hand and decides to leave it be for now.

“Shall we continue then,” he pulls up a chair beside Beto and next to Abuelita and unfastens his top shirt button allowing his tie to be loosened and relaxing his posture slightly.

SCENE 5: INT. CISTERCIAN MISSION CHAPEL, TEXAS – NIGHT (FLASHBACK - Early 1900s)

The austere chapel flickers gently with the golden glow of countless candles, shadows dancing across stone walls adorned with faded tapestries depicting the Templar Cross and knights in silent vigil. The soft, resonant voice of FATHER BERNARD (Lambert Wilson), dignified yet intense, echoes slightly in the sacred stillness.

FATHER BERNARD (reverently, eyes sharp) The Templars knew the power of hidden truths, my children. They lived openly, yet their greatest strengths remained concealed—unseen but ever vigilant. To the world, they were monks and pilgrims. Beneath, they were guardians of secrets too dangerous for any crown or church to control alone.

Three young faces illuminated by candlelight: FABRICIANO (young, determined, eyes full of intelligence), MARIA (striking, curious, with an intensity matched only by Fabriciano), and ELI MARTINEZ (sturdy, loyal, clearly protective of his companions). Each listens with rapt attention, the significance etched in their youthful eyes.

FATHER BERNARD (gently but gravely) Duality, my children. Courage in the shadows, faith when in doubt. Protectors of truths powerful enough to topple kings and make religious dogma questioned. Do you understand?

MARIA (slightly awed, defiant) But Father, why hide truths that can free people?

Father Bernard (Lambert Wilson) regards her thoughtfully, respect evident.

FATHER BERNARD (bitter-sweetly) Because truth, like fire, both illuminates and burns. Those who control it can heal or destroy. It is our sacred duty to guard it from those who would abuse it.

Fabriciano steps forward, his voice steady but quiet, a natural leader emerging.

FABRICIANO (resolutely) Then we must master the shadows, Father—so truth will never burn those we love.

Father Bernard's gaze softens with paternal pride.

FATHER BERNARD (softly, deeply moved) Yes, Fabriciano. Exactly. But remember, even among friends, each heart carries its own secret struggles. The strongest bonds will be tested by storms you cannot yet foresee.

He reaches into his robes and withdraws a small, intricately carved wooden box. Carefully, he places it on the altar before them. The three step closer, breath held in reverent suspense as Bernard slowly opens it. Within lies a small, silver emblem—a Templar cross shimmering under candlelight. Inscribed on it in latin is, "Veritas vos Liberabit"

FATHER BERNARD (with solemn gravity) This belonged to our brothers who fell long before us, yet their mission remains ours even today. Keep it close, let it remind you of your vow—guardians of truth and justice, always unseen but ever present. The Truth Shall Set Us Free. Then he makes the sign of the cross.

Fabriciano slowly reaches out, picking up the emblem reverently.

FABRICIANO (firmly, eyes bright with determination) I promise, Father. I swear we will protect the truth.

Maria and Eli each place a hand gently upon Fabriciano's, solidifying their bond, a quiet yet powerful pact made in candlelit secrecy.

MARIA (with quiet strength, eyes subtly wary) All for one.

ELI (voice steady, unwavering, yet hinting uncertainty) And one for all.

Father Bernard smiles faintly, eyes glistening with pride and apprehension for the burden he knows they now carry. He picks up a well-worn copy of Alexandre Dumas' "The Three Musketeers" from the altar.

FATHER BERNARD (sincerely, softly) The greatest gift, beyond knowledge, is friendship—rooted deeply, unshakable even in the strongest storms. Now you understand Dumas and his subliminal message in his greatest work, "The Three Musketeers." This is why I had you read it for your lesson this week. Friendship, loyalty, and trust—yet, beware, the deeper the trust, the greater the hurt if ever betrayed.

Fabriciano nods solemnly, placing the emblem securely into his pocket, exchanging subtle glances with Maria and Eli, hints of future complexity and challenges reflected in their expressions.

FABRICIANO (quiet, determined) We understand, Father. We're ready.

Father Bernard hesitates briefly, a shadow passing over his features, subtly hinting at dangers he dare not voice.

FATHER BERNARD (somberly, almost whispering) May God watch over you, my brave Musketeers. Courage alone will not always suffice. He turns and reverently looks and then bows toward the fresco painted on the mission wall of the dark Madonna holding her child on her lap, who is holding a golden septer with an angelic halo glowing around his head.

As they stand united before the softly flickering candles, shadows stretch long and solemn across ancient walls, foretelling the gravity of their future. The mission bell tolls softly in the distance, resonating deeply into the night, a herald of destiny awakened.

SCENE 6: EXT. MEXICO CITY, UNIVERSITY GROUNDS – DAY (FLASHBACK - 1913)

Mexico City bustles vibrantly with intellectual fervor and revolutionary passion. Fabriciano García (Pedro Pascal) stands quietly beneath an ancient jacaranda tree, its blossoms drifting softly around him. He breathes deeply, taking in the vibrant life around him with cautious optimism.

MARIA SALAZAR (Vannessa Vasquez), radiant, passionate, and fiercely intelligent, approaches through the lively crowd, books clutched close to her chest. Her eyes sparkle with excitement, warming instantly as she sees him.

MARIA (smiling softly, emotionally charged) Fabriciano... you really came.

FABRICIANO (quietly intense, with warmth) You knew I couldn't refuse you.

Maria links her arm gently with his, guiding him through the animated debates and impassioned speeches that echo through the campus, her voice a conspiratorial whisper.

MARIA (excitedly) This place is electric, Fabriciano. Ideas burn brighter here than anywhere. We're building something new, something beautiful.

Fabriciano's eyes darken slightly, his voice laced with subtle caution.

FABRICIANO Hope can quickly become dangerous, Maria. Ideas can ignite raging fires you can't control, they can consume everything in their path.

She stops abruptly, turning to face him, her expression fiercely resolute yet deeply personal.

MARIA (passionately) Then let them burn! Mexico can't be reborn without fire. Are you afraid you might get burnt, Fabriciano?

Before he can respond, PANCHO VILLA (Benicio Del Toro), larger than life, magnetic, charismatic, commands attention at a nearby podium, his voice resonant and commanding.

VILLA (defiantly, boldly) The choice is yours—fight with dignity for our lands or surrender in disgrace as cowards. Mexico demands bravery, courage. Who among you is brave enough to answer her call? Who will join my Army of the North? We Ride to make history, we ride for a free and liberated Mexico!

Villa descends, eyes immediately locking onto Maria, and then shifting appreciatively toward Fabriciano. He approaches, offering a firm handshake, studying Fabriciano closely, eyes calculating and shrewd.

VILLA (sincerely, warmly) Maria tells me you're very handy with a gun. But are you brave enough to face bullets, to face real death? Can you ride into the fray knowing the grim reaper may await you at any moment?

Fabriciano hesitates, meeting Maria's intense gaze, weighing heavy the cost of war, he knows what they would expect of him.

FABRICIANO (firmly, quietly) I'll fight injustice, General, but war is not something I crave.

Villa chuckles softly, nodding knowingly.

VILLA War never asks permission, amigo. It arrives and leaves in its own time.

Fabriciano glances at Maria, her expression filled with hope, confidence, and subtle concern. She reaches over and takes his hand and warmly squeezes it. His moments of doubt seem to melt away with her touch.

CUT TO:

SCENE 7: EXT. MEXICAN VILLAGE – NIGHT (WAR MONTAGE)

Rapid, harrowing images:

Fabriciano, eyes sharp yet haunted, engages in fierce gunfights, saving villagers from oppression.

Children crying, families torn apart, innocent casualties of brutal conflict.

Fabriciano, covered in grime and blood, shaken by the brutality around him, visibly tormented by what he sees.

Later that night he is sleeping under the stars and having nightmares, Maria arrives and lays down by him in his bedroll and comforts him.

CUT TO:

SCENE 8: EXT. MEXICO CITY TRAIN STATION – NIGHT (1914)

Fabriciano stands, weary and haunted. Maria rushes to him, eyes wide with desperation, clutching his arm urgently.

MARIA (anguished, pleading) Don't go, Fabriciano! We need you—I need you. There's so much left to fight for! I cannot imagine life without you please don't make me live without you.

Fabriciano cups her face gently, sadness and deep regret coloring his voice. He gently kisses her on the lips and they hug for a long moment, then he pulls away from her.

FABRICIANO (softly, sorrowfully) War devours us all, Maria. I won't let it take what's left of my soul, I need to find peace and tranquility not this endless bloodshed.

He boards the train. Maria's expression is devastated, heartbroken as the train pulls away, leaving her silhouetted and alone on the platform. She is sobbing but finally she waves and blows him a genuine farewell kiss.

CUT TO:

SCENE 9: EXT. DE LEÓN RANCH – DAY

Fabriciano, quiet dignity and strength has returned, he rides onto the lush De León ranch. CASIMIRO MUÑOZ (Edward James Olmos) and his daughter MANUELLA (Adria Arjona) work together, her gentle beauty and kindness immediately catching Fabriciano's eye.

CASIMIRO (kindly, perceptively) Looking for work or running from something, stranger?

FABRICIANO (sincerely, quietly) A little of both, perhaps. Mostly peace, if you have it.

Casimiro nods knowingly, warmly offering his hand.

CASIMIRO Then peace you shall have.

Fabriciano glances at Manuella, their eyes meeting warmly, instant chemistry is a palpable spark and moment of warmth rushes over him.

CUT TO:

SCENE 10: EXT. DE LEÓN RANCH – MONTAGE (1914)

Romantic, tender moments:

Fabriciano and Manuella bonding over chores, laughter, and shared stories under starlit skies.

Quiet moments where Fabriciano’s eyes reveal his struggle to reconcile past and present.

CUT TO:

SCENE 11: EXT. SOUTH TEXAS CHURCH – DAY (1914)

Fabriciano and Manuella stand hand-in-hand, marrying under a humble church, their faces alight with pure, simple joy. Fabriciano’s eyes subtly betray gratitude, a promise silently made for a peaceful future.

CUT TO:

SCENE 12: EXT. SMALL TEXAS TOWN – DAY

Fabriciano reunites warmly with ELI MARTÍNEZ (Luke Grimes), now a Texas Ranger. Their handshake firm, filled with old friendship and new complexities.

ELI (smiling, cautious admiration) Maria made you sound like a real hero, in that bandito brigade he calls his Army of the North. Guess you’ve changed.

FABRICIANO (grimly introspective) Heroes only exist in stories. War teaches that lesson brutally and with stark examples of how wicked man can treat one another.

Their attention shifts sharply to MAJOR AUGUST RANSOM (Idris Elba) and GABRIEL (Jon Bernthal) aggressively harassing local Tejanos. Fabriciano’s eyes harden instantly. He feels his belt and remembers he is unarmed.

FABRICIANO (disgusted, quiet rage) Who are these rinches causing trouble?

ELI (reluctantly, conflicted) They’re Wallace’s men—his hired guns.

Fabriciano locks eyes with Eli, intensity blazing.

FABRICIANO (low, challenging) And you stand by this? I thought lawmen protect the people, especially the oppressed?

ELI (uncomfortably defensive) I enforce the law, Fabriciano.

FABRICIANO (sharply, morally fierce) Laws can be unjust, Eli. Loyalty to a cause doesn't excuse cruelty, even if some paper justifies it. Choose your side carefully, my friend.

Fabriciano turns away, leaving Eli visibly shaken and conflicted.

CUT TO:

SCENE 13: INT. FABRICIANO & MANUELLA'S HOME – NIGHT (1914)

Fabriciano takes Manuella's hand, vulnerability clear in his eyes.

FABRICIANO (honestly, emotionally charged) Manuella, my past is dark—guns, violence, war, unspeakable memories I would not be proud of. You must know who you've married. I am a man that has a conflicted soul, a troubled past, and who wants to make amends for the mistakes I made.

MANUELLA (softly, with unwavering strength) I see the man you are today. Your past doesn't frighten me—it brought you here, to me.

They embrace warmly their love wraps them with a promise of peace amidst a gathering storm.

SCENE 14: Six – INT. WALLACE OIL COMPANY OFFICE – DAY

Rich mahogany furniture and polished brass fixtures gleam softly beneath elegant chandeliers, the symbols of wealth and ruthless ambition. HENRY WALLACE (Neal McDonough), a man whose eyes reveal cunning masked by practiced charm, sits confidently behind a massive oak desk.

Across from Wallace sits GOVERNOR JAMES E. FERGUSON (Brendan Gleeson), imposing yet nervous, perspiration beading subtly at his temple, and JUDGE GARRETT JACKSON (Walton Goggins), twitching with anxious, concealed depravity.

WALLACE (leaning forward, eyes piercing) The time has come, gentlemen. Black gold waits beneath their dirt, and time is money. I won't tolerate hesitation.

FERGUSON (cautiously) These families—De León, Gonzalez—they won't leave quietly, Henry. Their claims are old, protected by the Spanish Crown. Texas has always honored those when we achieved statehood.

Wallace's smile is chilling, his voice deceptively soothing.

WALLACE That's precisely why I pay you, Governor—to make inconvenient histories disappear.

JUDGE JACKSON (eagerly, conspiratorial) I've prepared the foreclosure writs, perfectly legal. Land seizure under eminent domain. It's airtight, Governor. Turns out these ranches

are assessed on their values improperly and therefore in arrears for decades...guess the state will need to liquidate them to clear these debts as best it can.

Wallace turns sharply to the judge, eyes narrowed dangerously.

WALLACE Good. But remember, Judge—your personal indiscretions stay hidden as long as you're useful. Keep it that way. I better be the successful bidder on all these lands...if you get my point.

Jackson pales visibly, nodding vigorously.

JACKSON I'll see to it myself.

FERGUSON (nervously, attempting courage) But the Tejanos will resist. They're proud, stubborn people.

WALLACE (smiling coldly) Then make your Rangers break their pride. Ransom knows how. That's his problem. Hang a few if necessary—examples speak louder than words. We need to make sure they understand resistance is dangerous and deadly.

Governor Ferguson visibly squirms, uncomfortable but resigned to his fate.

FERGUSON (softly, eyes downcast) If blood is spilled, it'll attract attention.

Wallace rises, circling the desk to stand imposingly close.

WALLACE (low, menacing) Blood's the price of progress, gentlemen. The new Texas we're building requires sacrifice—preferably someone else's.

The Governor nods grimly, the decision is sealed.

CUT TO:

SCENE 15: EXT. SMALL TEXAS TOWN – DAY

Fabriciano García (Pedro Pascal) strolls leisurely with Manuella (Adria Arjona), purchasing supplies. ELI MARTÍNEZ (Luke Grimes), uniformed Texas Ranger, steps forward from the shadows, his expression tense.

ELI (voice low, conflicted) Fabriciano, a word.

Fabriciano gently excuses himself from Manuella, stepping aside.

FABRICIANO (quiet, guarded) Speak plainly, Eli. I sense trouble.

ELI (reluctantly) Wallace is coming for your land—De León's, Gonzalez's—all of it. The Rangers are his tools.

Fabriciano stiffens, eyes darkening with cold fury.

FABRICIANO (accusatory, sharply) And you, Eli? Will you stain your hands too?

Eli winces, visibly struggling.

ELI (pained, pleading) What choice do I have, Fabriciano? They have power—real power. We're pawns. Judge Garrett issues the writs and we are agents of the State, Ferguson orders us to uphold the law.

Fabriciano fixes Eli with an intense, penetrating stare.

FABRICIANO (defiant, morally resolute) Men choose their fate, Eli. Right or wrong. Power doesn't excuse the choices we make. You wear that badge but do you honor what it stands for? Justice, equality, the right to pursue your dreams without being wrongfully oppressed. A real lawman is a tough dangerous business, a mercenary is a reckless murderer with no conscious...that's not the musketeer I knew. Guess when the time comes you'll have to decide who you really are my friend or my enemy, you know where I will stand.

Eli, conflicted, nods slowly, clearly torn.

FABRICIANO (softly, urgently) Stand for something you're proud of when the time comes. Don't choose the wrong side. Blood spilt stains for generations.

Fabriciano turns back to Manuella, troubled but resolute, aware now that his peaceful world is crumbling and that the day is approaching when he will have to fight again.

CUT TO:

SCENE 16: INT. LA BORDE HOTEL – EVENING

Inside a lavish suite, PHILIPPE-BAPTISTE LA BORDE (Jean Reno), impeccably dressed, calmly reviews intercepted telegrams, eyes gleaming with satisfaction. He picks up a telegram marked "Mexican CONSULATE—CONFIDENTIAL, from the German Ministry of Foreign Diplomacy, Ambassador Zimmerman" smiling cryptically.

LA BORDE (to himself, softly amused) The plot thickens, indeed.

GRETCHEN REINHARDT (Diane Kruger) appears quietly at the doorway, eyes nervous but resolved. She tucks her blouse in and buttons the front and then straightens her garments with a quick tug. Then she gives him a meek smile, a peck on his cheek and places her hand on his shoulder warmly.

GRETCHEN (hesitantly) Herr La Borde, Otto grows suspicious. He questions my absences.

La Borde smiles reassuringly, gently handing her a sealed envelope.

LA BORDE (kindly, with calculated warmth) Then distract him, Gretchen. Germany's loss will soon be our gain. Use some of that abundant charm and feminine affection you wield so well here with me.

He returns to his documents, focused, determined, a masterful chess player moving pieces unseen by others. He takes his fountain pen out and scribbles some notes, pretending to ignore her.

CUT TO:

SCENE 17: EXT. MAIN STREET, Rio Grande City – NIGHT

Fabriciano walks slowly home with Manuella, lanterns casting flickering shadows. The peaceful night belies the looming storm. Fabriciano squeezes Manuella's hand reassuringly, hiding his growing unease.

FABRICIANO (gently, masking worry) Tomorrow will be another day, mi amor. Everything will be fine. But his eyes, lost in shadows, betray the heavy burden he now carries.

SCENE 18: EXT. TEJANO COMMUNITY MEETING – EVENING

The setting sun casts long shadows over a modest adobe community hall where anxious Tejano ranchers and townsfolk gather, murmuring worriedly. FABRICIANO GARCÍA (Pedro Pascal), determined yet solemn, stands beside CASIMIRO MUÑOZ (Edward James Olmos) at the front, their presence commanding respect.

CASIMIRO (voice steady, calming) These men seek to steal our heritage—our lives, built by our fathers' sweat and blood. We must stand together now, or lose everything.

ANGRY RANCHER (voice raised, passionate) They've got the law, Casimiro! They've got guns and badges! How do we fight that? We resist them, they shoot or hang us and label us as seditionists or traitors. Now they're accusing us of rustling our own cattle and confiscating our herds. This is pure thievery!

Fabriciano steps forward, voice clear, resonating deeply.

FABRICIANO (strong, resolute) By refusing to yield. By proving that dignity and courage cannot be foreclosed upon or confiscated. If we break apart, they've already won. You must stand together as one force. The many are mightier than a few.

A ripple of agreement passes through the crowd. Suddenly, all heads turn as MARIA SALAZAR (Vannessa Vasquez), poised, fierce, steps confidently into the hall, drawing immediate attention, even though she is dressed in riding clothes fresh from the dusty trail, her physique and beauty make her a showstopper.

MARIA (authoritative, powerful) The Rangers have already begun their violence. They target the weak first, hoping fear will silence the rest. We must expose their brutality—make it visible to the world. Words can be our bullets, the press our army, but we must make them see our cause is just.

Fabriciano meets her gaze, an old connection sparking briefly, yet he looks away quickly, eyes flickering with complicated emotions. Manuella (Adria Arjona), sensing tension, steps closer to Fabriciano protectively.

FABRICIANO (nodding, affirming) Maria's right. Their greatest weapon is secrecy. Our truth must become louder than their lies.

The crowd murmurs agreement, determination replacing doubt.

CUT TO:

SCENE 19: INT. PRIVATE CLUB – NIGHT

A luxurious private room adorned with opulent European decor. Around an ornate table sit COLONEL AUGUST RANSOM (Rege-Jean-Page or Aldis Hodge), GERMAN IMPERIAL AGENT EFRAM VON KRÜGER (Mads Mikkelsen), and a MEXICAN DIPLOMAT, RODRIGO VELASCO (Demián Bichir). EMIKO TAKAHASHI (Kiki Sukezane), elegant yet quietly commanding, stands behind Ransom, subtly attentive.

Governor Ferguson enters the room and pours himself a snifter of bourbon before being seated.

FERGUSON Gentlemen, let's begin. I have many matters of state business to attend to. Mr. Krüger, the Kaiser's payments have not reached my bank yet this month. Do we have a problem?

KRÜGER (calmly authoritative) No, Governor, I can assure you it was only a short delay. Now, to the matter at hand. With Germany's impending victory, gentlemen, we shall reshape the globe. Texas will become the cornerstone of our new empire in the Americas, of course with permission from our alliance with Mexico.

VELASCO (smiling confidently) The Plan of San Diego assures Mexico regains its rightful lands—California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. With German protection, our victory is assured.

Ransom shifts uneasily, sensing the enormity of what he's hearing.

RANSOM (cautiously) And just what is my role in this grand vision?

Krüger meets Ransom's eyes with cool precision.

KRÜGER (firmly) Maintain order. Crush any resistance. Texas must be ready when the Kaiser's forces arrive.

Emiko gently leans down, whispering discreetly into Ransom's ear, her voice calm yet influential.

EMIKO (subtly influential) Your cooperation guarantees more than survival, Colonel. Japan's empire will rise in Asia; those loyal to our alliance will find themselves richly rewarded financially, and personally by me.

Ransom visibly relaxes, soothed by her quiet assurances.

RANSOM (resolutely) You'll have my full cooperation and that of my Rangers.

Krüger nods approvingly.

KRÜGER (satisfied) Excellent. Germany will remember its allies.

CUT TO:

SCENE 20: INT. LA BORDE HOTEL – LATE NIGHT

PHILIPPE-BAPTISTE LA BORDE (Jean Reno) works intensely by lamplight, maps and telegrams spread meticulously across his desk. OTTO REINHARDT (Thomas Kretschmann) appears at the door, knocking lightly, eyes narrowed.

OTTO (sharply, guardedly) Working late again, Herr La Borde? You seem restless these days.

La Borde smoothly folds the telegram, smiling coolly, remaining unflustered.

LA BORDE (charmingly dismissive) The burdens of business, Otto. Texas is full of opportunities—and challenges.

OTTO (deliberately casual, veiled menace) I decided to personally deliver the pastries tonight. Though, I'm sure you'd prefer Gretchen—she's undoubtedly a more... appealing messenger.

La Borde's eyes flicker briefly, acknowledging Otto's veiled accusation. A tense beat passes between them.

LA BORDE (coolly composed, subtle warning) Appealing indeed. Though it is always wise, Otto, to be cautious—some pastries, while enticing, can conceal a dangerous filling.

Otto smiles thinly, the meaning clear between them, nodding stiffly.

OTTO (curtly, dangerous politeness) Enjoy your evening, Herr La Borde.

He exits, leaving La Borde sitting quietly, eyes narrowed thoughtfully, aware of the precarious balance he must now maintain.

CUT TO:

SCENE 21: INT. FABRICIANO & MANUELLA'S BEDROOM – NIGHT

Fabriciano stares out the window, troubled. Manuella approaches, placing a gentle hand on his shoulder, sensing his turmoil.

MANUELLA (softly, concerned) You carry too heavy a burden alone, Fabriciano. Share it with me. We are, after all, husband and wife, we are a family now.

Fabriciano turns slowly, eyes filled with love and worry, voice raw.

FABRICIANO (gently, conflicted) I wanted peace, Manuella. But peace demands a price. A price I'm afraid I must pay.

MANUELLA (strong, determined) We pay it together, mi amor. Whatever comes, we face it as one. I hope you don't have to let that wild renegade side take hold of you again. I fear if it does, I may never get my kind, gentle husband back.

Fabriciano nods, embracing her, yet his eyes betray a shadowy awareness of darker times looming. He feels a cold chill run down his back and shudders.

SCENE 22: EXT. DE LEÓN HACIENDA – LATE AFTERNOON (1914)

The afternoon sun casts a warm, golden glow over the sprawling Los Gatos ranch.

MANUELLA (Adria Arjona) prepares to ring the dinner bell, glancing contentedly across the peaceful grounds. Suddenly, a distant rumble interrupts her serenity as Texas Rangers thunder onto the property, dust billowing ominously around them.

FABRICIANO (Pedro Pascal), brushing horses in the barn, steps quickly toward the barn door, watching carefully from the shadows.

DON RAFAEL DE LEÓN (Andy Garcia), dignified and impeccably dressed, moves calmly to greet the arriving Rangers, closely followed by CASIMIRO MUÑOZ (Edward James Olmos). VICTORIA DE LEÓN (Eiza González), resplendent in her dinner attire, emerges onto the front porch. Their elderly black servant stands protectively in the doorway, gripping a double-barrel shotgun.

MAJOR AUGUST RANSOM (Rege Jean Page or Aldis Hoge) reins his horse, looking down arrogantly at Don Rafael.

RANSOM

(coldly official) I am hereby serving you notice—your land has been confiscated by the state of Texas. You must vacate within two weeks, or we will remove you by force.

DON RAFAEL

(firmly, indignantly) This is absurd. This land has belonged to my family for nearly two centuries. It was granted by the Spanish Crown itself.

RANSOM

(sneering contemptuously) That was before Texas, old man. Your titles mean nothing now.

VICTORIA (Eiza Gonzalez) rushes protectively to her husband's side, glaring defiantly at Ransom. He nods arrogantly toward her.

RANSOM

(smugly, condescending) You chose poorly, Miss Victoria. I warned you to choose me instead.

Don Rafael, furious, reaches into his coat pocket for his reading glasses to examine the writ. GABRIEL (Danny Trejo), eyes wild with paranoia, shouts suddenly.

GABRIEL

(panicked, deceptive) Gun!

Without hesitation, Gabriel fires, hitting Don Rafael squarely in the chest. The proud rancher collapses, lifeless. Chaos erupts. The old servant fires his shotgun, dropping one of the Rangers from his saddle before Gabriel pivots, killing him instantly.

CASIMIRO charges Gabriel's horse, causing it to rear violently. Fabriciano swiftly races back into the barn. He kneels beside his bunk, pulling out a weathered wooden trunk. With practiced speed, he straps on his old gun belt, fingers familiar on his nickel-plated Schofield pistol. He spins the cylinder—fully loaded.

Fabriciano dashes to the barn entrance, just as another Ranger levels his gun toward Victoria and Manuella. In a fluid, lightning-fast motion, Fabriciano fires, dropping the Ranger instantly.

Ransom draws his pistol, but Fabriciano's next shot expertly knocks the weapon from Ransom's grasp, startling the hardened Ranger commander.

Gabriel, snarling viciously, swings his pistol to target Fabriciano. ELI MARTÍNEZ (Luke Grimes), watching from the rear, spurs his horse urgently into Gabriel, knocking Gabriel's shot wide. Eli spins his mount, voice commanding.

ELI

(authoritatively, resolutely) Enough! We're done here. Move out!

RANSOM, furious yet pragmatic, wheels his horse, signaling his men to retreat. Gabriel scowls murderously but obeys. Ransom turns back as they ride away, his voice dripping with venom.

RANSOM

(threateningly, loudly) You'll pay dearly, Victoria! When I return, I'll hang every man here for murdering my Rangers!

The Rangers vanish down the road, leaving a heavy, suffocating silence behind. Fabriciano, heart racing, stands protectively between the women and the retreating dust cloud, jaw clenched in determination, eyes blazing with renewed fire.

VICTORIA turns urgently to CASIMIRO.

VICTORIA Casimiro, saddle Don Rafael's dapple-gray horse. Quickly, pack provisions for a long journey.

She turns to MANUELLA, voice gentle but urgent.

VICTORIA Manuella, hurry to the kitchen. Fill a burlap sack with dried beef, fruit, and hardtack—enough for five days at least.

Manuella nods quickly and rushes off. Victoria faces Fabriciano, eyes firm and resolute.

VICTORIA You must go now, Fabriciano. Ride for your brother's place in Camargo. Cross the river tonight. They'll kill you if they find you here. Don't stop for anything, and do not return until we send word.

Casimiro quickly walks the majestic horse out, slipping a Winchester rifle into the saddle holder. Manuella emerges swiftly, tying the burlap sack of provisions onto the saddle horn. Casimiro secures a bedroll and Fabriciano's leather bag, then gestures for Manuella to fetch water. She returns promptly with two canteens, draping them across the saddle horn.

Fabriciano mounts the horse reluctantly, looking deeply at Manuella, their gazes heavy with emotion. He surveys the ranch yard carefully, eyes lingering on the carnage around him. Finally, he leans down, tenderly kissing Manuella.

FABRICIANO (softly, deeply conflicted) This is not the life I wanted. But trouble follows me wherever I go. I love you deeply, Manuella, and I promise I'll find my way back. Wait for me.

MANUELLA (bravely, resolutely) I will wait forever if I must. Go now, my love.

Fabriciano nods grimly, spurs the horse, and gallops through the ranch gates, disappearing into the setting sun.

ACT TWO

SCENE 23: EXT. RUGGED VALLEY – DAY

A narrow dirt path winds through a valley, leading to a hidden monastery tucked between rolling hills. Fruit trees cast dappled sunlight over the road, and the faint murmur of a stream can be heard nearby.

A weathered wagon rattles along the trail, swallowed by hills and whispering trees. Sunlight filters through the branches, casting fractured shadows across the earth. Somewhere nearby, water gurgles—a stream barely visible but ever-present.

At the reins: FABRICIANO (15). Thin. Hardened. Eyes that have seen too much, too young.

Beside him, a HOODED MONK says nothing. Silence has become their language.

Ahead, the monastery rises from the valley like an ancient secret, its stone walls worn but unbroken. A vineyard creeps up a distant hill, green veins against the ochre earth. A bell tower glints—its crucifix catching the sun like a blade.

At the entrance, under a cracked stone arch, waits FATHER BERNARD (60s)—monastic robes, sand-colored, face carved from time. Still. Watchful.

The wagon stops.

Fabriciano steps off, clutching a small burlap sack—his whole world in one hand. His gaze flicks from the vineyard to the chapel, measuring the weight of this place.

FATHER BERNARD

(in Spanish, calm)

Muchacho... estás lejos de casa.

FABRICIANO

(quietly)

No tengo casa.

Bernard nods. Not surprised. Not unkind.

FATHER BERNARD

Then we begin again.

He turns. Fabriciano lingers a beat... then follows him beneath the arch, into shadow.

SCENE 24: INT. MISSION CHAPEL – NIGHT (YEARS LATER)

A single flame dances in the dark—a candle on a small table, beneath a fresco of the Black Madonna. Her golden halo glows faintly in the low light. Her eyes are knowing. Watching.

FABRICIANO (20s) emerges from the shadows—older now. Drawn. Half-lit by flickering sconces. He moves like a soldier: silent, precise, ready.

FATHER BERNARD

(from the shadows, with warmth)

I was wondering when the Musketeer would return.

Fabriciano steps forward, head bowed slightly in reverence.

FABRICIANO

They came for Don de León. Rangers. Four of them.

Shot him in front of his wife. Casmiro too.

I got there in time, but it didn't matter. They killed without cause.

Said the land belonged to the state now.

Bernard studies him. Still seated. Still calm.

FATHER BERNARD

And you?

FABRICIANO

They saw my face.

So I ran.

Mrs. de León told me to wait in Camargo.

But... I couldn't. Not without seeking your wisdom.

I'm confused, Father.

I don't want to kill anymore.

FATHER BERNARD

Because you knew this was the only place left that still tells the truth.

A beat. The candle flickers.

FABRICIANO

They killed Zebulon. The old servant.

For what?

Cattle?

He shudders.

FATHER BERNARD

For what lies beneath the cattle.

Black gold...

Oil.

He stands now. Slow. Deliberate. Like a man who's buried more than he's saved.

FATHER BERNARD (CONT'D)

Henry Wallace wants it all.

The land. The courts. The people.

Governor Ferguson signs the writs.

Judge Garrett seals them.

And the Rangers carry out the verdict—with bullets and ropes.

All bought and paid for by Wallace and his oil money.

Fabriciano stiffens. A flash of memory behind his eyes.

FABRICIANO

Eli was there.

He rode with them.

But... he spurred his horse—knocked the pistol just as one of them aimed at me.

Then he shouted for them to retreat.

Bernard's face darkens. Something unsaid stirs.

FATHER BERNARD

Perhaps Eli still remembers who he used to be.

Or perhaps... he's playing a longer game.

Give him the benefit of your friendship...he is still a musketeer in his heart, believe in him,
show him you need him to be a musketeer again.

He turns to the Madonna fresco. Her child holds a scepter, dark skin glowing in the candlelight.

FATHER BERNARD (CONT'D)

You asked me once if faith was enough.

It's not.

Not when evil has money.

Money buys silence.

It buys power.

It buys spilled blood.

FABRICIANO

Then what do we do?

FATHER BERNARD

We steal it back.

Strike them where they worship most—

Their wealth.

Without their money they will have no power to corrupt and persecute

Fabriciano lets out a bitter breath. A tired smile.

FABRICIANO

I didn't come back to start a war.

FATHER BERNARD

It already started.

You arrived in time to decide how it ends.

If you choose not to fight...

Evil will prevail.

Bernard steps closer, his voice lowering.

FATHER BERNARD (CONT'D)

You think Maria stayed south to write poetry?

She's printing leaflets.

Telling her story.

Telling your story.

But stories need heroes.

She's waiting for one to appear.

She now knows it's not Pancho Villa!

A beat.

FATHER BERNARD (CONT'D)

The Musketeers were never meant to grow old in peace, Fabriciano.

You were meant to lead.

Just not in the way you imagined.

Fabriciano looks up—his face half in candlelight, half in shadow. Doubt flickering behind his eyes.

FABRICIANO

You want me to be Robin Hood?

An outlaw?

FATHER BERNARD

No.

I want you to be the reckoning.

A shadow in the night.

A man evil men fear to name.

The kind that makes them pray with the lights on.

He gestures to the Black Madonna.

FATHER BERNARD (CONT'D)

Use their playbook—

Confusion.

Deception.

Precision.

Fear.

Theft.

The Templars did it with secret scrolls and swords.

You'll do it with ink, powder, and lead.

He steps forward, voice barely above a whisper.

FATHER BERNARD (CONT'D)

A mask.

A message.

A plan.

And a weapon they'll never forget—

That nickel-plated pistol with the pearl handles?

Let that be your banner.

He stares hard into Fabriciano's eyes.

FATHER BERNARD (CONT'D)

The war isn't coming, my son.

It's here.

And the oil beneath our feet?

It's their Achilles heel.

SCENE 25: -“Consequences” INT. ABANDONED CHURCH SAFEHOUSE – NIGHT

Rain pounds the rusted tin roof. Wind howls through broken stained glass, casting fractured moonlight across the dusty pews.

FABRICIANO GARCÍA (Pedro Pascal) sits beneath the altar, hunched in shadow. His hands are stained with oil and gunpowder, sleeves rolled. A revolver is disassembled before him—cleaned with reverence, not routine.

Across the nave, MARIA SALAZAR (Vannessa Vasquez) paces. Boots echo on cracked stone. Her oilskin duster drips rain. Her wide-brimmed hat casts shadows over her eyes—sharp and unreadable.

A shaft of moonlight slices through the ruined rose window. Maria pauses, caught in the silver glow—her silhouette framed like a ghostly icon.

Fabriciano looks up. His breath stills. For a moment, the war outside fades.

She senses his gaze. Says nothing.

MARIA

They hanged three more in Zapata County.

No trial. No charges.

Just Tejanos with land someone else wanted.

Fabriciano says nothing. His hands move—deliberate, controlled. The revolver clicks together piece by piece.

MARIA (CONT'D)

You said there'd be consequences.

But they're not afraid.

Not of you.

Not with Ferguson and Garrett signing their sins clean.

Fabriciano slips the final round into the chamber. Spins the cylinder. Still silent.

FABRICIANO

(quietly)

Then I'll give them something to fear.

Maria stops pacing. Her eyes narrow.

MARIA

You mean it?

FABRICIANO

I won't be their excuse anymore.

The more they chase me, the more they'll pay.

No more warnings.

Just reckoning.

MARIA

Pancho's planning a hit tonight.

Southbound railcar—Wallace's payroll.

Twenty thousand in gold.

Light escort.

FABRICIANO

Any passengers?

MARIA

Just Wallace's men. Rangers, maybe.

Same bastards who razed González land.

Click. Click. Click.

He holsters the weapon. Stands.

FABRICIANO

Then we take the train.

MARIA

I thought you left this behind.

The farm. The quiet life.

FABRICIANO

I haven't seen Pancho since those ten days in Mexico City.

When Madero fell.

When Villa trusted Carranza...

and the revolution died.

She steps forward. Slowly. Arms slide around him. Her body presses into his. She kisses his cheek—soft, intentional.

MARIA

I thought I lost you.

But here we are again.

Fighting shadows.

Fabriciano looks toward the ruined doors of the church—beyond them, the storm, the night, the war.

FABRICIANO

We take Wallace's power his gold.

We give it back to the people.

No politicians. No Courts. No Ritches.

Just justice.

She grips his arm.

MARIA

You know what this means?

FABRICIANO

(low, dangerous)

It means I stop being just a man.

I become a message.

Maria's eyes tear up with pride and a touch of fear...as he leaves she whispers

"Be careful...I...I love you."

She knows he didn't hear her, but she sighs heavy

CUT TO:

SCENE 26: INT. BURNED-OUT TELEGRAPH OFFICE – LATER

A match flares.

PHILIPPE LA BORDE (Jean Reno) lights his cigar. Rifles, dynamite, and crates surround him. A half-burned German cipher lies open on the desk.

LA BORDE

Gold makes men dream.

But secrets...they erode power

Secrets make men vanish.

He unfolds a telegram from his vest.

TO: KRÜGER, From: HAVANA Consulate – “Villa spotted. Operation delay advised.
Recommend new strategy.”

La Borde smirks. Crushes out the cigar.

LA BORDE (CONT'D)

Toot Late Hun, Let's see who blinks first...

Wallace... or Carranza, perhaps he'll compromise Villa, it would serve his purpose.

SCENE 27: INT. ADOBE CHAPEL – DAWN

The sky outside glows with the faintest orange. The chapel inside is still and dim. Dust motes drift through shafts of light piercing the high windows.

MARIA SALAZAR kneels alone in the pews. Her hat rests beside her. Hair loose. Lips trembling. Her hands are folded reverently, but there is a slight tremble.

She looks toward the altar where FATHER BERNARD (70s), frail but wise, sits in silent prayer. A face weathered by mercy, war, and the quiet pain of witnessing too much. He wears the brown habit of his order—simple cloth, tied with a red braided cord. He is the devout advocate of the oppressed.

MARIA

I've done something I can't take back, Father. And I'm afraid.

Father Bernard doesn't speak. He waits. Letting her storm build.

MARIA (CONT'D)

I called him a ghost. I thought it might scare them—the Rangers, Wallace, the ones who hang men without trials.

(beat)

Now they say he rides at night on a ghostly gray horse. That he can't be killed. That bullets move around him like wind through a mountain pass.

FATHER BERNARD

You created a myth. A hero to inspire your people. He cannot be anything less now.

MARIA

I created a target. A man with a bounty big enough to tempt even the kind-hearted.

She rises. Paces. Her boots echo over the old stone floor.

MARIA (CONT'D)

The man I love—he bleeds. He flinches in his sleep. He carries guilt like iron on his ribs.

(beat)

I've made him hunted. Tormented. I helped make him something he never wanted to be.

FATHER BERNARD

The world needs stories, mija. But only the ones built on truth ever survive the fire.

He walks a path chosen for him by more than you. Perhaps by God Himself.

MARIA

I don't know if I'm writing the truth anymore... or just what they need to hear.

He steps toward her. Gently rests his hand on her shoulder.

FATHER BERNARD

You say he's no ghost. Then write him like a man who refuses to stay dead.

You shaped this figure who strikes fear—now reveal the man with the reluctant heart.

Show the public his mercy. His duality.

(beat)

Let them believe he rides by moonlight. Let them believe he draws strength from it.

Let them believe he walks through fire, untouched by lead.

Let them lie awake at night wondering if he's already at their door.

(softly)

So long as you remember... who he really is.

Maria stares at the flickering candles. Her creation sits heavy like a cloak over her shoulders.

MARIA

Fabriciano García didn't ask to be the Ghost. I did it without warning him of the cost.

I even gave him the skull-face scarf to feed the stories.

FATHER BERNARD

Then make sure El Fantasma never forgets the man beneath the mask.

And when he does—you remind him.

SCENE 28: EXT. SAN ANGELO – STREET – MORNING

Newspapers flap in the wind. Headline:

“WHO IS THE GHOST? \$5,000 REWARD — DEAD OR ALIVE”

Seditionist. Traitor. Murderer. Considered extremely dangerous.

Contact the Texas Rangers with any information.

A silhouette rides across the masthead. Eyes hidden. Scarf flowing.

BOOTS crunch over the page.

WALLACE (Neal McDonough) steps into frame, reading the headline with cold contempt. He folds the paper.

WALLACE

Dead will be fine.

He tosses it into the mud.

SCENE 29: EXT. MONASTERY HILL – SAME TIME

FABRICIANO, scarf around his neck, rides alone. The wind tugs gently at it. He doesn't know what Maria has written. Only what he feels in his blood:

There is no turning back.

FADE TO BLACK.

SCENE 30: “The Birth of El Fantasma” EXT. RURAL TEXAS – VARIOUS LOCATIONS

MONTAGE

A feverish dream of fear, fire, and folklore—the legend rising. The Avenger in the night riding a ghostly gray horse.

SCENE 31: — EXT. ZAPATA COUNTY – TREE LINE – NIGHT

Three TEJANO MEN hang from a gnarled mesquite, boots swaying in the wind. Their faces covered with bloodstained handkerchiefs. Beneath them, nailed to the bark:

SIGN

OBEY THE LAW. CHOOSE YOUR FATE.

RANGERS stand beneath the corpses, rifles in hand. One lights a cigarette without flinching.

SCENE 32: — INT. MARIA'S ROOM – NIGHT

MARIA types furiously by candlelight. The typewriter clacks like gunfire.

HEADLINE

“EL FANTASMA STRIKES IN THE NIGHT”

Beside her: a grainy photograph. A masked rider on a pale gray horse, silhouetted by moonlight. His pistol catches the light. A rope hangs from the saddle. A rifle rides in the scabbard.

He looks like Death come to settle accounts.

She stares at it—reverent, guilty, awe-struck.

SCENE 33: — EXT. RANGER STATION – SUNSET

WANTED POSTERS flood from the press.

“FABRICIANO GARCÍA — EL FANTASMA

DEAD OR ALIVE — \$5,000 REWARD”

RANGERS staple them to saloon walls, church doors, telegraph poles. Eyes follow the name. Whispers spread like wildfire.

SCENE 34: — EXT. WALLACE RANCH – NIGHT

Inside a candlelit barn, WALLACE slams his fist onto a table.

WALLACE

Burn their homes. Take the land by dawn.

And if this ghost shows up—make sure he stays in hell.

Men nod. Spurs echo. Gun cylinders spin. Boots move with purpose.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

I know he bleeds. Now make him disappear.

SCENE 35: — EXT. RIO GRANDE VALLEY – NIGHT

Two wagons and ten mounted enforcers ride toward a Tejano village. Kerosene lanterns swing from the wagons—orange halos cutting the dark.

A RIFLE SHOT cracks the silence.

The lead lantern shatters. Fire bursts like dragon's breath. The canvas wagon ignites. Men scream—leaping as flames devour their gear.

From the ridge—FABRICIANO rides in, masked and silent. Cloak snapping behind him like wings. His revolver glints.

He fires again—striking the second lantern. Another fireball. Men scatter. One horse bolts, dragging a burning rider.

In the chaos, FABRICIANO slows near a wounded enforcer—groaning in the dirt. He tosses a canteen down beside him...

Then rides straight through the confusion. Untouched.

A terrified gunman spins and fires wildly—hitting one of his own.

Screams fade into the wind. The lynchers are routed broken and scared.

SCENE 36: — INT. CHURCH – DAY

A grieving widow lights a candle. Sets it beneath a sketch of El Fantasma tacked to the altar.

Another woman silently passes out copies of Maria’s latest article.

HEADLINE

“NO BULLET CAN HARM HIM. NO ROPE CAN HOLD HIM.”

SCENE 37: — EXT. TEXAS RIDGE – DUSK

FABRICIANO rides alone along the ridgeline. The sun sets in molten silence behind him. Wind pulls at his scarf. His silhouette carves the horizon like a legend etched in fire.

MARIA (V.O.)

They say he rides without fear of death...

And that justice answers only to him.

FADE TO BLACK.

SCENE 38: INT. WALLACE OIL COMPANY OFFICE – NIGHT

HENRY WALLACE (Josh Brolin) sits at his massive oak desk, flanked by MAJOR AUGUST RANSOM (Idris Elba), JUDGE GARRETT JACKSON (Walton Goggins), GOVERNOR JAMES E. FERGUSON (Brendan Gleeson), and EFRAM VON KRÜGER (Mads Mikkelsen). The room, filled with cigar smoke and dimly lit lamps, exudes tension and conspiratorial silence.

Wallace hesitates briefly, fingers tapping nervously on the desk—a rare, subtle sign of vulnerability—before he regains his steely composure.

WALLACE

(grim, calculating)

Our time grows short. Wilson's onto our plans. Fabriciano seems a step ahead. It's as if he has eyes everywhere.

RANSOM shifts uneasily, gripping his chair tightly, conflicted emotions flickering across his face.

RANSOM

(tense, frustrated)

Garcia's nothing but a glorified cattle thief. Give me one good night, I'll hang him myself.

KRÜGER

(coolly confident)

Garcia's interference has cost us dearly. The Kaiser grows impatient. The war stands on a knife's edge—we must end this swiftly. Before acts to intervene!

FERGUSON mops his forehead nervously, exchanging wary glances with Jackson.

FERGUSON

(anxiously)

We need a scapegoat. Pin the Army Convoy Ambush and the Columbus raid squarely on Garcia. Paint him as a seditionist and traitor allied with Pancho Villa.

JUDGE JACKSON visibly swallows, masking his internal struggle behind a forced bravado.

JUDGE JACKSON

(nods, strained)

Exactly. A trial—swift justice. The public demands blood. Just like old Rome—let's satisfy their thirst.

Wallace leans back slowly, his eyes narrowing, meticulously assessing each conspirator. The ticking of the antique clock amplifies the tension.

WALLACE

(coldly decisive)

Not a trial. A bullet is quieter, more permanent.

Ransom hesitates, jaw clenched, his eyes briefly betraying inner turmoil before returning to steely resolve.

KRÜGER

(subtle menace)

Then allow me to handle La Borde personally. Without him, Garcia loses his intelligence network—he'll be helpless.

RANSOM

He has the people on his side, they hide him, tip him off and cover his trail for him. Don't underestimate him Governor.

Wallace's resolve sharpens again, noticing his men's unease.

WALLACE

Then it's decided. Ransom, prepare your Rangers. Krüger, eliminate La Borde quietly. Judge, Governor—control public opinion. We will be remembered as patriots, not traitors.

RANSOM

(hesitantly resolute)

Consider it done. I'll put my most ruthless and relentless bloodhound on him. Gabriel never fails me.

Wallace rises, ending the meeting. His voice lowers ominously, almost to a whisper.

WALLACE

Remember, gentlemen, this conspiracy binds us. Any failure dooms us all. Germany must succeed—or we risk everything for nothing.

They exchange tense nods and uneasy glances, each deeply aware of the dangerous game they've chosen to play. Wallace watches them leave, his expression haunted by the gravity of their betrayal, the weight of history pressing heavily upon him.

SCENE 39: EXT. BACK ROAD TO RIO RICO – NIGHT

A beat-up wagon rattles along a dusty trail under a bruised desert sky. The gibbous moon glows low, barely cresting the hills. FABRICIANO GARCÍA (Pedro Pascal) drives, eyes sharp. Beside him, his brother CARLOS GARCÍA (Clifton Collins Jr.) lifts a tarp, revealing crates of smuggled whiskey.

CARLOS

(grinning)

Rio Rico's gonna drink like it's Navidad. You sure Alfonso's still buying?

FABRICIANO

(gruff)

He always buys. Booze, bullets, broken promises—Alfonso makes money in his sleep.

They crest a ridge. Below, faint lights from Rio Rico flicker near the rail depot.

SCENE 40: EXT. RIO RICO BACKLOT – LATER

Fabriciano and Carlos unload the crates behind a cantina. ALFONSO (Danny Trejo-style swagger), gray-stubbled and sunburned, steps from the shadows with two men.

ALFONSO

(grinning)

You boys ride quiet. I like that.

He opens a crate, sniffs a bottle, nods approvingly.

ALFONSO (CONT'D)

Tell your bootlegger—this stuff's clean. But I got a bigger itch to scratch.

FABRICIANO

(eyebrow raised)

Yeah?

ALFONSO

Booze is good—but I'm short on beef. Americans in Nogales and New York are eating like kings. I can't fill half the orders coming in.

Carlos glances to Fabriciano.

CARLOS

We still got those cattle penned from the last job.

Fabriciano stays quiet, calculating.

FABRICIANO

(slowly)

How much can you move?

ALFONSO

Depends how fast you can rustle and ride. I've got buyers in NYC who'll pay double if we can get enough cattle to the port.

Fabriciano turns away, chewing on the idea. A spark ignites in his eyes.

FABRICIANO

Then we'll get a herd to the port. Hope you can handle a huge number?

ALFONSO

(snickers)

You serious? How many head?

FABRICIANO

(deadly serious)

Start preparing my buyers. I'll deliver the herd. How does 10,000 head sound?

Carlos watches his brother with quiet concern.

CARLOS

That's a hell of a lot of cattle, hermano. We don't have anything close to that number we might have 200 head.

FABRICIANO

Not yet Hermano, but we will when we steal all their herds. And a hell of a lot of money for our people. Let's sell their revenge by the pound on the hoof. That will bleed those murdering thieves dry for this season!

ALFONSO

(grins)

Deal! You get them there. I'll buy them all. Come on, I'll buy you both a drink. Some firebrands are stirring up sparks inside.

SCENE 41: INT. RIO RICO CANTINA – MOMENTS LATER

The cantina thrums with tension—smoke, brass guitars, and revolutionary dreams. Locals, smugglers, and soldiers trade drinks and stories under swinging lanterns.

At a corner table, MARIA SALAZAR (Vannessa Vasquez) debates GENERAL PANCHO VILLA (Benicio del Toro), who leans back, half-grinning.

MARIA

You don't just need soldiers, General. You need myths. Heroes. Without legend, your bullets are blanks.

PANCHO VILLA

(gruff)

You want legends, I want ammunition. Ballads don't win battles.

FABRICIANO steps in from the shadows, tipping his hat.

FABRICIANO

General. Señorita.

Maria rises with the slow confidence of a lioness. Her smile is heat wrapped in honey.

MARIA

El Fantasma rides again. I was starting to think you'd ghosted us for good.

PANCHO VILLA

(to Fabriciano)

You always appear when the whiskey's strong and the stakes are higher. Haven't seen you since ten days in Mexico City Amigo!

FABRICIANO

And when the revolution's louder than church bells I stay close to the ground.

Carlos and Alfonso settle at the bar. Maria eyes Fabriciano like a memory she hasn't let go of.

MARIA

(soft, coy)

You look tired, querido. Is married life dulling your edge?

FABRICIANO

(tight)

Marriage keeps me grounded.

MARIA

(teasing)

I liked you better untethered. No reins. Wild. Dangerous. Not bored!

She brushes his coat sleeve—casual, but electric.

FABRICIANO

Some fires don't need stoking.

MARIA

(smiling)

Some burn whether you want them to or not.

Pancho Villa watches with interest, swirling his tequila.

PANCHO VILLA

Careful, Garcia. A man pulled between duty and desire bleeds from both ends.

Maria raises her glass.

MARIA

Then let's toast to contradictions. They make the best stories... and the worst decisions.

They clink. Fabriciano lingers in her gaze a beat too long. Somewhere, a string is tightening.

Suddenly—gunfire outside. Two sharp cracks.

Everyone freezes.

ALFONSO

(shouting)

That came from the freight yard! He pulls out his revolver from under his inside waist coat and starts running towards the rear door.

Fabriciano's already in motion, is close behind him.

FABRICIANO

Trouble doesn't knock.

He looks to Alfonso.

Carlos rides up holding Fabriciano's gray stallion by the reins.

FABRICIANO (CONT'D)

I'll get your cattle. You get the money ready. Fabriciano mounts his horse.

He casts a final glance at Maria, unreadable. Then they spurs the horses and ride off.

SCENE 42: INT. LA BORDE'S PRIVATE COMPOUND – NIGHT

A weathered villa tucked behind iron gates outside Rio Rico. Inside, candlelight flickers off maps, telegraph wires, and open crates of ammunition and paperwork.

JEAN LA BORDE (Jean Reno), in a waistcoat and revolver holster, circles a large table with ALFONSO and a YOUNG TELEGRAPH BOY. A map of train lines crisscrossing Mexico is spread out, along with ship routes from Mexican ports to the U.S.

LA BORDE

(with precision)

Here—Engine 609. We hijack it in Monterrey, time it with Garcia's cattle run. The Germans believe the gold is aboard. In truth? Beef and rubble. The real treasure stays hidden.

ALFONSO

(grunts)

And Garcia?

LA BORDE

He thinks it's about profit—cattle and gold headed back to France. Better he doesn't know. But this—

(He holds up a Swiss-made gold pocket watch.)

—is the real payload.

Alfonso studies it.

ALFONSO

Just looks like a fancy watch.

LA BORDE

Inside: he opens to display a vault key with an inscribed number 609. Zurich Bank Name, address by latitude and longitude. Bearer bonds from the Kaiser's own gold stash. Meant for a Mexican warlord. La Borde snickers. Now? It'll tear their alliance apart.

SCENE 43: EXT. WALLACE OIL COMPANY – NIGHT

A private suite upstairs. WALLACE, RANSOM, EMILIA TAKAHASHI aka EMIKO (Rinko Kikuchi), and JUDGE GARRETT sit in a haze of cigar smoke and ambition.

WALLACE

He's alive. You told me he wouldn't be. Worse—he's organizing. He's lethal.

EMIKO

(sipping wine)

And selling cattle like a revolutionary. Clever little ghost.

RANSOM

(grim)

Give me the word. I'll hang him myself.

EMIKO

Not yet. First, frame him. Then crush him. And raise the bounty, Mr. Wallace. Even Robin Hood gets betrayed when the purse is heavy enough.

GARRETT

(nervously)

Frame him for what?

EMIKO

Everything perceived wrong. Pin the border raids on him, the cattle rustling. We fake the witnesses. La Borde dies—no trial, no trace.

(she leans in, seductive and cold)

Dead men leave no tales. So, leave no trace no trail other than his own.

WALLACE

Krüger's already en route.

They exchange dark, silent nods. Emiko brushes Wallace's lapel as she stands—he flushes, caught off guard.

SCENE 44: INT. TELEGRAPH STATION – NIGHT

A paper feeds through the machine. The clerk tears it off and hurries to La Borde.

TELEGRAPH BOY

From London. Marked "C."

La Borde reads it.

CLOSE ON MESSAGE:

"Intercept confirms German U-boats moving toward Tampico port. PM authorized misinformation campaign. Launch Operation Red Herring. Use Caution, Huns are looking for you, you have traitors in your vicinity. W. Churchill."

LA BORDE

(chuckling softly)

So it begins.

He places the message beside the gold watch, sealing both in a cloth pouch. He looks at the inscription inside the watch cover, the coordinates etched into the gold. He takes off the small symbolic inscribed vault key on a silver braided chain and gently places it inside the watch cover and places the picture of him in full royal attire over the cover and tightly seals it snugly into the case cover. Zoom in on the photo- "Victor, Prince Napoleon, 3rd Prince of Montfort"

LA BORDE (CONT'D)

If I don't make it through this scuffle—this must get to Garcia on your word.

SCENE 45: INT. WHITE HOUSE – OVAL OFFICE – DAY – EARLY 1916

PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON (Ed Harris) stands behind the Resolute Desk, thumbing through a folder marked "Operation Border Sweep."

Aides linger along the walls, tense.

GENERAL JOHN J. PERSHING (Sam Elliott), crisp in uniform, stands at attention in front of the desk. A storm brews quietly outside the tall windows.

WILSON General Pershing, this is your new theatre. Mexico has spilled chaos into New Mexico.

He closes the folder and looks Pershing dead in the eye.

WILSON (CONT'D) Your objectives are threefold: One—punish Pancho Villa for the Columbus raid. Two—locate and recover a shipment of stolen German gold. Three—neutralize Fabriciano Garcia, the Ghost of Southern Texas. His actions border on treason.

PERSHING Permission to question that last directive, Mr. President.

WILSON He's a folk hero in the making. We cannot afford legends that inspire rebellion.

PERSHING Understood, sir.

WILSON Find him. End him. Before he becomes a symbol.

He signs a document and seals it with the Presidential stamp.

WILSON (CONT'D) You leave tonight. Your full command authority is enclosed.

Pershing takes the sealed order, salutes.

PERSHING I won't fail.

SCENE 46: EXT. ABANDONED SILVERMINE CORRAL – PRE-DAWN

Steam hisses. Cattle groan. Crates thud. The massive Engine 609 idles beside a makeshift loading platform, hidden in the shadow of an old, crumbling silvermine. Shrouded in early morning mist, the forgotten corral is surrounded by brush and skeletal fence posts.

MEN in dusty overcoats load cargo. Some wear cowboy hats. Some, old rebel uniforms.

FABRICIANO (Pedro Pascal) oversees the loading, eyes always scanning. He wears a poncho, but a Nickel plated pearl handled Schofield rides on his hip. CARLOS (Clifton Collins Jr.) adjusts a saddle cinch nearby.

FABRICIANO (low) Make sure the rear cars are loaded light. If we need to cut and run, I'm not dragging dead weight.

CARLOS (grinning) I would not have believed we could pull this off! Good thing you distracted those Rinches at the river. That's why you're the ghost, hermano. Unbelievable!

They nod. LA BORDE appears with a satchel. His eyes are heavier than usual, he looks tired and worried.

LA BORDE We roll at sunup. You know your stop. Once we split, you vanish. Give this to the Captain of the French ship. Understand?

He hands Fabriciano a cigar tin and smiles.

LA BORDE Thought you might enjoy these for your next journey.

FABRICIANO (gruff) Always.

He smiles broadly.

La Borde reaches around and pulls his shoulder strapped satchel around in front of him and then reaches inside the satchel, pulls out the gold watch. He hands it to Fabriciano.

LA BORDE If anything happens to me—this is your compass now. Everything you need is inside this watch. Give it to no one. It is your ticket to reclaim your life once the war is over, my friend.

FABRICIANO (surprised) You sure you want me to have this?

LA BORDE I've done my part. It's your story now—make it a great one!

They clasp forearms. Real respect. Then nod to each other.

SUDDENLY — gunfire echoes from the ridge.

SHOUTS. WHISTLES. BULLETS RIP INTO WOOD AND IRON.

Out of the mist, a ragtag column of MEXICAN SOLDIERS loyal to the seditionists charge the corral with rifles blazing. Dust and smoke erupt. Horses scream. Chaos.

FABRICIANO (to Carlos) Get the horses on board! NOW!

CARLOS vaults onto the flatbed ramp, guiding three horses into the livestock car.

FABRICIANO (CONT'D) (shouting to the crew and circling his arm over his head, the departure signal to the engineer watching him from the locomotive) FIRE IT UP! WE ROLL NOW!

Steam bellows. The locomotive rumbles. Train whistle sounds a shrill ear-piercing blast

Fabriciano draws his Schofield and drops two advancing gunmen in the dirt.

LA BORDE returns fire with a bolt-action rifle from behind a shattered water trough.

Suddenly, from the ridge—a SHOT rings out with sharp authority.

A mounted figure appears through the haze. Tall, menacing, cloaked in a black overcoat trimmed with red piping. On horseback, he wears the uniform of a Kaiserliche Oberst — Colonel of the Imperial German Intelligence Service. His helmet glints.

In his gloved hand: a long-barreled Broomhandle Mauser Luger.

He takes aim.

FABRICIANO (turns) La Borde—!

TOO LATE.

The Colonel fires.

A single, echoing shot hits La Borde square in the chest. He falls backward in the dust, the bolt-action rifle clattering from his hand.

CARLOS (loading last horse) Train's moving! Get your ass on board!

Fabriciano stares at La Borde's body, fury rising—then leaps, grabbing the ladder on the side of the moving train. He swings inside the freight car as bullets rip through crates.

The mounted German officer watches with cold detachment. Then slowly reins his horse back into the mist.

SCENE 47: EXT. OVERLOOK ABOVE THE MINE – CONTINUOUS

From a rocky bluff, ELI MARTÍNEZ (Luke Grimes), in a worn Ranger coat, watches through a spyglass.

Beside him, SILAS GRAVES (Michael Biehn) and a young, eager CAPTAIN GEORGE S. PATTON (Glen Powell) adjust their scopes. "Son of bitch Kraut shot the Frenchman."

PATTON (snarls) He shoots his Springfield, it ricochets off the rock by the German, who reins his horse and spins and rides away quickly. "Son of a bitch rides like thundering lightning bolt."

GRAVES (not taking his eyes off the train) Fabriciano is not the enemy. Wallace picked the wrong ghost to hunt.

ELI (flat) Now let's see if the lucky bastard makes it out alive. He's got three nations chasing him and the Rangers.

SCENE 48: EXT. FREIGHT TRAIN ARRIVAL – TAMPICO PORT – DAWN

The train screeches into the makeshift cattle dock. Longshoremen scatter. The sea mist hangs like a curtain, and tension crackles in the air.

FABRICIANO and CARLOS ride on the livestock car as it slows. Fabriciano leaps down, scanning the port. French-flagged freighters idle by the loading pier. One ship hoists a blue pennant—the signal.

SCENE 49: INT. DOCKSIDE WAREHOUSE – CONTINUOUS

Fabriciano hands a sealed satchel to a FRENCH Ship's CAPTAIN.

FABRICIANO This gets to Bordeaux. No detours. No questions.

The Captain nods solemnly and grasps the satchel. Then quickly walks up the gangplank, while his men pull it up and make ready for departure.

SCENE 50: EXT. TAMPICO PORT – LOADING ZONE – MOMENTS LATER

Cattle thunder into the hold of a secondary freighter. Crates of processed beef are loaded onto the ship beside it. Steam curls from the stacks. Dock workers shout in French and Spanish. A final whistle shrieks.

CARLOS (to Fabriciano) We actually pulled it off.

FABRICIANO (grim) Almost.

SCENE 51: EXT. SEA OUTSIDE THE PORT – MOMENTS LATER

Two ships churn toward open water. The lead vessel, carrying the satchel, hits the edge of the channel.

SUDDENLY—

A TORPEDO slices beneath the waves.

BOOM! Water erupts. The French freighter shudders violently but stays afloat.

From the mist, a DARK SHAPE surfaces—sleek, menacing. A GERMAN U-BOAT. Its conning tower gleams. The Imperial German naval flag whips defiantly behind it.

SCENE 52: INT. U-BOAT – CONNING TOWER

OBERST D. VOSS (Richard Dean) peers through binoculars. Cold. Surgical.

VOSS Fire again. Forward tubes—one through four. Flood and launch.

He lowers the glasses.

VOSS (CONT'D) Deck gun—keep firing. Sink that ship.

SCENE 53: EXT. TAMPICO SHORE – SAME

A wave of MEXICAN SOLDIERS on horseback ride in fast, firing wildly toward the docks. Bullets riddle barrels and tear through crates. Dockworkers scatter.

Fabriciano fires back from behind a stack of fish crates, covering Carlos as he unhitches the horses.

FABRICIANO We're not dying on this dock! ¡Vámonos, hermano!

They mount, galloping full-speed toward the far end of the harbor.

SCENE 54: EXT. HILLSIDE ABOVE THE PORT – MOMENTS LATER

FABRICIANO and CARLOS crest the ridge. They stop—turning to look back.

BOOM. TWO WHITE STREAKS slice through the water.

A split second later—the French ship ERUPTS, lifted from the sea in a geyser of fire and steel. It splits in two, breaking like a cracked bone.

The cattle freighter—riddled, smoking—survives the crossfire. It limps forward, heading for the open sea and the rising sun. Gradually gaining speed.

The U-boat begins to submerge again, disappearing into the deep like a phantom Kracken.

Carlos and Fabriciano watch, breathless. Fabriciano clenches his jaw.

FABRICIANO (quietly) We failed, hermano... damn it all.

SCENE 55: EXT. REMOTE COASTAL SHRINE – NIGHT

A crumbling stone chapel, half-swallowed by vines. Ocean waves crash below the cliffs. A small campfire flickers.

FABRICIANO sharpens his blade with slow, deliberate strokes. CARLOS tosses dried driftwood into the flames.

CARLOS We made it. Barely.

FABRICIANO But we didn't stop them. That ship—La Borde's satchel—gone.

CARLOS Maybe. Maybe not. That second freighter made it.

Fabriciano doesn't answer. He opens his palm—the gold watch. Stares at it. The firelight dances on the metal.

CARLOS (CONT'D) You thinking about quitting?

Fabriciano slowly stands, still staring at the watch.

FABRICIANO I watched my friend bleed out in the dirt of that corral. Took a bullet straight from a German officer wearing his imperial uniform and spiked helmet with pride like a crown. La Borde died believing we'd pulled it off.

CARLOS We did mostly...almost at least the cattle got away.

FABRICIANO Mostly doesn't bring him back. Doesn't fix the lies. Or sink that damn U-boat.

He closes the watch with a snap.

FABRICIANO (CONT'D) The gold's gone. His story's over now forever. Now it's just about making sure his enemies choke on every inch of what's left.

He slides the watch into his coat.

CARLOS What comes next?

FABRICIANO Retribution and my revenge, I will avenge him.

SCENE 56: INT. U-BOAT – COMMAND ROOM – SAME

OBERST D. VOSS stands at a plotting table, seawater dripping from his coat.

GERMAN LIEUTENANT we had to sink it mein herr, we had no other choice.

VOSS (quietly) Then we hunt any ship that furthers our cause...make our enemies suffer

He taps the map—Telegram Mexico City circled in red. Tell them mission completed. 'Sunk'

SCENE 57: INT. WALLACE'S PRIVATE OFFICE – SAME

WALLACE pours a drink. EMIKO leans against a wall, arms crossed, her dress is slightly askew and almost provocative.

WALLACE I thought the German would finish them both?

EMIKO He failed. So now we escalate. We make Garcia the villain. Dead or alive. Perhaps your ransom will land him in our noose.

She tosses a dossier on the desk—FABRICIANO's photo inside, labeled: "ENEMY OF the ORDER."

WALLACE Send the hound after the ghost next.

SCENE 58: EXT. BOX CANYON – DAY

Fabriciano thunders across the desert on horseback, heatwaves dancing off the rocks. The open land narrows into a rocky, unforgiving canyon—his only escape now a trap.

Behind him: RANGERS. CAVALRY. ARMY SCOUTS. Among them—CAPTAIN GEORGE S. PATTON (Glen Powell), commanding with ruthless energy, flanked by ELI MARTÍNEZ and twelve hardened TEXAS RANGERS.

SILAS GRAVES (Michael Biehn) brings up the rear—calm, cold, and watching like a hunter who no longer trusts the hunt.

PATTON (shouting) There! We've got him! He's trapped—spread out, men!

Fabriciano pulls hard on the reins. His horse pivots. He doesn't run.

He charges.

Bullets rip past. He leans low in the saddle, eyes burning. Dust kicks behind him like cannon smoke.

Patton lifts his Colt, aims—

Fabriciano raises his Schofield calmly, steady as iron.

He fires.

Patton's Colt EXPLODES out of his hand. The revolver spins through the air and lands in the dust.

FABRICIANO (shouting) Oops... I missed, El Capitán!

He barrels through their line, hooves pounding, cloak snapping like a battle flag. Soldiers dive. Rangers scatter.

Silas watches silently. He slings his rifle, makes eye contact with Fabriciano—

—and gives him the faintest nod.

Fabriciano vanishes over the canyon rim, his powerful dapple-gray horse scrambling into open country, accelerating with righteous fury.

SCENE 59: FLASHBACK – INT. WHITE HOUSE – OVAL OFFICE – NIGHT

PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON stands with GENERAL PERSHING, low light casting shadows across the desk.

WILSON We can't let a rogue like Garcia upend our diplomatic chessboard.

PERSHING He has support. From both sides. You sure?

WILSON Issue the order. Capture or kill. I want him erased. Send your best men.

SCENE 60: FLASHBACK – INT. RANSOM'S RANCH HOUSE – SAME NIGHT

SILAS GRAVES interrogates RANSOM'S WIFE. Her hands tremble. Finally, she breaks.

RANSOM'S WIFE It was all a lie. Wallace. The Judge. Even my husband. They needed Garcia gone... to steal the land. For the oil.

Silas rises slowly. Something shifts behind his eyes—rage, realization, regret.

SCENE 61: BACK TO PRESENT – EXT. BOX CANYON – CONTINUOUS

Patton clutches his hand, stunned, blood on his fingers.

SILAS (quietly, to himself) He's not the outlaw we thought he was.

Patton glares at the ridge where Fabriciano vanished.

PATTON (gritting his teeth) Next time... I won't miss.

Silas Graves "he didn't miss Captain, he hit his target, I'm sure of that."

SCENE 62: INT. WALLACE OIL BOARDROOM – NIGHT

Heavy rain streaks down the floor-to-ceiling windows. Lightning flares like artillery fire beyond the glass.

WALLACE stands at the head of a polished mahogany conference table. A war map of the Southwest, riddled with pins and blood-red twine, glows under a single overhead bulb.

EMIKO lounges by the fire, her legs crossed, a tumbler of something dark in hand. Her expression is feline, her tone always fatal.

Seated behind her in the shadows—RANSOM. Cane propped against his leg, fingers steepled, watching the storm outside. Calm. Controlled. Predatory.

Across from them, in silence, sits THE HOUND—wide-brimmed hat low, oilskin duster wet from the rain. Just a toothpick twitching between his teeth.

WALLACE Fabriciano Garcia humiliated the Rangers, the Army—and made a fool of Pershing.

EMIKO He's a myth now. And myths? They start revolutions.

WALLACE He blew up our deal with the Germans. He's out there somewhere... still breathing.

RANSOM (cool, measured) Worse—he's giving people ideas. Dignity. That's poison to what we're building.

EMIKO Then we cut out the infection. Brutally. Publicly.

WALLACE Find him. Finish him. And when you do— (leans forward) —leave nothing behind to worship.

The HOUND says nothing. Just tips his hat as thunder rumbles.

RANSOM (smooth, final) Gabriel... erase the bloodline. Make them history. All of them.

GABRIEL grins from the shadows—predator teeth gleaming in the firelight. He nods once, then vanishes into the storm.

SCENE 63: INT. MILITARY CAMPAIGN TENT – CHIHUAHUA, MEXICO – NIGHT – LATE 1916

A kerosene lamp swings gently in the desert wind, casting flickering shadows across a war map of Northern Mexico.

GENERAL PERSHING (Sam Elliott) sits at a rough campaign table, fatigued but focused.
CAPTAIN GEORGE S. PATTON (Glenn Powell) stands at attention, dirt still on his boots.

SILAS GRAVES, worn from travel, sets a sealed envelope on the table.

GRAVES That's the confirmation, sir. The Ranger Colonel's wife confessed. Her husband sold intelligence to Pancho Villa—brokered through the Japanese woman in Rio Rico. Probably working for Emperor Tojo.

Pershing opens the envelope, scans the confession.

PERSHING This... this changes everything.

PATTON Sir, Graves also confirmed Fabriciano had no knowledge of the gold shipment. In fact, he and the Frenchman—La Borde—were trying to intercept it to prevent the Mexican's from taking possession of it.

PERSHING And the Frenchman, this mysterious La Borde, with French aristocratic ancestry the intelligence chaps suspect?

GRAVES He is Dead. Ambushed by a German officer outside an old silver mine. Fabriciano buried him.

Pershing stands, crosses to a footlocker, opens it. Pulls out a telegraph pad. The huns are trying to kill all the bloodlines in Europe, last monarch standing gets it all...damn our guys got that right about the old Kaiser. He's a sonuvabitch.

Beat

PERSHING I'm drafting a field communication to President Wilson. Effective immediately, Fabriciano Garcia is to receive a full Presidential pardon. Hell tell him to pin a medal on the man he's a real patriot!

He turns to Patton.

PERSHING (CONT'D) You'll arrange air delivery of this order to Fort Ringold. Get it into Graves's hands before week's end. Damn airplanes got to have some use, they obviously can't stop a train from delivering it's cargo.

He leans back in his chair and puffs on a cigar.

Well don't just stand there George...get moving! Time is something we have little of. Send in my sergeant.

PATTON Yes, sir.

PERSHING Hold up Captain.

PERSHING Sergeant, we've been hunting a man who was cleaning up our mess. No more. Send a squad of your soldiers to arrest Colonel Ransom of the Texas Rangers, send that Corporal Rufus Allen he's a crack shot, the one from Kentucky, I think he can handle the Rangers if they get squirrely. Get to it, Sergeant.

The Sergeant salutes and Graves tips his hat. Pershing gives a curt nod.

Patton spins to Graves, "You are correct Detective, he missed on purpose, he is one helluva shot."

PATTON How will you make contact with the Ghost and live to tell of it?

GRAVES I have a mutual contact that can get him the message through one of his nefarious secret insiders, let's just say he and I are both religious men.

SCENE 64: INT. BUTCHER SHOP – BACK ROOM – NIGHT

Dim candlelight flickers on hanging hooks and cured meats. The room smells of brine, iron, and old fear.

PATRICIA enters quietly through the back alley, glancing behind her. She wears a hooded shawl, damp from rain.

GRETCHEN, the butcher's wife, waits near a butcher's block, wringing her hands.

PATRICIA (Paola Paulin) You said it was urgent.

GRETCHEN I shouldn't even be here. If he knew I talked to you—

PATRICIA (soft but firm) Then don't waste time. What did your husband do?

GRETCHEN He gave the big german colonel the information on La Borde, he knew he was my lover and he wanted him dead. He made a deal to... she cries and sobs.

PATRICIA Who?

GRETCHEN The German. The one who shot my Phillipe—La Borde. He was here. My husband told him where they'd gone I think he saw maps when he delivered our streudel. Sold the information for promise of reward. Said it was just business.

Patricia's face freezes. Her voice turns ice.

PATRICIA He betrayed a good man for his Kaiser, your husband is an accomplice to his murder.

GRETCHEN I didn't know until afterward. I swear it. But now Wallace is sending men again—to the ranch. To Los Gatos. They want blood, Patricia. Not justice. Blood.

Patricia steps closer, eyes hard.

PATRICIA Are you sure? (Gretchen Nods) Then we warn them. Now.

GRETCHEN They'll kill us all.

PATRICIA Then let's not make it easy for them. She hands Gretchen a small derringer pistol. "You have two shots make them count...point blank."

Patricia pulls her shawl tighter and vanishes into the night.

SCENE 65: INT. RANSOM ESTATE, Austin City- PARLOR – NIGHT

The room is quiet, the air thick with tension. A fireplace crackles. RANSOM stands, collar loosened, drink in hand. Across from him sits the Pinkerton on the President's personal security detail, SILAS GRAVES, calm, composed. Beside him, a MILITARY PROVOST GUARD stands alert and rigid. Small in stature but steely eyed corporal, Allen is emblazoned on his chest patch, part of the elite 8th Cavalry Unit. He is wearing a holster with a 1911 Colt automatic pistol and a new Springfield 1903 rifle is held upright with his left hand. His right hand is positioned ceremonially behind his back.

RANSOM This is a mistake.

GRAVES Then you'll have no issue signing this statement denying all involvement.

A soft footstep. RANSOM'S WIFE appears in the doorway, her eyes haunted.

WIFE He's lying, Detective Graves. He gave the order. It was him. The intel to Pancho Villa. The meeting in Rio Ricoh. All of it. I saw it and read it with my own eyes, and that slant eyed seductress of his took it and went to Rio Ricoh to meet with General Villa's representative.

Ransom whirls on her. His nostrils flaring and his forehead is taunt with strain. Eyes bulging with anger.

RANSOM You don't know what you're saying.

WIFE I know exactly what I'm saying. You betrayed your oath to our nation and this great state. All to lay with that Japanese whore of yours. She looks across the room at Emiko, who shows no emotion.

She tosses a folded telegram onto the table.

WIFE (CONT'D) It's all there. His messages to through the Japanese agent to all the others. The plans for the gold shipment, based on some German telegram, your troop movements, the army convoy, I collected them all without their knowledge, now whose the smarty pants in this family.

Silas picks it up, reads it, then nods at the provost.

GRAVES Take him.

The Corporal Allen cuffs Ransom. As he's dragged out—

WIFE (softly) He would've let them hang that boy.

SCENE 66: INT. ESTATE HALLWAY – CONTINUOUS

EMIKO watches from the shadows near the heavy drapes by a French door. She backs away as Ransom is led out of the study in custody. Two more army soldiers are sent to retrieve the Japanese aide. Their boots make thuds as they walk briskly back to the study.

SCENE 67: INT. RANSOM'S STUDY – MINUTES Before

Emiko rifles through a hidden compartment in the wall, extracting a dossier—the remaining evidence. She stuffs it in her coat. Then she slips to the concealed door way that leads to an old abandoned tunnel to the carriage house, a smugglers tunnel built by early settlers when the Indians were a the threat.

Army Soldier: “She’s gone...not here!”

Graves is furious and visibly angry with his leaving her alone in there.

SCENE 68: EXT. STABLES – NIGHT

Emiko mounts a tethered army horse and rides off into the darkness.

FADE TO:

SCENE 69: INT. WALLACE HACIENDA – PRIVATE STUDY – DAYS LATER

Wallace flips through the stolen documents—Emiko sits across, silent.

WALLACE For this... I'll buy you a ticket anywhere.

EMIKO I'll take New York.

WALLACE Done. Just make sure no one ever sees these. Now I think you owe me a bit of additional boot for this favor, follow me to my bedroom. A sinister smile creeps onto his face.

He locks the dossier in his strongbox.

She submissively follows him into his bedroom and he closes the door and you hear the bolt slide shut and lock engaged.

Muffled male voice faintly audible. “I’ve been waiting for this for quite sometime.”

SCENE 70: EXT. DESERT TRAIL – NIGHT

A full blood harvest moon rides high over a lonely stretch of desert road. The sound of hoofbeats echoes.

SILAS GRAVES rides hard, a leather satchel tied behind his saddle. Inside his lapel jacket pocket: the Presidential pardon letter, and the satchel has bundles of documents taken from Ransom's private study inside it—maps, telegrams, and land seizure orders implicating Wallace, Ransom, Emiko, and Judge Garrett.

He checks the ridge lines—paranoia growing. He has sent word for the ghost to meet him ahead tonight through his sources

Ahead, a lone RIDER waits. Still. Silent. The horse dark in the shadow of a large broken tree. The coat long and dust-streaked flows in the wind.

SILAS (grim) Don't make me draw...identify yourself Mr. Ghost.

The figure says nothing.

SILAS (CONT'D) I have what we need to bury them—the Satchel is...

The rifle fires. The muzzle flash blinds him for a millisecond. Then he feels the bullet bury deep into his chest.

Silas jerks in the saddle, slumps, and tumbles hard into the dirt.

GABRIEL rides down, dismounts, and kneels by Silas's body. He checks for his pulse. Nothing.

He takes the satchel and opens it. Flips through the documents. Smiles faintly.

Without a word, Gabriel mounts back up and rides into the night, the evidence secured. He steers his horse towards the Wallace ranch to deposit the evidence into safe keeping as promised and then he grins he will ride for Las Gatos.

Silas lies in his pool of his own blood. Fabriciano arrives too late. He dismounts and runs to the dead man. He sees he is gripping something in his pocket and pulls the envelope with the White House seal out and glimpses at the letter inside resding it in the moonlight, as he does his hands tremble then he shouts "Hallelujah" and puts the envelope in his pocket and rides towards Los Gatos ranch, excitement in his horses gait.

FADE TO:

SCENE 71: INT. TELEGRAPH STATION – BORDER OUTPOST – NIGHT

A lonely lamp swings in the wind inside a dusty border station near Rio Grande City. The telegraph machine clacks—a mechanical heartbeat.

ELI MARTÍNEZ stands at the counter, soaked from the ride. The TELEGRAPH OPERATOR hands him a slip.

INSERT – TELEGRAM (CODED):

“LOS GATOS RANCH CONFIRMED. RANGER GABRIEL DISPATCHED. OBJECTIVE:
ELIMINATION. ALL WITNESSES. Wallace/Garrett”

ELI

(intense, quiet)

Son of a bitch. Shit!

He folds the message, tucks it inside his coat, and strides to the door.

SCENE 72: EXT. BORDER STATION – MOMENTS LATER

Eli tightens the saddle straps, throws his bag over, and mounts up. He spurs his horse hard.

SCENE 73: EXT. RIO GRANDE VALLEY – STONE CHAPEL COURTYARD – NIGHT

Lightning crackles overhead as PATRICIA and MARIA wait under the arch, cloaked and tense.

Eli reins in. Dismounts fast.

ELI

Gabriel’s moving on Los Gatos. Tonight.

PATRICIA

Then he’s after Miss Victoria... and Manuela.

MARIA

And Casimiro. They’re all there. That’s all the resistance leaders in his sights.

ELI

Fabriciano, we must warn him. He is riding to his death...all of them will die.

PATRICIA

He's on the trail. Carlos rode ahead—but he doesn't know who's coming either.

Eli swings back into the saddle, jaw clenched.

ELI

Then I ride like hell. Gabriel's death on a horse. I have to get there before...

He charges into the night as thunder cracks. Nothing else needs to be said.

FADE TO BLACK.

SCENE 74: EXT. LOS GATOS RANCH – PRE-DAWN

A mist rolls across the high grass. The sky bruises with the first signs of light.

GABRIEL's convoy approaches—black cars, headlamps dim. Rain pelts the windshields.

SCENE 75: INT. GABRIEL'S CAR

A ranger sits beside him, unreadable.

GABRIEL Tonight ends the myth.

RANGER: Or begins it anew.

He glances at him, unsettled.

CUT TO:

FABRICIANO and CARLOS ride along the tree line, eyes sharp, rifles ready.

In the distance, the Los Gatos Ranch house sleeps quietly, unaware of the storm coming.

FABRICIANO Low and quiet. We get inside, wake 'em up, and brace for hell.

CARLOS You really think the Rangers killed the President's man?

FABRICIANO I think that inbred half-breed Apache bastard killed the Pinkerton... and if he did, he's riding for me and mine next.

They dismount in the shadows near the barn.

SCENE 76: INT. LOS GATOS RANCH HOUSE – MOMENTS LATER

MISS VICTORIA (Eiza Gonzalez) sets a kettle on the stove, yawning. MANUELA sweeps quietly in her robe. CASIMIRO checks the front gate through the window.

He pauses—something doesn't feel right. He cocks his head, studying the perimeter.

SCENE 77: EXT. LOS GATOS – FRONT RIDGE – CONTINUOUS

GABRIEL stands atop a high bluff, watching through a spyglass. He signals down the line.

Six GUNMEN ride out from the mesquite and begin flanking the ranch perimeter.

SCENE 78: INT. RANCH HOUSE – SAME TIME

CASIMIRO sees movement in the trees.

CASIMIRO (alarmed) Riders—flanking both sides!

Manuela drops her broom. Victoria grabs a rifle from above the fireplace.

Casimiro fastens his gunbelt and grabs a Winchester. Manuela snatches the double-barrel shotgun from the deer antlers, cracks it open, checks the shells, then snaps it shut. She ducks to the kitchen window. Victoria covers the rear door. Casimiro moves to the front, calm and coiled.

SCENE 79: EXT. BARN – SAME TIME

FABRICIANO and CARLOS spring into action. Fabriciano loads a fresh round, eyes scanning the ridge.

FABRICIANO That's him over there. Gabriel's here. I knew it.

CARLOS Then we stand our ground brother.

FABRICIANO No, we hunt them like wolves in the fog.

He slaps Carlos on the shoulder. Dos Vaqueros!

FABRICIANO (CONT'D) Let's bleed 'em before they reach the porch.

They vanish into the fog just as the first gunshot cracks.

FADE TO BLACK.

SCENE 80: EXT. LOS GATOS RANCH – DAWN

Gunfire ERUPTS from the ridge.

Fabriciano and Carlos dive behind the stone corral. Bullets rip through the morning mist.

A GUNMAN drops hard—dead before he hits the dirt. Fabriciano’s shot is clean and fast.

SCENE 81: INT. RANCH HOUSE – SAME TIME

Victoria fires from the rear window, dropping a gunman trying to flank the barn. Casimiro and Manuela trade shots through the parlor glass.

SCENE 82: EXT. LOS GATOS – PERIMETER

Gabriel moves like a phantom, silent and surgical, flanking with two shooters. He raises his custom rifle.

GABRIEL (to his men) Storm the hacienda. Kill them all. I want the Ghost.

SCENE 83: EXT. BARN – SAME TIME

Carlos ducks behind a hay cart, firing tight bursts. Fabriciano grabs a shovel, scoops a burning ember from the blacksmith’s forge, and hurls it into a dry haystack beside the corral.

The blaze ROARS to life—smoke blinds the advancing shooters.

FABRICIANO Now!

Under cover of smoke, Fabriciano and Carlos charge. Fabriciano drops two more riders, shooting from the hip.

SCENE 84: INT. RANCH HOUSE – MOMENTS LATER

A GUNMAN crashes through the rear door—Manuela jolts back, stunned—then BLASTS him point-blank. His body slams into the wall and crumples.

Casimiro empties his Winchester through a gun slot, shredding three men charging the porch. Their bodies spin and drop.

Casimiro opens the front door, scanning both sides. A rifle CRACKS.

Gabriel fires from a ridge. The shot tears into Casimiro's chest. He spins and crashes into the doorframe.

Victoria gasps. Manuela screams, rushing to her father.

She drops to her knees, cradling his head in her lap, brushing back his hair.

MANUELA Papá... please...

Blood gurgles from his mouth. He's gone.

SCENE 85: EXT. FIELD BEHIND THE RANCH

Eli Martínez rides hard from the south, rifle drawn. He fires from horseback, killing a gunman acting as rear scout. As he rides by he notices the man looks unfamiliar.

ELI Great more hired thugs, he's not one of ours at least!

ELI (shouting) Hold your Fire!

SCENE 86: EXT. LOS GATOS – GABRIEL'S POSITION

Gabriel watches the smoke-choked field, calm and calculating. He sees Eli racing in but ignores his shouts.

GABRIEL (to himself) Time to finish this.

He moves in—alone.

SCENE 87: EXT. RANCH COURTYARD – CONTINUOUS

Fabriciano steps from the shadows, rifle in one hand, his pearl handled revolver holstered. Smoke curls around him.

From the mist—Gabriel emerges.

They lock eyes.

FABRICIANO This ends now.

GABRIEL Been waiting for it, runt.

Gabriel throws his rifle down and places his hand by his holstered revolver, his ranger badge glints in the dawn sunlight.

GABRIEL You're no savior. Just a shadow. I am here to send you to hell ghost.

FABRICIANO Funny. Shadows live longer than stiff corpses buried in a coffin never to see the sun again.

They draw. GUNSHOTS. A brutal duel in the rain.

They both draw in a blur.

Two shots split the silence. Pan to the nickel-plated Schofield, smoking from the barrel. Fabriciano stands erect and slightly bent but unscathed.

A cough and the sound of a body thudding falling into the dirt. Pan to Gabriel sprawled dead in the dirt, pistol in hand extended outwards from his body. A pool of blood underneath him making the dirt wet.

FABRICIANO leans against a the well box, breathing hard. ELÍ rushes to him.

ELÍ You alright?

FABRICIANO Yea, at least better than him. Found the Pinkerton too. On the road. Gabriel probably.

ELÍ Then it's over. For now.

FABRICIANO Not for me.

ELÍ You need to lay low. Go south—your parents' old shack. I'll clean this up.

FABRICIANO What about Maria? Tell her the Pinkerton gave me something very newsworthy!

ELÍ I'll tell her. And Father Bernard. You wait for word.

They clasp forearms, locking eyes.

TOGETHER One for all, and all for one. We ride forever as brothers.

ELÍ mounts and disappears into the shadows.

FABRICIANO turns, limping toward the house.

CUT TO:

SCENE 88: INT. LOS GATOS RANCH HOUSE – MANUELA’S ROOM – MOMENTS LATER

MANUELA sits on the bed, clutching her father’s photo.

FABRICIANO enters gently, removes his hat.

FABRICIANO I wanted to say goodbye. And... I’m sorry. For your father.

MANUELA You tried to save us. He knew what he was doing.

FABRICIANO You’re strong. Like him. Stay with your mother and Miss Victoria. I’ll be in touch.

She nods, fighting tears. He kisses her forehead. Then she rubs her stomach.

MANUELLA Don’t be longer than eight months or you’ll miss the birth of our child my love. She blows him a kiss.

FABRICIANO (CONT’D) Nothing could keep me from being home with you for that glorious day!

He exits into the night. Galloping away on his majestic powerful dapple gray horse, Carlos falls in beside him on his own horse.

CARLOS Where to now Hermano?

Fabriciano You head home to that coastal beauty of yours and take good care of her, I have business with Senor Wallace. I finally know how Robin Hood would get even with him, they can’t steal land without titles, so I’m going to destroy all records of those stolen deeds, I’ll burn down the courthouse and then Wallace’s hacienda as well. Viva My People!

CARLOS But the wars over Fabriciano!

FABRICIANO Not for me brother...I still have to avenge my friend.

FADE TO BLACK.

SCENE 89: MONTAGE – ARMISTICE DAY – NOVEMBER 11, 1918 (Newspaper Headlines)

SCENE 90: EXT. NEW YORK CITY – STREETS – DAY CONFETTI RAINS FROM ROOFTOPS. CROWDS CHEER, EMBRACE. NEWSBOYS WAVE PAPERS

NEWSBOY Armistice signed! Germany surrenders!

SCENE 91: INT. PARIS – PLACE DE LA CONCORDE – DAY FRENCH SOLDIERS TOSS HELMETS IN THE AIR. A CHILD WAVES AN AMERICAN FLAG. CHURCH BELLS RING.

SCENE 92: EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. – FRONT OF THE WHITE HOUSE – DAY WILSON WAVES FROM THE BALCONY AS A BRASS BAND PLAYS. FLAGS EVERYWHERE.

SCENE 93: INT. VICTORIA'S CHAPEL – TEXAS – DAY VICTORIA AND MANUELA KNEEL BESIDE A CANDLELIT ALTAR. A PHOTO OF CASIMIRO RESTS AT ITS CENTER.

SCENE 94: INT. RAILWAY STATION – NIGHT EMIKO, IN A NEW COAT, BOARDS A TRAIN IN NEW YORK. SHE LOOKS BACK ONCE, VANISHING INTO THE CROWD.

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE 95: INT. WALLACE HACIENDA – LIBRARY – NIGHT – NOVEMBER 11, 1918

The radio hums faintly in the corner. News of the Armistice crackles through the air.

WALLACE leans over a large globe, spinning it slowly. Across from him, JUDGE GARRETT sips from a tumbler of scotch, eyes hard.

WALLACE Ferguson's impeachment came quicker than I expected. I'd wager Wilson had a hand in it.

GARRETT The new Governor's clean. That muddies things.

WALLACE Then we wait. Let the flags wave and the brass bands play. But we prepare.

He opens a drawer and slides out a German passport and a set of ship papers.

WALLACE (CONT'D) Argentina is open to investment... and allies.

GARRETT (shakes head) Overstuffed shirts with too much pride and not enough fight.

WALLACE The Germans lost the war, but not their ambition. Same as us.

GARRETT And what of the Ghost?

WALLACE If he's smart, he'll vanish. If not... we finish what the war started.

They clink glasses.

Wallace sets his drink down. There's a quiet CLICK beneath the desk.

A faint sound—just enough to draw Garrett's eye.

Wallace slowly raises a small pistol, leveled across the desk.

GARRETT Wallace—

BANG.

Garrett's eyes go wide. He stumbles backward, drops the glass. It shatters. He slumps in the chair, blood soaking through his shirt.

GARRETT (strained) Why?

WALLACE (smoothly) I'm not leaving my fortune behind unless I have to. With Ransom hung... and you dead... I might just stay right here.

Wallace rises, circles the desk, and kneels beside the dying man. His voice low, deadly calm.

WALLACE (CONT'D) After all—everyone knows dead men don't testify.

Garrett gurgles one last breath. The room falls silent but for the scratchy radio broadcast echoing victory.

SCENE 96: EXT. GERMAN RANCH – NEW BRAUNFELS – SUNSET

A sprawling estate, eerily quiet post-war. A few remaining men load crates onto wagons.

KRUEGER, decorated in Imperial German uniform, stands with a map, calculating his escape.

KRUEGER Argentina. I'll be rich and anonymous.

A twig snaps.

FABRICIANO (O.S.) Only thing you'll be is dead.

KRUEGER spins, draws, FIRES.

Fabriciano dodges behind a pillar, returns fire. A deadly cat-and-mouse across wine barrels, ornate fencing, and crates of gold.

KRUEGER You can't stop history!

FABRICIANO I'm not stopping history, just stopping you. I'm rewriting yours.

A final flanking move—Fabriciano catches Krueger from behind and empties his revolver into him. Krueger sputters, choking.

KRUEGER Versailles... killed... us all...Kaiser failed us!

FABRICIANO So did you.

He shoots once more. Silence.

CUT TO:

SCENE 97: EXT. COUNTY COURTHOUSE – NIGHT

Fabriciano rides hard. Town is quiet. He sets a timed fuse into the basement window. Douses the front steps in kerosene.

SCENE 98: INT. COURTHOUSE – CONTINUOUS

Flames flicker across deeds, titles, and stolen property ledgers.

SCENE 99: EXT. COURTHOUSE – CONTINUOUS

BOOM. Fire erupts through the roof. Flames consume the corrupt records.

CUT TO:

SCENE 100: EXT. WALLACE HACIENDA – Later that NIGHT

Fabriciano approaches the main house carefully. The servants are gone. He dismounts, draws his revolver, and enters.

SCENE 101: INT. WALLACE HACIENDA – STUDY – NIGHT

Fabriciano searches the room with purpose—drawers, shelves, and finally the fireplace mantle. He pries open a concealed panel in the floor under Wallace’s desk.

The strong box is there. Small by most standards, just large enough for legal

files, like deeds, and other important legal papers. He shoots the lock and opens it. Just as he suspected, there are all the papers and deeds.

Fabriciano “the blood trail ends here tonight.” He shuts the box and hoists it on his left shoulder and carries it out to his horse and straps it on behind his saddle, he treats it like a pirate’s treasure. Mounts and trots off. From a small wooden board cabin on the perimeter, an old black man, a house servant watches as he rides away.

FABRICIANO Robert Louis Stevenson would be proud of my discovery! He chuckles as he spurs his horse on faster.

FABRICIANO (coldly) Now the Bastard will pay! Can’t own what you can’t prove...

He scans the room one last time, eyes falling on a portrait—it’s a painting of a seductive Miss Victoria de Leon. He shrugs and holsters his revolver and runs out and mounts his horse.

SCENE 102: INT. WALLACE HACIENDA – FOYER – NIGHT

Fabriciano lights a torch, then pulls a fuse cord from his saddlebag.

He hurls the torch onto a trail of kerosene leading up the front porch and into the front parlor, then the drapes begin to ignite. The house is quickly engulfed in flames.

SCENE 103: EXT. WALLACE HACIENDA – CONTINUOUS

The fire surges. Windows burst. The estate lights up behind him.

FABRICIANO (to himself) One more strike for the ledger.

He rides off, silhouette against the inferno.

FADE TO BLACK.

SCENE 104: EXT. WALLACE RANCH – VERANDA – NIGHT – NEW YEAR’S EVE, 1918

The porch of the a cabin at the once grand Wallace Ranch, Wallace sits in eerie stillness, rocking gently in his chair and his mind racing in thoughts. A faint glow flickers on the distant horizon—the smoldered remains of Wallace’s private library and study, and the burnt out frame of his once magnificent hacienda stood with a dark silhouette against the night horizon, debris still evident from the fire set by Fabriciano García, a few weeks earlier.

The wind rattles a loose shutter. In the distance, fire crackles from the smoldering embers of the cabins own fireplace...his mind drifts with subtle crackling and popping of the wood in the hearth.

WALLACE (Neal McDonough), still dressed in a tailored vest and starched shirt, sits in a white rocking chair, glass of whiskey in hand. He stares into the night, unmoved. In his other hand he holds a fine cigar with a perfect ash.

JONAH, an aging Black house servant, steps onto the porch with a silver tray. On it: a fresh decanter of Kentucky bourbon and another glass of ice.

JONAH

Sir... the men have been clearing the debris for weeks. Still no strongbox.

They say they can rebuild by spring.

Wallace doesn't turn his head.

WALLACE

Let them. That strong box is my most precious possession, I must find it.

Tell them to use more stone this time.

Fire's a romantic thing... but it's got no memory.

Jonah hesitates, watching him.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

That'll be all, Jonah.

Jonah bows and retreats into the house.

Wallace rocks gently in the chair. Sips. Watches the distant moon glow. Another pop of something being ignited in the fireplace—cheerful, out of place.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

To the Ghost.

He lifts his glass in a slow, mocking toast.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

Burned my courthouse. My maps. My deeds. My house.

But you don't kill a name like mine with mere fire.

A burnt piece of parchment fragment drifts onto the porch, carried by the wind. Wallace watches it land at his feet like a fallen leaf. It crumbles and is gone with a gust of wind.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

No one will remember you, Fabriciano García.

I'll see to that.

He leans forward, voice low, deliberate.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

They'll call you a bandit. A liar. A seditionist and maybe even a traitor. But never a hero!

A seducer of women and ideas. You're little family will be paupers when I'm done with them and your newspaper journalist turned revolutionary...well she will not live to write many more stories.

A bitter chuckle escapes.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

They'll forget you by spring once she is gone.

And me... my name will be carved in ledgers, written into history books as one of the great families of Texas.

Inscribed on banks. In stone. Hell I might even run for... naw too much work.

His eyes drift out over the dark plains beyond the ranch.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

Your heroic antics were for naught. I hedged my bets.

If Germany won—I was paid.

If Mexico took Texas—I had titles.

If the U.S. held—hell, I owned the governor and most of the state.

He rises slowly, walks to the edge of the porch.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

You stole from me—my gold, tried to soil my name, attempted to thwart my future.

A moment of silence. Then:

But I'll rebuild. All of it.

Bigger. Brighter. Better.

And I'll bury every trace of you beneath the sands of time.

He tosses the remaining whiskey into the dirt.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

The world remembers the man who writes the news and owns the newspapers, not the likes of you.

Not the one who bled for it. You'll be forgotten

He turns. Steps back into the small cabin.

The screen door creaks shut behind him as the wind blows another burnt parchment onto the porch. Then the wind gusts and the parchment floats into the breeze.

It drifts upward... spiraling into the dark Texas night.

Fade to:

SCENE 105: INT. WEINSTEIN WINE SHOP – BACK ROOM – NIGHT

WALLACE hands a thick envelope of cash to the LOCAL WINE MERCHANT. A short frumpy man in dark clothes with an orthodox beard and wearing his yarmulka for evening prayers before their holy day.

WALLACE You'll ensure this batch is delivered to the mission. No questions.

MERCHANT What is it?

WALLACE Ten thousand reasons not to ask.

He places a vial beside the wine crates. The merchant nods nervously. Add a drop of this into each bottle before you deliver it to the Priests. You understand? If you betray me, you

will not live to spend your shekels of coins. How poetic that you sold out Christ for a few shekels and now you sell out the ghost for a few thousand more.

CUT TO:

SCENE 106: EXT. MISSION COURTYARD – DUSK

The YOUNG PADRE rides through the gate. A CISTERCIAN BROTHER greets him and accepts the bottle and communion.

CUT TO:

SCENE 107: EXT. MOUNTAIN CABIN – DUSK

A small, weathered shack sits beneath towering pines. Fabriciano, worn and tired from the trail, sits wrapped in a poncho by the fire.

Footsteps.

He turns. MARIA approaches quietly, her eyes rimmed red.

MARIA You look like hell.

FABRICIANO I've felt worse. Maybe.

She kneels beside him, takes his hand.

MARIA I found you first. That counts for something.

FABRICIANO Always did. I've felt our special bond since that first day at the mission. My heart fluttered when you looked at me.

A long beat.

MARIA I'm carrying your child.

He looks at her, stunned. Then—joy.

FABRICIANO You're sure?

MARIA Clear as a desert sunrise.

He rests his forehead to hers.

FABRICIANO Tell them... if I don't make it... tell them their father rode for something that mattered.

FABRICIANO chuckles...I doubt in Dumas's story that one of the Musketeers ever got another one pregnant. They both shared a hearty laugh. She hugged him close and kissed him on his forehead.

MARIA I will keep you alive my love no matter what becomes of you and I. And if you do make it—you're going to see their faces. And ride beside them someday in the great trail in the sky.

They kiss. Soft. Final. She squeezes his hand.

She lays a blanket across his chest, brushes his cheek.

MARIA (CONT'D) Rest now, I'll be back after I gather some wood for your fire and make you a decent pot of coffee...you never could make it right.

She steps out into the dark, the wind blows her clothes and she casts a silhouette with the moonlight.

SCENE 108: INT. FABRICIANO'S HIDEOUT – NIGHT

The YOUNG PADRE offers wine and wafers to FABRICIANO, who lies beside a fire keeping warm from the cold damp night air.

PADRE Maria said you'd want to speak.

FABRICIANO Before I take the sacrament... you should hear my confession.

The Padre kneels.

FABRICIANO (CONT'D) I loved two women. And now I know... I have children with both.

PADRE (disturbed) You regret it?

FABRICIANO Only that I never told them I loved them both so much I could not abandon either of them. Or stayed long enough to choose my soulmate.

PADRE (quietly) God forgives. Even if history does not.

He raises the wafer. The ritual begins. They each make the sign of the cross and Fabriciano sips the wine and the Padre places the wafer on his tongue.

Cut to;

SCENE 109: Cistercian Mission- South Texas

The CISTERCIAN BROTHERS cough violently. One collapses. The bottle of wine stands half-empty on a nearby table. Bodies are strewn through-out the mission sprawled like a mass murder carnage scene. Eerie and surreal stillness descends as candles still burn in the

sconces. And the prayer candles all flicker by the side altar as well, as if the Holy Ghost himself has just passed through the mission and stirred the dead souls of the now deceased saints.

FADE TO:

SCENE 110: EXT. HILLSIDE GRAVE – DAWN

Freshly turned earth. Many men are carrying bodies and dumping them into a mass grave. A simple wooden cross. Its dove into the moist pile of dirt at the head of the large hole. You can see the wrapped bodies piled ten high in the grave. Grieving widows stand about twenty feet back crying and sobbing.

MARIA sits astride the majestic gray dapple horse of Fabriciano's. She is wearing his death scarf, his hat, his gunbelt and pearl handled Schofield pistol, and is sitting in his Spanish saddle that belonged to Don De Leon back before all this commenced. After the crowds depart she rides down and dismounts.

beat

She kneels, places a rose at the base of the cross, and kisses her fingers and touches the cross then the fresh dirt. Tears stream down her face. "I will never let them forget you Mi Amour, farewell Fabriciano. Until we meet in the next lifetime."

MARIA You'll never be forgotten. I'll make sure of it.

She touches her stomach.

MARIA (CONT'D) They'll know your name. And when they're ready, they'll carry the Ghost forward.

She rises, turns and mounts his horse.

MARIA (CONT'D) Let them come. We ride for justice. We ride for him!

The wind stirs her black shawl like wings.

SCENE 111: EXT. BORDERLAND RIDGE – SUNSET

Maria sits tall atop Fabriciano's majestic gray horse, dressed in his scarf, poncho, and hat. She watches over the land below.

The wind howls softly. The sun burns red over the hills.

MARIA (V.O.)

Justice doesn't rest. It rides. It waits.

And when they least expect it — it returns.

She disappears into the dusk, a ghost reborn.

FADE OUT.

ACT THREE

ACT THREE

SCENE 112: EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS – TEXAS – DAY

A memorial ceremony concludes on the quad. BETO and PROFESSOR MENDOZA walk quietly beneath the trees. YOLANDA trails them, snapping thoughtful photographs, documenting everything.

BETO

Hard to believe the Medal ceremony's tomorrow.

MENDOZA

Long overdue. But ghosts have patience. It's amazing my great-grandfather goes from Texas' most wanted man with a \$5,000 reward in 1916 to a recognized American hero winning the Medal of Freedom today. Ironic justice, I guess.

They stop by a bench. Mendoza opens an old folder—photos of EMIKO TAKAHASHI, aliases and dates across continents. Yolanda leans in.

MENDOZA (CONT'D)

Emiko was flame and shadow. She worked all sides to her own end. Slipped into NYC in 1920, ended up working in the Rockefeller household—shown here in this 1922 gala photo. By '39, she's serving drinks to Henry Stimson and FDR in DC. Two years later, she's back in Tokyo, then disappears before Hiroshima. MI6 thought she was dead... until she popped up in 1950, dressed as a nurse at Buckingham Palace. Then I traced a record of her having a child born in Switzerland with no father's name associated with it. She was definitely adept at manipulating powerful men, every description of her visually shows a beautiful intoxicating woman. A true sleeping cell seductress, as the Russians would say—a Red Sparrow Succubus.

YOLANDA

So she survived all that, only to vanish again.

BETO

You think she stayed loyal to Japan? Maybe she helped them prepare for Pearl Harbor?

MENDOZA

I think she stayed loyal to a dream. The Rising Sun. The man she loved. Probably all of the above.

A beat.

MENDOZA (CONT'D)

You know what haunts me? That strongbox. We have Fabriciano's journal... but never found the box.

BETO pulls the journal from his satchel, flips through the worn pages.

BETO

He wrote something twice. Almost word-for-word.

(reads)

"A squirrel buries its winter stash. A lion, its claws tear its' enemy to shreds, it's roar haunts the night and reminds everyone who is King of the Jungle—Lion's pounce where enemies least expect. Surprise is part of their hunt."

MENDOZA

It's not metaphor. It's his trail marker. He's your ancestor Beto put yourself in his shoes and think.

BETO

It's a map. I just need to decode it.

SMASH CUT TO:

SCENE 113: INT. ABANDONED CABIN – LATE AFTERNOON

Sunlight cuts in through shattered slats and broken window glass. The dust in the air glows like ghosts caught mid-flight.

BETO, YOLANDA, and MENDOZA step inside slowly. Beto lingers near the fireplace. Yolanda captures the room with her camera. Mendoza adjusts his glasses, surveying the decay.

BETO

This was his last hiding place.

YOLANDA

It's like it hasn't breathed since he died.

They explore. Mendoza brushes ash off a burned book. Beto steps near the rusted bedframe—

CREAK. THUNK.

A loose floorboard lifts under his boot.

BETO

Wait...

He kneels. Pulls it up. Dust pours out. He shines a light—metal glints below.

BETO (CONT'D)

No way...

He lifts out a fireproof box—soot-stained but sealed. The Kaiser's insignia still faintly visible.

MENDOZA

Dios mío...

YOLANDA

That's not just history. That's a weapon.

They gather close. Beto opens the box.

Inside:

- Forged land transfers
- A pact between Wallace and the German Empire
- Ranger payroll receipts
- Telegrams showing leaked U.S. troop movements

MENDOZA

This isn't a relic. It's a confession.

YOLANDA

Enough to erase a dynasty.

Beto closes the lid.

BETO

They buried him with the truth. But not deep enough.

FADE TO:

SCENE 114: INT. WALLACE FAMILY COMPOUND – NIGHT

The drawing room is in chaos. Assistants and aides frantically shred documents, unplug hard drives, toss phones into burn bins. A flat-screen TV blares.

Screens glow with red arrows. Markets free-fall.

HENRY WALLACE II (Josh Brolin), glacial and unmoved.

HANK "JUNIOR" WALLACE (Jon Hamm), drinking, fuming.

TREY "TRES" WALLACE (Evan Peters), scanning feeds—pauses.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

...the Wallace family has officially been sanctioned under the 1916 Sedition and Treason Act. All U.S. holdings are frozen pending federal seizure...

Wallace stands motionless, watching his empire burn in real time.

WALLACE

No... No, this isn't possible.

A distraught matriarch breaks down in the corner. Another family member punches a wall. Trey, 30s, the digital nomad grandson, enters—cool-headed, hoodie up, tablet in hand.

TREY

Okay, okay—breathe. It's bad, yeah. But not total Armageddon.

Everyone looks at him like he's insane.

TREY (CONT'D)

They can freeze U.S. banks, but they can't touch our holdings in the Dominican and Manila. And Argentina? Still clean and safe, plus my crypto is not visible or regulated by them, so we have quite the war chest still unofficially...he winks.

Wallace turns, ice in his veins.

WALLACE

You're sure?

TREY

Great-Grandpa bought that ranch and winery in 1914 for this exact scenario. Foresight, right? And all that crypto you mocked? It's decentralized, baby. We've still got options.

He pulls open his digital wallet and shows his dad... pan to the screen \$119,000,000.00 displays.

A beat. Wallace slowly pours himself a drink. His hand trembles.

WALLACE

If that's real son...then we rebuild... from exile, if we must.

A long silence. Then—

TREY

You know this Beto—white knight of the Tejanos today—shares a similar weakness his great-grandfather had?

HANK JR.

What's that, Trey?

TREY (enlarges image of YOLANDA on screen)

Her.

YOLANDA—mid-speech in a protest video, eyes blazing.

TREY (CONT'D)

It's always their women. They get in close. They inspire them. They make them reckless. She's our leverage.

HENRY II finally turns.

HENRY II

Then make her bleed.

TREY

Not yet. Let her think she's winning. Then we remind the Ghost why his story never had a happy ending.

Junior WALLACE (CONT'D)

Should I call my guy at the Cartel? About his Yolanda?

The air goes cold. Even the aides stop moving.

WALLACE (CONT'D)

They could use a pretty face like hers. She's made enough trouble here, let them profit from her!

Trey stares at him—equal parts disgusted and intrigued.

TREY

You're serious.

Wallace downs his drink in one go.

WALLACE

The Ghost and that girl just tore down a dynasty. This is war now

SCENE 115: INT. CARMELA'S FLAT – MEXICO CITY – NIGHT

CARMELA SÁNCHEZ (Renata Notni), late 30s, fierce and composed, opens her laptop.

SUBJECT: THE GHOST RIDES AGAIN

BODY:

"Meet the other half of your family. —Beto"

She opens attachments:

- Restitution fund data
- Oil dividends
- VivaTX crypto wallet

She leans back, eyes burning.

CARMELA

Looks like Robin Hood just went blockchain.

SCENE 116: EXT. NATIONAL MALL – DAY

A statue draped in cloth. The crowd roars.

POTUS (Dennis Quaid)

Today we honor Fabriciano Garcia, whose courage saved a nation from betrayal within. Let this Medal of Freedom be proof: Truth always rises.

BETO and CARMELA unveil the bronze statue: THE GHOST—on horseback, scarf whipping in the wind, journal in hand.

YOLANDA photographs it. Emotional.

CARMELA (to Beto)

We're just getting started.

BETO

Let's make sure this time, the truth doesn't get buried.

SCENE 117: EXT. PRIVATE AIRSTRIP – NIGHT

The Wallace jet revs. Inside, HENRY II sips brandy.

He studies a deed: "RIO NEGRO ESTANCIA – ARGENTINA – 1919."

HENRY II

Empires don't die. They migrate.

The jet vanishes into the dark.

FADE TO BLACK:

TITLE CARD: THE GHOST RIDES AGAIN

TO BE CONTINUED...