

FADE IN:

EXT. TEXAS DESERT - DAY

Five TEXAS RANGERS atop charging steeds cut through the undulating heat of the Texas desert. Driving their mounts hard, their HOOFBEATS sound like thunder on the hard packed earth.

SUPERIMPOSE: TEXAS, 1869

The men race towards a rising canyon. This is Bryant's Gap.

EXT. BRYANT'S GAP - DAY

Somewhat shielded by the sun, the Rangers are given respite from the sweltering heat as the walls of the canyon grow taller thus providing shade the deeper in they venture.

The lead Ranger holds up a fist and pulls back on the reins, stopping his horse. The others do the same. He turns to his men. He is JACOB REID, 58, face burnished by the sun with eyes the color of baked clay and just enough wrinkles around the eyes to denote a life of pursuit in the hostile environment of the American west.

JACOB

I don't like it boys. They could be setting' in ambush just waitin' for us to stroll right into their cross hairs.

BOB DONNER, 37, a man whose sharp blue eyes and fiery red beard boldly announces his Irish heritage, adjusts his hat and shifts uneasily in the saddle as he brings his rifle to the ready.

BOB

Maybe we should find another way in and cut 'em off.

Another Ranger, DAN REID, first born son of Jacob, 29, sitting tall in the saddle, hazel eyes scanning the canyon for any movement, tanned brow furrowed in concentration, slides his pistol from its holster.

DAN

He's right dad. There's just too many nooks and crannies for the bastards to hide in.

His father shakes his head.

JACOB

That would cost us time, and we don't have much of it. They're headin' for the Mexican border, which we can't cross. I don't like it son, but we have to follow.

The youngest of the Rangers, JOHN REID, Dan's little brother and Jacob's youngest son, 23, rides to his father's side. Boyish good looks are shadowed by the brim of his white Stetson hat but his brown eyes sparkle with an intelligence beyond their years.

JOHN

Dad, you realize where we are? We're in Bryant's Gap. The canyon narrows ahead. If Collins has any brains at all, he'll put sharpshooters up high in the canyon walls. They'll be able to pick us off easily enough from the high ground. I think we should take Bob up on his suggestion.

Jacob wrinkles his brow in thought.

JACOB

The narrowin' of the canyon will slow 'em down, so we'll be able to catch up to 'em quickly enough. Just keep yer eyes open and listen to the sounds around ya.

GUNFIRE erupts suddenly and TOM CAIDEN, 33, the fifth Ranger, takes two bullets to the chest. He is thrown from his horse in a spray of blood.

JACOB

Tom!

The horses flinch as bullets smash into the ground around them. Bob slides from his saddle and runs to the safety of an outcropping. He shoots blindly into the canyon.

John's horse is hit and he goes down with it. Dan sees this and he rushes to his brothers side and dismounts.

DAN

You alright little brother?

JOHN

Yeah. A little shaken though but...

Jacob is hit by several rounds. His horse tears off into the canyon, dumping his body as it escapes the carnage.

DAN

Dad!

JOHN

No!

Dan and John, firing wildly at the canyon walls, run to their bullet riddled father. Bob does his best to cover them. He grits his teeth as he ejects a shell from the lever action rifle he is using, spins away from the outcropping for just a moment and fires.

His aim is terrible and he hits no one.

BOB

For God's sake boys, find some cover!

He ejects another shell as bullets hit around him.

As he takes aim, his head explodes in a mass of gore as hot lead finds its mark.

The two brothers fall at their father's side, the desert floor beneath him stained crimson red.

DAN

You son of a bitches!

He aims and shoots, until his pistol is empty. He draws another as John stands defiant and fires at no one or anything in particular.

A moment passes and the brothers have expended all of their rounds.

Reverberating through the canyon, the VOICES of MEN CALLING OUT in victory reaches John and Dan, which enrages them further.

JOHN

Cowards!

Dan reaches for his father's weapon and it is shot out of his hand. He grabs his wrist and CRIES out in pain. Then his body jerks as a bullet strikes him in the chest.

John drops to his knees and puts a hand on his brother's chest, in a vain attempt at stopping the bleeding.

LAUGHTER replaces the gunfire.

DAN

John...get out...of here. Get...

Dan begins COUGHING, blood spewing from his mouth.

JOHN

I can't leave you.

DAN

They'll kill you...little brother. It's too late for...me.

His body spasms before it goes limp. His last breath escapes in a sharp EXHALE.

Rage overpowering his grief, John lifts a pistol from the ground as he stands. He takes a bullet to the shoulder which spins him to the ground. He grimaces in pain as he crawls away.

Another shot rings out, this one catching him in the leg.

John lies there a moment. He hears the CRUNCHING of earth beneath boots.

He weakly raises the pistol and pulls the trigger. CLICK. To his dismay, his pistol is empty. Another bullet slams into the opposite shoulder. He writhes on the ground in agony, blood pouring from his wounds.

HIS P.O.V.

Leering down at him is an OUTLAW in a mask made of Burlap and tied at the neck with twine (we will learn who he really is later). There is LAUGHTER like that of a crazed hyena O.S.

BURLAP

Look what we got here boys, a Texas Ranger.

Burlap checks his pistol and spins the cylinder, then CLICKS the hammer back.

BURLAP

Don't look so menacing' to me. You fellas got yerselves a reputation fer bein' regular bad asses. We hear a lotta stories about the mighty Texas Rangers, but you know how stories are, they ain't usually true.

The CACKLING LAUGHTER continues.

Burlap aims down at the young, wounded Texas Ranger.

BURLAP

Guess I'll be seein' you in hell.

BACK TO SCENE

Burlap pulls the trigger. John's body jerks as the round hits him in the chest.

Behind Burlap, nine OUTLAWS with black bandannas covering the lower portion of their faces eye the young lawman with contempt.

The CACKLING OUTLAW rocks back and forth on the heels of his boots, clearly enjoying himself.

Burlap turns to his men.

BURLAP

Mount up! We need to get to Mexico!

Burlap puts a hand on The Cackling Outlaws shoulder, stopping him from joining the others.

BURLAP

Get what you can carry and meet us at the old Wheeler Ranch.

More obnoxious LAUGHTER from the outlaw.

EXT. BRYANT'S GAP - DAY - LATER

The Cackling Outlaw is busily raiding the pockets of the dead Rangers. What he finds of value he stuffs into a leather pouch hanging at his side.

John MOANS.

The Cackling Outlaw ceases his activity and peers over his shoulder at John, who is alive, but just barely.

He stands and watches the young man a moment.

With a devilish gleam in his eye, he makes his way from Bob's body to the young Ranger suffering on the canyon floor.

CACKLING OUTLAW

I gotta say, yer one tough prick.

He kneels beside him and looks him dead in the eyes.

CACKLING OUTLAW

Let's see if you'll live with one in yer head.

He places his hand on his revolver and that is as far as he gets. An arrow THWIPS into the back of his neck. He falls over dead.

JOHN'S P.O.V.

His vision now fuzzy from pain and blood loss, obscures the FIGURE gazing down at him. Is it the Reaper come to take his soul? The figure is holding something in his hand. Is it a scythe or a bow?

As his vision goes gray, the figure bends towards him.

FLASHBACK:

EXT. CABIN - DUSK

Surrounded by sand and rock and a spattering of brush, the cabin is a typical frontier home complete with chickens pecking at the feed strewn ground.

Nine year-old John Reid is chopping wood.

Jacob rides through the gate, dismounts and ties his horse to the hitching post as John drops the hatchet and runs to him, elated at his return.

JOHN

Dad!

His father smiles and hugs his youngest son.

JACOB

I see you've been keepin' up with yer part of the chores.

JOHN

Everyday.

JACOB

Where's Dan?

JOHN

Inside making supper.

Jacob turns to the cabin.

JACOB

Come in and wash up.

JOHN

Did you get the bad man dad? Did you kill him?

Jacob turns to John, a stern look upon his face.

JACOB

We'll talk after we've eaten boy.

INT. CABIN - LATER

Jacob, Dan, 17, and John are seated at a small table. Before them in the center of the table is a wooden bowl in which Dan is scooping out beef stew with a large wooden ladle.

He finishes filling his father and brother's bowls before filling his own.

DAN

Was it a rough ride dad?

JACOB

As rough as always.

DAN

When are you gonna let me ride with ya?

John looks up from his bowl to his father and watches him contemplate on how to answer that question.

JACOB

When John's old enough to fend fer himself I reckon.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

Jacob is sitting in a rocking chair, puffing on a pipe. John is standing next to him, shoulders drooping, eyes cast downward. Hanging from the porch ceiling are two lit lanterns.

JACOB

I got the bad man today son. And yeah, I shot 'em. But takin' a life ain't an easy thing to do. Life should be respected, valued. I never kill unless I have to. Remember that.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

A fire burns in a pit, the flickering flames casting strange shadows that dance along the jagged walls in a macabre display of twisted shapes. Lying on a blanket, wounds bandaged, John MUMBLES as his feverish mind dreams.

An Indian stoops as he enters the cave carrying a bundle of clothes tied with string. He is TONTO, 35, tall, chest covered by a deerskin vest, hair as dark as raven's feathers with eyes so brown they look black, drops the bundle and goes to a water pot.

He dips a clay cup in and takes it to John. He lifts his head with his free hand and pours some of the water over John's lips. John drinks, then COUGHS as the water activates his gag reflex.

TONTO

Easy young one. Drink slowly.

John is still too weak to drink as he should. Tonto pours the water back into the pot, then adjusts the folded horse blanket he has improvised for John's pillow.

John continues to JUMBLE words in his feverish sleep.

FLASHBACK:

EXT. DEPOT - DAY

Dan, now a grown man, tips his hat to several LADIES as they disembark the train.

They smile warmly in acknowledgement.

John emerges from the passenger car wearing his finest suit and carrying expensive leather travel bags. Dan WHISTLES in astonishment.

DAN

Look at you! Four years of big city life and fancy schoolin' has turned you into a Nancy boy!

John SIGHS and tosses his bags to his brother.

JOHN

Well, if you're going to insult me, you can at least carry my bags.

DAN

Touchy ain't we?

JOHN

Don't start.

EXT. WAGON - DAY

Dan holds the reins with John sitting beside him. John glances at the star gleaming on Dan's vest.

DAN

Were you lookin' forward to comin' home?

JOHN

I could use some time away from the city.

DAN

Too fast paced fer ya?

JOHN

You could say that.

DAN

Dad's looking' forward to seein' ya.

John gives a slight smile .

JOHN

How is he?

DAN

All that ridin' is beginin' to take its toll on the man. I don't think he has many rides left in 'em.

JOHN

Maybe he should just quit.

DAN

Oh, I suspect he will eventually.

JOHN

When will that be? When he's too old to climb in the saddle?

DAN

He's a stubborn man, you know that.

John reaches out and feels the badge on his brother's vest.

JOHN

Guess me wearing one of those just once wasn't meant to be.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Jacob is sitting on the porch in the rocking chair, pipe tucked in the corner of his mouth. White smoke hovers above his head like a misty halo. He stands as Dan and John arrive.

He limps down the steps and crosses to John as he leaps down from the wagon.

He removes the pipe from between his teeth as his lips curl into a smile.

JACOB

You've grown up son. And handsome to. A lot like yer old man.

He embraces his youngest son and gives him a good squeeze.

JACOB

It's good to have ya home.

JOHN

Thanks dad.

JACOB

Come on boys, I've got some food on the table.

The three men head to the cabin.

INT. CABIN - DAY - LATER

Sunlight filters in through the cabin's two windows. They are at the table, the remains of their meal sitting before them.

JACOB

So yer a big time lawyer now?

JOHN
Not big time yet.

DAN
Ya still plan on openin' yer practice
don't ya?

JOHN
Eventually.

DAN
Well, dad and me are real proud of ya.

JOHN
I just wish mom were here.

JACOB
That makes two of us son.

DAN
Well, I guess we can bring out the good
stuff now.

Dan stands and opens a cupboard and takes from it a large bottle of wine. He also gets three glasses which he sets on the table.

JOHN
What's that for?

JACOB
Yer the first person in the family to
graduate from college. We think a good
glass of wine's in order.

JOHN
That bottle looks expensive.

JACOB
Don't ya worry about what it cost.

Dan begins pouring the wine.

JACOB
It's time to make a toast.

DAN
Damn right.

Dan sits and lifts his glass. John and Jacob raise theirs as well.

DAN
To my baby brother. May the Good Lord
bless him and make all his endeavors
successful.

JACOB

Here here!

They raise their glasses, then CLINK them together. They each take a sip before setting the glasses down.

Jacob gives Dan a wink and leans back in his chair, reaches behind himself to a shelf and grabs his pipe. He puts it in his mouth but does not light it.

John knows something else is coming.

JOHN

What's going on?

Jacob goes to a trunk and lifts the lid. He retrieves a small wooden box and presents it to John.

JOHN

What's this?

JACOB

A toast is good and all, but we couldn't welcome ya home properly without gettin' ya a graduation gift.

John stares at the box a moment.

DAN

Well, ya gonna open it or what?

He does and is amazed at what he sees inside.

INSERT

Inside the box is the tin star of the Texas Rangers.

BACK TO SCENE

John looks at his brother who has a smile on his face nearly as broad as his shoulders.

JACOB

Welcome home Ranger.

John stands and hugs his father.

JOHN

I thought you didn't want me to ride?

JACOB

Well, we got us a daisy of a ride startin' tomorrow. We can use the extra set of eyes. Besides, after this one, I'm hangin' up my badge next to my spurs. I want my last ride to be with both my boys.

DAN

Thought you might want to help out on this one seein' as how you're gonna open up yer law practice soon. It'll give ya a chance to get yerself dirty before ya have to look all spit and polish for yer clients.

JACOB

Let's make it official.

Jacob pins the star on John's shirt.

John is beaming.

EXT. PORCH - NIGHT

By lantern light, John is reading a wanted poster. Jacob and Dan are seated near him. Jacob lights his pipe.

JOHN

Fifteen hundred dollar reward for the capture of Brand Collins or any member of the Sagebrush Gang. Responsible for the killing of the West Fork Railroad engineer, Mr. Simmons, and the taking of twenty thousand dollars in cash and gold dust from the cargo car. Collins and The Sagebrush Gang are also responsible for the nighttime raid on the Denver Stage and the murder of its driver, Mr. Holden, and two passengers, Mr. Jackson and Sprague of Denver, Colorado. The take: thirty-two hundred dollars. Collins and his gang are well armed and extremely dangerous. Their capture and arrest is of the greatest importance.

DAN

They're the most ruthless we've ever gone after. Like dad said, an extra pair of eyes and another gun'll even the odds if it comes to a shootout.

JACOB

You can still shoot can't ya son?

JOHN

I don't know. The only thing I've had in my hands lately have been law books. I suppose I could draw if it comes to that. You don't really think this Collins is stupid enough to shoot at Rangers do you? If he were to even graze one of us, every lawman from here to Idaho will be steaming for him like a runaway train.

JACOB

Collins is a devilish man. Him and that gang of his have murdered three people already. I know his type. He's headin' for the Mexican border and if he gets whiff of us, there's no tellin' what he'll do. The thought of swingin' from the gallows is what's drivin' him now.

John rolls up the poster and lays it across his lap. The three men remain quiet for a moment. Dan lifts a tin cup of coffee to his lips and blows on it to cool it before he sips.

JOHN

How much of a head start do they have?

Jacob leans forwards in his chair.

JACOB

About a day, but I think I know which route he's takin'.

JOHN

A day's a pretty good head start dad.

Jacob blows out a cloud of thick, white smoke.

JACOB

Yeah, well Collins doesn't know that we're takin' the train halfway to him.

DAN

They have to stop periodically to water their horses, plus they'll be beddin' down at night. The train won't stop. It'll cut our ridin' time in half.

JOHN

Pretty smart dad.

DAN

That's why he's the best.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. CAVE

Tonto is dabbing John's brow with a wet cloth. Several of his bandages are wet with fresh blood.

TONTO

You should have perished many times over young one. There is much strength in you. That is good. Clearly you have found favor with the Great Spirit.

John sleeps fitfully.

TONTO

I will return by day break. There is something I must do.

Tonto leaves John to his nightmares.

EXT. WHEELER RANCH - NIGHT

Above the gate, WHEELER RANCH has been painted in huge, white letters, the moonlight from above causing them to dimly glow.

A dilapidated house with a sagging porch roof sits inside a fenced yard. Lantern light spills out from a single room as THREE OUTLAWS walk the porch, keeping watch.

Horses drink from troughs.

EXT. WHEELER RANCH - PORCH - NIGHT

The three outlaws, each holding a rifle, are also sharing a bottle of booze as they pull sentry duty.

The tallest of the three is DIRK, a tough cowboy with rotting teeth and in desperate need of a shave. He takes a hearty swig before handing it off to PIG, named appropriately due to his large, malformed nose. The other is MILLER, a short stocky fellow wearing an eye patch.

Miller refuses the bottle that Pig offers him and goes to the edge of the porch and unzips his pants.

PIG

Jesus Miller. That's five times already and we haven't had but two bottles. You can't hold your liquor, that's for sure.

DIRK

I think he's sly and just likes whippin' it out.

Pig glances over his shoulder as he urinates.

MILLER

Hopin' I'll show it to ya Dirk?

DIRK

I could never get that drunk.

Pig moves close to Dirk, doing his best impression of a saloon girl.

PIG

It does get lonely out here you know.

Dirk levels his rifle on him.

DIRK

That kinda talk will get ya killed out here Pig.

Miller finishes and zips up. As he turns, an arrow enters his heart. He falls off of the porch.

PIG

Shit!

He drops to one knee and aims his rifle. Dirk backs towards the door just as an arrow strikes the wall beside him.

DIRK

Mr. Collins! Indian attack!

INT. WHEELER RANCH - PARLOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

BRAND COLLINS, 48, with a three day growth of beard and bleary blue eyes, is startled from his slumber when Dirk's voice filters in from the porch.

O.S. Dirk and Pig FIRE their rifles into the night.

Collins is off of the couch in a flash. He runs past a table on which lies the burlap mask.

EXT. WHEELER RANCH - BACK DOOR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Collins barrels out of the back door and leaps into the saddle. He spurs his horse and makes his escape.

EXT. WHEELER RANCH - PORCH - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Three more outlaws rush out of the house to join Dirk and Pig. TINSDALE, WELLES and SHAW, all around the same height, take positions behind the porches crooked support pillars. Shaw, shirtless, aims his pistol and fires.

The horses move about nervously.

It doesn't look good for the outlaws.

SHAW

Who are we shootin' at?!

DIRK

Indians.

Tinsdale lets loose a volley from his rifle.

TINSDALE

How many of 'em are there?

Shaw scans the distance by following the barrel of his pistol as he moves it back and forth. An arrow catches him dead center in the forehead.

TINSDALE

Shaw!

WELLES

I say we take our asses back inside the house. We'll have cover in there.

DIRK

The hell with that! We need to get to the horses and get the hell out of here!

WELLES

You go right ahead. I'm not running out there. I'll take my chances inside.

Welles retreats to the innards of the old ranch house.

Dirk falls back as an arrow pounds into his shoulder.

DIRK

Dammit! Welle's is right. We're just target practice out here!

Tinsdale chances standing and grabs Dirk's good shoulder and begins dragging him towards the door. He crumples in a heap after an arrow slices through his skull and into his brain.

He lies atop Dirk, who is SHOUTING for help.

Pig rushes for the door.

PIG

Yer on yer own pal!

Now Dirk is alone on the porch, surrounded by his dead compatriots.

DIRK

Pig, you son of a bitch!

Dirk pushes against the body lying across him.

As he begins to slide out from beneath Tinsdale, an arrow strikes him in the chest. He falls back, grimacing in pain, unable to move.

The others follow.

EXT. WHEELER RANCH - YARD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The outlaws, eyes stinging and throats burning from the intense heat and smoke of the flaming structure, roll off of the porch roof to the ground. They lie there dazed.

Once they have their senses about them, they clumsily crawl away from the house as it begins to collapse. Cole, in a panic, leaves his pistol where he had fallen. They watch as the porch roof falls in on Dirk.

DIRK

NOOOOO!

As Cole rises, seemingly from out of the flames he sees:

COLES P.O.V.

A tall man silhouetted against the raging inferno behind him. He is holding a hatchet in each hand. This is Tonto.

BACK TO SCENE

Cole reaches for his pistol, only to find that it is not there.

TONTO

It is clearly not a good night to be you.

Tonto throws the hatchet, embedding it in Coles chest. As he drops to the ground dead, Pig pulls his pistol and fires, the round missing Tonto by inches. As he fires again, the second hatchet flies and it lodges in Pigs face.

Tonto pulls two bowie knives from their sheaths at each hip and goes for the remaining two.

Barclay and wells are running for their lives. But Tonto downs Welles with a well placed throw but he gives chase, catching up to Barclay who has gotten a decent head start.

Tonto leaps and comes crashing down onto Barclay. Barclay puts up a struggle but Tonto finally ends it when he cuts his throat.

The house, now in a huge flaming pile, continues to burn behind him.

TONTO

Now for my trophies.

INT. CAVE - DAWN

John is in the throws of a nightmare.

JOHN

Dad! Dan! I'll kill them all!

As he is saying this, Tonto enters. He drops something and goes to the water pot. He dips the cup into the pot and takes it to John. He helps him drink.

For just a second, John's eyes flutter open.

EXT. SHACK - DAY

The building is dwarfed by the great expanse of the Texas countryside. A MAN dressed in a faded duster and wide brimmed, floppy hat, slides from his mount and ties the black horse to the hitching post.

INT. SHACK - DAY - A MOMENT LATER

Collins, sleeping in a rocking chair, is awakened with a start as the door is kicked in. He draws his pistol but it is shot from his hand. He SHOUTS out in pain and drops back into the rocker as the man in the duster steps over the threshold.

The man is JULIUS "BART" BARTHOLOMEW, African American, 50, tall and thin, wearing wire rimmed glasses on a wrinkled face.

BART

Pardon the intrusion Mr. Collins, but you and I have a matter of great importance that must be discussed.

COLLINS

Who...who are you?

BART

How rude of me. I'm Julius Bartholomew, but those who travel within my circle call me Bart.

COLLINS

What do you want?

BART

You have specific information that I need, and it's very important that you tell me the truth, otherwise...your situation's going to get very unpleasant.

Bart moves into the room and seats himself in front of Collins. He levels a large pistol with a long barrel on Collins, not taking his beady eyes off of him for a second.

BART

Now, I'll begin by asking if you completed the contract for which you were hired?

COLLINS

What?

Without hesitation, Bart lowers the barrel of the pistol and shoots Collins in the foot. Before Collins can fall from the rocking chair, Bart kicks him in the chest, keeping him in a seated position but causing the rocking chair to rock feverishly.

COLLINS

Jesus!

Pain is etched on Collins's face.

BART

Did you fulfill the contract for which you were hired?

COLLINS

Yes! Jesus Christ, yes!

BART

Where did the event transpire?

COLLINS

A canyon to the west, about three days ride from here.

BART

Now tell me who hired you?

This question gives Collins pause.

Bart sends a bullet into Collins's other foot. As Collins falls forward, Bart punches him squarely on the nose. Blood streams from his nostrils.

BART

As you can see, I'm not a patient man. You remember the question?

Collins shakes his head.

BART

Very good. Answer please. Failure to do so will result in the loss of your right hand.

COLLINS

It was Ca...

BART

That's good enough.

Bart leans forward, looking directly into Collins's watering eyes.

BART

It's my understanding that the contract stated specifically that you are *not* to divulge the name of the individual holding your contract under any circumstances. I know this because the same man holds *my* contract.

He raises the large pistol, the barrel inches from Collins's face. Collins's eyes widen in fear.

BART

You're a loose end Mr. Collins, and loose ends are best...cut off.

EXT. SHACK - DAWN - SAME TIME

The REPORT of the pistol filters through the open door.

INT. CAVE

John's eyes snap open. He lifts his head and spies Tonto who is pouring himself a cup of coffee. Tonto gives John a grin.

TONTO

The dead man is awake.

JOHN

Dead?

John's voice is weak, frail.

TONTO

I dug four bullets from your flesh, you should be dead.

JOHN

My God! Dan! Dad! I have to...

He attempts rising but intense pain keeps him from doing so.

TONTO

You have been unconscious nearly five days young one. You are still too weak. You must heal.

JOHN

But...

TONTO

You must rest. Eat when you can, rebuild your strength.

JOHN

But I have to see them.

TONTO

You are in no condition to leave the cave. I will tend to them.

JOHN

Why are you helping me?

A sadness washes over Tontos face.

TONTO

I to know what it is like to lose loved ones. If I had happened by sooner, I might have been able to assist you and your companions.

Tonto helps John into a seated position. He grimaces from the pain.

JOHN

My head's hurting something fierce!

Tonto gets another cup and pours some coffee for John.

TONTO

Maybe this will help you.

JOHN

Thank you.

TONTO

It amazes me young one that you did not perish. Your spirit should be one with the maker of all things.

JOHN

I thought I was dead.

TONTO

Yet you have been spared. Let us be thankful.

John allows a brief smile.

JOHN

Amen.

Tonto nods.

TONTO

I am wondering young one, what are your plans once you have healed?

JOHN

I suppose I'll be going after Collins and his gang.

TONTO

And what will you do once you find
these men?

JOHN

Kill them all.

A wicked grin turns up the corners of Tontos mouth.

Tonto picks up the item that he had dropped upon entering the cave and tosses it onto John's lap. John sets the coffee down and lifts what is actually a series of scalps that have been tied together.

An expression of anger washes over John's face. Tonto sees this and attempts to calm John before any ill will is expressed.

TONTO

Eight scalps from eight murderers. I do
not mean to over step my boundaries,
but I felt compelled to act in your
stead.

Tontos reasoning is sound and John relaxes.

JOHN

I'm indebted to you.

TONTO

You have no debt that needs repaying.

JOHN

You took eight scalps. Collins rode
with nine men, so including him, you
should have ten.

TONTO

There is one gathering flies back in
the canyon.

JOHN

Is he wearing a burlap mask?

TONTO

No.

JOHN

Then it looks like Collins has gotten
away.

TONTO

I suspect you will find this Collins,
though fate sometimes rides a swifter
horse.

EXT. SANDY BROOK UTAH - DAY

Sandy Brook is the story book old west town, complete with Saloon, Hotel, General Store, Telegraph office, Blacksmiths shop, modest cottages, and stables. COWBOYS and LADIES alike bustle up and down the towns center street.

Slightly out of tune PIANO MUSIC filters out of the saloon.

SUPERIMPOSE: SANDY BROOK, UTAH

INT. UNKNOWN RESIDENCE - DAY

There is a series of KNOCKS on the door. The door swings open allowing in the bright sunshine. Standing in the doorway is MR. WINTHROP, a foppish man in bowler hat and glasses, with a thick handlebar mustache. He steps inside.

WINTHROP

Sir.

The VOICE that answers is deep and stern (he will be identified later).

VOICE (V.O.)

I'm busy you fool.

WINTHROP

There has been a report from Texas.

VOICE (V.O.)

And?

WINTHROP

All is well.

VOICE (V.O.)

This report was sent via my *associate*?

WINTHROP

No sir, local reports. The Rangers haven't been seen in nearly a week.

VOICE (V.O.)

Then there really isn't any news is there Mr. Winthrop?

A FEMALE GIGGLES O.S.

WINTHROP

I suppose you can see it that way. I just thought you should know.

VOICE (V.O.)

If you should hear from *him*, then come to me idiot.

More FEMININE COOING. Mr. Winthrops face reddens and he turns for the door.

VOICE (V.O.)

I don't wish to be bothered Mr.
Winthrop. Reschedule my appointments.

WINTHROP

Yes sir.

Mr. Winthrop shuts the door as he exits.

VOICE (V.O.)

Now, where were we ladies? Ah yes, you
were going to show me that trick you do
with your tongues.

EXT. SHACK - DUSK

Bart pulls himself into the saddle and glances back at the tiny building. He pats his horse on the neck.

BART

There is something not right about this
situation girl. My gut is telling me
that everything that could go wrong
has. Seems you and I have much more
work to do.

He pulls the reins and the horse turns away from the shack. Then he drives in his spurs and the horse jets into the desert as the last red and orange rays of the sun give way to the blue of early twilight.

INT. CAVE

John is chewing on a scrumptious looking piece of meat. Tonto pulls apart a piece of flat bread and pops it into his mouth.

JOHN

I don't think I've ever tasted anything
so good.

TONTO

Your body is needing nourishment. Be
glad, a hearty appetite is a good sign.

JOHN

You've been helping me all this time
and I haven't even asked you your name.

TONTO

I am called Tonto.

JOHN

John Reid.

TONTO

Well John Reid, I wish we could have met under better circumstances.

JOHN

You and me both.

EXT. BRYANT'S GAP - MORNING

Tonto digs. Near him are two mounds; graves that he has completed digging. He wipes the sweat from his brow and continues. Around his neck is a crucifix.

Flies BUZZ over the bodies he has yet to place in the ground.

EXT. CAVE - DAY - LATER

John is seated on a small boulder and drinking a cup of coffee outside of the cave. A spattering of brush dots the immediate area.

Tonto sees John as he approaches and gives him a pleasant smile.

Tonto slides from the saddle and ties his horse, SCOUT, a beautiful spotted Pinto to a tree near the cave mouth. John stands and walks to them.

TONTO

You are up and about I see.

JOHN

I was feeling a bit cramped, thought I should stretch my muscles.

TONTO

And?

JOHN

Hurts like hell.

TONTO

You are mobile, which means you are progressing.

John pats Scout, admiring the animal.

JOHN

He's a fine horse.

TONTO

His name is Scout.

JOHN

It suits him.

Tonto approaches John and takes the crucifix from his neck.

TONTO
 This is yours now. I believe it
 belonged to your brother.

Tonto puts it around John's neck. John lifts the cross
 and studies it.

INSERT

The crucifix is flared at the bottom with a notch on each
 side of the flare.

BACK TO SCENE

 TONTO
 Strange design is it not?

 JOHN
 I haven't seen anything like it before.
 You sure it was Dan's?

 TONTO
 Yes.

John SIGHS.

 JOHN
 It's finished?

 TONTO
 Yes.

 JOHN
 I want to see them.

 TONTO
 You are still not strong enough to make
 the journey. It is a half day from
 here.

 JOHN
 It's no longer your decision to make
 Tonto. I've been holed up here for over
 a week. I need to see them.

 TONTO
 Are you sure you are ready?

John lets that question linger.

EXT. BRYANT'S GAP - DUSK

John is kneeling before five wooden crosses. He wears a mask of anguish. He is doing his best to fight the tears that threaten to flow.

Tonto stands behind him, sullen.

JOHN

I have to find Collins Tonto. I have to make him pay for what he's done.

TONTO

We will find him Kemosabe.

John glances over his shoulder at Tonto.

JOHN

Kemosabe?

TONTO

In my language it means faithful friend.

He kneels beside his friend and puts a hand on his shoulder.

JOHN

Again, I'm indebted to you.

TONTO

And again, there is no debt you owe that needs repaying.

John turns back to the fresh graves.

JOHN

I promise you, I will find Collins, and justice will be served.

Tonto stands.

TONTO

Come. Tomorrow we have much to do.

EXT. DESERT - DUSK

John is sitting in the saddle as Tonto walks beside Scout, reins in his hand. The desert is painted in the red hues of the setting sun.

JOHN

There are five graves back there Tonto. Why?

TONTO

You have a new spirit now, one of reckoning. Your former spirit is no more. Let it reside in the cold ground to be forgotten.

JOHN

The body of the outlaw?

TONTO

I removed it from that hollowed ground. Let the desert scavengers fill their bellies.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Bart rides in the sweltering heat. He pops the lid off of his canteen and drinks. As he does so, he spies something in the air.

He recaps his canteen and lets it hang loosely at his side. Bart takes a pair of binoculars from its protective case and peers through the eye pieces.

BARTS P.O.V. THROUGH BINOCULARS

A dozen SCAVENGER BIRDS circle like a forming tornado. PULLING AWAY from the birds causes a momentary BLURRING of the scene through the binoculars.

The scene through the binoculars FOCUSES when Bart settles his view on a familiar site: Bryant's Gap.

BACK TO SCENE

Bart takes the binoculars from his eyes as an evil grin splits his wrinkled face.

EXT. CAVE - DAY

Tonto is placing clay cups in a row on top of a boulder. John Raises a pistol once Tonto is safely away. He pulls the hammer back and sites.

He shoots. And misses.

John rubs his shoulder.

JOHN

I wasn't expecting this to hurt.

TONTO

The pain is only temporary. Concentrate.

John aims once again. He pulls the trigger. The bullet smashes into the boulder just beneath a cup.

JOHN

That was better at least.

He tries a third time. The cup shatters. John smiles.

TONTO

You have five more targets.

He sends another bullet on its way. Again it collides with the boulder. Not satisfied, he lets loose another. A cup breaks apart.

Without hesitation, he rapid fires, destroying the rest. He grins like a child on Christmas morning.

JOHN

That felt good.

Tonto takes the saddle bag he has draped over his shoulder and opens it. He walks to the boulder as he pulls more cups from the saddle bag.

TONTO

Now try it with your left.

John's grin fades.

JOHN

I'm right handed.

TONTO

What if your right hand becomes incapacitated?

JOHN

Good point.

Tonto has completed the row. Once again John waits until Tonto clears the area.

He aims carefully and shoots. The row stands untouched.

TONTO

Again.

John rapid fires once again. All of the cups explode. He transfers the pistol back to his right hand and spins it around his finger, and then into the holster. He is a true gunslinger. He smiles over his shoulder at Tonto.

TONTO

Very good Kemosabe. I have more.

JOHN

Line them up.

Tonto sends his hand back into the saddle bag.

EXT. BRYANT'S GAP - DAY

Bart stands at the graves. Scavenger birds land around him, eager for a meal. He gazes at them, the sun reflecting off of his glasses.

BART

Have patience my brothers. You will dine soon enough.

He climbs into the saddle, digs his spurs into the horses flanks and it charges away from the Rangers's final resting place.

EXT. WILLARDS GENERAL STORE - DAY

Bart dismounts and ties the reins to the hitching post. He notices the looks he is getting from the TOWNSFOLK, but undeterred, he climbs the stairs, boots THUNKING on the old wood.

He passes beneath a hanging sign on which WILLARDS GENERAL STORE has been painted in bold yellow letters and enters.

INT. WILLARDS GENERAL STORE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Behind the counter sits ELIJAH WILLARD, 60, a rather portly man who is dabbing away the sweat off of his pudgy jowls. On the counter is an open newspaper.

He sees Bart and scowls.

Elijah peers at two MEN who are sitting at a table playing cards. The two men drop their cards and slide their chairs away from the table.

Bart seems not to notice.

ELIJAH

What the hell do you want?

BART

I am in need of tools.

ELIJAH

Well go some place else. I don't serve Negroes.

Bart continues to the counter.

BART

My money is not as good as the next man's?

ELIJAH

You must be hard of hearing'.

BART

I heard you just fine Mr. Willard. If you will not accept my money, then I will simply take what I want.

The two men leap up and go for their guns but Bart is quicker on the draw.

BART

Normally I would put a hole in each of you, but a confrontation with the town sheriff is not what I want, which is lucky for you. You get to live another day.

Bart turns back to Elijah.

BART

I need a shovel. Your most durable.

Elijah steps away from the counter, nervously patting the sweat off of his face.

BART

You return with anything in your hands other than my request, I will risk that confrontation with the sheriff. I trust you understand completely?

Elijah backs away, afraid to take his eyes off of Bart. The two men are still standing at the table, unmoving. Bart walks around to the other side of the counter and glances at the newspaper. He flips to the front page and reads the headline.

INSERT

The headline reads: STILL NO WORD FROM RANGERS. KIN DEMAND ANSWERS.

BACK TO SCENE

Elijah returns with the requested shovel. He sets it on the counter.

Bart glances at the two men as he holsters his pistol.

BART

I'll be taking the paper as well.

Bart quickly rolls the paper up and sticks it in the pocket of his duster. He takes the shovel and makes his way back around to the other side of the counter. Foolishly, the two men go for their guns again.

Bart swings the shovel. The spade end smacks both men in the face, dropping them instantly.

Bart heads for the door as if nothing happened.

BART

Good day to you Mr. Willard.

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

The CHIRPING OF CRICKETS filters into the cave. Tonto takes a small leather pouch off of his belt and tosses it to John.

John turns the pouch upside down and gives it a shake. Four Ranger badges fall into his open palm.

JOHN

There should be five.

TONTO

I have yours.

JOHN

Why?

TONTO

You are out for justice are you not?

JOHN

Yeah, but...

TONTO

That star represents justice. It is what your father and brother risked their lives for. It is what you now seek more than anything. It is also a powerful symbol. Not just of justice, but of hope.

Tonto tosses a second item to John. It is a bullet mold. Tonto goes to the fire and stokes it, tiny embers erupting from it and hang in the air like fire flies.

John takes a clay bowl and puts the stars inside. He then sets the bowl onto the fire.

EXT. BRYANT'S GAP - DAY

Bart is setting on a boulder, shovel on the ground beside him. He drinks from his canteen. Three graves have been opened. Flies BUZZ over the exposed corpses. Behind him, buzzards gather.

He wipes the sweat from his brow with his shirt sleeve, recaps his canteen and picks the shovel up as he stands.

He goes to a third grave and jams the shovel into the ground. More buzzards land.

INT. CAVE - DAY

John inspects the bullet he made with the badges. Tonto hands him the bundle of clothing he had with him when he was first introduced.

TONTO
New clothes for a new man.

 JOHN
You thought of everything didn't you?

Tonto pats him on the shoulder, and then turns to exit the cave.

 TONTO
I will be outside.

EXT. CAVE - MOMENTS LATER

Jon emerges from the cave wearing a red shirt, black pants and a fancy two gun rig. On his head is his dinged white cowboy hat.

 JOHN
Now what?

 TONTO
We get you a horse.

EXT. BRYANT'S GAP - DAY

Bart is standing in the last grave. He is the only body occupying it. He climbs out, his presence not frightening the buzzards that are pulling on the remaining flesh of the unearthed bodies.

 BART
Feast brothers. Get your fill.

He retrieves his duster from the wooden cross he had draped it over and mounts his horse.

He SNAPS the reins and he is off once again to fulfill his contract.

EXT. CORRAL - DAY

TERRENCE HOLLINGSWORTH, 45, puffs on a cigar, the smoke partially obscuring his hawkish nose. He is leaning against the wooden gate of a corral. On the other side of the gate, two RANCH HANDS are trying to rope a huge, WHITE STALLION.

John stares admiringly at the horse.

 TONTO
He certainly has spirit.

 JOHN
I'll take him.

Terrence shakes his head.

TERRENCE

I don't think that's wise. We ain't been able to break him. He's the biggest damned horse I ever did see, which is a good thing. When we found him, he was a mess.

JOHN

What was wrong with him?

TERRENCE

He'd gotten into a tussle with a buffalo! Can you believe it? A buffalo.

TONTO

But he did survive.

TERRENCE

That he did. Damndest thing.

JOHN

How much?

TERRENCE

I'm tellin' you, he's more trouble than he's worth. You'll be wastin' your money. I have three more in the barn that are much more...

JOHN

I want *him* Mr. Hollingsworth.

TERRENCE

Alright. But don't say I didn't warn you.

John heads for the gate. Tonto grins.

TONTO

What do we owe you?

Tonto produces a wad of cash. Terrences eyes grow as wide as saucers at the site of it.

EXT. CORRAL - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The ranch hands watch as John approaches the huge stallion. The horse backs away as John closes the distance between them. The ranch hands nervously await the outcome.

John is close enough to touch the horse. It backs away a second time. John reaches out and gently caresses its neck.

He is soon face to face with the horse. John continues to caress the horse until it bows its head to let John scratch it behind the ears.

JOHN

Good boy.

The ranch hands look on, completely surprised.

EXT. CORRAL - DAY - A MOMENT LATER

John walks the horse through the gate. Terrence just gawks.

TERRENCE

I don't believe it!

JOHN

All it takes is a little tender loving care.

TERRENCE

Seems you have a magic touch son. I'm impressed.

JOHN

Do you have a saddle for him?

TERRENCE

Of course. It's in the barn.

Terrence and Tonto head towards the barn.

EXT. CORRAL - DAY - MINUTES LATER

John has finished buckling the saddle and puts his foot into the stirrup to mount. He pulls himself up with a slight GRUNT and settles into the saddle. Then the horse begins bucking.

Terrence and Tonto run away from the furious animal as it kicks and leaps.

The ranch hands come running through the gate but stop short as John's horse changes direction and jumps towards them. They scatter like frightened cockroaches.

John is holding on for dear life.

JOHN

Whoa boy!

TERRENCE

Hold on! Don't fall!

JOHN

That's easy for you to say!

John is being whipped about like a rag doll.

TONTO

Grip with your knees!

But he cannot hold on. The horse successfully flings John sideways out of the saddle. He crashes to the ground in a puff of dust.

He lies there MOANING as Tonto rushes to his side. The horse has calmed now that John is not on its back and is staring at him as he lies there hurting.

TONTO

Are you alright?

JOHN

Well, the sky is spinning and everything hurts, and I think I might throw up.

Tonto helps him stand. John stretches as he shoots the horse an angry look. It lowers its head as if realizing it has done something wrong.

JOHN

I thought we were friends?

TERRENCE

What was it you said, 'all it needs is tender lovin' care?' Uh huh, tender lovin' care my ass! It almost killed you. You should've taken my advise.

JOHN

I'll break him.

TONTO

Perhaps I should attempt to ride him?

JOHN

Oh no, I'm getting back on. He wont throw me a second time, because if he does, I'm putting him down.

The horse BRAYS and backs away, as if he has understood John's remark.

JOHN

Get over here horse.

The horse comes. John gets into the saddle and gently pats its head.

The horse moves about nervously but it does not try to dislodge him a second time.

John tugs on the reins and turns it towards the road. Then it suddenly leaps forward and continues on in a dead run.

TONTO

It appears I have a friend to catch.

Tonto runs to Scout and leaps into the saddle leap frog style.

TERRENCE

You better catch him quick Injun, or
he's buzzard slop!

Tonto races after John, leaving Terrence and his two helpers LAUGHING at them as they gallop away.

EXT. ROAD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Scout is charging, desert dust exploding in puffs with each pounding hoof. Tonto is leaning forward like a jockey in the saddle. He is gaining ground.

After a moment, the two friends are side by side and Tonto reaches for the reins, but he sees that John is grinning like a kid in a candy store and pulls his hand back.

JOHN

This horse can run!

Tontos grin mirrors John's.

EXT. SANDY BROOK, UTAH - PLATFORM - DAY

CITIZENS are gathered in front of a raised platform. Red, white, and blue banners have been hung from every building. On the platform and standing behind the podium is BUTCH CAVENDISH, 48, a tall thin man in an insanely expensive suit, with a receding hairline and an expertly manicured goatee. As he gives his speech, we immediately recognize his voice as belonging to the unseen man in the unknown residence.

Sitting behind him are three dapper looking RAILROAD MEN in suits.

CAVENDISH

I'm a Texan ladies and gentleman, and
Texas is a tough state, not unlike
Utah! This is frontier territory, it
takes tough men to work the land, drive
cattle, and build homes!

Men and women nod in agreement.

CAVENDISH

But it's no longer that way for me, and
it doesn't have to be for you either!
You see, I found the *Greater Hastings
Railroad!* It has brought many an
opportunity with it by opening up the
entire United States! The railroad has

(MORE)

CAVENDISH (CONT'D)

made me a very wealthy man and for that, I must thank the fine gentleman sitting behind me! I want to do this for you ladies and gentleman! You have taken me in and accepted me as one of your own! I want you all to listen very carefully to these men because they're going to tell you exactly how their railroad line can ease your burdened lives and bring prosperity to Sandy Brook! My name's Butch Cavendish! You'll probably see it come ballot time!

The crowd APPLAUDS as he steps away from the podium and descends the stairs. One of the finely dressed railroad men steps to the podium and begins addressing the crowd.

Mr. Winthrop is waiting for him.

CAVENDISH

What is it?

WINTHROP

Word from your associate in Texas.

Winthrop hands him a telegram.

INSERT

The body of the telegram reads: ALL CONTRACTORS HAVE BEEN ELIMINATED, BUT ONLY FOUR OF THE FIVE RANGERS ARE DEAD. IT APPEARS THERE IS A LONE RANGER.

BACK TO SCENE

Cavendish angrily crumples the telegram and throws it at Mr. Winthrop, causing him to flinch.

CAVENDISH

Damn! That's what I get for hiring common brigands!

He pushes past Mr. Winthrop.

CAVENDISH

Send me three tonight Mr. Winthrop. I will need extra help in relieving my...anxieties.

WINTHROP

Three! But sir, I may not be able to procure three for...

CAVENDISH

Don't complain, it angers me. You'd better have three or you'll be a substitute.

WINTHROP

I will do my best sir.

Mr. Winthrop hangs his head as he walks off, the worry of becoming a substitute written on his plump face.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

Tonto and John tie their horses down and they enter the cabin.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

John strikes a match, lighting a lantern. He looks around his homestead and his countenance falls. Tears well and a single one rolls down his cheek.

JOHN

Feels like a tomb in here Tonto.

TONTO

I understand.

JOHN

There's nothing left for me here.

TONTO

Only memories that haunt.

JOHN

What should I do?

TONTO

What ever is in your heart.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT - LATER

John and Tonto watch as the cabin burns, black smoke rising into the starry night sky. In the distance, NIGHT BIRDS CRY.

EXT. GRAVE - NIGHT - LATER

John is kneeling at a crude stone headstone beneath an old, bent tree. In the b.g., the cabin still burns. The moonlight casts enough light that the etchings on the headstone can be read.

INSERT

REBECCA ANN REID, WIFE OF JACOB, MOTHER OF DANIEL AND JOHNATHAN, BORN 1834, DIED 1856, AT HOME WITH THE LORD

BACK TO SCENE

JOHN

Dad told me once that he never took a man's life unless he had to. Well, I'm going to take a man's life because I want to. I'm sorry mom, I know if you and dad were here now you'd do everything in your power to stop me. All I ask is that you try and understand, and if you can't, then please try to forgive me.

He stands, pulls a revolver and loads the silver bullet.

JOHN

Come on.

TONTO

To Mexico?

JOHN

That's where Collins was headed. Where ever he is is where I need to be.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT - A MOMENT LATER

John and Tonto ride swiftly away as the cabin, reduced now to a pile of smoldering debris in the b.g., fades from view.

EXT. DESERT - DAWN

John and Tonto ride side by side. The sun is rising, painting the sky and the terrain a deep orange.

JOHN

I've been meaning to ask Tonto, how is it that you speak english so well?

TONTO

My father sent my brother and I to the Reverend Wolcotts school. He thought it best that we learn the white man's tongue.

JOHN

That's sound reasoning. And by listening to you, I can tell the Reverend was an excellent teacher.

Tontos tone becomes laced with sadness.

TONTO

That he was kemosabe, as was his sweet wife. Mr. and Mrs. Reverend Wolcott were genuinely loving people. it mattered not at all to them that my brother and I were Indian, which regrettably was their undoing.

JOHN

What happened?

TONTO

We were students there many years John, and there were always those in town that disapproved of them teaching Indians. Some considered us nothing more than subhuman savages. In our years there nothing had ever happened, but tensions had been festering for all that time. One night, a group with murder in their hearts attacked the good Reverend and his wife. They killed them in cold blood while the town watched. They burned the school to the ground and raided their home, taking whatever was of value.

JOHN

What about the Sheriff? Where was he?

TONTO

The coward hid until they had gone. My brother and I discovered the ruins of the school house and their bodies, which they had left in the street as we were coming into town for class the following morning. Heart sick and enraged, my brother and I went in pursuit.

JOHN

Did you find them?

Tonto doesn't answer. He has the look of remembrance in his eyes.

JOHN

Tonto, did you find them?

Tonto glances at John with a hollow look upon his face.

TONTO

Yes, we found them, and the things we did to them...let us just say Hell will be a more pleasant experience.

John shakes his head in understanding.

They ride on in silence.

INT. CAVENDISH RESIDENCE - DEN - DAY

Cavendish is sitting behind a polished mahogany desk. He is speaking to an UNKNOWN MAN O.S.

UNKNOWN MAN (V.O.)

We can't allow the Rangers to become a symbol.

CAVENDISH

I understand sir. I thought that was the reason for my presence here. I'm a Texan, but first and foremost, I'm an *American*. Unfortunately, there are many in my state that aren't. Too many of them are supporting those damn Rangers, those...criminals! They look down upon any authority not their own, which means *your* authority. I assure you I can create certain instances that will change the way Texas feels about the larger than life Texas Rangers. Yes, I can sway public opinion away from them to you and yours, and we can federalize Texas! Just remember this come ball...

A KNOCK on the door interrupts him. It comes open and Winthrop enters. He nods, acknowledging the unseen man.

CAVENDISH

This had better be important Mr. Winthrop.

WINTHROP

Yes sir. Word from your associate.

Winthrop crosses into the room, leaving the door open behind him.

WINTHROP

He has requested addresses and other information. He advises that he'll be traveling and it could be days before we hear from him again.

Cavendish shifts in his seat, eyeing Winthrop coldly.

CAVENDISH

Once again you interrupt me with nothing substantial.

WINTHROP

Not at all sir. Your instructions were to bring you *any and all word* concerning the situation in Texas.

Cavendish jumps from his chair and swings a mean right cross, catching Winthrop in the jaw. Blood spews from his mouth as he reels backwards. Dazed, he trips over his own feet and falls to the floor.

Cavendish takes a handkerchief and wipes the blood from his knuckles.

CAVENDISH

Do us both a favor you fat prick and quit! Clearly you can stomach everything but *politics!* Get out of my sight you worthless mass of pig shit!

Winthrop picks himself up and sways unsteadily from the effects of the blow.

He stumbles out of the door and barely has the sense enough to close it behind him.

Cavendish returns his attention to the unknown man.

CAVENDISH

Obviously you can take the boy out of Texas, but not Texas out of the boy.

He sets on the edge of the desk.

CAVENDISH

I'm sorry about that sir, now, as I was saying...

EXT. DESERT - DAY

John and Tonto are still riding side by side. In the f.g. is Collins's shack. Above it, scavenger birds circle in a frenzy.

SUPERIMPOSE: 4 DAYS LATER

JOHN

That's strange.

TONTO

Indeed.

They turn towards the shack.

EXT. SHACK - DAY - CONTINUOUS

They dismount and secure their horses to the hitching post. Several of the large ugly birds are perched on the edge of the roof. To their amazement, several come out of the cabins open door from the semidarkness within.

JOHN

You smell that Tonto?

TONTO

It is the scent of death.

They shew the birds away as they enter the cabin. Some SQUAWK in protest.

INT. SHACK - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The body of Collins is still in the rocker, a bloated, rotting monstrosity. Hanging limply in his hand is a pistol. A scavenger bird chips away at the large bullet hole in his forehead while others pick at the clothing to expose the flesh beneath. Behind his body on the wall is a sickening pattern of skull fragments and dried brain matter.

John and Tonto lift their hands to their noses.

The two are thoroughly disgusted. John drops to his knees and WRETCHES. Tonto risks going to the body. The birds scatter as he approaches.

There is something on Collins's shirt. It is a hastily hand written note. Tonto pulls it off of the decomposing corpse.

He reads and his eyes widen with surprise.

TONTO

Kemosabe.

John is picking himself up as Tonto takes him by the arm and leads him out.

EXT. SHACK - DAY - CONTINUOUS

John stops and puts his hand on his knees once he is out in the fresh air and COUGHS his lungs clear.

TONTO

This is not going to make you feel any better.

Tonto passes him the note.

JOHN

There's no atoning for what I've done, let the devil take me. Collins.

John crumples up the note and tosses it away angrily. He kicks dirt into the air and looks to the sky. He trembles with rage and disappointment.

JOHN

Not like this! He was mine! Where is my justice?!

He drops to his knees, shoulders slumped in defeat. Tears stain his cheeks.

Tonto kneels before him and places his hands on his shoulders.

JOHN

Why am I denied my revenge?

TONTO

You have not been denied John. As I said before, Fate sometimes rides a swifter horse. But I think fate has opened a door.

JOHN

What are you talking about? He was mine Tonto. I was to take him. Not Fate. Me!

TONTO

While you were unconscious in the cave, you would talk in your sleep. I learned a great deal about you and your family. You also mentioned Collins as their murderer, so I left the cave and went into town. I posed as a bounty hunter and got what information I could concerning Collins and his men from the Marshal. It is surprising what is known about some people John, so you will be happy to hear that Collins was a known illiterate. He could not read or write.

JOHN

What?

TONTO

Collins did not write that note. Nor did he shoot himself.

John is confused.

JOHN

I...I don't understand.

TONTO

I think someone killed Collins to keep him from talking.

JOHN

You mean the Sagebrush Gang was hired to kill us?

TONTO

I believe so.

JOHN

Who would've hired them? And why? I think you're grasping at straws.

Tonto shakes his head.

TONTO

I do not have those answer John, but I
have a strong feeling that you will
have your justice after all.

EXT. DONNOR CABIN - DUSK

Bart KNOCKS on the cabin door. He WHISTLES nonchalantly as he waits. The door comes open and standing there is MRS. EUNICE DONNOR, Bob Donnors wife. She is an attractive woman, 30, with curly blonde hair and eyes the color of the ocean.

EUNICE

Can I help you?

BART

Are you Mrs. Robert Donnor?

She deflates and her eyes immediately begin to tear.

EUNICE

It's my husband isn't it?

BART

Yes ma'am, I'm afraid it is. But there
is good news. You'll be with him soon.

He raises his pistol and shoots her dead.

He holsters his weapon and then removes a tablet from his duster pocket, opens it and and crosses her off of what is obviously a list of names.

As he walks away, a BABYS CRY stops him. He draws his pistol and goes back to the house.

EXT. CAIDEN FARM - MORNING

JOYCE CAIDEN throws feed to the chickens gathering around her. Bart rides into the yard and stops his horse, but he does not dismount.

BART

Good morning madam.

JOYCE

Good mornin' to you.

BART

Is this the Caiden residence?

JOYCE

Yes. Is everything alright?

BART

No madam, everything isn't alright. It concerns your husband Thomas.

She drops the bucket and goes pale.

JOYCE

No...

As with Mrs. Donnor, he ends her life with one bullet. He takes the tablet and crosses her off of his list. He rides off as if he has just done the most normal thing in the world to do.

INT. JASPER SALOON - NIGHT

SUPERIMPOSE: JASPER, TEXAS

John and Tonto ascend the steps and cross the porch. They part as a DRUNKEN MAN staggers out of the saloon. They enter through the swinging swinging doors.

INT. JASPER SALOON - NIGHT

Four SALOON GIRLS dance as the bald PIANO PLAYER plays a fast tune. A group of COWBOYS CLAP along, encouraging the girls. There is a card game going on at two separate tables and the BARTENDER, 40, wearing an apron over a protruding belly fills a row of glasses for those at the bar.

Tonto and John enter. Upon seeing Tonto, the piano player stops playing and all eyes are suddenly focused on them.

BARTENDER

Get him out of here!

JOHN

Why?

BARTENDER

We don't serve Injuns in here!

JOHN

He's my friend.

BARTENDER

I said get him out of here!

TONTO

It is alright Kemosabe. I will wait for you outside. These are not Collins's men, a tussle with them will gain you nothing.

BARTENDER

Never thought I'd see an Injun with some sense.

Tonto turns to leave but John takes hold of his arm and shakes his head.

JOHN

This isn't right Tonto.

Five COWBOYS at the bar set down their drinks and make their way through the crowd towards them. They are tall, thick in the chest, and scowling like feral animals.

BARTENDER

Boy, you're in for a world of hurt.

Those sitting at the tables nearest John and Tonto evacuate their seats, hoping to avoid the devastation that is coming.

Angry and running on pure adrenaline, John quickdraws his pistols and has the hammers pulled back in the blink of an eye. The cowboys stop, eyes on John's pistols.

JOHN

Which one of you do I shoot first?!

No one moves.

The barrel of a pistol is placed against John's head. Tonto turns quickly to defend his friend but finds a shotgun aimed at his gut.

SHERIFF HOLLAND, 30, chews on a tooth pick as he presses his pistol against John's head.

DEPUTY SHANE, 20, looks rather pleased with himself as he holds Tonto at bay with his shotgun.

SHERIFF HOLLAND

No one's getting shot tonight, so why don't you put those guns away and step outside with me and the good Deputy.

John slowly holsters his guns and turns around.

JOHN

Sheriff, those men were...

SHERIFF HOLLAND

I don't give a damn what those men were going to do. We don't want Indians here, so you two come with us outside, get on your horses, and hit the trail.

As the deputy and the Sheriff escort John and Tonto out, the piano player resumes playing and patrons return to what they had been doing.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. SALOON - NIGHT

John and Tonto ride at a good pace away from the saloon as the Sheriff and young deputy eye their departure.

DEPUTY SHANE

Damn Holland, we should've killed that Injun, and his sly friend.

SHERIFF HOLLAND

You may get your chance yet Shane. Something tells me they'll be back.

EXT. CAMP SITE - NIGHT

A campfire burns. John pours Tonto a cup of coffee.

JOHN

I'm sorry Tonto.

TONTO

For what?

JOHN

For the way you were treated back there.

TONTO

You have nothing to be sorry for.

Tonto stokes the fire.

TONTO

My father once told me to never apologize for another man's ignorance.

John smiles.

JOHN

Your dad and mine would've gotten along great.

EXT. CAMP SITE - NIGHT - LATER

John is in the throws of a nightmare. The fire light glistens off of the beads of sweat that cover his face. Tonto wakes and watches a moment.

JOHN

No! Patricia, I'm sorry...I should've come right away! Please...I needed...

John awakens, wide eyed and PANTING. He sees Tonto and the concern on his face and sits up, shaking his head to clear it of the cobwebs.

TONTO

I know what it is like John, all too well.

JOHN

They're never going to stop are they?

TONTO

They will in time.

John massages his temples.

TONTO

Tell me, who is Patricia?

JOHN

Patricia? I take it I was talking in my sleep again?

Tonto nods.

JOHN

She's Dan's ex wife.

TONTO

Where is she?

JOHN

South Pass City, Wyoming. Being a Rangers wife is a hard thing. She tried, but all of the nights she spent alone...I guess I can't blame her. It must've been especially tough on her when she was pregnant with little Dan.

TONTO

As it would be for any woman.

JOHN

Yeah. What's wrong with me Tonto? I should've gone to her as soon as I was able. She needs to know.

TONTO

You will see her soon.

JOHN

Dan wrote to me once saying that he had a big secret, that he'd let me know what it was when I came home. He said it would more than make up for the time he'd lost with Patricia. He said little Dan would never have to worry about anything.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

I thought somehow they'd reconciled and he'd be going to Wyoming to stay.

Tonto is in thought. John notices.

JOHN

What is it?

TONTO

Nothing.

The two friends sit in silence as the fire CRACKLES.

EXT. DESERT STREAM - DAY

Bart fills his canteen as his horse drinks beside him. The water is clear and flowing. Once he has filled his canteen, he caps it, and then removes his glasses and splashes his face with the cool water.

He puts on his glasses and stands, gazing out across the stream. He turns to his horse.

BART

Mrs. Caiden was still living in relative squalor, as was Mrs. Donnor, so obviously they're not in possession of the document. That leaves the Reid residence. Let's pray it's there or our next visit is to Ms. Kaplan, formerly Mrs. Daniel Reid.

EXT. RUINS OF CABIN - DAY

Bart stands in the burnt rubble of what was the Reid cabin. He begins kicking over debris as if searching for something. Satisfied that what he is searching for is not there, an evil, impish grin twists his lips.

He turns to his horse, WHISTLING a happy tune.

EXT. CAMP SITE - DAY

John is cinching up his saddle as tonto pours water onto the fire. Gray smoke swirls into the dry air. John climbs into the saddle as Tonto puts his cup into his saddle bag. He hesitates as his brow wrinkles in thought.

TONTO

Your brother's necklace, may I see it?

John removes his hat, and then pulls the necklace over his head. He tosses it to Tonto, puzzled.

JOHN

What is it Tonto? What's on your mind?

TONTO
Does this look like a key to you?

John thinks a moment. Then he realizes that it *is* a key.

JOHN
Now that you mention it, yeah. But why
did Dan disguise it?

Tonto does not answer.

JOHN
I think I need to go back home.

Tonto quickly mounts Scout and the two blaze a trail to
the Reid cabin.

EXT. RUNS OF CABIN - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: TWO DAYS LATER

John and Tonto are rummaging through the charred timbers.

JOHN
If it was a strong box, it was
destroyed with the cabin.

Tonto shakes his head.

TONTO
I think we should be looking for a
safe.

JOHN
Well, Dan didn't keep it in here, I
would've seen it.

TONTO
Then perhaps it is below us.

The two begin lifting and tossing timbers into the yard.
Ash floats in the air like clouds of nats.

Once they have made a big enough clearing, John begins
heel kicking the weak floorboards. Tonto joins in. Then
the burnt flooring CRACKS, and Johns foot goes straight
through.

They now begin pulling away the cracked pieces of
flooring.

John goes to his belly and sticks his head in the hole
they have made.

JOHN
I see it!

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. RUINS OF CABIN - DAY - A MOMENT LATER

TIGHT ON John's hand as he inserts the key into the blackened safe. CLICK! Tontos hands open the lid. On top of a stack of yellowed papers is a rolled up document tied at the center with red twine.

PULL BACK to reveal Tonto as he cuts the twine. John unrolls the document.

INSERT

At the top of the document in bold black letters are the words: DEED TO LAND.

back to scene.

TONTO

Well?

John reads for a moment.

JOHN

According to this, my brother owned land, and it states that if anything should happen to him, the title is to be transfered to me.

TONTO

I was wrong when I said there was nothing here but memories that haunt.

JOHN

Let's go see this land.

EXT. DAVIS MOUNTAINS - TEXAS - DAY

John and Tonto sit atop their steeds, gazing at the large purple peaks that seem to flow like frozen waves beneath the clear blue sky.

They nudge their mounts towards the grassy foothills and towering forests, leaving the dusty plains behind them.

EXT. MINE - DAY

They come upon the mouth of a cave which has been boarded over with thick timbers. Painted across the makeshift barrier is: DANGER - KEEP OUT.

An old mine car is sitting on its side and there is other debris scattered near the closed entrance.

TONTO

We have been on your brother's land for quite some time now. It appears you are the owner of this mine.

JOHN

So this was Dan's big secret?

John dismounts as does Tonto.

TONTO

It appears so.

John goes to the entrance and peers through the slats. He then begins pulling on the boards.

TONTO

You sure that is wise?

JOHN

No. But I have to check it out.

Tonto lends a hand.

INT. MINE - DAY - LATER

John strikes a match, which he uses to light a dust covered lantern. The light of the lantern is dim and does little to brighten the darkness.

It does illuminate another mine car and the rails beneath it.

JOHN

It hasn't been worked in a long time.

John peers into the rail car and something glints inside. He reaches in and then withdraws a rock. He holds the rock in the lantern light and turns it slowly. He smiles and gives Tonto a sideways glance.

JOHN

You know what that looks like?

TONTO

Silver.

JOHN

The mine was productive at one time.

TONTO

Perhaps it is best we get tools before exploring further. Carver City is not far from here. We can make it there and back before nightfall.

JOHN

I think one of us should stay.

TONTO

Then I will go.

Tonto turns to exit.

TONTO

Be careful.

John nods and moves deeper into the mine, lantern held in front of him.

EXT. CARVER CITY - DAY

Tonto rides through the center of town. A group of WOMEN watch him warily from the balcony of the hotel. An OLDER GENTLEMAN nods to him and Tonto returns the gesture.

CHILDREN run across the road in front of him carrying wooden guns and making GUN SHOT sound effects with their mouths.

He dismounts and ties down scout outside PARKERS GENERAL STORE.

INT. PARKERS GENERAL STORE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

WENDY PARKER, 55, blonde hair streaked with white, turns from the shelf she is straightening and greets Tonto with a smile, not caring that he is an Indian.

WENDY

How can I help you stranger.

Tonto smiles as he approaches her.

TONTO

I need supplies madam. Digging tools and lanterns.

WENDY

Ah, you're a prospector. We have what you need.

She motions for Tonto to follow her.

She takes him to a section of the store where the items he has requested can be found.

WENDY

We should have everything you need.

TONTO

Thank you.

Wendy leaves Tonto as he picks his selection of tools.

EXT. PARKERS GENERAL STORE - DAY - MINUTES LATER

Tonto is busy tying down the tools he has just purchased onto Scout. Two shovels and pick axes are wrapped in canvass which he has secured with rope. Hanging from the rope are two lanterns.

A BOY, 13, tanned face freckled and dirty, is hawking the days newspaper.

The boy holds it into the air as he SHOUTS the days headlines.

BOY

Kin of missing Rangers murdered! Read
all about it! Kin of missing Rangers
Murdered, authorities have no suspects!
Read all about it!

Tonto whips his head around upon hearing the shocking announcement. He quick-steps to the boy and takes the paper from his hand. As he reads the headline, a lady approaches the boy and gives him a five cent piece for her paper.

The boy sees the look of Horror on Tontos face.

BOY

What's wrong Mister? You look like
you're gonna be sick.

TONTO

I want them all.

The boy is shocked.

Tonto hands him several dollars and takes the papers from him. He then hurries towards the TELEGRAPH OFFICE.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF CARVER CITY - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Tonto holds a match to the stack of newspapers. Within seconds, they are a flaming pile of ash.

EXT. MINE - NIGHT

John emerges, shirt soaked with sweat. Dirt smears his face. He drops the pick axe and sits before the campfire. Tonto hands him a tin plate on which contains freshly roasted Hare meat and beans.

TONTO

I was beginning to worry about you.

JOHN

It's unbelievable Tonto. There's still
a rich vein.

He reaches into his pocket and tosses Tonto a chunk of rock with silver protruding from it.

John puts a healthy portion of meat and beans in his mouth as Tonto admires the treasure in the rock.

JOHN

I've been thinking that the mine has something to do with why we were ambushed.

TONTO

I agree.

JOHN

But I feel there's more to it than just the mine. There's something else.

TONTO

We will figure it out.

Tonto leans forward, the firelight dancing in his dark eyes.

TONTO

Are you going to hire workers?

JOHN

After I find the man responsible for the ambush.

EXT. MINE - MORNING

Tonto is busy melting down the silver and making bullets with the mold.

John shows a large piece of silver to his horse, as if the stallion is interested.

JOHN

There's so much silver in there boy that it practically gives off enough light to see by.

The horse drops his head and nudges John's hand that is holding the silver.

JOHN

You like it?

He strokes the horses neck.

JOHN

I think that's a good name for you; silver.

TONTO

It is a strong name.

EXT. MINE - NIGHT

John is in the throws of a nightmare. His bare chest glistens with sweat. His eyes pop open and he sits up, momentarily disoriented.

When he sees Tonto, he realizes he was having another bad dream.

He runs a hand through his dark hair and SIGHS heavily.

 TONTO
Your family again?

 JOHN
No. Strangers this time.

 TONTO
By your reaction, they were hurting.

 JOHN
Being hurt.

John stands and looks to the stars.

 TONTO
And how does this make you feel?

 JOHN
I've known all my life that people like Collins exist. They prey on the weak and the innocent, using the fear they create to their advantage. It angers me Tonto. I can feel the blood in my veins boiling.

 TONTO
What are you going to do?

 JOHN
Stop as many as I can.

Tonto takes a flaming piece of wood from the fire and holds it up.

 TONTO
This world is one of darkness. Many inhabit it with souls as black as a moonless sky. What it needs is light John. When there is light, darkness cannot exist.

Tonto points to John with piece of flaming wood.

 TONTO
Be that light.

Tonto pulls from his pocket Johns badge and throws it to him.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. MINE - MORNING

John steps from the mine wearing the iconic blue outfit of The Lone Ranger, complete with the gleaming star on his chest.

JOHN

I'm ready.

TONTO

Not quite.

Tonto hands John a piece of black material. John holds it out and sees that it is a mask.

TONTO

I cut it from your brother's vest.

As John looks at the mask, his face takes on an expression of determination.

TONTO

That is your new face now.

John brings the mask to his face and we -

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. SALOON - DAY

A SALOON GIRL is being forced against the wall by two powerful hands. She struggles against them but she is not strong enough to break free.

SALOON GIRL

Please! I'll do whatever you want!

Pull back to reveal a GRUNGY COWBOY, shirtless, suspenders hanging loosely at his legs. Rage fills his eyes and he draws back a meaty fist.

As he punches, a gloved hand shoots into frame, catching the punch and stopping it before it can smash the poor girl's face.

Surprised, the cowboy whips around to see John, now wearing the mask. He does not have time to react. John delivers a blow of his own that drops the cowboy instantly.

The saloon girl presses against the wall, more afraid than she was before upon seeing the masked intruder.

John nods to her as he slides a silver bullet from his gunbelt.

He drops it onto the bare chest of the dazed cowboy.

JOHN

Ma'am.

He walks away.

EXT. COACH ROAD - DAY

A stagecoach sits motionless on the road. The DRIVER lies dead on the ground but the BRAKEMAN has been tied to one of the huge wheels.

Three PASSENGERS, two MALE and one FEMALE, have been pulled from the cab and are being forced to hand over their valuables to a bandanna wearing BANDIT who quickly drops them into a saddle bag as three more BANDITS hold them at gunpoint.

Once he has received all of their valuables, he leaps into the saddle. One of the bandits has climbed onto the coach and cuts loose the strongbox.

As he climbs down, three SHOTS in rapid succession ring out. The three bandits grab their wrists almost simultaneously as their pistols are shot from their hands.

the one with the strongbox goes for his gun but it is shot from his grip as well.

The bandit on the horse drops the saddle bag, spurs his horse, and makes his getaway.

As he rides off, John and Tonto ride into frame. The bandits can do nothing but stand there dumbfounded, clearly shocked by the sudden appearance of the masked man and the Indian.

JOHN

You folks alright?

The passengers nod appreciatively.

John and Tonto dismount. Tonto unties the brakeman and helps him up While John approaches the bandits.

JOHN

Well boys, I'm pretty sure there's a noose with your names on it.

John suddenly strikes the one closest to him. After he collapses, he kneels and puts a silver bullet in the unconscious bandits hand.

INT. BANK -DAY

Tonto and John fist fight a group of BANK ROBBERS. Two WOMEN rush from the bank as the battle intensifies. The two TELLERS watch the event in disbelief.

Once John has downed his two adversaries, he spies Tonto bringing his knife down towards the chest of his opponent.

John quickdraws and shoots the knife from Tontos hand.

Tonto drops the robber and gazes at John with questioning eyes.

JOHN

No killing. If we do, we're no better than they are.

Tonto nods his understanding.

John drops a silver bullet onto the floor beside an unconscious robber.

John turns to the tellers and tips his hat.

INT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY

John is Holding two ROBBERS at gun point. Tonto kneels beside an unconscious CUSTOMER and checks him to see if he is alright.

The customer MOANS as he slowly comes to.

John returns his pistols to their holsters and puts a bullet into one of the robbers shirt pockets.

INT. KAPLAN HOME - DAY

Bart is sitting on a comfortable couch, his wide brimmed hat beside him. He is sipping tea from a china cup. Seated across from him is PATRICIA KAPLAN, formerly Mrs. Dan Reid, 29, a stunning blonde with clear blue eyes. She is holding her own cup of tea.

PATRICIA

You knew Dan?

BART

Not directly. You can say we were business partners after a fashion.

Bart nods to her and holds up the china cup.

BART

The tea is exceptional Ms. Kaplan. As is your hospitality. It does a man good to meet a lady so beautiful and refined.

PATRICIA

You're too kind Mr. Bartholomew.

BART

I can see now that Dan was a man of
exquisite taste.

LITTLE DAN, 6, enters the room holding an envelope. He
takes in the rough looking black man sitting on the
couch. His big blue eyes beneath a tangle of brown hair
take in every detail.

BART

Ah, this must be his boy.

PATRICIA

Yes. This is Little Dan. Say hi to Mr.
Bartholomew.

LITTLE DAN

Hello sir.

BART

He's very well mannered. Rare for a boy
his age.

PATRICIA

He's a gentlemen, just like his father.

Little Dan hands his mother the envelope.

LITTLE DAN

Here's what you asked for mom.

PATRICIA

Give it to Mr. Bartholomew son.

Little Dan takes the envelope to Bart.

Bart sets the cup down on the end table and opens the
envelope and begins to read.

PATRICIA

It arrived about a week ago. I was
instructed to hold it until someone
arrived to collect it. It is what
you're needing?

BART

Yes. Thank you.

Bart returns the telegram to the envelope and grabs his
hat as he stands.

BART

Well, I must be leaving now. I thank
you for the tea and inviting me into
your lovely home.

Bart turns for the door but stops before exiting.

BART
There's one last thing...

INT. CAVENDISH RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Butch is leaning against the wet bar, staring into the mirror. In the mirror, we can see that there is no one behind him. He has a look of disgust upon his face. In his hand is a glass of whiskey.

CAVENDISH
You're pathetic! The only thing you're good for is downing expensive booze! These people took you into their good graces because they feel sorry for you! You're going to have to do something truly amazing to win them over! If you had any sense at all and any self pride, I might have loved you, but you're nothing but a miserable failure and an even worse...

A series of KNOCKS on the door interrupts his mad tirade. He turns as the look of disgust is suddenly replaced with one of annoyance.

CAVENDISH
This had better be good.

He goes to the door and opens it. Standing before him are two of the RAILROAD MEN that were with him on the platform days before. They are back lit by bright moonlight.

CAVENDISH
Gentleman.

The tallest of the two, MR. GRAYSON, fixes his gaze upon Cavendish. He does not look amused.

MR. GRAYSON
It's time Cavendish to create those *instances*.

A devilish smile erases the look of annoyance.

CAVENDISH
I've already taken the initiative to set the events in motion. No worries gentleman. All will be well.

MR. GRAYSON
It had better be.

The two railroad men abruptly turn on their heels and disappear into the night. Cavendish closes the door and turns back to the mirror. He holds up the glass of whiskey.

CAVENDISH

I'll be damned. Events are already in motion you say? I might've been a bit hard on you before.

He takes a drink and then his face scrunches into a mask of pure animalistic hatred.

He throws the glass at the mirror, shattering it in a spider web pattern.

CAVENDISH

You'd better not disappoint me! Remember, you not only have to prove yourself to them, but to *me* as well!

EXT. CAMP SITE - NIGHT

Tonto is making an arrowhead before the fire. A newspaper is dropped onto his lap from O.S.

He looks up as John dismounts. John tears the mask from his face.

Tonto stands.

JOHN

When were you going to tell me?!

Tonto remains quiet.

JOHN

It's been front page news for a week!

TONTO

Know that I have done all that I can to protect Patricia.

JOHN

Really? Is it going to be enough? For all I know, she and Little Dan are already dead!

TONTO

Please Kemosabe, I have done all that I can do.

John stalks forward, forming his hands into fists.

JOHN

Never keep anything from me, *Kemosabe!*

John punches Tonto solidly on the chin. The Indian stumbles backwards, and then drops to his knees. He fights unconsciousness.

John quickly ties on the mask and returns to the saddle. Tonto wobbles as he stands. Through bleary eyes, he watches John ride off into the desert.

EXT. RUINS OF CABIN - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: 6 DAYS LATER

Tonto stands amidst the burnt timbers. He studies Bart closely as he arrives. The two men share a gaze of equal distaste.

BART
I was expecting the Ranger.

TONTO
Sorry to disappoint you.

Bart slides from the saddle.

BART
Disappointed? I think not. It's always a good thing...killing an Indian.

Bart quick draws the pistol with the long barrel but Tonto has thrown a hatchet which slams into the gun, breaking it into pieces before he can even aim.

BART
I loved that gun.

Bart chargers and pulls a bowie knife.

EXT. KAPLAN HOME - DAY

Patricia and Little Dan are searching through the burnt ruin that was their home, gathering anything that can be salvaged. Little Dan spots a rider in the distance.

LITTLE DAN
Someone's coming mom.

Patricia watches John as he speeds closer.

PATRICIA
Come to me son.

He does and partially hides behind her.

John dismounts as soon as he reaches the yard.

JOHN
Are you hurt?

Patricia sees the star on John's chest and relaxes.

PATRICIA

No.

John kneels before Little Dan.

JOHN

What about you?

He just shakes his head.

John stands and takes in the destroyed home.

JOHN

I'm sorry. I didn't know he'd be coming
or I would've gotten here sooner. I
could've stopped him.

Patricia smiles, and even with the soot on her face, she
is beautiful.

PATRICIA

It's alright John. Don't blame
yourself.

He is surprised that she knows who he is.

JOHN

How did you...

PATRICIA

That mask may hide the resemblance from
everyone else, but not from me.

Little Dan steps forward.

LITTLE DAN

Uncle John?

John smiles and kneels before his nephew a second time.

JOHN

It's me.

LITTLE DAN

Are you looking for the bad man?

JOHN

Yes.

PATRICIA

I received a telegram two weeks ago. I
was told there would be someone coming
to get it. I assumed it was him.

John stands, turns, and gazes back in the direction he
had come from.

JOHN

I don't know who would've sent you a telegram.

She steps beside him and presents him with a singed envelope.

PATRICIA

I was lucky enough to save this. It's addressed to the Masked Man. It came with the other.

John tears the envelope and reads the telegram.

JOHN

Oh my God!

John runs to Silver and climbs into the saddle.

LITTLE DAN

What's wrong Uncle John?

JOHN

I have to help a friend.

PATRICIA

Be careful. This man is ruthless.

LITTLE DAN

Will you be back?

JOHN

Absolutely.

John tosses a silver bullet to Little Dan.

JOHN

That's yours to remember my promise to return.

John spurs Silver and they are off like lightning.

LITTLE DAN

I hope he can help his friend mom.

PATRICIA

I believe he will son, I believe he will.

EXT. RUINS OF CABIN - DAY

Bart is standing over Tonto, who is tied to stakes in the ground. His face is one massive bruise. His shirt is torn and blood stained, and dozens of cuts criss-cross his arms.

Bart is missing his glasses and there is a long nasty cut, now scabbed over on his cheek. Dark patches of dried blood stain the areas around the many holes that have been sliced through his faded duster.

A cloth is wrapped around one hand and red with old blood.

BUZZARDS land nearby, patiently waiting for Tonto to die.

BART

I give you full marks for bravery Indian. You do your race of...*inhumans* proud. You didn't make it easy. I've never had such trouble felling anyone before. As difficult as it is for me to admit, I thought you were going to be the death of me.

Bart grins wickedly at the hungry birds.

BART

They're waiting for you to die savage. It must be a hard thing knowing that you're about to leave this world. But there's an uncanny strength in you. I bested you nearly a week ago and you've had no food or water. Again, as much as I hate to admit it, you amaze me.

Bart kicks dirt into Tontos face. Tonto COUGHS, then speaks with a DRY, RASPY voice.

TONTO

Boast all you want. A reckoning is coming, and he wears a silver star.

BART

Yes, the Ranger. I've asked many times his location, but your stubbornness in providing an answer surprises me. After all, white men have driven you from your land, destroyed your villages, raped your women, and murdered your children, yet you protect this Ranger as if he is kin.

TONTO

You have no soul or you would know the value of friendship. You are like a ghost doomed to wander the earth, searching for that which all men value but will always elude you.

BART

I assume you are speaking of loyalty and trust, of bonds formed in the heat of battle. I know all too well of the bonds of friendship. I witnessed many of my friends and brothers torn apart at Shiloh, I felt the heartbreak and grieved their loss. Why have friends when you're bound to lose them?

Bart digs the toes of his boot into a wound in Tontos side. Tonto grimaces in pain and GRUNTS. The buzzards SQUAWK.

BART

Another thing I must admit Indian, is how impressed I was at you sending that telegram to Patricia, pretending to be Reid. Indians aren't the most intelligent of creatures so be proud that you've astounded me. I have a specific view of Indians and you've challenged that view. I must say that that has angered me to no end.

Bart pulls a pistol and locks the hammer back. He looks to the buzzards and aims at Tonto.

BART

I've kept them away long enough. My brothers must feed. I want you to know that I'll find Reid and I'll pull his entrails from his body. You must feel totally hopeless knowing you'll no longer be able to assist your friend. That's just as well, the knowledge that I've pulled the hope from your soul is better than an evening with a fine lady. I'll sleep contented.

Tonto smiles weakly. Bart sees this and he wrinkles his face with hatred.

A bullet strikes his gun hand. He drops the gun and clutches the back of his hand as the blood pours between his fingers.

REVERSE ANGLE to reveal John sliding his pistol into its holster as he and Silver gallop full steam ahead to rescue Tonto.

Bart wastes no time in mounting his horse and making his escape.

John does not pursue for the moment. He pulls on the reins, stopping Silver just feet away from Tonto. He dismounts with a canteen.

He cuts the bonds loose and helps Tonto into a sitting position. He unscrews the canteen cap and gives it to Tonto who drinks slowly. Water cascades down his chin.

JOHN

That was a foolish thing you did Tonto. I was almost too late.

TONTO

I am alright, thank you for asking.

JOHN

Sorry. I need to get you to a doctor.

TONTO

There is no time John. He is yours for the taking.

JOHN

I can't leave you like this Tonto.

Tonto finds enough strength to push him away.

TONTO

Go! I will find you.

John is back on Silver in seconds and riding away from Tonto who is slowly rising on weak legs.

As John races to close the distance between he and Bart, Scout appears from the desert. Tonto grins.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

John sees Bart ahead of him and he digs in his spurs, forcing Silver to pump his legs faster. In the f.g. of in the distance is a cloud of low lying black smoke.

The baleful WAIL of a TRAIN WHISTLE accompanies the black smoke.

EXT. TRAIN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Bart is coming up fast to the caboose. He glances over his shoulder, drawing a pistol at the same time, and fires at John.

John returns fire and misses but Silver is closing the distance between them.

Bart attempts one more shot. SHOUTING in frustration, he holsters the pistol and maneuvers closer to the caboose. He reaches for the railing post.

He is still too far away.

BART

Ha!

He pulls on the reins, turning his horse closer to the tiny railcar.

He grabs onto the rail post and pulls himself out of the saddle and over the railing. His horse trots away from the speeding train.

He pulls on the cabooses door handle but it is locked. As he shakes the handle desperately, we see embossed in bronze lettering on the doors window: GREATER HASTINGS RAILROAD.

BART

Dammit!

Bart finds the ladder that leads to the roof of the railcar and climbs quickly.

Once on the roof, he draws his pistol and fires, forcing John and Silver to slow down. John answers his shots with several of his own. Bart begins running and leaping from rail car to rail car.

Silver pushes up alongside the ladder and John leaps from the saddle, catching the rungs and ascends.

EXT. TRAIN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

John follows Bart from car to car. Bart spins and John hits the deck. The bullet passes by only inches above his head.

Bart continues his escape.

John rises and charges like a sprinter after the starter gun sounds.

As he pursues his adversary, he sees that the train has entered hill country. As he leaps to the next car, the high rocky walls whip past in a blur of gray-brown.

John is close enough now to Bart and dives. He tackles him and the two enemies crash to the roof of the railcar.

The two men punch at each other mercilessly. Just when John is about to gain the upper hand, Bart finds the strength and kicks John off of the car.

Smiling evilly, Bart turns for the engine. Ahead of him, the pass narrows into a high hill where the gaping maw of a dark tunnel waits to swallow him.

As the the train enters the tunnel, Bart presses himself to the roof of the railcar.

EXT. TUNNEL - DAY - SAME TIME

Tonto and Scout follow the train into the darkness.

EXT. TRAIN - DAY - A MOMENT LATER

As the train emerges from the tunnel and Bart rises, John slams into him, taking him completely by surprise.

Again the two men are locked in hand to hand combat. They both deliver powerful blows. And as before, Bart is victorious.

BART

You can't best me Ranger!

Bart advances upon John, stomping down at him with the heels of his worn boots. John deflects them and scoots away.

BART

You're definitely hard to kill, I'll give you that!

Bart pulls a bowie knife and kisses the blade. The sun gleams from the blade.

BART

I told that Indian friend of your that I was going to pull your entrails out! I'm a man of my word after all! I have to live up to my reputation!

John has squirmed dangerously close to the edge of the car. He peers out and smiles.

JOHN'S P.O.V.

He sees that the train is fast approaching a rail switch.

BACK TO SCENE

As Bart bends over him and slashes at him with the knife, John kicks his wrist, dislodging the blade from his grip and rolls over the side.

Bart is stunned and he rushes to the edge to see the bloody remains of the Ranger splattered over the tracks. But to his horror he sees John atop Silver with his pistol pointed not at him but at...

The switch.

John fires twice and the force of the bullets impact turns the switch.

The train switches tracks. As John and Silver ride away from the train, we PULL UP AND AWAY, revealing that the train is heading for a solid mass of rocky hill, the tracks ending having not been completed.

EXT. TRAIN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

C.U of Bart, whose wide eyes narrow as he accepts his fate.

EXT. TRAIN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The ENGINEER leaps from the engine and hits the ground like a sack of stones.

The engine collides with the hill. The sound of IMPACT and the WRENCHING OF STEEL rumbles the like God's angry voice through the desert.

Clouds of dirt Geiger up, as does rock and pieces of train as the cars buckle and lift into the air.

EXT. RUINS OF TRAIN - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

As the dust settles, John dismounts and stalks towards Bart who lies amongst the debris, a ragged and broken man.

Barts duster is in shreds and his face and arms are bleeding from deep wounds. His shirt also in tatters, is wet with blood.

As John advances through the haze of smoke and dust, Bart manages to pull himself into a sitting position.

JOHN

And you said I was hard to kill.

Barts body convulses as he COUGHS. He spits blood from his mouth.

BART

That shot you made Ranger was one in a million. I wouldn't have believed it myself if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes. Remarkable.

John glowers down at Bart. He pulls his pistol and aims the barrel at Barts forehead.

BART

I've never done a decent thing in my life Reid, not one damn time. My mother always said I was destined for death. A true statement right? I mean, we're all going to die sometime. So do what you came to do. Finish it.

John hesitates. Bart can see he is conflicted.

BART

Can't do it can you boy?

John grits his teeth. His hand holding the gun begins to shake causing the barrel to shift from side to side.

BART

I didn't think so. You don't have the killer instinct.

John doesn't lower the pistol, but the shaking in his hand has gotten worse.

BART

I'm wondering, aren't you curious as to why this has happened to you? The thought has had to have crossed your mind.

John remains silent, but continues to stare needles into Bart.

Bart smiles as if he is beginning a happy tale.

BART

It wasn't personal. It was a job. And why do people work jobs? For the money of course. In my case, very good money.

JOHN

Looks like you won't be spending any of it.

BART

Obviously.

JOHN

Who hired you? I want his name.

BART

I could give you his name I suppose, but why should I? You won't kill me outright which means you're going to leave me here to the elements, let nature do what you can't.

John holsters his pistol and kneels. He pulls Bart to him by the threads of his shirt. Bart MOANS in pain.

JOHN

You're right, I won't kill you in cold blood. That would make me just like you, and I'm nothing like you. But you'll tell me who it is that hired you or I'll just add to the pain you're already experiencing, and the things I'll do to you will make you beg for death.

BART

Well Ranger, it seems I'm going to do something decent after all. The man you want is Calends. Butch Cavendish. You can find him by way of the railroad whose train you just destroyed.

JOHN

He's a railroad man?

Bart smiles a smile that is somehow devoid of any emotion.

BART

Happy hunting Lone Ranger.

John stands and backs away from Bart, taking in his dying enemy one last time. He turns to see Tonto standing behind him, chest heaving, dark eyes narrowed into slits.

JOHN

Tonto...

TONTO

Go Kemosabe.

John stares at his friend a moment, SIGHS and walks away.

Tonto draws a knife and flicks it into the ground beside Bart, the handle protruding from the dirt.

BART

I wish I could've seen his face.

TONTO

You were looking at it.

BART

I suppose I was.

TONTO

You and I have some unfinished business.

Tonto pulls a second knife.

TONTO

Pick it up.

Bart reaches for the knife.

EXT. SANDY BROOK, UTAH - DAY

Cavendish, Mr. Grayson and the other men from the Greater Hastings Railroad pose with the entire population of Sandy Brook beside a train.

The PHOTOGRAPHER, whose head is beneath the cloth of his early box type camera, lifts a hand and begins counting down by curling his fingers. Once his hand has made a fist, he takes the picture, the powder of the camera FLASHES WHITE and CHEERS follow as the smoke of the ignited flash powder wafts away in the gentle breeze.

Once the picture has been taken, everyone begins to mingle. Mr. Winthrop hurries over to Cavendish waving a telegram in the air.

Cavendish's jovial expression immediately changes as he spies Winthrop.

WINTHROP

Mr. Cavendish! Mr. Cavendish!

CAVENDISH

You really know how to ruin a man's good time.

WINTHROP
Telegram for you sir.

He holds out the folded sheet of paper.

WINTHROP
You'll want to read this.

Cavendish snatches the telegram from Winthropps pudgy hand.

Once he has the telegram unfolded, his expression changes once again, this time to one of sudden fear. The railroad men see his expression and move in to view the telegram.

INSERT

It reads: I'M COMING FOR YOU CAVENDISH. THE LONE RANGER

BACK TO SCENE

Mr. Grayson shakes his head as he shoots Cavendish a look of disappointment.

He drops the telegram as he turns to the railroad men.

MR. GRAYSON
It seems your attempt at killing the Ranger and obtaining the deed has failed completely Cavendish.

CAVENDISH
It's only a small set back Mr. Grayson, I assure you. The situation can be remedied.

MR. GRAYSON
Is that so? Tell me, should we continue to lay track towards that mine or should I wait until you...*remedie* the situation? A delay that lengthy puts profit on hold.

Mr. Winthropps grin of happiness is out of place due to the seriousness of the situation which enrages Cavendish.

CAVENDISH
What are you still doing here?

WINTHROP
There's one last thing to tell you.

Winthrop steps forward and kicks dirt onto Cavendish's highly polished boot. This not only shocks Cavendish, but Mr Grayson and the others as well.

WINTHROP
I quit you miserable whore mongering lunatic!

And with that, he walks away.

Mr. Grayson has had enough.

MR. GRAYSON

Good day to you Mr. Cavendish. We'll be taking our leave now.

As they depart, Cavendish stands there, disbelieving the event that has just transpired.

EXT. RUINS OF CABIN - GRAVE SITE - DAY

John drops a wild flower on the ground before three new headstones. Tonto is beside him, ready for action.

TONTO

Where do we go now?

JOHN

To Wyoming. We have a house to build.

TONTO

And what of this Cavendish?

JOHN

We'll find him.

TONTO

That telegram you sent could cause him to flee.

JOHN

Doesn't matter. He can run all he wants, but we'll get him. Besides, it's a long ride to Wyoming. There'll be people to help along the way.

They go to their horse and climb into the saddle.

TONTO

True Kemosabe. There are many, of that there is no doubt.

JOHN

And Tonto, back at the train. He was your last. You ride with me, you don't kill. Period.

He slides a silver bullet from his gun belt and tosses it to him.

JOHN

That silver bullet's your reminder that we're different than those we hunt. We seek justice, not revenge.

TONTO

Then let us take your *silver justice* to
Cavendish and those like him.

John nods to his friend, spurs Silver and they are off in
a flash towards adventure, and Justice.

FADE OUT:

THE END

EXT. DAVIS MOUNTAINS - DAY

