

MONSTERS OF GOD

"Pilot"

Written by

Rod Lurie

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EXT. WESTERN TEXAS. DAY

Over shots of the terrible beauty of desolate West Texas, an old-style cinema scroll runs from the bottom up to the top.

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BY 1867, THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ENDED ONE CIVIL WAR BUT WAS STILL FIGHTING ANOTHER - AGAINST NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES LIVING IN THE GREAT WESTERN FRONTIER. THE MOST RUTHLESS OF THEM WAS THE COMANCHE NATION - PERHAPS THE MOST EFFICIENT WARRIORS THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE HAD EVER SEEN.

Now images of the grand Fort Thayer- a stockade made of tall lumber with a gigantic tower that peers over the grand valley. The Pecos River roars behind it. SCROLL continues.

FORT THAYER WAS ESTABLISHED AS A BUFFER BETWEEN THE COMANCHE AND THE WHITE CIVILIZATIONS THAT WERE FORMED IN ITS VICINITY. THE PRIMARY GOAL OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WAS TO GET THE COMANCHE AND OTHER TRIBES ONTO RESERVATIONS. NOTHING WOULD STOP AMERICA'S MANIFEST DESTINY.

Now we tilt down from the glorious blue sky to the front of Fort Thayer's mighty gates as they swing open wide.

FOURTEEN MEN wearing Cavalry blue and Greyish stetsons ride toward us with a ferocious intensity on their horses- a massive dust storm created in their wake.

MONSTERS OF GOD

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EXT. MOUNTAIN CREEK. DAY

*

FIVE COMANCHE braves stand guard as THREE SQUAWS work by the river pounding on deer skins. It is quite, serene, until-

*

A SQUAD OF AMERICAN CAVALRY, atop their raging quarterhorses, storm into the area, rifles drawn, all hell following.

*
*

In the lead is a tower of a man, a warrior, THE COLONEL. *
 Beside him, also full of rage and steam, is his SERGEANT *
 MAJOR. All the other men are young soldiers. *

The Comanche braves react immediately.

The arrows start flying-

One hits the horse of an AMERICAN PRIVATE. The animal drops *
 instantaneously- crushing the poor private under its weight, *
 his scream muted by an arrow that THWUMPS in his neck. *

The Colonel fires his Winchester rifle and shoots one of the *
 Comanche in his leg. The Indian drops, wincing in pain. *

One of the privates gets off of his horse to load his musket-

SERGEANT MAJOR *
 Goddamn it, private, get back on-

Then WHOOSH- an arrow goes right through the dismounted
 private. Two down.

But now- Several of the soldiers on their horses have
 surrounded two of the Comanche braves. Captured.

The Colonel rides past The Sergeant Major. He points to one *
 of the squaws who is running through the creek in an attempt *
 to escape.

LANCASTER
 Get her!

WINDOM
 But, sir-

LANCASTER
 NOW!

EXT. DOWN CREEK. A HALF MINUTE LATER

The young squaw is running toward camera.

Behind her, the Sergeant Major on his horse roars behind her- *
 getting closer- closer- closer.... *

EXT. TEXAS DESERT. DAY

There are now twelve Cavalry soldiers galloping through the
 horrible open plains. With them are THREE COMANCHE INDIANS -
 their hands tied behind their backs. Prisoners.

Riding behind the Sergeant Major is the squaw. He rides up to the Colonel. It is now that we are introduced formally to our sergeant major through a **Super**:

SERGEANT MAJOR WINDOM REYNOLDS

REYNOLDS

We're about a mile out, sir.

Now we super the Colonel:

COLONEL "TERRIBLE" BILL LANCASTER

LANCASTER

What's that?

REYNOLDS

You asked me to tell you when we were about a mile out and we are.

Lancaster stops his horse. Turns to Lancaster.

LANCASTER

The prisoners walk from here.

Reynolds turns to the men.

REYNOLDS

Dismount the savages!

As the soldiers pull the Comanche down from the horses, Reynolds dismounts to help the FEMALE COMANCHE down.

LANCASTER

She rides. Lady's a lady after all.

Reynolds smiles to himself. He should've known.

REYNOLDS

Maybe it'd simplify our lives if we just released her. The Comanche understand us avengin' MacMillan. Taking one of their women, that'll be a lot of something to them.

LANCASTER

She's our bargaining chip, Sergeant Major. They'll get her back. For the right concessions.

It is only now that we get a good look at the female Comanche. Her hair is charcoal black - remarkably black, really. She is beautiful but with deadly angry eyes.

EXT. FORT THAYER PARADE GROUND. DAY

SUPER: FORT THAYER. WESTERN TEXAS. 1867.

Dozens of soldiers, most of them wearing white denim shirts with blue trousers are either working hard at various chores or training. Horses are being fed and tended to.

The entire contingent stops their work as they witness a remarkable sight. Lancaster and his men enter. They come in proudly, the lead soldier carrying the American flag. But the thing that grabs their attention are the three Comanche Indians that are tied and pulled, almost dragged, behind them. Lancaster turns to Reynolds.

LANCASTER

Let's get the squaw bathed and fed.
She's gonna be our guest for a bit.

REYNOLDS

Yes, sir.

LANCASTER

Not that they would treat our women
the same.

REYNOLDS

Not by a long shot, sir.

Reynolds hops off of his horse. There to meet him is his servant OATIS - a burly black man of about 40.

OATIS

Good to have you back, sir.

LANCASTER

Thank you, Oatis. See that Regal is
cooled off. Same for all the
horses.

*

Lancaster walks over to the horse the female Comanche is on.
Reynolds pulls her down. She puts up as much of a fight as
she can. A couple of soldiers help Reynolds. Lancaster
smiles at the sight.

*

*

Lancaster dismounts and lights a cigar in such a fashion
that it seems to be a post victory ritual. He walks over to
the captured Comanche and looks them up and down. Disgusted.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

Okay, then. Let's have these
savages meet Corporal MacMillan.

INT. CHAPEL. DAY

The Three Comanche are standing before a COFFIN. Behind them are Reynolds and his men. Also there is a young Army Captain-WILCOX. Lancaster throws open the coffin. *

The Comanche are distinctly unmoved by what they see. Several of the American men flinch at the horrible sight of their mutilated comrade in arms.

LANCASTER

Seventeen years old, this boy was.
Made the mistake of going a hair
too far on his scouting patrol.

Lancaster turns to Wilcox. We notice that he has a Crucifix around his neck. His uniform carries no rank.

SUPER: CAPTAIN ALEXANDER WILCOX - REGIMENTAL CHAPLAIN

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

Tell me, Chappy, can a man who has
been mutilated like this get a
proper Christian burial?

Wilcox doesn't respond to the rhetorical question.

Lancaster violently grabs the lead Comanche by the head and forces his face close to the corpse before him.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

You're proud of yourself, aren't
you? You think in your sick code
there's some kinda honor in what
you did to this poor lad.

William begins to translate, but Lancaster cuts him off-

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

HE KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT I'M SAYING!

He pushes the Comanche even closer.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

Don't ya?
(beat)
You sons of bitches are going to
learn what it means to dare to do
this to a member of the US Army.

He pulls the Comanche away and more or less throws him to the side as if he were a discarded doll. From the pain that Comanche is in we realize he is the one who was shot in the leg. Lancaster turns to Reynolds.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

You take these two, the older two -
take 'em somewhere, gut 'em, chop
their balls off, and scalp them.

*

REYNOLDS

In what order would you like that
done, sir?

LANCASTER

Make your own command decision.

(beat)

And take the young one-**horsebrand**
him, and then give him their bodies
and let him bring them back to
their Chief.

Lancaster gets in the face of the young one.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

(enunciating)

Lan-Cas-Ter!

(to William)

Have him repeat it back.

WILLIAM

(to young Comanche)

Say the name Lan-Cas-ter.

And the young one does repeat it. With venom. With anger.

YOUNG COMANCHE

Lan-Cas-Ter.

LANCASTER

Sounds good to me. You tell your
chief all 'bout me. Tell him one
day we're gonna meet.

(beat)

Get these cannibals outta my sight.

And the men drag the Comanche out. Wilcox remains. Before
Lancaster can move, Chaplain Wilcox stops him.

WILCOX

With all due respect-

LANCASTER

Oh-oh, here comes some disrespect.

WILCOX

Sir, just because the Comanche
behave like animals does not mean
we must as well.

(MORE)

WILCOX (CONT'D)

We must teach them about humanity.

(beat)

And I say this not only as the post chaplain but as the acting Executive Officer. Our mission is to make peace with the Indians- get them on reservations.

LANCASTER

Animals? Is that what you called 'em? That's where we differ, Captain Wilcox. They ain't that. They ain't animals. In fact, they're very human. Cause animals do one thing - They survive. I can't begrudge anything wants to just survive. But animals don't torture. Humans do. Animals don't scalp people while they're alive, they don't tear babies outta the womb and eat 'em.

(making stronger point)

Animals don't crucify other animals. Humans do. I wish we were just fighting animals.

WILCOX

Yes sir, nevertheless-

LANCASTER

And when Major Pennington gets here to become my second in command - he will show you what a real Executive officer is- Loyal, unquestioning, efficient.

Lancaster jovially pats Wilcox on the back.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

Now I gotta finish something up.

EXT. FORT THAYER PARADE GROUND. DAY

The soldiers watch as the two older Comanche are dragged out. The soldiers clearly have never seen anything like it - and don't quite know how to feel.

The Youngest Comanche is brought to a young private who is branding the horses with a "U.S."

The young Comanche is tied up to a hitching post. He doesn't resist.

Instead, he eyes his tormentors with a kind of dignified resistance. One of the soldiers grabs the sizzling BRANDING IRON and-

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM. FORT THAYER. NIGHT

OVER THE SOUND OF SCREAMS-

A Mexican woman named Irais is doing laundry. Lancaster walks in, secures the door. Irais turns around.

LANCASTER
I'm a bit late, sweetheart.

IRAIS
Que está bien.

LANCASTER
You know the rules, Irais. You speak English or you don't speak at all.

Lancaster grabs her and throws her down on a pile of Blue uniforms. She lays on them - a look of anticipation.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)
Ready for me?

IRAIS
Sí, estoy listo.

LANCASTER
Damn it, Irais.

IRAIS
(realizing her mistake)
Yes, Terrible Bill, I ready for you.

LANCASTER
(correcting)
I am ready for you. Good. You are a fast learner, Irais.

And with that, Lancaster lowers himself next to her. He moves into kiss her. Before he does-

LANCASTER (CONT'D)
(sweetly)
By God, I'm gonna make you a lady of Texas.

INT. FEMALE BATH HOUSE. NIGHT

The captured Squaw is struggling as several WOMEN try to get her into a bath. One of them is a heavy set middle aged woman named OLIVIA. She's clearly frustrated and needs help.

OLIVIA
CLARENCE!!!

In walks Clarence, a gangly nineteen year old corporal.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Help us get her into the bath, boy.

Clarence joins the group of women as they continue to struggle...

CLARENCE
I don't feel right touchin' her
like this-

OLIVIA
Boy, it don't matter. You been
scheduled to go to hell for a long
time now. Now, just HELP US...

...and after some stumbling and fumbling manages to drop her into the bath tub.

CLARENCE
Can I go now?

OLIVIA
You just hold her shoulders.

Olivia starts doing some scrubbing and then stops in her tracks.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Well, how about that.

CLARENCE
What?

INT. LANCASTER. WAR ROOM. NIGHT

Lancaster is going over some maps and blueprints with Reynolds. Wilcox stands in the back.

LANCASTER
Nuthin' doin'. We have to build a
second sentry tower back here.
Overlooking the river.

REYNOLDS

Guess they didn't feel the need.
They kinda assumed the river was a
natural defensive boundary.

WILCOX

Our previous commander and his
executive officer felt that to be
the case.

LANCASTER

Maybe when the water's racing good
and hard. When it's lazy the
Comanche can go over it like it was
land. Kill us in our sleep.

There is a KNOCK on the door.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

Come in!

(back to Wilcox)

When Major Pennington gets here,
he'll build it. Pennington took
those engineering courses at West
Point seriously. Do we know when my
esteemed executive officer is
supposed to show up?

Another KNOCK.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

(annoyed)

COME IN!

REYNOLDS

Gotta post from Fort Concho that
Major Pennington's in New Orleans.
Should be in Austin in a week or
so.

(to Wilcox)

Then you can go back to
concentrating on your godly duties,
sir.

Olivia walks in.

SUPER: OLIVIA HAMPTON - REGIMENTAL LAUNDRESS

OLIVIA

Pardon me, Colonel-

LANCASTER

What is it, Mrs. Hampton?

OLIVIA

I've come to tell you somethin',
sir - about that savage woman ya
brought in.

LANCASTER

Yes?

OLIVIA

Well, sir, it seems she ain't quite
savage.

LANCASTER

Not sure I get your meaning.

OLIVIA

She acts like a savage-

REYNOLDS

(laughing)
Coulda told you that.

OLIVIA

See, sir - we cleaned her up real
good and, well. The charcoal came
out of her hair.

(beat)

She's a white woman.

LANCASTER

White?

OLIVIA

White as the Virgin Mary.

LANCASTER

Well, how about that?
(to Reynolds)
We rescued a white woman. Guess
that puts us in the hero business,
don't it?

REYNOLDS

I'm guessing it does sir.

LANCASTER

Also guessing it changes things.

INT. LANCASTER'S QUARTERS. NIGHT

Lancaster is at a small table eating his dinner. The room is
illuminated by a few lamps - some kerosene and some oil.

Standing in front of him are William, Reynolds, and the Squaw, who we will come to know as...

WILLIAM

Her name is Ayasha. It means
"Little One".

Lancaster smiles at her. He nods.

LANCASTER

Ayasha.

She does not respond.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

It gives me great pleasure to
welcome you back.

He signals for her to sit down. She does. He pushes over his food to her and she starts to devour it.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

Ask her what her real name is.

William does ask her.

Ayasha responds to him.

WILLIAM

That is her real name. She says.
She also says she wants to return
to her people.

Now Lancaster stares at her- starts talking a mile a minute with William barely able to keep up.

LANCASTER

That is *exactly* what is going to
happen.

(to Ayasha)

You're gonna be with your people.
You're going to be free again.
Coming back to civilization. We
just need to figure out who your
people are.

(beat)

When did the savages take you? From
where?

No answer.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

The United States Army is here to
help you. And by Lord it will.

Ayasha says something.

William turns to Lancaster and translates.

WILLIAM

She is asking what happened to the
three men that were captured with
her.

Lancaster leans back as he contemplates how he should answer.
He decides to not hold back.

LANCASTER

They'll be free to torture and kill
the white man no more.

Ayasha doesn't quite get it. Lancaster clarifies.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

They're dead. Very, very dead.

William translates for her. It takes a second for it to sink
in with her. But when it does-

Ayasha rises and spits into Lancaster's face. She then grabs
a fork and lunges over the table.

Lancaster grabs her wrist and twists the fork out of her
hands. It's not violent or even aggressive - just efficient.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

PRIVATES!

Two young privates enter.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

Let's lock this one up as long as
she thinks violence is the answer.

The privates grab her.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

Gentle goes it, boys. She's a lady.

PRIVATE ONE

Yes, sir.

LANCASTER

(to William)

You think she understands a word
I'm saying?

(to Ayasha)

Are you fooling on me? You hearin'
every word, are ya?

WILLIAM

Don't think so, sir.

Ayasha is taken out. Lancaster looks over to William who is stunned by this series of events.

LANCASTER

Spend time with her. See if we can figure out who she belongs to.

WILLIAM

Ok. She'll break.

LANCASTER

"She'll break?" Ain't a matter of that, William. No way to "break" a woman with conviction like that. Best we can hope is to "convince" her.

William nods. Gets it.

EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT. NIGHT

It is the deep dark of night in the tiny town of-

SUPER: SLATER, TEXAS

We linger outside a saloon as patrons move in and out.

INT. SALOON. NIGHT

It is a small saloon, but heavily populated. Patrons jostle at the bar. The few women who are here are either waitresses or prostitutes. At the back of the saloon is a set of stairs to the bordello.

There are only four or five tables. Around one of them sits a well toasted Reynolds and some of his NCOs. Next to that table is another packed with lowly privates. We recognize these men from the war party that captured the three Comanche and Ayasha.

REYNOLDS

Gotta hand it to those Comanche.
They never screamed. Never begged.
That little one, we branded him
like he was a quarter horse. Fucker
toughed it out.

(beat)

(MORE)

REYNOLDS (CONT'D)

But, now all these savages gonna think twice before they ever fuck with one of us again.

Cheers from the men all around. Now a man in his forties, wearing a suit, very much not a soldier, speaks up. This is MAYOR WALTON GREEN - intellectual yet somehow sturdy and masculine all at once.

GREEN

Did any of your men fall when you captured these Indians and the woman?

SUPER: WALTON H. GREEN - MAYOR OF SLATER

REYNOLDS

Some brave souls gave their lives. Yes. Two young Galvanized Yankees who didn't normally run with us. Didn't know what they were dealin' with when they came upon them Comanche. They dismounted and thus left themselves vulnerable.

(lifts a glass)

To Miller and O'Connell. God save their souls. They deserve a little God after what they'd been through.

The men raise their glasses. An old soldier speaks up-

OLD SOLDIER

And to that poor fucker MacMillan.

THE MEN

To the Poor Fucker MacMillan.

REYNOLDS

Ain't civilized what they done to him.

GREEN

Let me ask you something, Sergeant-

REYNOLDS

(loudly correcting)
Sergeant Major!

GREEN

How many more "souls" are going to give their lives when the Comanche come into our town of Slater here to exact their revenge?

REYNOLDS

Ain't gonna happen, Mayor Green. *

GREEN

And why's that?

REYNOLDS

Cause now they KNOW Terrible Bill Lancaster is running Fort Thayer. They see what happens when they fuck with us. *

GREEN

Perhaps you were unaware, Colonel Lancaster is unaware, that Slater has a separate treaty-

But Reynolds has stopped paying attention. Instead, he has grabbed a whore has passed by him - in fact it is Irais!

REYNOLDS

Irais, Terrible Bill gave me two dollars- told me to spend it on ya.

Green is still trying to be heard.

GREEN

Slater has its own treaty with the Comanche and they are going to think that we violated it! Perhaps if you returned the squaw-

IRAIS

(also ignoring Green)
Then we spend it wisely.

Reynolds is on his feet and walking up the stairs with her. *

REYNOLDS

I told ya not to worry, Mayor Green. You gotta trust us. Terrible Bill has gotta plan. Always does.

Then he yells to his fellow soldiers.

REYNOLDS (CONT'D)

What y'all waiting for?
(grabs Irais by the face)
You can handle all of us, eh?

And with that the five men rush the stairs to go and be with Irais - a frightening horrible prelude-

EXT. FORT THAYER. SENTRY TOWER. MORNING

A SENTRY notices that a small group of Comanche are approaching on their glorious mustangs. One of them is carrying a white flag.

EXT. PARADE GROUND. FORT THAYER. DAY

The troops are standing at attention as Lancaster and Reynolds are inspecting them. Lancaster looks them over, one by one. He stops at PRIVATE SMITH.

LANCASTER
Smith. Where you from?

SMITH
Meridian, Mississippi, sir. *

LANCASTER
When did you Galvanize?

SMITH
Two years ago at Rock Island, sir.

Lancaster takes this in. Rock Island prison. A brutal hell.

LANCASTER
You ready to kill some Comanche?

SMITH
Yes sir.

LANCASTER
Well, good to have you among us.

Lancaster moves on. He comes to PRIVATE TAYLOR, Lancaster notices something sticking out of Taylor's top pocket.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)
What's that in your pocket, Taylor?

TAYLOR
Ain't nothing, sir.

REYNOLDS
Don't be a clown, Taylor.

Reynolds goes into Taylor's pocket. He pulls out a MEDAL.

REYNOLDS (CONT'D)
Goddamn, Taylor- you're carrying around a reb medal?

Taylor doesn't answer. Lancaster takes the medal and looks it over. He's impressed.

LANCASTER

The Southern Cross of Honor for
"conspicuous courage." Where'd you
get this?

TAYLOR

Pittsburgh Landing. Sir.

*

And those words create an odd tension between Lancaster and Taylor. A bit of a silence. Then Lancaster yells to all the men. There is an "elephant in the room" so to speak.

LANCASTER

HOW MANY FORMER REBS HERE FOUGHT IN
SHILOH?

There is no response. Lancaster rolls his eyes-

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

I mean PITTSBURGH LANDING.

About twenty hands (out of the 150 go up). Lancaster takes this in. He turns to Reynolds.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

This should make for an interesting
command, Windom.

REYNOLDS

Maybe we should make Taylor eat
this goddamn medal, sir.

Lancaster smiles at Reynolds. He admires the bravado. But then he does something *extraordinary*. He ritualistically PINS the medal on Taylor.

LANCASTER

Conspicuous courage is conspicuous
courage, Sergeant Major. And I
could use some men with conspicuous
courage in this command.

(to Taylor)

I also fought at Shiloh.

TAYLOR

Yes, sir, I am aware.

Reynolds is quietly stunned. Lancaster moves to the next man. The sentry runs up huffing and puffing from a hard sprint.

SENTRY

Sir. Colonel Lancaster, sir-

*

REYNOLDS

(admonishing)

Private - You need to stand at attention and present arms!

The Sentry snaps to attention and salutes.

SENTRY

Sir, there is a Comanche party coming our way. Carrying a white flag. I counted five.

*

*

Lancaster breaks ranks and has Reynolds join him. They pull the sentry away.

*

LANCASTER

That was faster than I thought.

(beat)

They're carrying a white flag?

*

*

SENTRY

Yes sir.

LANCASTER

Go out and meet them, Sergeant Major. Make sure they ain't armed, and then escort them in.

REYNOLDS

Yes sir.

Reynolds yells out to the gate guard-

REYNOLDS (CONT'D)

CORPORAL OF THE GUARD!-

EXT. TEXAS DESERT. DAY

We are with a group of Five Comanche riding in on beautiful Mustangs. Leading them is a powerful and handsome Indian named SEES TWO MOONS. The Comanche carrying the white flag is the young Indian who was branded with a "U.S." on his back. In fact, we get a good look at the "U.S." that has been seared into his back. The Indians are carrying Winchester rifles.

Reynolds and his crew gallop out on their quarter horses to meet them. When they arrive they circle the Comanche. Not a word is spoken. Reynolds signals for them to hand over their rifles, which they do.

Then the two combined groups trot toward Fort Thayer.

EXT. FORT THAYER GATE. DAY

Lancaster stands at the gate and observes from afar the Comanche and his unit approaching. CHAPLAIN WILCOX stands next to him.

WILCOX

This is quite an opportunity,
Colonel, to make steps to implement
the U.S. policy of getting these
Comanche on reservations.

LANCASTER

My sincerest wishes as well.

INT. LANCASTER'S OFFICE. DAY

Lancaster sits across from the five Comanche. Sees Two Moons sits directly across from him. Also in the room is Reynolds and William. Even though the following is reflected as a conversation between Lancaster and Sees Two Moons, William will be translating.

SEES TWO MOONS

We do not fault you for killing our
brothers or imposing the white man
brand on Hears The Wind. We will
not seek vengeance.

LANCASTER

Thank you for putting me at ease.

SEES TWO MOONS

This is the nature of war. However,
you have stolen from us a sister.
We demand that she be returned.

LANCASTER

What is your name?

SEES TWO MOONS

I am called "Sees Two Moons"

Lancaster looks about the room - a big grin.

LANCASTER

Boy, these guys come up with some
fucked up names, don't they?

(beat)

So, you "demand"?

No response from Sees Two Moons.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

You've got a set of balls-

WILLIAM

Sir, there is no direct translation for that.

LANCASTER

Use your goddamn imagination, William!

(back to Sees Two Moons)

Why is your Chief not here? Why am I negotiating with a lackey?

SEES TWO MOONS

The Chief does not negotiate.

LANCASTER

But I do?

(beat)

Allow me to remind you that this is a *white* woman that we are talking about. That changes the whole equation. I don't know when and I do not know where - but you Comanche kidnapped her in the first place. Probably raped and killed her mother, didn't ya? Maybe the father as well. And now you just want me to hand her over to you?

SEES TWO MOONS

She's our sister. If you want peace, you will return her.

LANCASTER

I don't give a fuck about peace with anymore than I give a fuck about making peace with rattlesnakes. As far as I see it, my job ain't to make nice with you. It's to kill ya. Period. Texas deserves to be rid of you.

SEES TWO MOONS

We want the woman.

LANCASTER

(to all in the room)

Would you listen to this dense savage.

(leans in)

(MORE)

*

*

*

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

She's a white woman and she belongs with us. You fuckers better never come around here again. And if you bring a white flag I will take the pole, shove it up your ass, and cook you on a spit.

(to William)

Can you translate *that*?

Sees Two Moons has gotten the gist of it.

SEES TWO MOONS

I cannot return to my chief with nothing.

LANCASTER

I'd say keeping your heads is "something." Every last one of you deserves to die unimaginable deaths for what you done over the years to my people, to Americans. To TEXANS!

(beat)

You'd better get out of here before I chop off your balls and...

Lancaster gets out of his chair, grabs the face of Sees Two Moons violently and turns it so he's facing another Comanche-

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

Feed 'em to that one.

Sees Two Moons dislodges his head from Lancaster's grip. Then he points at Lancaster.

SEES TWO MOONS

Lan-Cas-Ter.

No translation needed there.

LANCASTER

Damn right.

(to Reynolds)

Escort them out of the fort.

And with that Lancaster goes out the door.

EXT. FORT THAYER DAY.

Sees Two Moons and the other Comanche trot out of the Fort. Sees Two Moons looks through the prison window and sees Ayasha. He nods to her. "It will be okay." The look on his face turns into determination.

From a distance Lancaster watches them. Chaplain Wilcox approaches him.

WILCOX

How did it go? Did he agree to consider moving on to a reservation?

LANCASTER

We're making progress.

Lancaster moves back into his office.

EXT. MADISON RANCH. MORNING

HANK MADISON, mid-thirties, works his ranch. His wife ANGELA is also there. Several ranch hands are busy at work. Their children CLYDE and ANNABEL play. Close is his brother FRED. *

Hank hears the clip clop of horses. He raises his head. In ride about a dozen Comanche Indians. In the lead is Sees Two Moons. He is carrying a spear. *

ANGELA

What do you think they want? *

FRED

Probably ain't nothing. Maybe they want some water. Lemme go and talk to 'em. *

Fred walks up to meet Sees Two Moons, deliberately creating some distance between the Comanches and the children. Fred speaks a broken Comanche.

FRED (CONT'D)

What can I do for you?

Hank and Angela watch this from their vantage point - which means that they can't hear a thing. What they can tell is that the conversation is slightly animated.

Fred motions to Sees Two Moons that he needs a minute. Sees Two Moons nods.

Fred walks toward Hanks and Angela his back to the Comanche.

FRED (CONT'D)

Sees Two Moons said he wanted us to give him a cow.

HANK

You tell him we only had one? *

FRED

I did. Then he told me he wanted to use the watering hole-

HANK

That don't make sense. Their horses are all wetted down-

And then WOOSH- with amazing velocity a spear impales Fred from behind. It has been thrown by Sees Two Moons. Fred drops dead instantly.

Angela screams in shock.

The children stop in their tracks.

Now, with a terrifying whooping, Sees Two Moons and his fellow Comanche burst into a full throated gallop - charging at Hank and Angela.

We stay with Angela as she bursts into a sprint. She scoops up her daughter Annabel and beseeches her son...

ANGELA

RUN, CLYDE!

Clyde tears ahead - running with ferocious speed for a boy. *

RETURN to Angela. She is running as fast as she can with Annabel in her arms. An ARROW goes straight through her leg. She drops Annabel.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

You run, Annabel!

And Annabel does that.

Now, a mounted Comanche rides on the *side of his horse* and manages to grab Angela by her hair... dragging her... Forcing her to scream for her life.

The mounted Comanche pulls Angela to a woodline. There, ANOTHER Comanche leaps off of his horse and the two of them carry Angela into the thicket of trees.

In the meantime, RANCH HANDS are being mercilessly shot down with arrows, each collapsing to an instantaneous death.

Comanches dismount to scalp their prey-

One of the Indians emerges from the woodline holding Angela's scalp in the air- a grotesque trophy.

Little Clyde, who is also running- is hacked in the back with an ax.

Now- focus on Hank- bloodied - an arrow in his arm.

He screams as he pulls it out - only to be - THWAP- hit in the leg with another arrow.

He SCREAMS in agony.

Now a mounted Comanche warrior stands over Hank. He lifts his arms up and reveals that he is holding little Annabel as if she were herself a trophy.

That Comanche starts to circle the property- putting Annabel on display - whooping frighteningly.

Hank now notices something- a revolver on Frank's corpse. He starts to crawl over to it...

Now Sees Two Moons signals for the men to leave- which they all do.

The last man in the group is the one holding Annabel.

Because of his grandstanding he is the last one to leave and is considerably behind the rest of his gang of warriors.

BOOM!

A shot rings out. That Comanche is shot through the back. The horse falls over and Annabel drops to the ground.

As the Comanche continue riding- Annabel runs to her father- who she discovers has expired. She cries hysterically.

EXT. MAKESHIFT CEMETARY. DAY

A service for the fallen at the Madison ranch has concluded. Lancaster is the only military representative there. Mayor Green hands over young Annabel to his wife GRACE.

GREEN

Get her home.

Grace takes Annabel away. Green then walks over to Lancaster.

GREEN (CONT'D)

Colonel. I'm Walton Green. I'm the mayor.

LANCASTER

That's what I figured. You look like a mayor.

GREEN

May I ask, sir, what your intentions now are?

LANCASTER

(off subject)

What's to become of the girl?

GREEN

She's now to be our little girl. My wife and I are to adopt her.

LANCASTER

(sadly)

The tragedies that befall man.

(beat)

My intentions? To make sure these people did not die for no reason.

GREEN

They didn't die for no reason, Colonel. They died for a very specific reason. They died because you came into this command a week ago and decided to fly in the face of a treaty that has kept the peace for (two years)-

LANCASTER

(loud, angry)

A treaty not approved by the United States government. A treaty that gave your people a false sense of security.

GREEN

A treaty that has held the peace now for almost two years.

LANCASTER

That, sir, is an insanity! The Comanche don't have any structure. They are wild marauders. They are beholden to no God and no sense of right and wrong. They certainly are beholden to no piece of paper.

GREEN

Nothing was on paper. It was an agreement using the word of two gentlemen.

LANCASTER

(almost spitting it out)
Gentlemen?

GREEN

IT HAS HELD! You revenged upon them. And then they revenged upon us.

LANCASTER

You saying I have blood on MY hands? Is that what you dare imply? *

GREEN

Worse than that. You have blood on your soul, Colonel.
(beat)
If we just let it stop now- maybe the killing will stop.

LANCASTER

Oh, yes, the killin' will stop. Soon enough. And for good. Just like it stopped in Carthage. *

As Lancaster walks away-

GREEN

You ARE NOT the Scourge of God.

Lancaster turns around, confused.

LANCASTER

Being the scourge of God is all I got. It's all you got!

Lancaster starts to walk away. Mayor Green yells-

GREEN

I will have to go over your head!

Lancaster can only laugh - to himself. But as he continues - and we stay with him - a somber and sad look overtakes him.

INT. CHAPEL. DAY

Wilcox is reading in one of the pews. Sitting close by is a PRIVATE JONES who himself is reading the Bible.

Both men are quiet, well ensconced in their reading. A shaft of light interrupts the serenity. A group of OFFICERS enter. They are lead by CAPTAIN COBY GRITT.

CAPTAIN GRITT

Chappy?

Wilcox puts down the book. - JANE EYRE.

WILCOX

Hello, Coby. Hello boys. It isn't Sunday. What's wrong?

Another officer, LIEUTENANT BAINBRIDGE, barks over at the private.

LT. BAINBRIDGE

Private, Give us the tent. *

The Private scuttles out.

WILCOX

What's going on?

CAPTAIN GRITT

Hoping you could tell us. You're Lancaster's Executive officer.

WILCOX

"Acting" Executive officer. Until Major Pennington gets here. Which couldn't be soon enough.

CAPTAIN BAINBRIDGE

We're supposed to be making nice with the Comanche- We're supposed to get them on to reservations.

WILCOX

I told him that. He knows that.

CAPTAIN GRITT

Then why's he raising hell? That Reb-loving lunatic is gonna get every soldier in this fort killed. These youngsters aren't equipped to fight these savages. *

From the back of the room comes Lancaster's booming voice.

LANCASTER

GENTLEMEN!

All the men face Lancaster. He walks in tightly among them.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

I came here for some time with God
and find a bunch of cowardly
devils.

CAPTAIN GRITT

Permission to speak, sir.

LANCASTER

What is it, Captain?

CAPTAIN GRITT

The men are scared, sir. They feel
a war is being provoked and they
don't have the training or the
weaponry to fight the savages.

LANCASTER

You saw what the Comanche did to
MacMillan? We had every right - we
had the divine authority.

(barking)

Chappy- Deuteronomy 19:21.

WILCOX

*And thine eyes shall not pity. But
life shall go for life, eye for eye-*

LANCASTER

Eye for an eye!!!

CAPTAIN BAINBRIDGE

With respect, sir- we don't take
our directives from the Bible. We
take them from the President. And
those orders are to get the savages
on to reservations.

*

Lancaster considers this and then chuckles-.

LANCASTER

Good luck with that, gentlemen.

(beat)

Boys, you can stay here and join me
in prayer if you like. You can
also tender your resignations. I
promise you they will be accepted
without prejudice.

And Lancaster sits down in the pew and picks up a Bible. He
then looks up at the men.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

I know what I'm doin'.

*

INT. GOVERNOR'S OFFICE. DAY

Mayor Green sits in a large but dusty office of GOVERNOR JAMES W. THROCKMORTON. Also in the room is a very young GENERAL CHARLES GRIFFIN. Next to him is the General's Aide-COLONEL GAVELSTON.

*

GOVERNOR

I am sorry for your town's loss. I would like to send condolences to the Madison family personally.

SUPER: GOVERNOR JAMES W. THROCKMORTON

GREEN

Condolences? To whom, Governor? They're all dead. Except for the little girl.

GOVERNOR

If Colonel Lancaster is indeed inciting the Comanche to attack your town, perhaps (a change)-

*
*
*

General Griffin interrupts. He is the real man in charge.

GRIFFIN

You've talked to Lancaster?

*

SUPER: GENERAL CHARLES GRIFFIN - MILITARY DISTRICT COMMANDER

GREEN

He dared to come to the funeral. He learned nothing from -

*

GRIFFIN

(to Gavelston)
Do you know Lancaster?

GAVELSTON

Of him. They say his bold charge at the Hornets Nest at Shiloh was the one that Killed General Johnston. The rebs had a bounty on him. If they'd caught him, they'd have hung him. Probably still would.

SUPER: COLONEL THOMAS GAVELSTON, ADJUTANT

GRIFFIN

Why do they hate him more than other Northern officers?

GAVELSTON

Lancaster's a former Texas ranger.
When the war came he joined the
Union. A traitor to the South.
He was an abolitionist.

*
*

GREEN

He fights for the niggers, but
wants to kill the savages. It
doesn't make sense.

GRIFFIN

Everything makes sense eventually.
(beat)
Go ahead, Thomas.

GAVELSTON

Well, he was so impressive at
Shiloh that General Grant himself
offered him a choice of commands.
Lancaster chose Fort Thayer.

*

GREEN

All Lancaster wants to do is kill
and butcher. Problem is, that's
what the Comanche want as well.
This did not have to happen. The
town of Slater had its own treaty
with the Comanche. I negotiated it.

*

GRIFFIN

With U.S. government approval?

GREEN

No. but-

*

GRIFFIN

(impatient)
We obviously can't remove him. He's
Grant's darling.

*
*

(beat)
How many former union are there at
the fort?

*
*

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)

About fifty enlisted, about ten
junior officers. And then there are
about a dozen or so men loyal to
him that he brought from Shiloh.

(looks at some paperwork)
He has requested a Major Pennington
as his executive officer.

(MORE)

GRIFFIN (CONT'D)
West Point class of '55. He's on
his way there now.

EXT. AUSTIN HOTEL. DAY

Outside an Austin hotel, an OFFICER, handsome and well
groomed, wearing blues, supervises two STAGECOACH DRIVERS as
they finish loading his bags into the back of a STAGECOACH. *

 OFFICER
How long will it take to get to
Fort Thayer?

 STAGECOACH DRIVER
Oh, we avoid any weather, any
bandits, any destruction to our
wheels or equipment, any injury to
the horses, and, of course, any
savages - I'd say tomorrow night. *

 OFFICER
Perfect.

The Officer hops into the stagecoach.

INT. STAGECOACH. DAY

When the Officer enters and settles into the chair, he finds
only one person there. It's a woman named CYNTHIA, 36,
attractive but slightly patrician, very nicely dressed.

 OFFICER
Ma'am.

 CYNTHIA
Thank goodness, I was dying of
loneliness.

 OFFICER
Happy to be of service. But I am
afraid I am not much of a talker,
Mrs.... *

 CYNTHIA
I'm just plain old Cynthia. What's
your first name? *

 OFFICER
Ellroy. *

 CYNTHIA
Where are you going to, Ellroy? *

OFFICER
Fort Thayer, ma'am.

CYNTHIA
Really? Fort Thayer. Why on Earth
are you going all the way there?

OFFICER
Like I said, ma'am, I'm not much of
a talker.

CYNTHIA
Oh. Now you're getting interesting.
Is it a top secret mission?

OFFICER
Taking over as Executive Officer. *

Cynthia takes him in - giving him a once over. She very much
likes what she sees.

CYNTHIA
You won't have to do much talking
to keep me entertained.

And with a "WHUP" from the Stagehands, the Stagecoach starts. *

INT. AUSTIN COURTROOM. DAY *

KELLY KILLERTON, early forties, small but stout, unkempt, *
stands in front of a JUDGE. The courtroom is advanced as far *
as courts of the era go - but it is sparsely populated. *
Killerton has a defense attorney. No prosecutor is present. *

JUDGE *
Mr. Killerton, you have anything *
you'd like to say before this court *
before I pronounce sentence? *

KILLERTON *
No, I ain't got nuthin' to say. *

SUPER: KELLY KILLERTON - OUTLAW AND FORMER TEXAS RANGER *

DEFENSE ATTORNEY *
If I may beseech the court- *

JUDGE *
No, you may not beseech the court, *
Counselor. Mr. Killerton you *
understand that you have been found *
guilty of horse thieving? *

KILLERTON

Yes.

JUDGE

Are you able to make restitution to the owner?

KILLERTON

Resti- what?

JUDGE

Can you pay back the owne?

KILLERTON

(laughing)

I ain't even got a confederate sawbuck.

JUDGE

Well, then, I'm going to sentence you to five years. You will be remanded to the federal prison in Fort Leavenworth.

KILLERTON

For horse thieving? My attorney, or this man pretendin' to be an attorney, he told me I'd get - whatever the fuckya call it-

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Your honor, it has been precedent in cases such as these that probation for first time offenders is more than appropriate.

JUDGE

That was before these lawless former Rebs-

KILLERTON

I ain't no Reb. I'm a goddamn Texas Ranger! I don't wear blue and I don't wear grey.

Now, from the back of the room an army soldier - FIRST LIEUTENANT JOHNNY GEFFEN takes to his feet.

GEFFEN

YOUR HONOR, MAY I APPROACH?

SUPER: FIRST LIEUTENANT JONATHAN GEFFEN - ADJUTANT, 5TH CAVALRY REGIMENT

The Judge is taken aback, but what the hell...

JUDGE
Yes, Lieutenant?

Geffen strides past a confused Killerton and his attorney. They watch Geffen talking to the Judge who seems to be agreeable to whatever Geffen is saying. Killerton turns to his attorney.

KILLERTON
What the hell's this all about?

DEFENSE ATTORNEY
YOUR HONOR!

The judge signs a document and Lt. Geffen strides back.

GEFFEN
Okay Killerton, let's go.

Killerton looks stunned.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY
Your honor-

JUDGE
You are free to go, Mr. Killerton.
You are now under the supervision
of Lieutenant Geffen.

GEFFEN
Let's go.

And the two men walk out.

EXT. COURTHOUSE. DAY

Killerton and Geffen walk out on to the courtroom steps and then into the great city of Austin.

SUPER: AUSTIN, TEXAS

GEFFEN
You hungry? I'm authorized to
provide you with five meals.

KILLERTON
You wanna tell me what's goin' on?

GEFFEN
You're coming with me.

KILLERTON

Yeah, that much my puny brain has figured.

GEFFEN

You're going to do some fighting.

KILLERTON

What a second. I'm going into the Army? Hell no. I'll go to prison.

GEFFEN

Terrible Bill told me you'd say that.

KILLERTON

Terrible Bill?

GEFFEN

That's correct.

KILLERTON

Last I heard he took a bullet in the heart and died.

GEFFEN

Close. He took a bullet in the shoulder and got meaner.

(beat)

And I was told to tell you that you don't have to wear "no damn" uniform.

Killerton takes this in for a second.

KILLERTON

Where we going?

GEFFEN

Fort Thayer.

KILLERTON

Where's that?

GEFFEN

That's about one hundred miles toward Nowhere.

KILLERTON

Don't have to wear no damn uniform?

GEFFEN

Nope.

KILLERTON
We fightin' the Comanche?

GEFFEN
Yes, they're the culprits, alright.

KILLERTON
Do I get to give Terrible Bill the
ass whuppin' his treasonous behind
deserves?

And to this Geffen just laughs.

EXT. ESTABLISHING. DAY

The Stagecoach tears across the barren desert. On the coach
sits the driver and his deputy who is carrying a shotgun.

INT. STAGECOACH. DAY

The Officer wakes up from a nap. He looks around, disoriented
for a second. His eyes settle on Cynthia who is quietly
observing him.

CYNTHIA
Good afternoon.

The Officer nods to her with a polite smile.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
Makes the trip go by faster if you
can sleep.

OFFICER
I suppose.

CYNTHIA
You really are a man with not a lot
to say.

THE OFFICER
I suppose not, ma'am.
(giving in)
Is there something you'd like to
discuss? A topic?

CYNTHIA
(re: His college ring)
You went to West Point?

THE OFFICER
Yes, ma'am. I did.

CYNTHIA

So did Generals Grant and Lee.

*

The officer smiles at this obvious and very well known fact.

THE OFFICER

We'll take credit for one of them.

*

THE OFFICER (CONT'D)

Don't let the Louisiana in my voice
fool you. The Blue saved us all. I
feel very indebted to the officers
in charge.

*

*

*

*

*

She smiles at him - but the come on is not quite hitting him.

CYNTHIA

I have been known to show my
appreciation.

THE OFFICER

Ah.

CYNTHIA

I would be happy to show you my
appreciation.

He's still not getting it.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

But I can't show you if you are
sitting over there.

NOW, The officer gets it. He's not interested, but dead set
on being polite about it.

THE OFFICER

Well, ladies like yourself kept us
all sane. We protected the Union
and you made sure it was still
standing when all was done. That's
what my wife always tells me.

*

*

*

CYNTHIA

Where is your wife?

THE OFFICER

Back home with my two daughters.

CYNTHIA

In... I'm going to say...
Pennsylvania.

*

*

*

THE OFFICER
Connecticut.

CYNTHIA
Even further away than I thought.

The Officer nods. Yes, even further away-

EXT. RANCH. DAY

LANCASTER arrives at a ranch that has several hundred heads of cattle. Soldiers are guarding it. The head rancher is STAN EDELMAN, old, grizzled. They discuss the Indian attack.

EDELMAN
Terrible what happened to the Madisons.

LANCASTER
Doesn't get worse.

EDELMAN
I been here for thirty years now and I gotta say you're right.
(beat)
You scare the shit outta people, Colonel. Lotta legend around you.

LANCASTER
Been working hard at that.

EDELMAN
Mind if I ask ya, is it true you wore blue at Shiloh?

LANCASTER
It is.

Edelman nods. He won't make judgement on it, he just wanted to know. Lancaster points to the soldiers.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)
I appreciate your letting my men work here on their off time. Keeps him outta trouble more than anything else.

EDELMAN
Can't do much on a private's pay.

Lancaster points to the herd.

LANCASTER

Let's introduce one of these cattle to Jesus. I'm going to cook up a small feast for my officers. I have a special guest who's arriving two days hence.

EDELMAN

You see one in particular?

LANCASTER

One's as good as the next, I'd say.

Lancaster looks over the herd.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

They go their whole lives, right down to the last second, having no idea what's coming their way.

INT. JAIL AREA. NIGHT

Ayasha stands as William enters. He is slightly inebriated.

WILLIAM

(in Comanche)

Come here.

(beat)

Tell me something. Something I can tell Lancaster- anything about you- I will be a hero.

(beat)

Then I can help you. Come on.

Ayasha is tentative.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Be nice to me. I can get you released. Sent home.

This seems to percolate her.

Ayasha now approaches.

When she is close enough to him, William GRABS her violently and reaches his hand down *there* - under her clothes.

Ayasha reacts quickly. Spinning around, She grabs him by the back of his head, slams his face into the bars of her cell, and then proceeds to bite his nose, tearing at it, chewing hysterically, like a rabid dog.

William SCREAMS in agony.

Now he grabs the back of her head and slams it into the bars. *
She releases him, but not before he manages to punch her *
solidly in the face, sending her reeling. *

William grabs his face and races out of the jailhouse. *

INT. STAGECOACH. NIGHT *

The Officer wakes up from a bit of a slumber. Rubs his eyes. *
Realizes that he is all alone. No Cynthia. Outside it is *
pitch dark. The stagecoach is standing still. He sees a book *
on Cynthia's side of the stagecoach. LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET by *
Mary Elizabeth Bradden. Picks it up. Leafs through it and *
then puts it back. Now, he gets to wondering where everybody *
is... *

THE OFFICER

Hello?

No response.

The Officer, slightly confused, reaches for a lantern.

EXT. DESERT. NIGHT

The Officer, carrying the lit lantern, exits the stagecoach
and tentatively makes his way a few yards.

THE OFFICER

Hello?

(beat)

Anybody around?

Still no response. The Officer puts the lantern down so that
he can relieve himself. Then he hears something. An odd
grunt.

The Officer picks up the lantern in the direction of the
sound - and here is what he sees:

Cynthia is on the ground on her back being screwed by the
stagecoach driver.

The Officer gazes upon the sight. This is surreal to him - he
has never seen anything like it.

The stagehand finishes and then, with Cynthia welcoming him,
the other stagehand moves in to take his turn. Now, very *
clearly, Cynthia turns her head to see the Officer. She *
acknowledges him with a small and unnerving nod. *

The Officer turns around and heads back to the stagecoach. He enters, lowers the brim of his hat, and returns to sleep.

INT. LANCASTER'S OFFICE. DAY

Lancaster is having his hair trimmed by a BARBER. William is in front of him, his nose covered by bloodied bandages.

WILLIAM

She's gone totally savage, she has.

LANCASTER

Can see that.

WILLIAM

I gave her a thumpin', I did. But not enough. I think she needs to feel *your* wrath now.

Lancaster is not sure he heard that quite right.

LANCASTER

My wrath? *

WILLIAM

Set an example for what happens to folk who do harm to your soldiers. *

LANCASTER

Well, of course.

(beat)

Now, suppose you tell me why she did this.

WILLIAM

The savage in her just came on out. *

LANCASTER

But, why'd the savage in her come out?

William speaks quietly - as if he were in a conspiracy. *

WILLIAM

Suppose she didn't like I come get what was rightfully mine as a man. *

Lancaster nods and then we SMASH CUT- *

EXT. PARADE GROUND. FORT THAYER. DAY

William is tied up on the flagpole. Lancaster stands behind him, a buggy whip in his hand. Several soldiers observe. William is crying. *

Lancaster talks loudly to the assembled men - he has a damn important point to make.

LANCASTER

We will not tolerate, in this unit of great American men, the abuse of women nor children. *

Several of the women are observing as well- they stand in front of the laundry room. Olivia stands in front of them. Lancaster turns to the whimpering William.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

William, now behave like a damn man. You're lucky I chose a buggy whip instead of a bullwhip- *

And then THWAP! Lancaster ferociously unleashes the first lash. William screams out with horrible anguish. *

Reynolds and a few other soldiers enter the fort on horseback at this moment. Reynolds face drops when he sees this.

EXT. PARADE GROUND. FORT THAYER. DAY

A few minutes later. The men have dispersed. William is still tied up to the flagpole, two men are undoing the ropes. Lancaster walks away, having turned the buggy whip over to a soldier. Reynolds rides up next to him. *

REYNOLDS

Sir!

LANCASTER

What is it, Windom?

REYNOLDS

Permission to speak-

LANCASTER

Aw, for Chrissakes-

REYNOLDS

We been together since Shiloh and I ain't never had reason to object to nothing you done- not in the war, not in training, never-

LANCASTER

That man laid hands on a *woman*! He spared nothing from me.

*

REYNOLDS

Ain't that. Woman beater's a coward. Ain't no place for cowards here. But that wasn't your job, sir. Discipline's for the sergeants and I'm the damn Sergeant Major.

*

*

*

Lancaster considers this. Reynolds has a point, of course.

*

LANCASTER

It was something I felt I needed to attend to personally.

REYNOLDS

It hurts me with the men when they see you gotta do my job for me. That could have ramifications days or weeks or months from now.

LANCASTER

I see your point, Sergeant Major.

REYNOLDS

Thank you, sir.

LANCASTER

And I humbly apologize.

REYNOLDS

Thank you, sir.

LANCASTER

You want me to string him up again and you can have a go?

Reynolds salutes.

REYNOLDS

All I care 'bout is that we understand one another.

*

EXT. PARADE GROUND. DAY

*

Lancaster is playing a primitive game of baseball with his soldiers. He is the pitcher. He hurls a ball at the batter, who knocks it clean to Kingdom Come.

LANCASTER

If the rebs made war like they play
baseball we'd all be wearin' gray
'bout now.

PRIVATE SMITH trots out to Lancaster and salutes him.

PRIVATE

Sir, there's a man here to see you.

Lancaster sees THE OFFICER (from the stage coach).

EXT. PARADE GROUND. A FEW MINUTES LATER.

Lancaster is looking over The Officer's paperwork.

LANCASTER

Says here you've been assigned as
Executive officer, Captain.

THE OFFICER

That's right, sir. At your service.

LANCASTER

That's a mistake. Major Tyler
Pennington's my new XO.

THE OFFICER

I'm afraid that may not quite have
worked out, sir.

LANCASTER

Not worked out?
(looks At paperwork)
Major Ellroy McQueen, huh? Well you
need to head back to Austin and
tell them sons of bitches that I
will wait here for Major
Pennington.

*

**SUPER: CAPTAIN ELLROY MCQUEEN - EXECUTIVE OFFICER, 5TH
CAVALRY**

MCQUEEN

Yes, they told me you might say
that and I was supposed to tell you
there's no mistake.

LANCASTER

Oh, there's a mistake. There's a
goddamn big mistake.

Lancaster hands him back his papers.

*

MCQUEEN

Very well, sir.

LANCASTER

In the meantime, You may have stay
in the XO's quarters.

MCQUEEN

Actually, sir, the regulations say
that until my furniture and
material objects arrive, I must
stay in temporary quarters

*

LANCASTER

Fine. You can dine at my table
tonight. Have a feast prepared.

*

*

MCQUEEN

Very kind of you, sir. Now, word,
Colonel, is that you rescued a
white woman from the Comanche?

LANCASTER

Indeed. She's a bit feisty for now,
so we have her in the stockade.

MCQUEEN

May I talk with her?

*

INT. JAIL AREA. DAY

McQueen enters the cell. William comes in with him. Ayasha
stands. William moves into the corner.

WILLIAM

Be careful, sir.

MCQUEEN

Thank you. I will.
(to Ayasha- a warm smile)
Good evening, ma'am. My name is
Elroy McQueen.
(points to himself)
Elroy.

McQueen points to William's broken nose. Then he points to
Ayasha as if to ask her "Did you do this?"

Ayasha nods. This prompts McQueen to start laughing. Then
Ayasha starts laughing. Then-

WILLIAM

Hey. This isn't funny!

But McQueen and Ayasha think it is and continue laughing.

INT. OFFICER'S MESS. NIGHT

Lancaster stands before his men.

LANCASTER

Gentlemen. May God bless the United
States of America. And the Great
state of Texas.

*
*

All the men respond with "here, here".

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

Allow me to show my appreciation to
all you sons of bitches.

*

In walk several waiters (Army privates) carrying steaks. The
men all cheer as they are served.

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

From my personal stock.

*

The men applaud. Oatis personally delivers a steak to
Lancaster. A little black girl, LORRAINE, Oatis' daughter,
pours wine in Lancaster's glass. He tossles her hair.

*

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

Thank you, Lorraine.

(turns to men)

Gentlemen- You will hear many
things about me. You already have.
Many of these rumors are false.
Most true. But what is true is that
over the coming weeks and months we
will -together- create the most
efficient fighting force Texas has
ever seen. This great state I love
so much will be protected from a
scourge that must be blighted from
the Earth. We WILL avenge the
massacre of the Madison family- WE
WILL bring Justice here, WE WILL
show the Comanche and the world
what it means to wear BLUE!

*

*

*

*

*

The men are revved up - "Here! Here!" McQueen enters the
dining hall. Lancaster raises his glass. So do the men.

*

*

LANCASTER (CONT'D)
To Fifth Regiment!

OFFICERS
TO THE REGIMENT!

All the men repeat this and then sit down to their meals. *
McQueen takes a seat next to Lancaster. A smile. *

LANCASTER
So, tell me, McQueen, tell me a
story-

MCQUEEN
A story, sir?

LANCASTER
The story of why YOU are here and
Pennington is not.

MCQUEEN
Your guess is as good as mine, sir.

LANCASTER
Then lemme give you my guess. The
authorities, as they were, they see
me as a... as a Palomino they can't
quite saddle.

MCQUEEN
Not sure about that, sir. *

LANCASTER
No?

MCQUEEN
They view you as a raving lunatic. *
(beat)
Who happens to be a brilliant *
soldier, of course. A man who is *
needed here, a man who requested to *
be here, but a man who is also *
dangerous. A man who would war on *
the Comanche while the rest of the *
country wants peace. A man, *
therefore, who should not be able *
to put into positions of power *
other such lunatics. Thus *
explaining why I'm here and *
Pennington's on his way to teaching *
math to plebes at West Point. *

LANCASTER

So, you admit you're a spy for the government?

MCQUEEN

If that's the case I am not a very good spy. *

LANCASTER

That's true.

(smiling) *

Where are you from, McQueen?

MCQUEEN

Connecticut, sir.

LANCASTER

I was there once. Had a picnic, I believe. You know the Comanche well, do you? *

McQueen shakes his head "No".

LANCASTER (CONT'D)

I been fighting these cocksuckers for two decades now. I've killed more of them than can fit into any one nightmare. I gotta say they are true Monsters of God.

MCQUEEN

Maybe they see us the same way. *

LANCASTER

(laughing)

I would hope so.

(beat)

There is no pacifying this tribe. They are Mongols by heritage, did you know that?

MCQUEEN

I did not.

LANCASTER

They spend years traveling thousands of miles spreading terror. Spreading unspeakable acts of violence that would make the Vikings look like Quakers. They must be stopped.

MCQUEEN

Sounds like it, sir.

LANCASTER

So, I will spend months training these fine men. And when we are ready- we go and get 'em.

MCQUEEN

Sir, I have to tell you, I think your timeline might be a bit off. *

LANCASTER

Oh?

MCQUEEN

I think THEY are coming back *here*. And soon. With a war party bigger than anything you've ever seen. *

LANCASTER

Why?

(get's it)

Oh, over the white woman? They already exacted their revenge. Now they are done. That's the Comanche way - not to dwell on lost causes. *

(beat)

Anyway, she's not even their blood. *

A pause. Dramatic affect here. *

MCQUEEN

No. But she's the Chief's *wife*.

And with that, Lancaster freezes. It changes just about *everything*. McQueen for the first time takes a bite of steak.

MCQUEEN (CONT'D)

Delicious by the way.

(beat)

You're going to need to bring in some reenforcements.

At this moment, from behind Lancaster, appears Cynthia! *

McQueen is absolutely taken aback by her presence.

A Private moves to pull a seat out for her - but she stops him and pulls out her own chair. Sits. *

CYNTHIA

Hello, dear. I am famished.

Lancaster sees her for the first time- and is stunned. He wasn't expecting her. *

LANCASTER
Cynthia - what an astonishing
surprise.

*
*
*

CYNTHIA
(a wry smile)
Hello, Bill.

*
*
*

SUPER: CYNTHIA LANCASTER - WIFE OF COLONEL BILL LANCASTER

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
(turning to McQueen)
It's good to see you again, Major
(searching for last name)-

*
*

MCQUEEN
McQueen, ma'am.

And over of Cynthia's beautiful smile we-

FADE OUT.