

T R:
NIGHT THREE
WORKING DRAFT

Thinkfactory Media
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TEXAS RANGERS - NIGHT THREE

CLOSE SHOT (MOVING) - GENERAL SAM HOUSTON, furious, galloping hell-for-leather, though we're so tight we don't know where--

MUTED SOUNDS - Distant battle noises...horse hooves pounding, gunshots, screams...all MUFFLED - Houston yells but we only see him mouthing... "FORM RANKS! COVER THEIR RETREAT!"

1 EXT. SAN JACINTO FIELD - CALVARY SKIRMISH - DAY 1

WIDER - HOUSTON rides Saracen in FRONT of a scattered advance of his out-of-control troops, trying to halt the chaos.

SUPER: April 20, 1836 - SAN JACINTO, TEXAS

Mexican Colonel PORTILLO & his DRAGOONS surround the gung-ho Colonel SHERMAN and his outmatched TEXAS CALVARY as--

SHERMAN'S ill-ordered assault disintegrates into a confused melee. His RIDERS FIRE muskets - Some dismount, others surround their overwhelmed leader in a doomed "last stand".

Still, the MUTED BATTLE SOUNDS continue...

TEXAS SIDE - HOUSTON gallops down the line of infantry that's about to charge, putting himself in danger to get control--

...until a sudden EXPLOSION OF SOUND...

SAM HOUSTON
HALT! COVER FIRE ONLY! DIG IN!

Swept along by the action, KNOWLES gratefully halts, joins RANGERS DEAF, KARNES, ANDERSON, GATOR, BEANS and VERN, among the first to obey Houston and lay down COVER FIRE as--

HOUSTON CHARGES onto the BATTLEFIELD, his warhorse's chiseled muscles rippling, teeth bared in fury, through the heart of--

PORTILLO'S DRAGOONS - Houston ducks sabers, dodges a lance, a BULLET creases his whiskers as he whips Saracen onward to--

--a FULL COLLISION INTO COL. SHERMAN - WHAM! Saracen BOWLS OVER Sherman's stallion, KNOCKING horse and rider to the ground! Sherman rolls clear as Houston's warhorse REARS and the General usurps COMMAND from the stunned Colonel, BOOMING--

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)
FALL BACK! BACK TO OUR LINE!

SHERMAN'S CALVARY wheel back to the TEXAN FRONT LINE - Unhorsed stragglers run like hell, dodging Portillo's dragoons. A cowed Colonel Sherman runs behind as Houston herds his men to safety--

STILL ON THE BATTLEFIELD--

KIT, covering Houston, rides like a Comanche, FIRING under his mount's neck and reloading at full gallop as--

COLBY BOUNCES OFF his saddle on his ass in the open ground--

RUSK, about to be killed. when...BOOM!

LAMAR shoots one Dragoon dead, wards off others with drawn saber, spots COLBY in danger, CHARGES toward him under fire--

--YANKS Colby up on his saddle, saving his life.

FELLOW TEXANS CHEER Kit & Lamar's bravery and horsemanship. Lamar waves his hat, rides off, getting more APPLAUSE from...

THE MEXICAN SIDE - THE SOLDADOS

CHEER and react to the heroics like spectators at a soccer game, infuriating SANTA ANNA, who snaps at ALMONTE--

SANTA ANNA

That is a ruse! Pull Portillo
back! We're clapping for clowns
while their army circles behind us!
Send out the Scouts! Find them!

OFFICERS scramble to comply as Santa Anna looks off hatefully-

2

EXT. ROAD TO VICTORIA - DAY

2

On their way to meet Buckley and face (false) murder charges: JACK HAYS and BIG FOOT WALLACE ride in the back of BUCKLEY'S WAGON driven by CLARENCE, toughest of the Empresario's THUG SLAVES - the OTHER TWO lazily hold shotguns on the prisoners.

APPROACHING A CREEK, Big Foot's eyes dart about while Jack peacefully naps. The wagon hits a BUMP, distracting the guards--

Big Foot SNAPS OFF a low-hanging LIMB from an overhead tree - Before the slaves react, he JAMS it in the spokes--

WHEEL SPLINTERS, wagon lists, OVERTURNS in the CREEK, dumping everyone in the water! The slaves flounder, scramble for their dropped guns. Big Foot scoops up a shotgun first.

BIG FOOT WALLACE

HANDS UP! Or yer brains is stink bait!

The slaves reluctantly raise their hands. GASPING and SPLASHING off the sudden, wet, wake-up, Jack yells...

JACK HAYS
What the hell you doin'?!

BIG FOOT WALLACE
Bustin' us out, what's it look like!

JACK HAYS
What for? We're INNOCENT!

Jack gathers the guns, stomps to shore.

BIG FOOT WALLACE
Can't take a chance with a man like Buckley.

JACK HAYS
We are NOT OUTLAWS. I'm not lookin' over my shoulder the rest of my days cause of a price on my head--

Big Foot scowls as he fishes out Buckley's slaves.

BIG FOOT WALLACE
You gonna stop your yammerin' 'n help me?

CLARENCE
Ya bes' knows, a'fore Mass'a Buckley hangs ya, he gonna whoop yore ass til you wanna die.

3 EXT. HOUSTON'S CAMP - DAY

3

Enraged, Houston RIPS the braids off Sherman's jacket.

SAM HOUSTON
The orders were NOT to engage!
Your despicable insubordination
almost cost us the war!

He appends the braids & stripes to MIRABEAU LAMAR'S UNIFORM, both Sherman and newly-promoted Lamar shocked by the action.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)
Back to the 2nd Infantry, Sherman!
The Cavalry now belongs to Lamar!
(wheels to Rusk)
Any objections?

Embarrassed, Rusk is as cowed as Sherman.

The other men quickly bombard Houston with questions.

ED BURLESON
We bloodied 'em, Sam. Re-group for
counter-attack--

LAMAR
They're on the defense--

HOCKLEY
Should we press forward--

Still furious, Houston silences the men with a cold look.

SAM HOUSTON
I believe one should rather die
than be betrayed. There is no
deceit in death, it delivers
precisely what it promises. Betrayal
is the willful slaughter of trust.

Befuddled, the men have a hard time following his logic.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)
I need to trust my commanders.

Houston turns away, leaving the men rattled and perplexed,
unsure of what he plans to do.

4

EXT. SANTA ANNA'S CAMP - DAY

4

In a stolen Mexican Uniform, FLORES sees Santa Anna walking
with his commanders and ducks back.

SANTA ANNA
ALMONTE! Dispatch!

Almonte crosses with a skinny young MESSENGER.

SANTA ANNA (CONT'D)
Order General Cos to march through the
night. We need his reinforcements--

Santa Anna distracted by a commotion...

EMILY on a horse, ROMOLO holding the reins trying to stop
her. SANTA ANNA strides over as she WHIPS Romolo back.

SANTA ANNA (CONT'D)
Emily, STOP!

EMILY WEST
Kill me or let me go!

SANTA ANNA

My dear, you had a gun--

As if a perfectly reasonable excuse to viciously beat her.

EMILY WEST

Yessuh, I done deserve' a whoopin' -
But none 'a my prev'ous mass'ahs
used dey's fists - Dey all's had da
decency ta use da whip.

Taking the horse's reins, Santa Anna dismisses Romolo.

SANTA ANNA

You must understand that I'm in the
middle of a campaign--

EMILY WEST

If'n I's wanted ta kills ya--
(levelly)
I could'a done so a dozen times.

SANTA ANNA

I know, my sweet. In the heat of
battle, passions sometimes get the
better of us.

The closest he'll come to an apology - Emily softens.

SANTA ANNA (CONT'D)

Under normal circumstances, I could
never hurt you. When this is over,
you will be the toast of Vera
Cruz... My Yellow Rose of Mexico.

He gently lifts her from the saddle, and Emily falls into his
arms - Over Santa Anna's shoulder, she sees FLORES... NODS at
him. Santa Anna notices, turns around to see for himself--

SANTA ANNA (CONT'D)

Who is he?

EMILY WEST

The soldier who saved me in Harris-
burg...when I didn't have my gun

SANTA ANNA

Yes, of course...

He acknowledges Flores with a tight smile and a polite nod...
while muttering to Almonte with a cold muttered aside...

SANTA ANNA (CONT'D)

Assign him to the barricade.

5

EXT. ROAD TO VICTORIA - NIGHT

5

Camped for the night, Jack and Big Foot sit at a CAMPFIRE near their broken wagon - Clarence and Buckley's other two slave/thugs tied up to the wagon.

BIG FOOT WALLACE
Dammit, Jack, figured I was savin'
our lives.

JACK HAYS
Use your HEAD--

BIG FOOT WALLACE
I went with my gut--

JACK HAYS
Your gut lies to you! You do
realize that since we met, I've
been mugged, robbed, almost hanged
and nearly drowned... I swear,
you're just plain bad luck.

HEAVY FOOTSTEPS in the darkness. They raise their guns at the sound - Watching...

THEIR POV - THE SURROUNDING DARKNESS

A HUGE, MOONLIT SILHOUETTE looms toward them. Jack and Big Foot COCK their guns. What the hell...?

NATE emerges with the unconscious PAULINE in his arms, a glazed, traumatized expression on his face.

JACK HAYS (CONT'D)
Whoa there... Hey, boy!

Nate shuffles on past until his steps stagger... He DROPS to his knees, barely holding Pauline safely aloft.

Jack and Big Foot rush over to take Pauline from him. Jack carries Pauline to the wagon bed, carefully lays her on it.

JACK HAYS (CONT'D)
She's been stabbed! Bad!

Big Foot tears Pauline's dress to treat her wound.

BIG FOOT WALLACE
Comanche lance.

CLARENCE
Cut me loose 'n I makes her a
poultice ta heal up da wound.

Jack looks at Pauline...then back to Clarence...

JACK HAYS

Boy, you even think of running,
I'll cut you down faster'n swarmin'
hornets on sugar water.

CLARENCE

Where I be runnin' we already goin'
- Wants me ta help da lady or not?

Jack cuts Clarence loose. Clarence bolts to the creek.
Scoops up mud and rips tree moss from overhead limbs.

6

EXT. OFFICER'S TENT, SAN JACINTO - NIGHT

6

BY LAMPLIGHT: A mock-up of SAN JACINTO on a table showing
the lay of the land and position of the Mexican ARMY.

SAM HOUSTON

The Sisters here, take out the
barricade and shower points beyond--

Rusk, Seguin, Hockley, Burleson, Baker, Martin, Sherman and
Lamar watch him move the cannon pieces. Houston then moves
wood chips and pebbles that designate the Texian command.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

Line of infantry a thousand yards
wide. 1st Regiment here. Baker's
Rifles here, Sherman's regiment on
the flank--

MOSELY BAKER

I vote we receive an attack.

SAM HOUSTON

It's not up for a vote, Mosely.

WILEY MARTIN

Ya might reconsider. We ought not
leave the security of the woods.

GEORGE HOCKLEY

(to Baker and Martin)

Where are the war dogs now?

SAM HOUSTON

Fight and be damned!
(back to war plan)
Colonel Lamar's cavalry on the far
right. Captain Seguin and his
Tejanos man the rear-guard--

This is what a simmering Sequin was afraid of, interrupting:

JUAN SEQUIN
Unacceptable--

SAM HOUSTON
Understand me, Don Juan. The
courage of you and your men is not
in question. But there is such
deep rooted rage towards Mexicans,
your men may have to duck more than
Santanista bullets.
(pointed)
The killing may become indiscriminate.

JUAN SEQUIN
We are Tejanos, Texians. The blood
of our comrades has earned us our
place alongside you, General.
(moves pieces for his
company to the front)
We insist on a front line attack,
come what may.

SAM HOUSTON
We need some way to distinguish
your Tejanos from Mexican soldiers.

JUAN SEQUIN
We'll wear goose feathers as long
as we get to sink our teeth into
Santa Anna's neck.

7

EXT. VINCE'S BRIDGE - ESTABLISHING - SUNRISE

7

THE SUN RISES behind exhausted, fatigued MARCHING MEXICAN
TROOPS, led by a rather effete, mustached GENERAL COS (30s),
as they cross the long wooden bridge.

TITLE: April 21, 1836 - 5:45am - VINCE'S BRIDGE, SAN JACINTO

PAN TO: A napping Karnes awakens to the NOISE of the marching
troops. He nudges Deaf, grabs a spy glass to observe the enemy.

HENRY KARNES
Shit, looks near 'bout five hundred
troops. Nothin' but conscripts,
raw recruits 'n peasant farmers.

DEAF SMITH
(takes spy glass)
Santa Anna's cannon fodder -

HENRY KARNES

Looks like they marched all night.

A MEXICAN PATROL has spotted them - The PATROL FIRES - Deaf doesn't hear the SHOTS that SMACK into trees, RICOCHET off rocks. Karnes stumbles back, as Deaf casually turns...

DEAF SMITH

We best git 'fore they spot us--

OFF MORE GUNFIRE, Karnes rolls his eyes, ducks bullets and scrambles to MOUNT UP behind a nonchalant Deaf RIDING OFF.

8

EXT. SANTA ANNA'S TENT - DAWN

8

Worn from their all-night march, Cos' men collapse, gulp water as General Cos checks in with Santa Anna and Almonte.

SANTA ANNA

All present and accounted for?

GENERAL COS

Yes, your Excellency, but my troops are exhausted. Will the rebels attack?

ALMONTE

Unlikely now that we're reinforced.

IN TENT - INTERCUT - EMILY, wrapped in a poncho, eavesdrops...

SANTA ANNA

Feed and rest the men in shifts.
Yesterday's skirmish vexes me.
(to Almonte)
It made no tactical sense.

GENERAL COS

We'll remain on high alert.

SANTA ANNA

Houston is fickle, unpredictable.

ALMONTE

Hold our positions until Filisola or Urrea arrive?

SANTA ANNA

Yes - Then we will see if Houston runs again, or finally dies. I am tired of this war and ready to end it.

Hearing enough, Emily slips out the back flap...

9

EXT. SANTA ANNA'S CAMP - MORNING (CONTINUOUS)

9

Emily sneaks among the SOLDIERS slumbering or consorting with CAMP WOMEN. Emily locates a soldier, lifts her poncho, briefly revealing her NAKED BODY, climbs on top of...

FLORES, who awakens, SHOCKED, until he realizes it's Emily. She pulls her poncho over them both to secretly confide...

EMILY WEST

Tell Houston today's the day. He must attack during siesta.

MANUEL FLORES

Santa Anna seems cocksure of himself.

EMILY WEST

That's for show. He's worried - He's stalling. Now that General Cos is here, he doesn't think our army will attack...which is why Texas must seize the day.

MANUEL FLORES

Come with me, it's not safe for you.

EMILY WEST

It don't matter what happens to me ...as long as I get to see the look of defeat in that bastard's eyes.

(slipping away)

At siesta time...I'll make sure Santa Anna's distracted!

10

EXT. TEXAN ARMY CAMP, SAN JACINTO - DAWN

10

DEAF & KARNES (w/Half-Breed following) reporting to Houston...

DEAF SMITH

If we take out that bridge you won't need to worry 'bout no more Santa Anna reinforcements.

SAM HOUSTON

Risky.

A feverish Lamar, Rusk, Sherman, Baker and Martin interrupt.

MOSELY BAKER

Goddamnit to hell, Santa Anna's already reinforced! We had `em by the throats--and you retreated!

MIRABEAU LAMAR

Now they outnumber us! We gonna
wait for Urrea, too??

WILEY MARTIN

Lotta men gonna die 'cause 'a this.

THOMAS RUSK

I assured them you have a plan...

Houston stares at them a beat, nods at DEAF...then re-enters
his tent, closing the flap.

COLONEL SHERMAN

What the hell's that about?

THOMAS RUSK

He is in charge.

COLONEL SHERMAN

God damn him!

11 EXT. RANGERS' CAMPFIRE - DAWN

11

Deaf kicks ANDERSON's feet. He stirs - MOVING DOWN THE LINE,
Karnes kicks BEANS, who nudges GATOR, who slaps KIT, who
shoves VERN, who hits KNOWLES. They get up, gather weapons--

--ONE BY ONE, THE RANGERS, armed to the teeth, FALL BEHIND
Deaf and Karnes, moving off like the *WILD BUNCH*--

12 EXT. VICTORIA - DAY

12

Jack, Big Foot, Nate, Clarence & thug-slaves emerge at the
end of the muddy street. Pauline rides unconscious on a
TRAVOIS (makeshift gurney w/two poles to one of the horses).

Unnerved by the eeriness of the abandoned town, all move
carefully... A DOOR OPENS...Guadalupe steps out.

GUADALUPE

Praise the Saints!

BIG FOOT WALLACE

The "Saints" give us a few trials--

JACK HAYS

We got a hurt woman here.

She rushes to help get as Big Foot looks across the street--

BIG FOOT WALLACE
What the hell...?

He races off - Jack, Clarence & thug-slaves follow. Nate remains beside Pauline with Guadalupe.

ACROSS THE STREET - A LARGE TREE...

Empresario Buckley and a SMALL CLUTCH OF SURVIVORS surround CURLS, ON A HORSE, a NOOSE around her neck, about to be hanged.

BIG FOOT WALLACE (CONT'D)
WAIT!

But Buckley SLAPS the horse's rump, leaving Curls dangling, NECK SNAPPED - Big Foot checks her wrists in vain for his stolen bracelet. Buckley's disgruntled upon seeing them, snarls...

EMPRESSARIO BUCKLEY
Never saw a man so anxious to run to his own hangin'.

JACK HAYS
Seems to me since you caught the real killers, we're cleared.

BIG FOOT WALLACE
Where's her misfit peckerwood partner?

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY
After Guadalupe Smith spotted 'em, that snotnosed mongrel shot up the town 'n took off.
(points to SCRATCHES)
This little wildcat pert-near scratched my eyes out a'fore we wrangled her.

BIG FOOT WALLACE
Where's the silver wrist cuff she was wearin'?

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY
Was wearin' what she got on.

JACK HAYS
You question her?

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY
You know me. Not a lot of palaver between catchin' 'n hangin'.

JACK HAYS
For a lawman, you possess a bewildering command of due process.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

I make no apologies for frontier justice if that's how I gotta keep MY town in order!

JACK HAYS

(looks around)
--a ghost town.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

They'll all be back soon as Santa Anna whoops Sam Houston's ass and squashes this senseless revolt.

JACK HAYS

Unlikely as that may be, you have grander troubles on the horizon.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

Whatta ya mean by that?

BIG FOOT WALLACE

Let's hit the trail, Jack. We got a revolution to win 'n some whoop-ass to kick.

He takes Jack by the shirtsleeve to pull him away.

JACK HAYS

Last night, a few miles west of here, Comanches raided a homestead and massacred a family.

Buckley and the few gathered townfolk overhearing react.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

Be best we all hold up together awhile til the savages settle down.

BIG FOOT WALLACE

We prefer takin' our chances alone. This ain't the most hospitable town.

He tugs at Jack. Buckley needs them to stay but stays cagey:

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

Y'know, I might'a confiscated a few things from those young brigands that might interest you.

Jack and Big Foot stop, backs turned...but attention grabbed.

BIG FOOT WALLACE

My wrist cuff?

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

No, but let's see...there's a rifle
in a scabbard, saddlebags with some
kinda initial...might'a been a "H."

(as if just remembering)

Oh! And that she-devil was ridin'
what looks like a fine, Tennessee
Thoroughbred--

JACK HAYS

That's MY horse--

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

(interrupts, the deal...)

Help us get through this, I might
recollect where I stabled her.

BIG FOOT WALLACE

Why you low-down...

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

Got no choice, boys. Necessity
requires your help.

Jack turns to Buckley, studies the few innocent folks left.

Big Foot shakes his head, "here we go again," as Buckley, the
slaves, and townspeople begin to gather around Jack.

13 INT. BUCKLEY'S LAND OFFICE - DAY 13

Guadalupe finishes sterilizing Pauline's wounds - Pauline
comes to, convulses violently. Nate grips her.

PAULINE WYKOFF

Where's my babies? James...?

Nate whispers in her ear. Pauline goes limp, then WAILS,
lapsing into the most awful, shuddering display of GRIEF.

14 EXT. VINCE'S BRIDGE - DAY 14

FOUR MEXICAN SENTRIES patrol the BRIDGE.

IN THE WEEDS: Deaf and Karnes snake towards them, motions...
Anderson, Gator, and Kit slip from the WEEDS into the BAYOU--
Deaf watches AIR BUBBLES split to both sides of the bridge.
Motions to Beans and Knowles to take covering positions.

Vern and Beans emerge from the bayou - A knife in his teeth,
Vern begins climbing the pylon directly under a sentry.

Anderson, bow & arrow quiver strapped on, rises in a tuft of weeds, plucks an arrow...THUNK - NAILS the First Guard's chest.

The SECOND GUARD jerks up his rifle, peers into the brush - but Vern grabs his leg, yanks him into the water - Beans grabs him, strains to HOLD HIM DOWN, the water CHURNING--

THE THIRD SENTRY races to fire at Vern...Karnes throws a TOMAHAWK, striking him in the back of his head.

DOWN BELOW, the WATER CALMS, bubbles stop - Beans lets go, and the Second Guard's body floats downstream.

THE LAST SENTRY panics - Deaf waves his arms at him. The Sentry raises his rifle...WHOOOSH another ARROW from Anderson SHOTS THROUGH HIS THROAT... The Bridge is theirs.

15

EXT. HOUSTON'S CAMP - DAY

15

Baker, Martin, Sherman, and Lamar vent their resentments...

MIRABEAU LAMAR

Confound it, he's sleeping sound as a bear cub in a winter's cave.

MOSELY BACKER

With the enemy a stone's throw away!

THUNDERING HORSES APPROACH - Men scurry to grab guns--

COLONEL SHERMAN

My God! THEY'RE ATTACKING!

LORCA and his horde THUNDER into camp like demons--bloody scalps hanging from Lorca's belt. Murmurs spread throughout the camp. "It's him!" "Angel of Death!" "LORCA!"

LORCA

Where's General Houston?

THOMAS RUSK

State your business.

LORCA

Saith Jehovah, Raise your swords with ABANDON and OUTRAGE, till the Rivers runs red with HEATHEN BLOOD--

Houston bolts from his tent to respond...

SAM HOUSTON

Amen. You'll be assigned to Colonel Lamar's command.

LORCA

I'll be assigned to no man, be clear on that. We won't ride for you. We won't ride under you. But we'll kill Meskins alongside you til every brown breathing bastard lies dead.

JUAN SEQUIN

(low, to Houston)

You can't trust that loco, Sam.

SAM HOUSTON

When I'm ready to attack, I'll give you a sign. Watch for it.

Lorca nods and RIDES OFF, his MEN FOLLOW.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

I'd ally with the devil himself when I'm outnumbered.

JUAN SEQUIN

Sir, I think you just did.

16 EXT. VINCE'S BRIDGE - DAY

16

Rangers carry small kegs of GUN POWDER across the bridge, attach them to pylons. Karnes strings out the fuse--

VERN ELWOOD

Now what?

BILLY ANDERSON

We wait for Houston's signal.

KIT ACKLIN

What kinda signal?

HENRY KARNES

We'll know it when we git it.

EPHRAIM KNOWLES

How do we get back when we blow the damn bridge?

DEAF SMITH

We don't.

17 EXT. TEXAN CAMP, SAN JACINTO - DAY

17

FLORES, back in his own clothes, sneaks back towards camp, as a Texan Sentry FIRES - Flores DIVES out of the way, YELLS...

MANUEL FLORES
DAMMIT, it's ME, Ranger Flores!

JUAN SEQUIN
CEASE FIRE! He's one of ours!

Seguin KNOCKS the Sentry's gun aside as Flores gathers himself and runs over.

JUAN SEQUIN (CONT'D)
Flores, what news?

MANUEL FLORES
I've seen the Mexican army up close.
They're worn thin, their supply lines
shredded to the breaking point.

Houston comes out of his tent and walks over to them.

MANUEL FLORES (CONT'D)
Emily West says Santa Anna's forces
are split - So you should attack
during siesta. Otherwise, they
will have time to rest, replenish
and reunite their forces. Then
they will be too strong.

SAM HOUSTON
And as to Miss West?

MANUEL FLORES
She pledged to personally see that
Santa Anna is indisposed.

Disgusted, Houston goes back into his tent.

18 EXT. MEXICAN CAMP - DAY

18

Santa Anna in tense discussion with COS, ALMONTE, PORTILLO,
and CASTRILLON. ROMOLO, as always, stands near.

ALMONTE
We are in a critical situation,
General. The closest reinforcements
are at least another day away

GENERAL COS
Most of our men were up all night.

SANTA ANNA
(glaring)
As was I.

(MORE)

SANTA ANNA (CONT'D)

I don't understand why the Texians haven't attacked. We've spent ourselves waiting.

CASTRILLON

We should not have put ourselves in a position where it matters.

SANTA ANNA

What value is that assessment now that we're here! Help me manage the situation as it is or keep your mouths shut!

ALMONTE

Sir, would it not be better to abandon this position, march back east, re-join Urrea's troops, rest, and then pursue Houston on the offensive?

SANTA ANNA

You propose we RUN? When we're exhausted? Left vulnerable to attack in the open, with no defenses?

PORTILLO

We have won every battle where we were the aggressor--

SANTA ANNA

I need time to think. To clear my head.

Santa Anna leaves his troubled officers. EMILY watches him, her expression tells us she will SEIZE the moment. Santa Anna comes to a grove of trees. Emily picks up a basket, smooths her dress and her hair, and approaches him.

EMILY WEST

What can I do to comfort you?

SANTA ANNA

Leave me. I've got a decision to make--the fate of this campaign hangs in the balance.

Emily walks deeper into the woods, spreads out the blanket, lays out bread, fruit, and a bottle of wine. Takes a seat, as if obliging him--but she glances over her shoulder.

Finally, he walks up to her.

SANTA ANNA (CONT'D)

Forgive me, my Yellow Rose, I'm
beside myself that I lost my temper
with you yesterday. There is so
much at stake.

Emily pats the blanket beside her--well out of sight from
Santa Anna's camp. She kisses him sweetly...

EMILY WEST

You are forgiven, Antonio. A weaker
man could never command so much
power. Of course, it takes a toll.
Besides, you said yourself, they
won't attack today. The best thing
you can do is rest. If anyone needs
you, we'll be right here.

After a moment's deliberation, Santa Anna lies down on
Emily's blanket, puts his head in her lap.

OFF EMILY'S wicked grin--as Santa Anna's eyes CLOSE.

19

EXT. HOUSTON'S ARMY - DAY

19

Texas Battle FLAG (a bare-breasted woman) that says "LIBERTY
OR DEATH" flutters in the afternoon breeze, held by Colby.

SUPER: "APRIL 21, 1836 - 3:30 PM - SAN JACINTO, TEXAS"

On his magnificent white warhorse Saracen, Houston rides down
the line, holds up a hand high to silence his men - Then...

SAM HOUSTON

We were born to live as FREE men.
ONE MAN took that from us, ONE MAN
sent our sons and brothers to
unmarked graves, ONE MAN cast our
daughters and wives alone into
oblivion. Reduced our cherished homes
to cold ashes! Burned the bounty of
our rich fields. Taught us suffering,
hunger, and inconsolable grief.

Houston pulls a deck of RED PLAYING CARDS from his saddle bag.
Sticks one in Juan Sequin's HATBAND--to DISTINGUISH the TEJANOS
from Mexican soldiers. Sequin distributes them to all his MEN.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

Today, we avenge our dead and honor
our loved ones! United against
tyranny, TODAY WE ARE ONE!
(placing red card in hat)
(MORE)

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)
 WE ARE THE SONS OF TEXAS! Ready
 your weapons! Unsheathe your
 swords! And follow me to VICTORY!

20 EXT. VINCE'S BRIDGE - DAY (RESUME) 20

A MEXICAN OFFICER leads a PLATOON up to the bridge - Halts his troops - Reacting to NO GUARDS around the bridge.

Curious, he dismounts, walks toward the bridge.

Sensing something not quite right, the Officer looks around the bridge. Silently, THE RANGERS ready their weapons.

21 EXT. SAN JACINTO FIELD - DAY (RESUME) 21

As quietly as possible, the TEXAN ARMY, led by Houston (the MUSICIANS behind him) slowly advances toward the Mexican camp...

--Young Colby, carrying the Texas Flag, marches beside his General, who leans down, hands him the now repaired & polished PISTOL Colby brought to him. Colby gapes at his Daddy's gun.

--Hockley leads Ben McCulloch at the head of TWO TEAMS OF MEN harnessed to the "TWIN SISTERS" straining against their burden.

--GUN CREWS carry Powder Kegs & buckets of NAILS, SCRAP METAL, pieces of HORSESHOES to re-load the CANNONS.

--Juan Seguin & his Tejanos, RED CARDS in their sombreros.

--Burluson's brigade, Baker's riflemen...

--Martin's regiment, Sherman's Kentucky Infantrymen...

--Lamar proudly leads his cavalry along the tree line, eyes focused on Houston. Also watching...

FROM A SHADOWED KNOLL ABOVE - LORCA & HIS REFUGEE GUERRILLAS remain vigilant at the slow, silent advance of--

HOUSTON leading his ragtag, mud-stained, unshaven army - frontiersmen in greasy buckskins, townsmen in frock coats and top hats, U.S. Army "deserters" in partial uniforms.

Houston draws his SWORD and points it at the Mexican line...

22 EXT. SECLUDED TREE - DAY (RESUME) 22

His passion PEAKED...Santa Anna, panting, rolls off Emily, who, cuddles with him, soothing him to rest...to sleep.

23 INT. VINCE'S BRIDGE - DAY (RESUME) 23

His soldiers on the move, the Mexican Officer spies...

THE FUSE, connected to the powder kegs strapped to the pylons below! Not sure what it is, the Officer crosses to it...

--Anderson draws back his bow, ready to release an arrow into the snooping Officer. Deaf catches his hand - Not yet.

24 EXT. SAN JACINTO FIELD - DAY (RESUME) 24

Marching ever closer to the Mexican Camp, now within sight of the barricade, nervous Texas soldiers raise their weapons. Houston holds up a hand - Not yet - Leans in to musicians.

SAM HOUSTON

What battle songs can you play?
"We're Marching on?" Yankee Doodle?

BLACK DRUMMER

All's we know together is "Come To
The Bower"

SAM HOUSTON

Good enough. Start it up.

The DRUMMER pounds out the BEAT, the fifers & fiddler join in the rousing saloon song. Excited soldiers pick up their step--

--Houston out in front of his troops, horse trotting faster.

INTERCUT - THE MEXICAN CAMP...

Most of Santa Anna's men nap, SOME ROUSE sleepily at the DISTANT TEXAS MUSIC. Two SENTRIES look across the field, squint at MOVEMENT IN THE WEEDS between the two camps.

INTERCUT - SECLUDED TREE - NEAR MEXICAN CAMP...

Santa Anna SNORES, as Emily positions pillows around his ears to keep him from hearing... EMILY pulls out her pistol.

INTERCUT - SAN JACINTO FIELD...

Houston nods to Hockley and Ben to position the cannons--

INTERCUT - THE BARRICADE...

SENTRIES spot the Texans approaching, look confused, raise their rifles. One RUNS, frantically trying to rally arms--

INTERCUT - VINCE'S BRIDGE...

The Mexican Officer pulls up the FUSE...SIGNALS HIS MEN.

THE RANGERS - Lighting a CIGAR, Deaf reacts to the discovery.

INTERCUT - SAN JACINTO FIELD...

Within only a couple hundred yards, Houston HOLDS his army to their ADVANCE, despite SPORADIC SHOTS from the Sentries--

INTERCUTS - NOW COME FASTER...

BEN MCCULLOCH takes a smoking COIL OF MATCH from the botefeux, holds it an inch from the cannon's FUSE HOLE as -

MORE MUSKET FIRE ERUPTS FROM BEHIND THE MEXICAN BARRICADE.

A COUPLE OF TEXANS FALL out of the advancing lines -

Still Houston holds, his HORSE DANCING SIDEWAYS as he draws his saber, raises and...LOWERS IT, a signal to fire...

THE TWIN SISTERS - BEN'S MATCH COIL lights the CANNON--

--KA-BLOOM! A CANNON BALL PUNCHES THROUGH THE MEXICAN BARRICADE! The second cannon lit right after...KA-BLOOM!

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)
REMEMBER THE ALAMO! CHARGE!!!

JUAN SEQUIN
REMEMBER GOLIAD! ATTACK! FIRE!

VINCE'S BRIDGE - Off the CANNON, Karnes slaps Deaf on the shoulder - Puffing on his cigar, Deaf reacts to the Mexican Officer now CUTTING THE FUSE - Deaf leaps into the saddle--

DEAF SMITH
SPUR UP!!!

He charges across the bridge, Rangers follow, GUNS FIRING! The Officer & Dragoons fall back, take cover. Deaf sticks his lit cigar up under his hat... wades into the bayou as--

RESUME: SAN JACINTO BATTLE (CONTINUING TO INTERCUT)

--LORCA & HIS BAND, YIPPING & SCREAMING, charge down from the knoll to join the attack, wildly racing ahead of even Lamar's Calvary - The first to arrive at the barricade...

LORCA LEAPS HIS HORSE INTO THE OPENING made by the cannon ball, BUSTING THROUGH to clear a LARGER HOLE for others to follow!

The TEXAN SOLDIERS behind break into a run, FIRE THEIR RIFLES, LAMAR & THE CALVARY CHARGE as the CANNONS ROAR--

--SANTA ANNA SNAPS AWAKE, confused by the NOISE AROUND HIM.

25 EXT. THE MEXICAN CAMP, SAN JACINTO - DAY (CONTINUOUS) 25

Disoriented Mexican soldiers form muddled ranks as TEXAN MUSKET FIRE & CANNON SHRAPNEL SHRED tents and RIP INTO them

Almonte, Cos and Castrillon try to get control of the panicking soldiers. Romolo grabs a horse.

ALMONTE

BATTLE POSITIONS! RETURN FIRE!
Where's GENERAL SANTA ANNA?!

GENERAL COS

FORM RANKS! LINE UP!

CASTRILLON

PREPARE THE CANNON!

PORTILLO, his grazing cavalry horses frantic off the gunfire, catches his horse, rallying his men--

PORTILLO

SADDLE THE HORSES! COUNTERATTACK!

ROMOLO RACES THROUGH CAMP, Santa Anna's horse in tow--

SANTA ANNA throws on his uniform, trying to process what's going on, confused...

SANTA ANNA

We're attacking?

EMILY WEST

You are under attack...

(raises her GUN)

I mean to deprive you of your life,
but I wanted you to know WHO beat you.

(flashes "TEXAS SENTINEL")

Tomorrow's banner, "The Napoleon of
the West Done In By a Nigger Whore!"

She pulls the trigger as ROMOLO, riding in, LEAPS in front of Santa Anna to protect him, TAKING EMILY'S BULLET for his beloved master - Romolo FALLS DEAD! Emily ducks back to re-load as Santa Anna, his men calling for him, gathers the reins & his dignity--

SANTA ANNA

No place on earth is safe for you,
you devil bitch!

HE RIDES OFF before Emily can fire again.

RANGERS PROVIDE COVER FIRE as Deaf swims toward the FUSES, Mexican Dragoon BULLETS PELTING around him. He LIGHTS THE FUSE TO EACH POWDER KEG, yells up to the Rangers--

DEAF SMITH

GIT!

One by one, the Rangers peel off from the attack - Ride over the bridge, dismount, and take firing positions to cover the next man. Last man out, covering for the others, Anderson runs to his horse past dead Mexicans, when ONE suddenly--

--GRABS Anderson by the ankle, taking the Ranger down...shot down with an arrow but not dead, the WOUNDED SENTRY fights as--

THE FUSE on the far powder keg SIZZLES, nears its END--

Grappling, ANDERSON KICKS off the wounded man, JUMPS on his horse, WHIPS it to RACE across the bridge in time to beat--

BOOM! The first section blows. BOOM! The second. BOOM! The third, showering the Rangers with wood, water, debris, but nearly ENGULFING Anderson, who spurs his horse to LEAP as--

VINCE'S BRIDGE EXPLODES with Anderson & horse in mid-air--

THE BRIDGE COLLAPSES as Anderson's horse safely LANDS on the bank, the Dragoons now stuck on the other side of the chasm, EXCHANGING GUNFIRE with the Rangers on the San Jacinto side.

HENRY KARNES

Victory or death.

COUGHING UP dirty water, Deaf climbs up from the bayou to re-join his men, now mounting up to ride back to the battle. Knowles hesitates with a low aside to Vern...

EPHRAIM KNOWLES

I'm gettin' the hell out. Ya with me?

VERN ELWOOD

Little late for that, don't'cha think?

SAN JACINTO FIELD - THE TEXAS CHARGE... (RESUME)

As the MEXICANS FIRE BACK, BAKER is one of the first hit. RUSK rides over to dismount & help Baker off his horse.

MOSELY BAKER

I'll live! KEEP GOING!

A CANNON BLAST KNOCKS Houston's warhorse out from under him!

Houston recovers, looks around for another horse--

MOSELY BAKER (CONT'D)
Houston! Take mine!

Rusk helps Houston mount Baker's horse to continue the attack.

THE MEXICAN CAMP

Soldados, blind with panic, flee. WHOOPS & SCREAMS of the raiding, havoc-wreaking Texans deafen their ears. Santa Anna charges around on his warhorse, trying get control.

SANTA ANNA
STAND AND FIGHT! FORM RANKS!!

SEVERAL TENTS FLAME UP, the SMOKE adding to the haze of smoky GUNFIRE & CANNON BLASTS - a BUCKING MULE and a NAKED MESTIZO WOMAN run past Santa Anna, who calmly shoots a TEXAN SOLDIER.

SANTA ANNA (CONT'D)
COWARDS! HALT AND RETURN FIRE!

Santa Anna's champion chicken COOPS GET BLOWN TO SMITHEREENS. Birds and feathers fly everywhere - BENITO (18), the young bird keeper, knocked back by the blast. Terrified, Benito runs through the smoke and chaos, away from the fighting.

IN THE THICK OF BATTLE - LORCA, merciless, almost effortlessly fends off attackers, HACKING through them with his sword.

PORTILLO - One of the few on horseback, bears down on COLE HORNFISHER, aiming his gun at Santa Anna.

WHACK! Portillo lops off Hornfisher's gun hand at the wrist! Hornfisher gapes at his GUSHING STUMP, eyes widening as Portillo SWINGS his sword for a DEATH BLOW. Nearby, LANE reacts to see Hornfisher fall over dead - Stunned for a beat.

Lorca storms over to shove a gun in Lane's hand, pushes him, a silent order for Lane to stop mourning and keep fighting.

REAR OF MEXICAN CAMP - THE RANGERS

The nine brave men attack the Mexican Army from behind--

Beans, Gator, Flores, and Kit expertly control their mounts, pick out their targets and HIT THEM - Soldados fall. Anderson SHOOTs ARROWS, reloading Kiowa-style, and SHOOTING AGAIN & AGAIN, faster than the others can reload bullets.

Lagging behind his busily fighting comrades...Knowles sees his opportunity to desert - Turns his horse, GALLOPS AWAY--

PORTILLO sees Kit exposed, FIRES...

Kit flies off his horse, flops in the mud.

Wounded, Kit struggles up as another MEXICAN SOLDIER, seeing an easy kill, charges him with his bayonet, when--

--A RIFLE BUTT CAVES IN the soldado's head, saving Kit!

It's VERN, swinging his rifle like a club, BASHES the downed soldier's brains. Kit weakly raises up...and collapses into Vern's arms. Vern drags his friend from the fray.

NEARBY A MEXICAN SOLDIER RAISES HIS MUSKET to shoot Vern but--
--GETS CUT DOWN by Flores' knife.

TAKING COVER FROM THE BATTLE - EMILY reacts to...

SAM HOUSTON
EMILY! EMILY...?

Emily starts for him...but has to take cover from MORE GUNFIRE. Searching, Houston doesn't see her.

Sword fighting, SEGUIN faces an aristocratic MEXICAN OFFICER--

MEXICAN OFFICER
Why does a Mexican Nobleman fight
for these Rebels?

JUAN SEGUIN
(a lethal THRUST)
I am Texian!

MARTIN & SHERMAN - Charging through the camp, urging their soldiers on - Find themselves up against--

ALMONTE & A HALF-DOZEN TROOPS in a well-formed line, muskets aimed to shoot the trapped Texian Colonels when suddenly--

KNOWLES, looking for a way out, turns in his saddle to look back at the battle behind him, RIDES FULL SPEED--

--INTO ALMONTE'S LINE OF SOLDIERS - Knowles' big horse KNOCKS down at least four of the men like bowling pins, causing their kill-shots at Martin and Sherman to FIRE ASKEW. Almonte and his men SCATTER to keep clear of Knowles and his rearing, out-of-control horse. In awe of Knowles' "heroics"...

ED BURLESON
Damndest thing I ever saw!

NEARBY... Using his sword, LORCA confronts three MEXICAN SOLDIERS as other SOLDADOS charge in on his vulnerable side--

Riding in, Houston FIRES his pistol to SHOOT ONE, TOSSING his sword...which Lorca CATCHES with his left hand to STAB his other attacker with this second sword, SLASHING his opposing duelist with the sword in his right hand as--

Houston snatches a Mexican LANCE sticking up from dead soldier, SPEARS a fourth Lorca attacker - A curt nod of thanks, Lorca tosses Houston his sword back as they separate back into battle.

EDGE OF BATTLE - SANTA ANNA, his men routed, rides to Portillo.

SANTA ANNA

I'll find Filisola. You head west for Urrea. We will return to crush these infidels, cut out their hearts, then flood the rivers with Texian blood.

Portillo nods and they separate. Santa Anna stops short at--

GENERAL SAM HOUSTON

Riding through the SMOKE like an apparition. Houston stops at the sight of Santa Anna - Draws his saber...

THE SHOWDOWN - Santa Anna smiles, raises his sword - the two Generals spur their mounts and hurl themselves at each other.

EMILY - Rises up from hiding to observe the two facing-off.

PORTILLO - On his way out, sees his endangered Presidente...

BLAM! PORTILLO'S MUSKET BALL SLAMS through Houston's BOOT and into the side of his second MOUNT...which TOPPLES to the ground, THUMPING across Houston's wounded leg, trapping him.

LORCA AND LANE SWEEP IN - Lane rears his horse to shield Houston while Portillo turns away from the fearsome Lorca, who dismounts to help free Houston - Lorca gives Houston his horse, guiding his BLOODY BOOT into the stirrup as MORE TEXANS swarm in...

SANTA ANNA sees he's outflanked, wheels his horse, and races away while Portillo directs his Dragoons to LAY DOWN COVER FIRE that drives back Lorca, Houston, and Ranger pursuers--

AT THE REAR - DEAF BASHES an attacker with his rifle stock, but his action triggers a COUGHING SPASM so convulsive Deaf falls off Charmaine - TWO Mexican Soldiers move in to FINISH Deaf - Charmaine REARS, RISING UP ON HIND LEGS, KICKING OUT--

--Charmaine CRUSHES THE MEXICAN SOLDIER'S SKULL. Terrified, the other soldado scampers away - Deaf passes out.

ON THE BATTLEFIELD - MEXICAN SOLDIERS kneel, pleading...

MEXICAN SOLDIER
Me no Alamo! Me no Goliad!

SAM HOUSTON
They're surrendering! CEASE FIRE!

SHERMAN bashes the head of the crying Mexican, moves on.
LAMAR, wielding a BLOODY SWORD, rides past them pursuing a
fleeing Mexican soldier. A SECOND MEXICAN SOLDIER bursts from
a tent, arms raised in surrender - Lamar RUNS HIM THRU.

PORTILLO, riding away, catches sight of EMILY, turns to her--

CASTRILLON remains steadfast beside his big cannon as his
artillerymen cut and run. Almonte approaches.

ALMONTE
CASTRILLON, we must surrender!

CASTRILLON
I never showed my back in over 50
battles. I am too old to do so now.

He climbs atop the barricade to face the oncoming enemy.
RUSK sees his proud defiance, wants him alive.

THOMAS RUSK
Don't shoot him! DON'T SHOOT!

VERN and Knowles and others - BAM, BAM, BAM, BAM, BAM!
Castrillon's body shudders from a HAIL OF TEXIAN BULLETS.

SAM HOUSTON
Gentlemen, I applaud your bravery
but damn your manners! CEASE FIRE!!

In a killing frenzy, few of his men comply. Boot lacquered
in blood, his pallor deathly PALE, Houston slips from his
horse into the mud. Rangers rush to his aide - Beans and
Gator lift him up to carry him from the field, while Karnes
and Anderson provide a protective escort.

HOUSTON'S POV - A BLUR OF CHAOS, IN & OUT OF FOCUS, he sees...

A MEXICAN DRUMMER BOY, LEGS BROKEN, crawls through the mud.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)
DON'T! He's just a boy!

The kid's SKULL EXPLODES! As the red mist clears, REVEAL...

LORCA
Nits make lice.
(stares hard at Houston)
(MORE)

LORCA (CONT'D)
 If Jesus Christ himself come down
 from heaven today and ordered me to
 stop killin' Yellerbellies--

A Mexican Soldier stumbles forward, WAVING A WHITE FLAG--

LORCA (CONT'D)
 --I would not do it.

He SHOOTS the Soldier, whose flag FALLS in the mud.

ALMONTE organizes his soldiers, laying down their arms

ALMONTE
 Surrender! We SURRENDER!

THOMAS RUSK
 CEASE ATTACK! RANGERS, TAKE THESE
 PRISONERS IN THE NAME OF TEXAS!

Anderson, Karnes, and a group of Texas Soldiers take Almonte
 and his soldiers prisoner, saving their lives.

Beans and Gator carry Houston off the battlefield as--

REVENGE-CRAZED TEXIANS rush past them to...

PEGGY LAKE - MEXICAN SOLDIERS

Retreating from Texian pursuers, splash into the turbid
 water. Despairing of mercy, the Mexicans attempt to swim
 away, some DROWN, others SHOT by the growing number of
 merciless TEXANS...

JUAN SEGUIN
 MEN... Your orders are to take
 prisoners!

WILEY MARTIN
 We'll take 'em... just like the
 Mexkins did.

A KILLING FRENZY...the LAKE clouds RED WITH MEXICAN BLOOD.

The last thing Houston sees before he passes out.

27

EXT. COMANCHERIA(TEXAS HILL COUNTRY) - SUNSET

27

A sinking sun glows blood-red on the horizon, casting long
 shadows over a COMANCHE WAR COUNCIL - Buffalo Hump advises
 his young braves, among them Piakini and Yellow Knife.

IN THE DISTANCE: the rooftops of Victoria. In COMANCHE...

BUFFALO HUMP

Everything in nature exists in circular patterns--the sun, the moon, the stars, the seasons, how night follows day, a bird's nest, a turtle's shell, a rain drop and a river stone--and yet these odd, ugly people build square lodges like a pox on the earth, mocking the Creator of Life. I will scorch them from the face of the Comancheria--

YELLOW KNIFE

We have never before taken the risk of attacking them in their village. Be patient. Catch them alone out in their fields. Easy prey.

BUFFALO HUMP

I have a vision. Burn out one family, we eliminate only a handful of white eyes. Burn their village, we discourage them all. That is a risk I am willing to take.

YELLOW KNIFE

*(points at Victoria)
You see only a puddle, not the river that supplies it. You risk war such as you've never seen.*

BUFFALO HUMP

I see only land, once beautiful, stolen from us and made into a festering sore. And since when are the Comanche afraid of war?

PIAKINI

I will give my life to share in your vision.

BUFFALO HUMP

A great war chief does not let his warriors bleed. We see many lodges, but only a few of these intruders remain, huddled together like baby quail... TONIGHT WE RIDE UNDER A BLOOD MOON! Draw out their men and kill them. By daylight we leave Victoria in ashes, blood and tears... Teaching the whites to fear the Comanche.

The young braves, all but Yellow Knife, WHOOP & YELL & DANCE in joyous anticipation.

28 EXT. VICTORIA - DUSK 28

Streets empty. Ominous. Jack crosses the street towards BUCKLEY'S LAND OFFICE.

29 INT. BUCKLEY'S LAND OFFICE - DUSK 29

Now packed with the fifteen or so remaining townfolks, watchful, pacing, anxious. A baby cries. A trembling finger inside a trigger guard. Shaking hand can't roll a cigarette. Nervous stares. A ticking grandfather clock.

Pauline lies on a makeshift bedroll, nursed by Guadalupe w/little Pedro curled up nearby - Nate stands by a window near Pauline, gripping a club, a knife in his belt.

Sweating behind his desk, Buckley taps his fingers, drinks, a glass and a bottle of whiskey in front of him.

PAULINE WYKOFF

I...I can't endure this a second time.

GUADALUPE

Ssshhh.

EMPRESSARIO BUCKLEY

No sense in gettin' all worked up. We're ready for 'em.

PAULINE WYKOFF

That's what my husband said. You don't know what's comin'. I do...

TOWNSMAN

I can't stand bein' cooped up in this coffin no more!

He bolts for the door, knocking people out of his way, until Big Foot clamps down on him and shoves him back into place.

BIG FOOT

Keep your head, mister. Otherwise, we're all liable to lose our scalps.

At a window, Big Foot sees Jack, opens the door, nervously looking around as Jack enters - then SHUTS it.

JACK HAYS

Everything's set.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

Damn Injuns think we gonna lay down for 'em got another thing comin'.

JACK HAYS

Gettin' dark. I'm gonna set up a
coupla bonfires outside.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

Send the niggahs - CLARENCE!
(to Jack)
You're too valuable.

JACK HAYS

Slaves aren't settin' on shelves
lik'a jars-a-pickles, and even if
they were, we can't afford to lose
none of them willy-nilly neither.
(to Clarence)
Just sit your ass down and stay put.

Gratefully, Clarence sits. Jack glares at Buckley, snatches
Buckley's bottle, corks it.

JACK HAYS (CONT'D)

Big Foot! Let's meander!

BIG FOOT WALLACE

What? Huh? Now you want my help?

JACK HAYS

Shhhh - Quit your yammering.

Jack cautiously looks out, then exits. Big Foot follows...

30

EXT. TEXAN CAMP, SAN JACINTO - DUSK

30

OUR MOVING POV - MEXICAN SOLDIERS, marching by the dozens in
FORMATION under ALMONTE, OVERWHELMING HOUSTON'S CAMP--

HOUSTON - Carried by Beans and Gator, his eyes half-closed,
in the throes of delirium when he sees the Mexican soldiers.

SAM HOUSTON

My God, all is lost..I have failed--

DOC EWING thrusts SMELLING SALTS under his nose - Houston
GASPS off the ammonia, eyes wide as officers lean in.

GEORGE HOCKLEY

Those are prisoners, General--

RUSK

Sam - We won!

JUAN SEQUIN

You did it, sir...Texas is ours!

He clenches his red playing card in Houston's fist. Off echoing, sporadic GUNFIRE in the distance, Houston tries sit up in this makeshift triage. BLOOD streams out & around his boot from his wounded ankle, pooling in the mud below.

SAM HOUSTON
Santa Anna with them?

HENRY KARNES
No. We're huntin' him, General.

SAM HOUSTON
Take him alive - You hear me?

Doc Ewing nods to the Rangers who give Houston a sip of water, lift him onto a stretcher, and carry him off.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)
Alive, Presidente-General Santa Anna will secure our victory--
(fading, as they go)
Stop gloating. We've won nothing without him...nothing.

31 EXT. VINCE'S BRIDGE - DUSK 31

Santa Anna rides up to the SMOKING remains of Vince's Bridge - Glances back at a DISTANT MOB OF SCATTERED TEXIAN SOLDIERS--

--urges his horse along the steep river bank... His horse STUMBLES...THROWS Santa Anna. The horse scampers away. Staying low, Santa Anna looks around and spots...

A SMALL CAVE OPENING

Santa Anna scoops up an armload of dried brush and crawls through into the cave, shoving the brush in place behind him to camouflage the entrance.

32 INT. SMALL CAVE - DUSK (CONTINUOUS) 32

A few shards of filtered light in the darkness as Santa Anna stoops to make his way through the cave. GALLOPING HORSES and TEXAS VOICES outside give him pause. He remains still until the outside threat passes on. Then--

A NOISE deeper in the cave - Someone or something is in here!

SANTA ANNA
Who is there?
(off the silence)
I have a gun and will shoot!

SOBBING from the darkness... Santa Anna raise his gun...

Young Benito (last seen w/blown-up rooster cages) steps forward, hands up in surrender - Tears streak his dirty face.

SANTA ANNA (CONT'D)

Benito? You are one of the keepers
of my champion birds, no?

BENITO

Si, Presidente-General...my friends
are all dead.

He slumps to a rock, sobbing. Santa Anna puts his gun away.

SANTA ANNA

I am afraid we lost many brave
friends today.

Benito stifles his sobs, sniffles as Santa Anna comforts him.

33

INT. MEDICAL TENT, SAN JACINTO - NIGHT

33

THE SOUND of a SAW gnawing through BONE - IN LAMPLIGHT...

DOC EWING amputates the LEG of a thankfully UNCONSCIOUS
SOLDIER. Drops the pale, mangled limb in a bloody bucket.

HOUSTON's eyes flutter as Ewing turns with the bloody saw...

SAM HOUSTON

Doc, you cut off my foot?
(sudden panic, looks down)
You did...

DOC EWING

No, but your ankle's shattered.
Sepsis sets in, you'll die a slow,
miserable death.
(hands saw to Sarah)
Gotta get you to New Orleans. If
not, should you fall unconscious, I
will have it off.

SAM HOUSTON

Take my chances in New Orleans.

34

EXT. SAN JACINTO FIELD - NIGHT

34

Among the SCATTERED BODIES...one moves: Deaf, having passed
out from his attack of consumption, regains consciousness.

DEAF SMITH
 Charmaine...? Charmaine!

He smiles when he sees his faithful horse grazing nearby--

DEAF SMITH (CONT'D)
 C'mere, girl, ya saved me today--

When Charmaine tries to trot to him, Deaf's face falls. His beloved mare LIMPS, an UGLY BREAK in her leg, crippled during her valiant fight to protect Deaf - His eyes well with tears when she nuzzles her nose against Deaf's face.

Stroking Charmaine, Deaf gets control...resigned to do what he must. He loads his pistol...presses it to her head.

DEAF SMITH (CONT'D)
 Sorry, ole girl...
 (COUGHING)
 Reckon we's both broke down.
 (gets control, cocks gun)
 Might see ya sooner'n ya think.

BANG! Charmaine falls. Deaf sinks to his knees beside her.

35 EXT. VINCE'S BRIDGE - NIGHT 35

Lamar and several of his Cavalrymen split up to ride along the banks with TORCHES. Lamar dismounts, holds his torch toward the mouth of the cave - Peers into the darkness...

36 EXT. MEXICAN CAMP, SAN JACINTO - NIGHT 36

Rangers Karnes, Anderson, Gator, and Beans check dead bodies, search potential hiding places for the missing Santa Anna.'

Away from the others, Vern and Knowles come to Santa Anna's large, wrecked TENT, go inside...

37 INT. SANTA ANNA'S TENT - DUSK (CONTINUOUS) 37

Knowles and Vern gape at the LAVISH FURNISHINGS: Gold-trim bathtub, candelabra, silver goblets, Santa Anna's fancy duds.

EPHRAIM KNOWLES
 Well chop my legs 'n call me
 Shorty! Ain't this swank.

VERN ELWOOD
 The spoils of war, son. This
 sumbitch traveled in style!

He grabs a pillowcase to cram in silver, candlesticks, etc.

VERN ELWOOD (CONT'D)

I say we pilfer ever'thing we can
tote 'n cut outta here tonight.

EPHRAIM KNOWLES

I dunno, Vern. I'm a hero now - I
saved them Colonels' lives.

VERN ELWOOD

Ya fell over a bunch'a Mexicoons!

Knowles tries on Santa Anna's fancy uniform coat 'n hat.

EPHRAIM KNOWLES

Lookit "General Santa Annabelle!"

Vern salutes, cracks up as Knowles struts, FARTS, trips over--

SANTA ANNA'S WAR CHEST which tips over and SPILLS MONEY BAGS.
Knowles crawls over to open a couple: GOLD and SILVER!

VERN ELWOOD

(breathless)

Hole--eee--shit! Mother of Jesus!

They look at each other and LAUGH--

38 INT. SMALL CAVE - NIGHT

38

Santa Anna and Benito sit still in the dimly lit cavern
until they hear Lamar's footsteps fade, and the soldiers
ride away. Then...Santa Anna removes his boots and jacket.

SANTA ANNA

Switch uniforms with me.

Benito stares at the ground, slowly shaking his head.

BENITO

The rebels will hang whoever
wears those clothes.

Santa Anna nods sympathetically, then suddenly STABS Benito
in the chest, quietly covering his mouth to avoid any sound.
Laying him down, Santa Anna strips off the private's clothes.

39 EXT. OUTSIDE VICTORIA - NIGHT

39

Faint light only from Buckley's Land Office, the rest of the
town a dark skyline of silhouetted buildings--

Riding to the edge of town, the Comanches dismount - Using sign language, Buffalo Hump silently directs his braves to scatter out - Weapons ready, they creep in and out of the shadows along the abandoned streets, edging slowly towards...

40 INT. BUCKLEY'S LAND OFFICE - NIGHT

40

Like a deathwatch. Big Foot peers out the window, checks his guns, powder, ammo. Buckley drinks. Nate stays by Pauline, who's tended by Guadalupe - The townfolks crammed around them, sweating, eyes fearful.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

Once't had a sister, Kiowa got her.

BIG FOOT WALLACE

They kill her?

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

Worse. They raised her up as their own. She ain't my sister no more.

TERRIFIED TOWNSMAN

Can anybody here write? I wanna do my last will and testament.

Another townsman raises his hand. The terrified man crosses to him to dictate his will on the back of a land sale poster.

BIG FOOT WALLACE

(nervously looks outside)

Where the hell's Jack?

41 EXT. VICTORIA STREET - NIGHT

41

THE COMANCHES, sneaking around town, converge on the Land Office, about to attack when...

PILES OF BRUSH in the middle of the street SPARK, BLAZE UP!

Buffalo holds up a hand to stop his war party's advance, squints at JACK'S SILHOUETTE disappearing into the DARKNESS--

THE BONFIRES now light the previously-abandoned-looking buildings, now crackling illumination to shine on...

--RIFLE BARRELS poked from the LOFT OPENINGS OF THE LIVERY.

--RIFLE BARRELS poked from a couple SECOND STORY BUILDINGS.

--RIFLE BARRELS sticking out windows all around town.

BUCKLEY'S LAND OFFICE - BIG FOOT & BUCKLEY

POINT their rifles out the windows, ready to fire. Frantic breathing, STIFLED CRIES from the terrified sequestered townsfolk - O.S. HORSE HOOVES PRANCE AROUND THEM...

AROUND TOWN - THE COMANCHES - Retreat back to their horses...

YELLOW KNIFE

An ambush?

PIAKINI

When did more white eyes come?

Without a word, Buffalo Hump mounts, turns his horse, GALLOPS OFF, away from town - His braves FOLLOW as we INTERCUT...

--THE LIVERY LOFT - JACK watches the SILHOUETTED WAR PARTY ride away, this CLOSER VIEW REVEALING the RAKE and PITCHFORK HANDLES poked out the openings, looking like rifle barrels from a distance in the flickering bonfire light.

--VARIOUS OTHER WINDOWS - QUICK SHOTS - BROOM & MOP HANDLES, POOL CUES stick out, resembling gun barrels in dim firelight.

42

INT. BUCKLEY'S LAND OFFICE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

42

Peering outside, Buckley opens the door for Jack to come back in, turning with a wide grin to the anxious townspeople.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

Well I'll be damned, it worked -
Slicker'n snot on a doorknob.

A huge sigh of relief from the group, various exclamations...

BIG FOOT WALLACE

Comanches are tough on horseback,
but get 'em on foot, takes the
starch outta their breechcoats.

TERRIFIED TOWNSMAN

Praise Jesus! Thank-you God...

GUADALUPE

Thanks to the Saints!

BIG FOOT WALLACE

Saints, hell - Thank Jack Hays.

JACK HAYS

We'll know for sure come mornin'.
Til then, we stay vigilant.

43 EXT. SAN JACINTO - NIGHT

43

Vern and Knowles hurrying, stuff their pockets with as much gold & silver as possible. They claw into the dirt digging a HOLE, just big enough to stash the BAGS OF SANTA ANNA'S LOOT. *

VERN ELWOOD

Goddammit! Cain't git it all now,
gotta come back 'fore we head out!

Coins spilling from his pockets, Knowles helps Vern dig as--

HENRY KARNES (O.S.)

Santa Anna ain't hidin' no-where
here. Vern? Knowles? Y'in there?

Panicking, Vern and Knowles throw the MONEY BAGS into the hole...drag a RUG over it just as--

KARNES ENTERS, looking around Santa Anna's ravaged tent. Anderson, Gator & Beans follow, rummage through furnishings.

HENRY KARNES (CONT'D)

So this is where the famous
Presidente' slept. Fancy!

BEANS WILKINS

(holds up posh Emily gown)
Awful high-falutin' camp gear.

GATOR DAVIS

Souvenirs!

EPHRAIM KNOWLES

Spoils a' war.

BILLY ANDERSON

Loot any of this shit, yer court-
martialed 'n shot. It all belongs
to the Texas Government.

Vern and Knowles awkwardly stand there, trying not to look guilty as hell - They jump on this, talk over each other...

VERN & KNOWLES

Yeah... 'at's right, ain't our'n.
Belongs to Texas...turn it over...

GATOR DAVIS

You two look like possums shittin'
peach seeds.

Sweating, they shrug, grunt, mumble, ease in front of their hiding spots. Karnes goes around them to the open chest.

HENRY KARNES

Reckon Santa Anna's war chest done
been emptied out. He must'a--

CRUNCH - Karnes steps on a hole, reacts, pulls the rug back.

EPHRAIM KNOWLES

Santa Anna must'a buried it!

He jerks his dirt-digging hands behind his back, knocking
against his pockets...GOLD COINS CLINK to the ground. Knowles
looks sick. Bringing out the money bags, Karnes gives Vern
and Knowles accusing looks. They return weak-ass smiles.

44 EXT. NEAR VINCE'S BRIDGE - THE DRY GULCH - MORNING 44

Dressed in Benito's private uniform, Santa Anna pushes the
dry bush and cactus aside to squeeze out of the cave...

Still patrolling, COLBY, as surprised as Santa Anna, stiffly
swings his daddy's gun around at the Mexican General.

COLBY PIT

Surrender, Mezkin! Or I shoot
you deader'n last Tuesday!

Santa Anna sighs, raises his hands. The boy walks close to
him, pats his body and relieves him of his pistol and knife.

45 EXT. TEXAS ARMY CAMP, SAN JACINTO - MORNING 45

Soldiers huddle in groups, talking, eating, resting, nursing
wounds. One by one, they stop and react to--

THE RANGERS ride into camp like the circus come to town!

Wearing Santa Anna's jewelry, medals, hats & uniforms, Anderson,
Knowles, and Vern ride alongside Karnes driving a WAGON loaded
with Santa Anna's personal valuables and money chest.

In the back, Gator sits in the bathtub, scratching his back
with a gold scrub brush and smoking a cigar - Beans, wearing
Emily's fancy dress, stands in the wagon-bed, toasts w/a
silver goblet and waves to everyone like a queen.

46 INT. MEDICAL TENT, SAN JACINTO - MORNING 46

A busy triage for yesterday's wounded: Susanna Dickinson
changes Mosely Baker's bandages. Rebecca uses a cold compress
on Kit's head. Doc Ewing administers to Houston...

DOC EWING
It's opium, Sam...for the pain.

SAM HOUSTON
Quart of whiskey works just as well.

Rusk rushes in, Seguin, Hockley, Martin, Burleson following.

THOMAS RUSK
Sam, you gotta see this...

DOC EWING
He needs to rest!

SAM HOUSTON
I need fresh air! Haul me out to
that oak tree. I'll rest there.

47 EXT. ROAD TO SAN JACINTO CAMP - MORNING

47

Unaccustomed to walking, Santa Anna perspires and breathes heavily as the young Colby energetically prods him along.

COLBY PIT
What's Santa Anna look like?

Santa Anna signals for a rest, sits on a rock to reflect:

SANTA ANNA
Very handsome, aristocratic, and
powerful. His uniform is decorated
with many medals and ribbons and
he...has golden hair - Quite unlike
mine or any normal Mexican.

LORCA (O.S.)
Stand aside, boy.

REVEAL - Alone on horseback, Lorca trains his rifle on Santa Anna. Colby aims the gun he took from Santa Anna at Lorca.

COLBY PIT
This here's my prisoner, mister,
onliest one I got in this whole
war. Anybody kills him, it's me.

LORCA
Then do it. Otherwise I gut-shoot
thru you to kill him. Your choice.

COLBY PIT
Mister...why would you wanna go 'n
do somethin' like that?

SANTA ANNA

I surrendered, just a common peasant
soldado - No one needs to kill me!

Scared, Colby keeps his gun on Santa Anna, his other on Lorca as HORSES APPROACH - Lamar & his Calvary ride up on Lorca's stand-off with Colby. Without a word, a disgusted Lorca spurs his horse away.

MIRABEAU LAMAR

Carry on, Soldier.

Under Lamar's escort, Colby prods Santa Anna down the road.

48 EXT. TEXAS ARMY CAMP, SAN JACINTO - UNDER OAK TREE - DAY 48

Houston lies on a pallet beneath a large oak tree by Buffalo Bayou, his ankle splinted, bloody bandages seeping - Santa Anna's treasure trove beside them as the officers debate...

GEORGE HOCKLEY

It's at least 20,000 in gold and
silver, plus his personal valuables--

JUAN SEQUIN

We must give it to the People of
Texas! Anyone who lost a home or--

THOMAS RUSK

Gentlemen, this discussion is moot,
funds seized from the enemy belong
to our newly liberated Republic!

MOSELY BAKER

What about those who gave their
lives 'n all of us who liberated it!

WILEY MARTIN

Oughta be distributed to the
officers, make up for back pay--

COLONEL SHERMAN

I want none of that murdering
bastard's blood money--

Pained by his injury, Houston glances from the argument to...

Lamar's Calvary ride in behind Colby prodding his prisoner. Curiously, Mexican soldiers bow their heads, OFFICERS rise and salute Santa Anna, who ignores them, a murmur of "El Presidente" floats on the wind.

Houston turns to Karnes, points...

SAM HOUSTON

That prisoner there - Bring him to
me - Flores, fetch Colonel Almonte.

Karnes goes to get Santa Anna, accompanied by Anderson -
Flores and Gator get Almonte. Houston grimaces in pain.

Santa Anna and Almonte, surrounded by Lamar and the Rangers,
are brought to Houston - A perplexed Colby follows. Certain
that he's to be executed, Santa Anna, head bowed, is visibly
shaken. Almonte reaches out to steady his General's arm.
Feeling the opium, Houston smiles at Santa Anna.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

A silk shirt with diamond studs...
awfully elegant for a "private." I
have seen you from afar.

Santa Anna blanches - with Benito's shirt bloodied from his
stabbing, Santa Anna had to wear his own, dissembling...

SANTA ANNA

You have me confused...

SAM HOUSTON

Colonel Almonte, why do your men
salute him?

ALMONTE

Regretfully, I do not know all my
soldiers.

SAM HOUSTON

(turns to Colby)
Execute your prisoner, soldier.

A reluctant Colby points his Daddy's pistol at Santa Anna.

COLBY PIT

Yes, sir?

SAM HOUSTON

Put him against the tree, so his
brains don't splatter.

SANTA ANNA

(scared, blurts...)
I am General Antonio Lopez de Santa
Anna, El Presidente of Mexico--

SAM HOUSTON

(smiles)
General Santa Anna, I cannot express
how pleased I am to meet you.

Everyone's electrified by this revelation, MURMURS shoot thru the ranks, "Santa Anna! That's him!" etc., converging on them.

SANTA ANNA

I put myself at the discretion of the brave General Houston. I wish to be treated as a General should be when made a prisoner of war.

Off Houston's gesture, Ewing gives opium to the trembling Santa Anna, who ingests it, closes his eyes as the drug kicks in. In shock, Colby gapes, whispers to Anderson next to him...

COLBY PIT

You mean that's...?

The word spreads fast. Angry, muttering Texans press forward. Lamar quickly takes credit for bringing him in.

MIRABEAU LAMAR

We captured Santa Anna! We must convene a tribunal and execute him.

Martin, Sherman, and Lamar all erupt simultaneously.

WILEY MARTIN

Let's shoot 'im, Sam!

COLONEL SHERMAN

He has to swing for what he did!

MOSELY BAKER

Tie him to horses and rip him apart! Right here! Right now!

Off the dangerous mob, Santa Anna appeals to Houston...

SANTA ANNA

The conqueror of the Napoleon of the West is born to no uncommon destiny. He can afford to be generous to the vanquished.

SAM HOUSTON

You should have remembered that, sir, at the Alamo.

SANTA ANNA

The Alamo was taken by storm! Your defenders fought bravely but chose to die to the very last man!

JUAN SEQUIN

You offered them no alternative.

From the crowd: "Hang 'em! Shoot 'im! Give 'im what he gave!"

SANTA ANNA

I acted under orders from my government!

THOMAS RUSK

You are yourself the government, sir. Texas formed a recognized government. We are not pirates. The rules of war applied...

A weak voice cuts through the crowd as Deaf pushes his way thru--

DEAF SMITH

Fannin surrendered, with terms.

SANTA ANNA

General Urrea had no authority to accept their surrender on any terms.

DEAF SMITH

No matter. Still don't justify their slaughter.

SANTA ANNA

I will personally have Urrea executed upon my return to Mexico.

The furious, sneering crowd press in closer. A lynch mob.

SAM HOUSTON

I admire your optimism, El Presidente. Equal only to your sense of justice.

WILEY MARTIN

Why we even talkin' to this murderer! He needs to swing!

MIRABEAU LAMAR

Firing squad--here and now!

SAM HOUSTON

I can't let that happen - Texas, to be respected, must be polite. Santa Anna living can be of incalculable benefit to us - Santa Anna dead, would just be another dead Mexican.

ANGRY MEN ADVANCE, "Let's kill 'im! Hang the bastard!" etc.

MOSELY BAKER

Prick bastard must PAY!

SAM HOUSTON
 (over the crowd)
 Then let it be so... Let us take
 our reparations. Open his war chest.
 GOLD for every man in my command!

He motions to Seguin to drag off the chest, away from him for
 the mob to follow the money. The officers are outraged...

MIRABEAU LAMAR
 What?!? Not your decision, General.
 It is President Burnett's!

THOMAS RUSK
 Sam, your mind is cloudy with the
 Doc's pain serum. You can't...

He turns to the mutinous men, many who are still confused.

SAM HOUSTON
 To all who risked their lives,
 equal shares! Colonel Seguin...
 Divvy it up!

Seguin OPENS THE CHEST to display the CACHE OF WEALTH, the
 men react, stunned, mesmerized by the gold & silver as--

--LORCA & HIS BAND ride in straight to Santa Anna - Lorca's
 men, armed to the teeth, spread out to seize the Mexican
 General from Houston. Lorca withdraws his sword.

LORCA
 General! We're takin' him.
 Retribution goes hand in glove with
 victory - Present your prisoner. *

A tense moment... Deaf steps in front of Houston and Santa
 Anna, then ALL the RANGERS follow suit: Colby, Karnes, Gator,
 Beans, Anderson, Kit, Flores, Vern... ALL EXCEPT Knowles.
 The Rangers have created a wall/human shield around Houston
 and Santa Anna. A nervous Knowles hangs back. Irritated...

BILLY ANDERSON
 Knowles!

Reluctantly Knowles shuffles over to join them.

A BEAT, neither side yields - Murderous mayhem about to erupt--

LORCA
 Fine by me, we end it all NOW. My
 only reason for living is to SLAY him

Lorca brings up his pistol to fire at Santa Anna when--

--A ROPE falls around his chest - Juan Seguin yanks Lorca off his horse. The Rangers subdue the furious, flailing Lorca.

DEAF SMITH

Ride outta here while you can.

LANE WALTERS

This man saved my life. We're not leaving without him.

SAM HOUSTON

He saved mine as well. He is a fierce warrior of uncommon valor and must be treated with dignity.

The Rangers back off. Lorca shakes off the rope, faces Houston.

LORCA

Do not fool yourself.

(to Santa Anna)

This man will die.

(to everyone)

It just remains to be seen how many of us he takes with him.

He jumps back on his horse, lashes it, rides out with his men.

49

EXT. VICTORIA - DAY

49

The street bonfires smolder. The Land Office door OPENS--

Stepping outside with some trepidation, Jack, Big Foot, Buckley, Nate, Guadalupe, Clarence, and townfolks look around the peaceful street, somewhat surprised that they're still here.

EMPRESSARIO BUCKLEY

They'll likely be back--

JACK HAYS

Likely.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

(freaked out even more)

You ought stay awhile longer...for the sake of the women 'n childrens.

JACK HAYS

A deal's a deal, Buckley. Fetch our belongings, we gotta get goin'.

BIG FOOT WALLACE

S'right - Me 'n Hardcase fightin' Mexicans, not Comanches.

A COUPLE EXPRESS RIDERS tear into town FIRING GUNS in the air.

TEXAS EXPRESS RIDER
IT'S OVER! TEXAS WON! SAM HOUSTON'S
DRIVIN' THE SANTANISTAS BACK TO MEXICO!
TEXAS IS FREE!

People come outside and celebrate. Jack and Big Foot exchange a crestfallen look.

JACK HAYS
We missed it?

50

EXT. CAMP BESIDE A RIVER - DAY

50

A TENT erected near a parked wagon - An OLDER MEXICAN MAN checks a fishing line, MIDDLE-AGED MAN with a shotgun nearby - A YOUNG MAN wields a rifle, scans environs for game to kill.

LORCA & HORDE CHARGE IN, SHOOT down the Older Man & Young Man--

The Middle-Aged Mexican BLASTS one round from his double-barrelled shotgun, Lorca IMPALES him with his SWORD before he gets off the second round. A RIFLE BARREL POKES OUT from the tent and Lorca's men UNLEASH A THUNDEROUS VOLLEY! The tent peppered with bullet holes, Lorca SLASHES through the canvas--

A MIDDLE-AGED MOTHER lies bloodied, holding the rifle. Lane and the others stare in shock - They just murdered a family.

Suddenly, a little boy, MOISES (8), bolts from a hiding spot and RUNS for his life! Lorca SCOOPS HIM UP, pulls his knife to slit the kid's throat - Lane swings his gun up at Lorca--

LANE WALTERS
NO! He's a child!

LORCA
Kill 'em all, lest they grow
up ta murder us.

In shock, tears streaking his face, Moises stares at the SCAR, on Lorca's WRIST.

LANE WALTERS
We are done killing women and
children.

The rest of his band now raise their guns on their former leader.

LORCA
Take him 'n git the hell out! I aim
to kill Mexicans 'n I ain't done yet!

Lane pulls Moises onto his saddle, rides away, the rest of the band following. Jaw clenched, Lorca glares at them until they're no longer in sight - Starts to turn --

BOOM! Lorca smacks down in the dirt - passes out.

The Mexican Father, bleeding to death, has rallied enough to fire his shotgun before he dies. *

51 EXT. TEXAN ARMY CAMP, SAN JACINTO - DAY

51

A FLURRY OF ACTIVITY - Army Regulars BUILD A FENCED-IN PRISON for the Mexican POWs, others DIG GRAVES. Many volunteers are PACKING UP AND RIDING OUT.

Shackled, Santa Anna watches Doc Ewing transport Houston.

SANTA ANNA

You wanted to keep me alive - Once you are gone...these men will hang me.

SAM HOUSTON

Will Filisola and Urrea retreat if informed we hold you hostage?

SANTA ANNA

No. Their orders are to engage.

SAM HOUSTON

I recommend you countermand them.

SANTA ANNA

You may have Texas in exchange for my life.

THOMAS RUSK

President Burnet must negotiate the terms of any treaty.

BY THE RANGERS' CAMPSITE

With everyone working, Vern mounts up, starting to head out--

EPHRAIM KNOWLES

Vern? You's aimed the wrong way - We's all congregatin' back over there to escort the General.

VERN ELWOOD

War's over for me, Knowles. Done my duty. Had my fill of takin' orders. Need to find me a lusty feline 'n get hitched...but not in church.

(MORE)

VERN ELWOOD (CONT'D)
 (grins to Knowles)
 You wanna ride along?

EPHRAIM KNOWLES
 Naaa... I reckon I'm stayin' on.

Jaw dropped at Knowles' righteous transformation, Vern grins.

VERN ELWOOD
 I'll be...good luck with that shit.
 (a tip of his hat)
 Tell the boys I said Adios.

He jerks his reins, rides through camp...pauses to watch...

SARAH, Doc Ewing's daughter, w/adopted dog Half-Breed running ahead of her to jump on Karnes, who stoops to greet him.

SARAH EWING
 Half-Breed wanted to say goodbye.

Karnes nods to the Medical Wagon behind Sarah where Rebecca and others are packing up. Scratching Half-Breed's ears... *

HENRY KARNES
 Y'all off to Victoria?

SARAH EWING
 Yessir, my daddy's settin' up his doctorin' office there soon as he's back from New Orleans. Says it's time to settle down some place.

HENRY KARNES
 Half-Breed... you protect this pretty little one til her Daddy gets back.

BACK TO HOUSTON & SANTA ANNA

Houston takes the papers from Santa Anna, gives them to Sequin.

SAM HOUSTON
 We'll need riders to deliver these to Urrea and Filasola right away.
 (to Rusk)
 Tom, ride on ahead to formalize our agreement with Burnet.
 (to officers)
 George - you, Ed, and Juan take charge of the army while I'm gone.

Burleson indicates the scattered troops riding away...

ED BURLESON

What army we have left. Most of
the volunteers think we already won
and are headin' on back home.

Houston raises up from his pallet to bellow at the soldiers:

SAM HOUSTON

Nearly 8000 Mexican troops are
still out there and could attack at
any moment! REMAIN ON FULL ALERT!

JUAN SEQUIN

You get that leg healed, sir.
Texas needs you.

GEORGE HOCKLEY

We'll do our best to keep the
companies together and ready, Sam.

Houston winces in pain, Doc gives him a hit of opium. Santa
Anna is loaded into a hastily-constructed CAGE (like a
chicken coop) onto the wagon beside Houston's pallet.

OUTSIDE MEDICAL TENT

Shoulder bandaged, Kit, FILING a MEDAL exits to join the
Rangers on their escort assignment, with Rebecca following.

REBECCA PIT

Kit! You're not fit to ride yet!

KIT ACKLIN

Don't fuss, case I need tendin' to,
Doc Ewing's comin' with the General.

He pauses in his filing to take her hand, scrutinizing it.

REBECCA PIT

Whatta you doin' with that thing?

KIT ACKLIN

Fixin' it. I got it off a dead
Mezkin tried to gut me.

He's shaped it into a perfect GOLD RING, drops to his knee.

KIT ACKLIN (CONT'D)

Wait for me?

Speechless, Rebecca, throws her arms around Kit, eyes
tearing, accepts the ring. Squeezing Kit's wounded shoulder,
he GRUNTS in pain, Rebecca reacts, "Oops, sorry," BOTH LAUGH.

*
*

HOUSTON - Sitting up in the wagon, watches the tender exchange between Kit & Rebecca, signals Flores - Low:

SAM HOUSTON
Any sign of Emily yet?

MANUEL FLORES
Got her revenge on Santa Anna, she might've gone back to New Orleans. Maybe you'll see her there.

SAM HOUSTON
Yeah... Maybe.

NEW ANGLE - DEAF SMITH

Carrying a shovel, covered in mud, he shuffles towards them - Houston & Rangers gape at their pitiful, debilitated Captain.

GATOR DAVIS
Dang, Cap'n. Ya look like somethin' the cat dragged in that the goat wouldn't eat. Where ya been?

DEAF SMITH
(stifles a cough, low)
Had ta cover up Charmaine..

He drops the shovel, consumed by a bad coughing fit. Flores opens his canteen to offer water, but the proud old Ranger pushes him away, stumbles to the trees to VOMIT BLOOD.

Everyone watches in pity. Houston turns to Colby.

SAM HOUSTON
The man who captured Santa Anna oughta make a good Ranger. Your first assignment, escort Captain Smith back home to his wife.

COLBY PIT
Yessir! Hey, sis...sis...

Colby hurries over to Rebecca. They embrace in celebration.

DEAF SMITH
(stumbling back)
Ain't nobody fetched me a new mount yet?!

SAM HOUSTON
You're not going, Deaf.

Deaf stops short with a sharp look at him. Then...

DEAF SMITH

Who the hell's gonna keep El Presidente
breathin' and watch over your ass?

SAM HOUSTON

Karnes will take command.

DEAF SMITH

Jes' gonna throw me away, that it?

SAM HOUSTON

Go on home, old friend. The
Republic of Texas is grateful for
your service.

DEAF SMITH

I'll tell you when I'm done!

SAM HOUSTON

You are hereby ordered to
convalesce until further notice.

Deaf stares in fury and disbelief, SMACKS his hat against his
leg. Colby rushes over to help him. Hurting for his friend,
Karnes looks away, gruffly yells the order...

HENRY KARNES

Gotta get the General to New Orleans
and this Meskin war-lord to his
"Peace talks" - MOVE OUT!

The Rangers MOVE OUT. Rebecca blows kisses to Kit.

THE ARMY CAMP breaks up... Most heading in the opposite way
from the Rangers - Among them, Sarah, and Rebecca helping
WOUNDED SOLDIERS in the Medical Wagon driven by Colby -

In the back of the cart: A scowling, deathly-ill Deaf.

Vern falls in behind the entourage, eyeing Sarah.

52

EXT. PRAIRIE ROAD - DAY

52

BUZZARDS circle. FLIES buzz around dead bodies...one lands on
the nose of the bloodied Lorca...who twitches, swats it away.

Grimacing in agony, Lorca raises up on one elbow...reacts to:

A BUZZARD pokes at the entrails of the Mexican Father who shot
Lorca. Lorca YELLS, throws a rock to flush the buzzard--

--then painfully struggles to his feet.

RANGERS: Karnes, Kit, Beans, Gator, Flores, Anderson, and Knowles ride escort. Attended by Doc Ewing, Houston fights pain. Santa Anna stares back with a small, stoned smile, enjoying Houston's misery.

SANTA ANNA

Tell me. Why do the Texians revolt against me? Mexico gave you people so much opportunity.

SAM HOUSTON

Mexico did indeed. But YOU--

Santa Anna sighs, as if explaining to a child...

SANTA ANNA

You see a cruel, heartless dictator instead of a leader with a singular force of will and clarity of vision who only did what had to be done.

SAM HOUSTON

I see a man in a chicken coup.

SANTA ANNA

I am the savior of Mexico, defending my people from pirates like you stealing our land. History will sweep you aside with a footnote.

SAM HOUSTON

Better a footnote than an entire book of abominations.

SANTA ANNA

We are men on opposite sides, yet we share many things...

(off Houston's silence)

Like Miss Emily West?

SAM HOUSTON

You are the author of Miss West's need to avenge her brother--no matter how difficult her path--

SANTA ANNA

(laughs, relishing this)

My, it seemed so effortless!

Especially when she was screaming,

"Oh, Antonio, more! MORE!"

Houston shows no reaction but for a small smile...

SAM HOUSTON

Although I've never personally
witnessed it, I'm told women are
gifted at pretending that sorta thing.

(a shrug)

However, if what you say is true,
she really must've needed "more."

He smiles and takes another tab of opium. Seething, Santa
Anna sticks out his hand for his hit. Houston stops the Doc.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

He's had enough, Doc. Let him
wrestle with what defeat feels like.

54 EXT. PRAIRIE - DUSK

54

Lorca sits by a FIRE, digs out a last SHOTGUN PELLET from his
bare chest, badly bleeding. Next to him, the BLADE of his
Bowie knife glows red-hot from where it lays in the fire.

Lorca uses the sizzling blade to cauterize his wounds...his
bloodcurdling SCREAM flushes crows off their roost.

55 EXT. ROAD TO VELASCO - DAY

55

A MEXICAN COURIER rides toward Houston's transport. Karnes
signals for a stop - The Rangers ready their weapons.

BILLY ANDERSON

One of Santa Anna's Dragoons?

The rider draws closer, waving a WHITE FLAG.

HENRY KARNES

You 'n Flores circle back around,
see where this feller's come from.

With a nod, Anderson and Flores GALLOP off on a lateral track
as the Courier pulls up his horse, waits. Beans rides out to
meet him, takes the message...rides back.

BEANS WILKINS

Colonel Portillo's got Emily West.

His condition worse, a half-conscious Houston perks up...

SAM HOUSTON

She's alive...?

BEANS WILKINS

Wants to trade her for Santa Anna.

Overhearing, Santa Anna grins but acts offended, to Almonte:

SANTA ANNA

What an insult. A whore for a
Chief of State.

(to Houston)

It will be a blessing to let
Portillo kill her - If I get my
chance, I will do far worse.

Conflicted, Houston glares at Santa Anna. Weakly...

SAM HOUSTON

Tell Portillo if he returns Miss West,
I will be merciful. There is no other
option.

Beans writes Houston's response on back of Portillo's note,
rides out to give it to the Courier. *

PAST AN ARROYO

Flores and Anderson, having circled around to conceal
themselves, pick up the Courier's trail as he rides by.

56 EXT. A ROAD WEST OF THE COLORADO RIVER - DAY (LATER) 56

Flores rides in to follow the Courier, who turns to him.

PORTILLO'S COURIER

Think I don't know you're following
me? You think I'm stupid?

MANUEL FLORES

No, we think you're real stupid.

Anderson springs from hiding, drills the Courier point blank
with an arrow, then draws his KNIFE to SCALP the Courier.

57 INT. VICTORIA SHACK - MORNING 57

Abandoned by previous occupants, Guadalupe has taken shelter
here to nurse Pauline. Nate sweeps the front stoop.

She looks up through the doorway as Colby rolls up. Seeing
Deaf, Guadalupe, rushes to him, Pedro following..."Poppa!"

Deaf's eyes focus on his wife, a smile grows on his face, his
voice a barely audible rasp:

DEAF SMITH

We did it, darlin'. Texas is ours.

Deaf passes out. Guadalupe grabs on to him, calls to...

GUADALUPE SMITH
NATE... give me a hand.

58 EXT. A ROAD WEST OF THE COLORADO RIVER - DAY 58

Flores and Anderson hide behind cover, watching a MEXICAN ESCORT OF FOUR DRAGOONS ride in and react to the dead Courier ambushed by "Indians," anxiously look about for danger.

MEXICAN DRAGOON
Comanches...!

The Mexican Escort leave the body and gallop back.
Flores and Anderson wait a beat...then follow--

59 EXT. GALVESTON BAY - DAY 59

The "FLORA," a rust-bucket ready to sail, fishing nets draped from the booms. Unconscious, Houston lies on a stretcher held by Doc Ewing & Knowles. Karnes and Gator confront the CAPTAIN.

HENRY KARNES
Every government boat we've tried
say they got orders to patrol for
enemy ships. You're our last hope.

GATOR DAVIS
Does Burnet want him to die?!

FLORA CAPTAIN
Look...if it were up to me, I'd
ferry the general anywhere he needs
to go - But it's not my decision.

As DECKHANDS untie the boat, Kit and Beans climb on board behind them, unsheathing Bowie knives.

HENRY KARNES
Then we'll decide for ya--

He and Gator level their pistols at the Captain, while Kit and Beans hold knives to the throats of the deckhands.

KNOWLES
Bet you just got a hankerin' for
some Frenchie food 'n Creole pussy.

The Rangers get Houston onboard, situate him, then Knowles, Beans and Kit disembark. Karnes lingers a beat as the Doc settles in next the sick General and Gator points his pistol.

GATOR DAVIS

Break wind, skipper...or whatever
it is you corncobs do 'fore I burn
a new hole in your chincy ass.

Karnes realizes the BOAT'S PULLING AWAY, takes a RUNNING LEAP
back to the dock as the schooner drifts out to sea - on its
STERN: "*Flora* - DAVID BURNET, PROPRIETOR"

60 EXT. HACIENDO VALERO (PORTILLO'S HIDEOUT) - DAY 60

TELESCOPIC POV - SOLDADOS mill about - PORTILLO comes out of
a small hacienda as the Dragoons arrive, tell him (MOS) what
happened. Furious, Portillo storms back inside-- PAN POV...

TO WINDOW - Portillo storms in, SLAPS Emily to the ground.

REVEAL: Anderson lowers the spy glass.

BILLY ANDERSON

We're gonna need more muscle to
wrestle her outta that snake den.

61 EXT. VICTORIA STREETS - DAY 61

Anderson and Flores ride into town. Excited to see them,
Colby WHOOPS, rushes to them. Anderson's all business--

BILLY ANDERSON

Need ya to help us round up a
posse, kid - Got a rescue mission.

NEW ANGLE - Aided by Nate, the recovering Pauline practices
walking, reacts at seeing Empressario Buckley, limps to him.

PAULINE WYKOFF

Remember me, Mister?

EMPRESSARIO BUCKLEY

Yes ma'am, unfortunate what happened--

PAULINE WYKOFF

You sold us that place knowin' the
Comanche were runnin' loose!

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

As I recall, your husband inquired
only of the Mexican turmoil. The
subject of Injuns never come up.

She SPITS in his face.

ANGLE - GUADALUPE'S SHACK - Anderson and Flores approach
Guadalupe on the porch - She defiantly blocks the door. *

GUADALUPE SMITH
Erastus is done with rangers.
Please... Let him know peace in his
final days.

BILLY ANDERSON
Yes, ma'am. We only stopped by to
say howdy 'n pay respects.

GUADALUPE SMITH
You think I don't see? There's
trouble somewhere. You want men.

She points to Colby talking to Jack, Big Foot and others.

Flores and Anderson exchange a look - Caught, admitting...

BILLY ANDERSON
There's been a kidnapping.

MANUEL FLORES
The lady who helped us whip Santa Anna--

DEAF SMITH (O.S.)
You found Emily West?

62 INT. VICTORIA SHACK - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

62

Deaf's bare, knobby feet hit the floor. Guadalupe rushes in--

GUADALUPE SMITH
You get back in that bed!

DEAF SMITH
Gotta take a country leak, woman!
'Less you wanna mop this floor.

Flores and Anderson have followed her in, respectfully...

BILLY ANDERSON
Deaf, we ain't here to cause a fuss.

MANUEL FLORES
Though we could use your counsel--

DEAF SMITH
Don't marry a woman who can whip
ya. She'll make ya piss yourself.

Deaf grabs the bed pan -- closes the door.

DEAF SMITH (O.S (CONT'D)
Who's got her?

BILLY ANDERSON
Portillo and about twenty of his
Dragoons. Holdin' her in a
hacienda on the Nueces.

As they talk, we hear an O.S. trunk lid opening, closing...
the sound of SPURS jingling with each clump of a boot heel.

The door swings open - out walks DEAF, ready to ride. He
moves to his pistols and fills his brace.

GUADALUPE SMITH
You walk out that door, we both
know you ain't comin' back.

DEAF SMITH
(to Anderson and Flores)
Fetch the horses.

The Rangers can't get out of there fast enough. Then, gently:

DEAF SMITH (CONT'D)
Lupe...darlin'...I'm coughin' blood
and fartin' dust. I can die in
that bed listenin' to your
caterwaulin', or I can die as I've
tried my damnest to live all my
days--like a man.

Eyes welling, Guadalupe pulls down her husband's rifle.

DEAF SMITH (CONT'D)
It's your love kept me goin' this long.

He kisses the tears from Guadalupe's cheek. Turns for the
door - Stops, and turns back to little Pedro--

DEAF SMITH (CONT'D)
Mind your chores. Be a comfort to
your Ma. When you're old enough, I
expect you to account for yourself.
This ain't the end of the troubles.
Texas is gonna need you.

Anderson, Flores, Jack, Big Foot, and Colby, holding an extra
horse, wait outside on horseback. With young Moises by his
side, Lane Walters, in his blacksmith apron, talks to Flores.

LANE WALTERS

I owe ya for savin' me 'n all those
others at Harrisburg - So I'll shoe
your horses 'n fix your tack free
of charge anytime ya want... But I
got my bellyfull of killin'...

Flores nods, understanding, as Deaf exits the house.

COLBY PIT

Got you a new mount, Cap'n.

DEAF SMITH

(mounting up)

'N you think you're goin', too?

COLBY PIT

Got strict orders to look after ya.

JACK HAYS

Captain Smith, We're honored to ride
with you. My name's Jack Hays.

DEAF SMITH

You're the Tennessee turnip what
saved this town from Comanches.

JACK HAYS

This here is Big Foot Wallace.

DEAF SMITH

(ignoring him)

Y'all don't keep up, I ain't comin'
back for ya - H'YAH!!

He SPURS his horse, the others scramble to catch up.

Guadalupe and Pedro watch them ride away.

64 EXT. NEAR MISSION CONCEPCION, SOUTHWEST TEXAS - DAY 64

WIND sweeps up billowing SAND...LORCA trudges across the
prairie, stops off faint MUSIC: A CHOIR OF YOUNG VOICES sing
Beethoven in Latin.

65 INT. MISSION CONCEPCION - DAY 65

Ornate doors BURST OPEN. Lorca stomps in, eyes searing yet
dead, a pistol in each hand. The BOYS CHOIR STOPS. Silence.

A handsome young COUPLE: MEXICAN MOTHER (22) & ANGLO FATHER (23), stand in front of a PRIEST (50s), holding their tiny INFANT in front of the Baptismal.

Everyone turns to gape - An intense HUSH... MUTTERS THROUGH THE CONGREGATION OF "LORCA"... UNARMED MEN step in front of their terrified women and children, ready for an attack.

A stout, wizened Mexican woman, ABUELITA (70s) steps forward.

ABUELITA
(to everyone)
Christ washed the feet of lepers.

She gently pats his hands to lower his pistols.

ABUELITA (CONT'D)
Thank you for coming for this
special moment in the life of my
grandson.

She gestures to the pew, presses him to sit. He hesitates, slowly sits. Abuelita turns to address the congregation...

ABUELITA (CONT'D)
The legendary warrior who helped
save Texas is welcome here.

She nods for the Priest and the CHOIR to BEGIN AGAIN.

Entranced by the MUSIC and RITUAL, Lorca watches the baby baptized, a moment of grace in filtered, stained-glass light.

66

EXT. NEW ORLEANS HARBOR - DAY

66

A uniformed BAND, horns, tubas, etc wide-eyed in anticipation as the CONDUCTOR taps his baton to start "COME TO THE BOWER!"

GATOR DAVIS (O.S.)
DOC! DOC! Sweet Jesus... the
General's dead!

SUPER: MAY 22, 1836, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

DECK OF THE FLORA - Doc Ewing moves quickly. Gator is standing over HOUSTON, gaunt, hatless, sunburned, looks dead... Then his eyes flutter - Weakly...

SAM HOUSTON
That music... For me?

GATOR DAVIS
Thank the lord.

He tries to get up - Doc Ewing pushes him back, scolding...

DOC EWING

Stay put... Your leg's swelled up
with infection, put weight on it,
might explode--

SAM HOUSTON

Then you better stand back--

He struggles to get up, Gator helps prop him on the gunwale.

WIDE VIEW - THE DOCKS

PACKED with a RAUCOUS CROWD waving American & Texas flags and
CHEERING WILDLY at the sight of the Texas hero - Low aside...

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

Give me your hat.

DOC EWING

My hat? Why?

Houston snatches the Doc's HAT. He waves it at the crowd, who
CHEER EVEN LOUDER - He THROWS THE HAT, and EVERYONE SCRAMBLES
FOR THE SOUVENIR, PRETTY WOMEN SCREAM, swoon, feign fainting.

Houston turns with a grin at the slack-jawed Doc, then--

--COLLAPSES dead away into Gator's arms.

67

EXT. HACIENDA VALERO (PORTILLO'S HIDEOUT) - NIGHT

67

Smoke billows from the chimney of the main house. Sentries
walk the ramparts and horses mill around the corral.

ON A HILL OVERLOOKING the hacienda...

DEAF, ANDERSON, FLORES, JACK, BIG FOOT, and COLBY spy...

DEAF SMITH

(coughing)

Hell, I couldn't sneak up on a dead
mule. I best stay here.

COLBY PIT

What if we storm the place from all
sides at once... surprise 'em.

An obviously bad idea, Jack grabs a twig, draws in the dirt.

JACK HAYS

Here's somethin' that might work.

68 EXT. HACIENDA VALERO - ON THE WALLS - NIGHT 68

A lone SENTRY patrols the grounds.

JACK SILENTLY HAND SIGNALS--

--ANDERSON ARROWS the SENTRY, who falls, just as--FLORES SLICES the throat of the SECOND SENTRY.

69 EXT. PLAINS - NEAR HACIENDA VALERO - NIGHT 69

UNDER A FULL MOON--PORTILLO rides in with REINFORCEMENTS.

70 EXT. HACIENDA VALERO - NIGHT 70

--FLORES makes HOOT OWL SOUND to Jack, signaling all's clear--

--JACK crawls on the roof, throws a blanket over the chimney.

INTERCUT ACTION

--INSIDE HOUSE: SMOKE engulfs the rooms. An OLDER DRAGOON curses, throws open the windows. The other soldiers awaken, coughing. OLDER DRAGOON walks out the front to figure out what's wrong. Flores pegs him in the throat with a knife.

--DEAF sees DUST rise on moonlit PLAINS. Grabs a telescope.

DEAF'S POV - Portillo and Dragoons! DEAF howls like a COYOTE.

--Groggy soldiers stagger out of the house, Anderson arrows them, Flores stabs them. Big Foot uses his rifle. BOOM!

--INSIDE HOUSE: A DRUNK DRAGOON, hears the shot. Holds a rag over his face, grabs a rifle, and sinks into a back room.

--OUTSIDE: Jack drops from the roof, pistol out...

--INSIDE HOUSE: Colby and Flores charge inside - They don't see ANOTHER DRAGOON come up behind them--

BOOM! Jack SHOOTS the bushwhacker. Flores grabs the traumatized Emily who manages a weak smile off...

MANUEL FLORES

You think I forgot about you?

--OUTSIDE: Big Foot rushes inside as Deaf brings the horses.

DEAF SMITH

Clear the house! Riders a'comin'!

--INSIDE HOUSE: The rooms fill with smoke.

BIG FOOT WALLACE
Portillo's back! We gotta git!

Big Foot pulls a burning log from the fireplace and sets the house of fire. Jack and Flores help Emily up.

COLBY PIT
YAHOOOOO! We did it--

BOOM! Colby staggers back, off the others' looks of horror ...BLOOD oozing from Colby's chest - Big Foot BLASTS the shooter: The Drunk Dragoon from the back room...who falls. *

Big Foot catches a shocked but still conscious Colby, as Flores and Jack take Emily - All exit coughing.

--OUTSIDE: Flores helps Emily onto his horse and Big Foot helps Colby onto his horse.

DEAF SMITH
Spur up! NOW!

--PORTILLO & REINFORCEMENTS close in on the Hacienda as--

Deaf assumes full command as the Rangers ride out. Jack lags behind, TORCHES CREOSOTE brush, jumps on his horse, rides off.

71 EXT. THE NUECES RIVER - NIGHT 71

THE RANGERS charge through dense brush, SPLASH into the water where they leave no tracks--

THE MOON SINKS behind DENSE CLOUDS, covering the land in DARKNESS as the BLINDING FIRE rises like Atlanta burning.

72 EXT. HACIENDA VALERO - NIGHT (MOMENTS LATER) 72

PORTILLO & men arrive as SMOKE & dark shadows envelope them--

RESUME - THE NUECES RIVER - NIGHT (CONTINUING)

Clear of pursuit, the woozy Colby, slumped over his horse, DROPS his Daddy's pistol, which Houston had restored, in the mud.... No one notices. Deaf sees him wheezing.

DEAF SMITH
Kid needs water!

They stop - Anderson and Big Foot help Colby down.

Flores stays mounted, holding a barely conscious Emily. Jack hurries to the river to get water. Deaf cradles Colby in his arms. Not comprehending how this could happen to him...

COLBY PIT

I...wanted to do somethin' in this life...y'know...somethin' good.

DEAF SMITH

Hell, boy, ya done better'n good. You's the one captured Santa Anna hisself.

COLBY PIT

Yeah...that made my Sis proud.

Colby's eyes GLAZE OVER IN DEATH.

73

EXT. VICTORIA - NIGHT

73

Deaf and the RANGERS ride into town. Colby's body lies stiff across Deaf's horse.

A NUMBER OF TOWNSPEOPLE have come out to the street to see the Rangers returning. Among them...

LANE, in a heavy apron, holding hot tongs and a hammer, steps out from a BLACKSMITH SHED, eight year old Moises beside him.

VERN, drunk, seeing the Rangers, ducks back in the shadows.

Guadalupe steps out on the porch to see what the commotion is about, sees DEAF and crying for joy runs down the street.

DEAF SMITH

Enough of your slobberin', woman. Just need a place to die.

GUADALUPE SMITH

(see Colby's body)

Oh my... Poor child - His sister helps out at Doc Ewing's place.

Flores eases a half-conscious Emily down - To Guadalupe...

MANUEL FLORES

This is Miss Emily West. Be obliged if you could see your way to care for her a spell.

SARAH EWING & REBECCA PIT step out from the clinic as Jack and Big Foot, with Colby across the saddle, take off their hats.

Seeing her brother, Rebecca goes pale - Jack rushes to hold onto her as Rebecca breaks down in HYSTERICAL TEARS.

VICTORIA STREET - NIGHT (LATER)

Sitting on Guadalupe's porch, Anderson smokes his pipe while Flores casually plays a lightning version of mumbly peg with his knife, both somber, as Jack and Big Foot step outside.

BIG FOOT WALLACE

Me 'n my partner was wonderin'...
whatta we gotta do to join up with
a rangerin' company?

Anderson blows smoke, gives Flores' look, who picks up on it.

BILLY ANDERSON

It's a pretty involved process--

MANUEL FLORES

Kind of a secret, actually.

JACK HAYS

An initiation, a swearing in, what?

BILLY ANDERSON

(bluffing)
All that.

MANUEL FLORES

A sacred ritual.

BILLY ANDERSON

Ya wanna ride with us, we're off to
meet Captain Karnes who's guardin'
Santa Anna hisself.

MANUEL FLORES

We'll see if ya got what it takes.

74

EXT. *THE INVINCIBLE* (SHIP), VELASCO, TEXAS - DAY

74

Under the protection of KARNES, GATOR, BEANS, KNOWLES & KIT -
Santa Anna & Almonte walk up the gangplank. Aside to Kit:

BEANS WILKINS

Rape, pillage and murder thousands,
they give ya a parade and a boat
ride home.

SUPER: June 1, 1836; VELASCO, TEXAS

A RAUCOUS CROWD, civilians & soldiers gather around as Santa Anna, relaxed, confident, sips a swig from a new bottle of OPIUM, addresses his captors: the Rangers, Burnet and Rusk.

SANTA ANNA

Friends! I have seen how brave you are in battle, how generous you are in its aftermath. You may count upon my friendship forever and you will never regret having dispensed these considerations upon me.

Behind them, 250 New Orleans GREYS (mercenaries) in full uniform and fully armed PUSH THROUGH THE CROWD.

HENRY KARNES

That's a nice tidy end to a war.

EPHRAIM KNOWLES

I'm goin' to Harrisburg and stick my pecker in a pay woman.

About to step off, they get JUMPED by the overwhelming force of ARMED NEW ORLEANS GREYS. Their commander GENERAL THOMAS J. GREEN (42) sticks a gun in Karnes face...as his men SWARM over the Rangers, beating them down in the surprise ambush.

GENERAL THOMAS GREEN

Hate to get rough with Texians, but we ain't lettin' nobody get between us and that murderin' bastard.

SEEING the MOB OF GREYS STORM TOWARD HIM, Santa Anna panics, SWIGS the entire bottle of OPIUM! The Greys tackle him. One jams his fingers down Santa Anna's throat, making him VOMIT.

HENRY KARNES

And WHO the hell are you?

Green directs as his men roughly bind Santa Anna in chains.

GENERAL THOMAS GREEN

Brigadier General Thomas Green - Me 'n my company just arrived awaiting orders from General Houston.

HENRY KARNES

Houston's the one that made peace with Santa Anna!

GENERAL THOMAS GREEN

Need to hear that from the General himself. Til then, we're holding onto this goddamn "El Presidente!"

Now in chains, hauled off by the Greys, Santa Anna and Almonte get hustled down the gangplank, forced to WAVE a TEXAS FLAG, as the MOB HOOTS & LAUGHS W/CATCALLS & EPITHETS!

As the beaten-up Rangers recover, pick themselves up...

GATOR DAVIS

Nothin' worse than a bunch'a crazy-ass late-comers with guns.

EPHRAIM KNOWLES

Forget the whore, I need doctorin'.

75 INT. MISSION CONCEPCION - DAY

75

Pauline dips her fingers in the holy water, crosses herself, then walks into what seems to be an empty sanctuary...startled to see...

--LORCA, sitting by the altar, in PRAYER.

Pauline slides into a pew in the back so as not to disturb the wild-looking man.

--Lorca locks eyes with Pauline, who stares back at him...two lost souls connecting for one brief moment--

76 INT. SANTA ANNA'S PRISON CELL (VELASCO, TEXAS) - NIGHT

76

Santa Anna lies listless on a wood plank, staring blankly at the ceiling. Almonte shares his cell.

A GUN BARREL protrudes through the outside window. BOOM!

Almonte jumps at the ricochet... Santa Anna does not flinch. LAUGHTER & CAT-CALLS from outside, as sentries run off the drunk Texans. A PRIEST approaches with his head bowed.

SANTA ANNA

Save your sermons, Father--

PRIEST (PORTILLO)

Your Excellency! We must speak!

Santa Anna recognizes Colonel PORTILLO, outside the bars.

COLONEL PORTILLO

I have failed you, Excellency.
Miss West escaped...

COLONEL ALMONTE

Urrea and Filisola?

COLONEL PORTILLO

South of the Rio Bravo, sir - They backed down after receiving your orders.

SANTA ANNA

Idiots! I chose my words precisely - Any fool would know I was under duress and wanted them to attack!

COLONEL PORTILLO

I have only a company of Dragoons at my disposal. But give me the word, sir, and I will charge this jail even if it costs me my life.

As TEXAS SENTRIES pass, Portillo crosses himself, bows, acts as if saying a prayer for the prisoners. After they go...

SANTA ANNA

No. That would be foolhardy.
(eyes spark, a thought)
Go to the Comanche. Tell them the land west of the Colorado will forever be theirs if they free me. Make haste.

77

INT. VIEUX CARRE (FRENCH QUARTER) NEW ORLEANS - NIGHT

77

The elegant BARONESS MICAELA PONTALBA (40s) hosts a BALL in Houston's honor. His splinted leg wrapped in purple velvet, he wears a uniform customized w/garish colors. Drunk, he holds court, quoting Shakespeare, as New Orleans society pay tribute.

SAM HOUSTON

You are called plain Kate, and bonny Kate and sometimes Kate the curst; But Kate, the prettiest Kate in Christendom...my super-dainty Kate, for dainties are all Kates...

Surrounded by LOVELY YOUNG LADIES, he gulps his drink, sees a Creole Beauty cross to him, gets lost for a moment - By rote:

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

I love her ten times more than e'er before, my fair and virtuous Emily--

YOUNG LADY

(giggles)
You mean "Kate!"

SAM HOUSTON

Indeed, I do... Good Kate, come and kiss me, Kate--

Focused on the Creole Beauty, he pulls her to him for a kiss. CHEERS, APPLAUSE, CLINKING OF GLASSES, ladies all over him.

BARONESS PONTALBA
To the Hero of San Jacinto, our
gallant General Sam Houston,
liberator of Texas!

Houston smiles, acknowledges the toast, returns to carousing.

78

EXT. COMANCHERIA (TEXAS HILL COUNTRY) - DAY

78

COLONEL PORTILLO sits on a wagon when BUFFALO HUMP rides up. His WARRIORS, including YELLOW KNIFE and PIAKINI, remain mounted and armed, glaring into the faces of Portillo's escort and Comanchero traders. In SPANISH...

BUFFALO HUMP
*You speak in the name of the
Mexican Father? Though the Tejanos
hold him in chains?*

COLONEL PORTILLO
*The Mexican Father hates the
Tejanos--as do the Comanche. Help
us free him.*

Portillo rips the blankets off the burros--revealing new rifles, knives, powder, lead, hundreds of STEEL arrow tips.

COLONEL PORTILLO (CONT'D)
*In return, by a new treaty with Mexico,
this land will forever be Comancheria.*

He reveals casks of whiskey - Buffalo Hump smiles, and they drink together, to the WHOOPS of the warriors.

79

EXT. STREETS OF VICTORIA - DAY

79

The town bustles with activity. New settlers pile into Buckley's land office. People working and trading.

LORCA rides in - The WHISPERS start, "It's HIM! LORCA! The demon Mexican-Killer!" Women hustle children safely away. Back from New Orleans, Doc Ewing, Rebecca, and Sarah peek out the clinic windows. Clarence and townsmen grab weapons.

Lorca takes notice of LANE who's now blacksmithing. Moises comes out of the shop, and Lane pushes him behind his body, protecting the boy as he stares Lorca down.

Buckley steps out to meet Lorca, who stops in front of him.

LORCA

Seen a widow woman in church. Lost
her family to the Comanche. Know her?

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

Mrs. Pauline Wykoff, most likely.

LORCA

Where might she be?

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

What business do you have with her?

LORCA

What business is that of yours?

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

Don't want no trouble here.

LORCA

Then we want the same thing.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

Follow that road yonder. Seven
miles out. Mind what I told you.

Lorca flicks the reins on his horse.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY (CONT'D)

I know who you are.

LORCA

Then you know to leave me be.

80 EXT. OROZIMBO PLANTATION, TEXAS - NIGHT

80

Santa Anna and Almonte, even more ragged than before, are
chained to a large TREE. Flies & mosquitos buzz around them.

SUPER: July 21, 1836 - OROZIMBO PLANTATION, TEXAS

The cloudy skies open up, POURING RAIN on the prisoners.

SANTA ANNA

Is there any way you can swat this
mosquito off my nose?

COLONEL ALMONTE

I'm sorry, Sir. It's not possible.

SANTA ANNA

Let him drink his fill of blood,
then. He can have it all.

COLONEL ALMONTE
 Forbear, Your Excellency. Portillo
 will come to save us.

SANTA ANNA
 If I owned both Hell and Texas... I
 would rent Texas and live in Hell.

81 EXT. WYKOFF HOMESTEAD - SUNRISE

81

Newly re-built cabin with plowed fields. Pauline, Nate and Emily hoe weeds. Guadalupe hangs laundry. Pedro plays.

Emerging from the woods that surround the Wykoff land, silhouetted by the sunrise glare rides LORCA.

Seeing the rider, Pauline hurries to the house, comes back out with her shotgun. Emily herds Pedro inside, returns with a cocked pistol. Guadalupe appears, dries her hands on a rag, then picks up Deaf's rifle as--

Lorca rides up to the porch. Pauline slowly comes to recognize him as the stranger at the church.

GUADALUPE SMITH
 What brings you here, Mister?

LORCA
 I am corrupted by war. Unrecognizable
 to myself, an ugly man--

EMILY WEST
 (over)
 She asked you a question.

LORCA
 (to Pauline)
 I feel a kinship with you.

PAULINE WYKOFF
 You sayin' I'm ugly, mister?

LORCA
 Madam, you are most beautiful.

PAULINE WYKOFF
 (raises her shotgun)
 Now I know you're lyin'.

LORCA
 In your suffering, I see love. In
 mine, hatred. Your pain draws light
 into the world. My pain repels it.

PAULINE WYKOFF

Pretty words. You ain't come callin',
have you? 'Cause I ain't ready for that--

LORCA

Madam, I have nothing to offer other
than my own dismay--and a history
beyond redemption. But it would allow
me some solace if you accept this--

He drops a leather POUCH from his saddle bag at her feet with
a CLANG - GOLD and SILVER! Stunned, but after a beat, wary--

EMILY WEST

Where'd you get that, Mister?

LORCA

What matters now is that it can't
be returned, I can't touch it, and
it must be used for good. Hence,
it's yours, to lighten your burden.

He rides off, doesn't look back.

Pauline looks at Emily and Guadalupe, who shrug - Her call.

PAULINE WYKOFF

What's your name?

Lorca pauses, unsure of how to respond... tentative.

LORCA

Tom...Tom Paxton.

He clucks his tongue to continue on, stopped by...

PAULINE WYKOFF

Well, Mr. Tom Paxton... Got a pot
of ham and beans on the coals.

GUADALUPE SMITH

But first you must clean up proper.
(to Nate)
Go fetch the shears.

82

INT. WYKOFF HOMESTEAD - DAY (LATER)

82

Nate pours water into a TUB. Guadalupe holds SHEARS - Emily
grips a STRAIGHT RAZOR. Pauline brings her husband's clothes.

Lorca, looking lost, stands motionless, poleaxed.

GUADALUPE SMITH

Mister, you don't have nothing we all
haven't seen before. Now strip those
filthy rags and get in this tub!

It's clear, Lorca has no choice...

WYKOFF HOMESTEAD - DINNER TABLE - NIGHT

LORCA, clean-cut, shaved and unrecognizable, has been
transformed into... Tom Paxton.

LORCA

Much obliged, Mrs. Wykoff...
ladies. Mighty fine supper.

PAULINE WYKOFF

It's too late to travel, Mr.
Paxton. You can sleep in the barn.

A GUN gets shoved into Lorca's temple -

DEAF SMITH

I know you.

DEAF, frail, sickly, determined to protect his family.

GUADALUPE SMITH

Deaf! He's our guest.

PAULINE WYKOFF

We don't treat people like that in
this house...

DEAF SMITH

(stifles a cough)

He ain't people. I know who you are.

The strain's too much for Deaf, whose eyes roll back as he
starts to crumple - Lorca catches him, who carries the passed-
out Deaf back to his bed. Humbly, to Pauline...

LORCA

He's not wrong. Grateful for all
you done--

He starts for the door. Pauline steps in front of him.

PAULINE WYKOFF

Whatever happened in the war don't
matter. We're all startin' over.

Lorca pauses, holds her look...

83 INT. HALLWAY, KENWORTH'S WHOREHOUSE, NEW ORLEANS - DAY 83

Juan Sequin cautiously knocks on the door... no response, he opens the door, the room seeming unoccupied.

84 INT. PAGODA ROOM, KENWORTH WHOREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS 84

Juan Sequin pokes his head in the room, followed by the peering heads of THOMAS RUSK and GEORGE HOCKLEY...

JUAN SEQUIN

General...?

The SOUND of a distant piano playing 'The Deguello' through the walls...and a faint SNORING. Sequin's eyes rest on a foot and ankle, covered by blue silk pajamas, projecting from beneath the four-poster bed.

SAM HOUSTON (O.C.)

Extract me, if you'll be so kind.

Sequin stoops, takes hold of the ankle and slowly pulls Houston from beneath the bed, still somewhat inebriated.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

Every shoe-less shepherd, every farm boy dreaming on a haystack, every clerk with slicked-back hair finds love...but not me.

GEORGE HOCKLEY

If it's love you're after this is hardly the place to find it.

SAM HOUSTON

What I find here is consolation--
(peering under bed)
I left a bottle of whiskey under there. Can you fetch it for me?

He pushes himself onto his knees. Sequin reaches under the bed and, by the ankle, pulls a lingerie-clad, heavily-made-up GIRL, who clutches a BOTTLE of whiskey to her chest.

JUAN SEQUIN

Tell Misses Kenworth to send up some breakfast for General Houston - and take that damn bottle with you.

THOMAS RUSK

Good morning, Sam--

The girl exits. Houston VOMITS into a bowl. Rusk grimaces.

THOMAS RUSK (CONT'D)

Now that you're in the recreational phase of your recovery, perhaps you'll attend to the business of Texas.

SAM HOUSTON

Surgeons removed twenty pieces of bone from my ankle in the business of Texas. The battle is won.

HOCKLEY

General, your enemies conspire against you as we speak--

85 INT. PRESIDENT BURNETT'S OFFICE (TEXAS CAPITAL) - INTERCUT 85

Burnet confers with LAMAR, MARTIN, BAKER and a few others.

MIRABEAU LAMAR

Sir, a delegation of Texas' finest turncoats appointed itself to return Houston from his debaucherous self exile as elections approach.

WILEY MARTIN

"Big Drunk" will single-handedly dash our dreams of Texas ruling this country from the Sabine to the Pacific!

PRESIDENT BURNET

Damn coward retreats to "victory," transmogrifies himself into a hero riding a wave of grog-house gaggle that'll sweep that villain's blackened arse into this office.

MIRABEAU LAMAR

As the President that liberated Texas, you remain in the catbird's seat--

PRESIDENT BURNET

But the people claim HIM their hero!

RESUME: PAGODA ROOM, KENWORTH WHOREHOUSE

GEORGE HOCKLEY

The New Orleans Greys abducted Santa Anna and now plan to invade Mexico!

THOMAS RUSK

Burnet doesn't foresee the ramifications--

SAM HOUSTON
 (still bleary, BELCHES)
 He's as sharp as mashed taters.

JUAN SEQUIN
 Will your old friend President
 Jackson come to our aid?

SAM HOUSTON
 He will not. He can not admit
 another slave state into the Union,
 and recognizing our independence
 would risk civil war at home, and
 war with Mexico's allies abroad.

Slowly pulling himself together, Houston finds water to rinse
 out his mouth, spits in a spittoon, looks for clean clothes.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)
 Gentlemen, Texas must go it alone.
 And that course, my friends, is the
 province of politicians. I am
 merely the military commander.

RESUME: BURNET'S OFFICE IN COLUMBIA

Burnet crumples THE TEXAS CONSTITUTION newspaper--

PRESIDENT BURNET
 Tell the newspapers that Big Drunk
 abandons his post with a wound that
 does not prevent him from boozing
 and whoring--while Texas wallows in
 hunger and chaos--

WILEY MARTIN
 We should mount a campaign exposing
 his affinity for the Indians.

The slandering grows to an enthusiastic frenzy - A harried
 SECRETARY (20s) has a hard time keeping up with the notes.

MOSLEY BAKER
 He speaks that heathen Cherokee
 better than our own English--

WILEY MARTIN
 --Spends like a Spanish duke.
 Dresses like a French Quarter pimp--

MOSLEY BAKER
 Sullied the reputations of countless
 women...ABANDONED two wives!

MIRABEAU LAMAR

The people need to know this!

PRESIDENT BURNET

A lot of 'em do...but don't care.

(frustrated, POUNDS desk)

The more men of reason and integrity
loathe Sam Houston, the more our
drunken populace LOVES him.

RESUME: PAGODA ROOM, KENWORTH WHOREHOUSE

THOMAS RUSK

Sam, we've come to you as our
military commander. Texas is in a
state of chaos!

GEORGE HOCKLEY

You're the only man who can fix
this, General... We lose everything
we fought for if you won't.

SAM HOUSTON

I have already lost everything. Not
a word from any of you about the fate
of Miss West?

JUAN SEQUIN

General...what's become of her
awaits all of us if you will not
embrace the challenge God Himself
has placed before you.

Off Houston's tormented expression...

THOMAS RUSK

I've sent word to Captain Karnes
and his Ranging Company to meet us
at Orizimbo.

86

EXT. OROZIMBO PLANTATION, TEXAS - DAY

86

SAM HOUSTON rides into the plantation where Santa Anna and
Almonte are still chained to the tree, guarded by NEW ORLEANS
GREYS. With Houston, rides RUSK, SEQUIN, and HOCKLEY.

Waiting in a group, KARNES, BEANS, GATOR, ANDERSON, FLORES,
KNOWLES, JACK and BIG FOOT all leap to their feet - Throw
their hats in the air to welcome their resurrected General.

HENRY KARNES

HALLELUJAH! Welcome back, General!

Regarding Santa Anna's condition, dirty, unshaven, in rags and covered in bug bites, Houston shakes his head.

SAM HOUSTON
Celebrations can wait. I want
those men released.

NEW ORLEANS GREY
Followed General Greene's direction
under President Burnet's order, sir.

SAM HOUSTON
(to Rusk)
Burnet should stick his head up his
ass and wait for the blowback - It
might clear the fog in his thinking.

THOMAS RUSK
Your Commander-In-Chief, General
Houston gave you an order, soldier!

The soldiers quickly unshackle Santa Anna and Almonte.

SAM HOUSTON
Please accept my sincerest
apologies, El Presidente. You will
have the run of this home.

THOMAS RUSK
Prepare a warm bath, new clothes,
fresh meals.

SAM HOUSTON
And whatever medical care his
Excellency requires in preparation
for your journey.

SANTA ANNA
Journey, General? I prefer a swift
execution.

SAM HOUSTON
I have arranged an invitation for
you to visit Washington as the
honored guest of President Andrew
Jackson himself.

SANTA ANNA
(brightening)
Washington? Very well. Come, Almonte.

As they move off towards the house, Houston turns to Karnes.

SAM HOUSTON

You and your rangin' company
deliver him to General Gaines at
the border. I'll meet you in
Victoria after I confer with Burnet.

Jack walks up to offer his hand to Houston.

JACK HAYS

I'm John Coffee Hays, General
Houston. Late of Tennessee. This
is my associate, Big Foot Wallace.

SAM HOUSTON

Knew your father well. My deepest
sympathies for his untimely loss.

MANUEL FLORES

They helped us rescue Miss West.

SAM HOUSTON

You...found her? Emily's safe?

87 EXT. WYKOFF HOMESTEAD - NIGHT

87

Pauline rocks alone on the porch. Emily hands her lemonade.
Sits beside her. Inside, Deaf coughs - Guadalupe comforts.

EMILY WEST

Another long hard day...another man
dyin'...and another woman tryin' to
make the best'a things 'n carry on.

Pauline turns to her with a bittersweet smile...

PAULINE WYKOFF

All those big strong men... We do
tend to outlive 'em, don't we?

EMILY WEST

'Cause they always think they're right.

PAULINE WYKOFF

I followed my fool husband right to
my children's graves.

EMILY WEST

I followed my brother to his.

A silent moment - Pauline catches herself, strong again...

PAULINE WYKOFF

Tears won't bring them crops in -

EMILY WEST

I appreciate all your help. I don't
wanna be no burden...

PAULINE WYKOFF

Good lord, you a burden?

EMILY WEST

My past. People talk...

PAULINE WYKOFF

Let 'em. Forget the old ways and
petty judgements. This is new a
country.

88

EXT. WYKOFF HOMESTEAD - DAY

88

Empresario Buckley rides in with Clarence and a contingent of
his slaves/thugs. Pauline waits with her arms crossed. Emily
stands beside her. Nate comes in from the field.

BUCKLEY looks upon Pauline's improvements, and then spits
tobacco juice on the dirt--

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

Mrs. Wykoff. I have business with
you today.

PAULINE WYKOFF

And I with you.

She retrieves Lorca's pouch and hands the coins to Buckley.

PAULINE WYKOFF (CONT'D)

Payment in full, I'll have that deed.

Buckley's covetous gaze sweeps across the bounty of her
homestead--lets the COINS fall from his palm into the dirt
and holds up a document.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

10% was due August 1st. This is
September. I have foreclosed.

PAULINE

(takes the document)

We planted late 'cause of the war!
Just like everybody else!

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

War has no bearing on the terms. By
law, you must vacate. Immediately.

PAULINE WYKOFF
I've got a sick Ranger in that
house. A young boy. Refugee women--

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY
You should have thought of that
before you insulted me in my place
of business. Your land is forfeit,
as well as the collateral with it.

Clarence and his thugs surround them. Nate steps between the
slaves and Pauline, fists clenched--

PAULINE WYKOFF
Collateral. What collateral?

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY
Your nigger slave. Don't you
recollect your husband had no cash
to put down?

PAULINE
You can't have Nate.
(confused, thinking fast)
He's free! I done freed him.

No one is more surprised by the news than Nate himself.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY
Weren't the case when your husband
assigned him to me.

A furious Guadalupe stomps up to Buckley...

GUADALUPE SMITH
My husband, Deaf Smith... Captain
of Houston's Rangers will--

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY
Your husband's a lunger... a
goner... he ain't gonna do shit.

Buckley nods to his slaves, who climb out of the wagon with
their clubs and ADVANCE toward Pauline. Buckley chuckles as
Clarence uncoils his whip and CRACKS it above her head.

EMILY WEST
How about me, Mister?

PAULINE WYKOFF
(takes Emily's arm)
No! I won't....can't...let you--

Emily doesn't move, her forthright glare locked on Buckley.

EMILY WEST

It's all right, Mrs. Wykoff. I've put up with worse than him.

(to Buckley)

How about it, Mister? Take me and the money and let this go?

Buckley looks her up and down, and GRINS.

EMPRESSARIO BUCKLEY

Two years indentured service. With a contract. All legal-like.

He gathers the money. Emily pulls away, walks to the wagon.

EMPRESSARIO BUCKLEY (CONT'D)

I am constantly amazed by the depths of the human heart. You will have your deed. Good day.

Buckley flips the reins, the wagon w/Emily aboard rolls forward.

PAULINE WYKOFF

Don't sign nuthin', Emily! You hear? We'll find another way!

89 EXT. WYKOFF HOMESTEAD - SUNDOWN 89

LORCA rides in, two field-dressed deer across his saddle, a few ducks hang from his saddle...reacts as Nate rushes out.

90 EXT. WYKOFF HOMESTEAD, BARN - NIGHT 90

LORCA quietly collects his WAR CHEST. Lays out his weapons, checks them, runs his finger over the edge of his sword with a maniacal stare. A hand falls on Lorca's shoulder.

Lorca looks up, sees PAULINE standing in her NIGHTGOWN, the outline of her female form against the light of a BONFIRE by the barn renders an angelic grace. He sheaths his sword...

LORCA

When my boy and his family were murdered, I answered with a storm of fire and blood. I became DEATH... Buckley deserves killin' like few other men.

PAULINE WYKOFF

Romans 12:19..."Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written-

LORCA
Vengeance is *mine*, saith the Lord.

PAULINE WYKOFF
We'll find another way to save Emily.

LORCA
Have you any idea of what a man
must endure who leads such a life?
No, you cannot. No one can unless
he lives it for himself.

He struggles with a decision. Looks into Pauline's eyes and acquiesces, tossing his weapons into the fire.

LORCA (CONT'D)
I'll pay for my sins - But until
Judgement Day, I won't harm another
living soul. I will stay close to Miss
Emily, for what little that's worth...

Lorca mounts up and rides out.

Out of the shadows, a simple, innocent Nate, distraught, steps into the firelight.

NATE
Miss Pauline...I ain't needing
to be freed. 'Ceptin' if'n I
done ya wrong?

PAULINE WYKOFF
My Lord, Nate... You've done
nothing wrong.

NATE
Mistah Wykoff was da bes' mass'a--

PAULINE WYKOFF
Nate, you must keep this secret.

NATE
(unsure)
Yes'm?

PAULINE WYKOFF
You are my slave. Always will be.
Just don't let nobody know.

NATE
(relieved)
Oh Lordy... Miss Pauline, I sho
glad I's ain't freed no mo.

91

EXT. A ROAD WEST OF NACOGDOCHES, EAST TEXAS - DAY

91

Karnes leads Santa Anna's carriage through the piney woods.

UP AHEAD - BEHIND A THICKET - Buffalo Hump motions to his warriors, including PIAKINI and YELLOW KNIFE. Portillo and his soldiers ride alongside... all UNSEEN by the Rangers.

The RANGERS, Karnes, Anderson, Beans, Gator, Flores, Knowles and Jack & Big Foot, enter the thicket and ride into shadowed DARKNESS. A quiet so eerie it spooks ANDERSON's horse.

BEANS WILKINS

Been thinking it's high time to
find me a woman.

BILLY ANDERSON

How old are ya?

BEANS WILKINS

Twenty-two this year, practically
an old man...

BILLY ANDERSON

A man don't have thoughts about
women till he's twenty-five, a'fore
then all he's got is feelings.

Beans laughs with the other Rangers.

--WHOOSH...SMACK! An arrow strikes Beans in the throat. He tugs at the arrow, then tumbles--

--HUGE TREES CRASH in front and behind the CARRIAGE. The Rangers are TRAPPED--

They dismount, take cover. Arrows fly all around them. Flashes of INDIAN WARRIORS. Rangers aim, don't get a target.

PIAKINI flies out of the brush at Anderson - TOMAHAWK swinging. KARNES and the others look on, HELPLESS as--

--AN ARROW KNOCKS PIAKINI DEAD off his horse.

--out steps YELLOW KNIFE, who runs to his father(Anderson).

--GATOR, seeing Yellow Knife charging Anderson, takes aim. Anderson jumps out to shield his son Yellow Knife.

BILLY ANDERSON (CONT'D)

NOOOO!!!!

--Gator fires! Yellow Knife falls. In shock, Anderson holds his dying son. The Rangers are stunned but still in a fight.

Portillo gallops in from the rear with his squad. SANTA ANNA sees him, emerges from the carriage, and takes command.

SANTA ANNA
STOP THIS! CEASE FIRE!

Buffalo Hump looks at Portillo, who signals him to stand down. Fuming, Buffalo Hump pulls back his warriors.

COLONEL PORTILLO
It's your rescue, Your Excellency.
As ordered.

SANTA ANNA
Rescue? I am no longer in no need.

COLONEL PORTILLO
But, sir, I--

SANTA ANNA
--You are brave and loyal, but you have erred, tragically, in failing to update changes in my situation. I am going to the White House to meet with the President of America!

Buffalo Hump gallops in to claim PIAKINI's body, glares at Anderson, and spits on Yellow Knife's body.

The Comanches race off in disgust. Santa Anna approaches the Rangers. Karnes and Big Foot carry Beans' body...

SANTA ANNA (CONT'D)
There is little I can say about the actions of misguided men. I am sorry for your tragic loss.

GATOR, shaken, kneels by Anderson who cradles his son's body.

GATOR DAVIS
Couldn't see who he was, Billy.
All that commotion...

Anderson holds up his hand. Enough. He hugs Yellow Knife's body in his arms, and carries him off into the forest.

BILLY ANDERSON
Goddamn Texas--

After he's gone, the Rangers react to...

the most ferocious WAILING AND CHANTING (O.S.) as Anderson mourns his dead son in the dark of the woods.

92

EXT. BUCKLEY'S SALOON - DAY

92

ABOVE THEM A BANNER READS: "ELECTION DAY IS COMING"--

FIDDLES STIR TO WHIRL AS people line up to sample dishes laid out on a table--fried chicken and other southern specialties.

MEN swap stories, smoke pipes and handrolls, swig a little out of the jug. Among them VERN, already drinking hard, who seems a bit out of place. Lots of NEW ANGLO faces, settlers pouring in, mingle - Doc Ewing, Sarah, and Rebecca among the crowd.

EMILY hauls a barrel of beer. Folks in the crowd, whisper, gossip. Buckley watches her sweat.

EMPRESSARIO BUCKLEY

Such a waste you won't lie on your back rather than break it.

(Emily glares at him)

It's not like spreadin' your legs is a trade unknown to you.

(to Clarence)

Don't you touch her with that whip. Not one scar. She'll break soon enough. Men'll line up out the door to bed the mistress of Santa Anna.

LORCA stares at Emily's toils, takes off his hat to Buckley.

LORCA

Lookin' for work - I can keep books, once worked as a clerk--

EMPRESSARIO BUCKLEY

I need help with these big doin's today. S'pose I can try you out tendin' bar. Short me so much as a nickel I'll hack off your hand.

Not recognizing Lorca, Buckley tosses him a soiled apron. Lorca ties it on, goes to assist Emily. Buckley SHOVES him.

EMPRESSARIO BUCKLEY (CONT'D)

You do not, at any time, lighten her burden! Understood?...

(studies Lorca)

You look familiar. I know you?

After a conflicted beat...

LORCA

Don't recollect. Name's Tom Paxton.

VERN, drunk, licks his palm, smooths his hair--

--slides next to Sarah with two spiked cups. Sarah, looks for her father, busy talking, gulps the drink. Vern grins.

NEWCOMERS in the crowd (white settlers), point to Emily - One says something that produces contemptuous LAUGHTER.

Taking a break in her work, Emily, hungry, steps up to the table, reaches for a plate - A HAND slides it away.

WOMAN WITH PLATE

Washwoman or not, we won't abide
Santa Anna's whore in this town.

DOWN THE LINE - WOMEN SERVERS sneer, cover their dishes.

ANGLE - HOUSTON, KARNES, ANDERSON, FLORES, GATOR, KNOWLES, KIT, JACK AND BIG FOOT ride into town. As they dismount, Rebecca, squealing in delight, races to Kit and JUMPS into his arms. He twirls her about as the CROWD GOES WILD for Houston, who takes off his hat, waves it across the banner.

SAM HOUSTON

God bless you all! God bless Texas!

As others reunion with Houston and the Rangers, a drunk Vern greets his old friend Kit, clutched closely with Rebecca.

KIT ACKLIN

Rebecca, this here man saved my life!
Thought you'd be in Paris by now.

VERN ELWOOD

Catchin' me a freighter next month.
Just sayin' my bon voyages--

He drapes his arm around Sarah, pulls her on the dance floor.

KIT ACKLIN

Careful ya don't piss off Doc Ewing!

HOUSTON - Surrounded by admirers, across the way he sees--

EMILY, disheveled, washes dirty dishes in a tub. She catches Houston looking at her and turns away, ashamed, runs off into an alley. Houston pushes through the crowd, runs after her.

93

EXT. BEHIND BUCKLEY'S SALOON - DAY

93

Houston comes out to find Emily in tears.

SAM HOUSTON

Emily? My love...

EMILY WEST

Sam, no, you can't be seen with me--

Houston pulls her into his arms, kisses her. Then...

SAM HOUSTON

What have they done to you?

94 INT. BUCKLEY'S OFFICE - DAY

94

Buckley bent over his desk, sorts CASH. The DOOR KICKS open. Buckley's blinded by the sun as a NOOSE falls over his head, jerked tight - He's DRAGGED over his desk out the door.

95 EXT. BUCKLEY'S SALOON - CONTINUOUS

95

Houston hauls Buckley into the street, stops the celebration - A crowd gathers... Jack, Flores, Big Foot among them.

SAM HOUSTON

You were ordered by Texas to burn this town, destroy all provisions, deny support to the enemy and to report to the army for duty. You did neither. That's treason.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

(choking, tugs at rope)
I'll answer to..that...in...court--

SAM HOUSTON

You are in court, sir. A military tribunal. You have been convicted.

JACK HAYS

You remember how this goes. Not a lot of palaver 'tween catchin' and hangin'.

Houston and his men reach the gallows. Haul Buckley to his feet, toss the rope over the beam as the CROWD FOLLOWS--

EMPRESSARIO BUCKLEY

What do you want?

Houston points across the street to the BUCKLEY HOTEL/SALOON, speaks loudly enough for everyone to hear...

SAM HOUSTON

For MISS EMILY WEST in recognition of her heroic sacrifices in capturing the tyrant Santa Anna and liberating Texas!

EMPRESSARIO BUCKLEY

A welcome gesture. It's hers.

The snotty WOMEN's sneers turned to shock. Emily whispers in Houston's ear. Back to Buckley...

SAM HOUSTON

And the Wykoff place! Free and clear, all money returned.

EMPRESSARIO BUCKLEY

Done.

SAM HOUSTON

Justice is swift. Court adjourned.
(unties the noose)
The era of the empresario ended at San Jacinto. There's new law in this land. Your crimes will not escape the noose a second time.

JACK HAYS

Men are thirsty after all this fuss, General.

SAM HOUSTON

Drinks on the house, Mr. Buckley?

EMPRESSARIO BUCKLEY

Yes...yes...for the love of all things holy, YES!

He collapses in the dirt as Houston takes Emily by the arm to lead everyone back to the celebration - FESTIVE MUSIC RESUMES!

Houston climbs on the serving table, kicks the dishes to the floor, stares down the rude townspeople - Then pulls Emily up beside him - They dance in defiance and celebration to all!

96

INT. BEDROOM - SALOON - NIGHT

96

Houston & Emily lie naked in bed, reflective...

SAM HOUSTON

I've seen country on the Colorado
I think would do for us. Hill
country. White limestone bluffs.
Crystal springs. Buffalo walk up
and lick the salt out of your hand.

EMILY WEST

You got Texas to worry about. Me, I'm
gonna make something outta this hotel.

SAM HOUSTON

Sell the hotel, woman. I've given
enough for Texas. I'm not letting
you go again...

Off Emily's bittersweet smile and non-committal expression...

97

EXT. VICTORIA TOWN PARTY - NIGHT

97

Folks drunk - KNOWLES, surrounded by a bunch of star-struck
young boys, points to a San Jacinto MEDAL he's wearing--

EPHRAILM KNOWLES

War Secretary never seen such a hero!
(holds up medal)
For uncommon valor - I mowed down a
dozen horses and faced a hun'ered
blazin' guns to save the Secretary!

Wildly drunk, VERN smirks to Flores and a sullen Anderson.

VERN ELWOOD

Why if it ain't my ole Mexicoon
chili-shitter 'n his Injun-lovin'--

ANDERSON SHOVES Vern into a wall, whips out his KNIFE, one
second from killing Vern, who's stunned by his ferocity.
With people staring, Anderson lets go of Vern, stalks away.

MANUEL FLORES

The trouble with you, Vern, is you
always make trouble.

GATOR DAVIS

Anderson lost his son. Beans was
killed, too.

VERN ELWOOD

Beans? Damn.
(somber, then LAUGHS)
Guess it's a good thing I QUIT!

He swoops Sarah off her feet to dance near lovebirds Kit and
Rebecca. Groping Sarah, Vern slides his hand to her breast--

Nearby, DOC Ewing sees Vern man-handling his daughter - Rage
boiling over, he pulls his pistol, looms toward Vern--

DOC EWING

Unhand my daughter, you barbaric ass!

Vern defiantly holds a struggling Sarah closer to him, pulls
his own gun, recklessly waving it around when--

--the Doc lunges to grab Sarah away...as Vern swings his gun around...BOOM! Off the accidental discharge, they turn to...

REBECCA, the red stain on her fancy dress spreading quickly. She looks at the wound, then at KIT...then her eyes roll up and she falls, clutching her abdomen. Kit lifts her in his arms, as a horrified Doc Ewing points to a wagon.

VERN is stunned. With all the attention focused on Rebecca, Vern eases away to get his horse, CUTS ALL THE HORSES LOOSE, and RACES out of town with a herd of horses following.

ON REBECCA: Blood runs down her listless arm as Doc Ewing works frantically to save her life - Kit, in shock, and the dumbstruck Rangers stand helplessly by.

BILLY ANDERSON
Goddamn Texas.

ON REBECCA'S HAND, lying limply in a pool of her own blood, the hand-carved gold band on her ring finger splotched red.

98 EXT. COMANCHE ENCAMPMENT - DAY (ESTABLISHING) 98

Comanche encampment beside the San Saba River.

99 INT. MAGUARA'S TENT - DAY 99

Buffalo Hump joins the circle of chiefs. In the center sits Maguara who indicates Buffalo Hump should remain standing.

MAGUARA
*Remember the words we spoke when
Mexican and Tejanos went to war?*

BUFFALO HUMP
I was to be the eyes of the nation.

MAGUARA
*The eyes only. Yet you returned
with fresh scalps from Tejanos.*

BUFFALO HUMP
Your words are true...

MAGUARA
*Do you not see that they are now
masters of their land? Thousands
more come with guns. Their chiefs
come to make peace - Speak with
angry eyes saying young warriors
kill their people without cause.*

Buffalo Hump, thunderstruck, can hardly find his voice...

BUFFALO HUMP

Am I to be given up to my enemies?

MAGUARA

No, but take your horses and leave my camp. If the time comes for war, the Nemenuh will send for you. But if you set foot in our country before, you will be killed.

100 EXT. WYKOFF HOMESTEAD - DAY 100

Houston arrives at Pauline's homestead, greeted by Guadalupe.

GUADALUPE SMITH

He says he'd sooner crawl in a rattlesnake den than see you.
(bittersweet smile)
But I know better--

101 INT. WYKOFF CABIN - CONTINUOUS 101

DEAF lying in his bed, cavernous, mouth gaping open, dried blood caked around his nose. Houston thinks he's too late.

SAM HOUSTON

Our Father, who art--

Deaf's eyes flutter open. Focus on Houston. Raspy, weak...

DEAF SMITH`

Them quacks down in New Orleans at least saw off your damn leg?

SAM HOUSTON

You're out of luck there.

DEAF SMITH

I sent Lupe and Pedro away. I hold you in far less regard than them.

SAM HOUSTON

I never had a better scout. A better Ranger. A better friend..

DEAF SMITH

Good thing about dyin', I don't have to listen to all your bullshit no more - Sit, ya ornery bastard. Ain't time for the funeral yet.

Houston sits next to the bed, takes Deaf's hand as his dying friend lapses into deep, rattling breaths.

DEAF SMITH (CONT'D)

Shoulda seen Anderson ride cross Vince's Bridge. Now that was somethin'.

102

EXT. CEMETERY GROUND - WYKOFF HOMESTEAD - SUNDOWN

102

NEW GRAVES next to the Wykoff Family plots... "COLBY PIT"... "REBECCA PIT" - a morose Kit stands away from the others, near his beloved's headstone, fingering her GOLD BAND... which he slips on his pinkie as--

SAM HOUSTON

Erastus "Deaf" Smith was Texas' first and greatest Ranger--

BY A FRESH OPEN GRAVE - Emily, Pauline, Nate, Jack, Big Foot, Karnes, Anderson, Flores, Gator, Knowles, Doc Ewing, Sarah, Guadalupe, in a black veil, and little Pedro listen to Houston's eulogy. Also in attendance: RUSK, SEQUIN, and HOCKLEY.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

We'll never see the likes of Deaf again-- He has set the mark and standard for all who follow.

IN SHADOWS OF THE TREES some distance away, Lorca, still the outsider, watches the ceremony. Pauline notices him as...

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

(looks to heavens)

Thy brother... I hope the Great Spirit gives light to your path and clouds of sorrow never rest upon your journey in the ever after.

LATER...

The funeral over, everyone walks sadly from the grave, some socializing, some mounting up or climbing in wagons to go.

Houston walks away, holding Emily's hand, Rusk, Seguin, and Hockley anxiously herd around him...

JUAN SEGUIN

Sam, it's only twelve days to the election, everyone in Texas wants you to be the next President--

SAM HOUSTON

I'm voting for Stephen Austin.

GEORGE HOCKLEY

Austin can't beat Burnet! He was far too friendly with Santa Anna before the war!

THOMAS RUSK

Frankly, Stephen's very ill right now. If you run, he's agreed to serve as your Secretary of State.

SAM HOUSTON

What about you, Tom? You'd make an excellent President.

THOMAS RUSK

Sam, leaders with vision are few. And there's only one Sam Houston.

GEORGE HOCKLEY

Texas must establish a Republic, a currency, a banking system, ports, roadways. Earn recognition abroad--

JUAN SEGUIN

--enlist allies against Mexico... who will mostly likely invade Texas again when Santa Anna returns.

THOMAS RUSK

War is inevitable with the Indians as well - Perhaps even with the United States should our new Republic become her rival under the leadership of Burnet and his ilk.

Emily smiles politely, lets go of Houston's hand, walks away, leaving him to talk business. Houston watches her go, musing...

SAM HOUSTON

The Republic of Texas has more trouble than a man toting a live bobcat by its hind leg.

103

INT. EMILY'S SALOON - DAY

103

Jack leans against the bar, orders whiskey from Lorca. Jack draws a bead on the poker table, sees Big Foot's WRIST CUFF in the gambler's pile. Walks to him, points to the cuff...

JACK HAYS

I'll have that cuff. It was stolen from a friend of mine.

GAMBLER
 (reaches for his pistol)
 I beg to differ...

A beat as Jack deliberates. Then sits at the table. The game begins, and Jack antes up with a thin wad of cash.

Jack pulls a SIX. Spreads his cards - TWO PAIRS. With a face of stone, the Gambler shoves the bracelet into the pot.

GAMBLER (CONT'D)
 No time for faint hearts.

Jack's out of cash. Pulls off his pistols to set them in the pot. Jack spreads out his hand. Gambler reveals a FLUSH.

ON JACK HAYS--as the Gambler RAKES in the pot. He rises, defeated, starts to exit. A LEATHERSTOCKING (42) steps up.

LEATHERSTOCKING
 Heard you rode with Deaf Smith?

JACK HAYS
 I did.

Exiting, the Gambler reacts...hands Jack back his guns. Then, with a grin, he flips him Big Foot's WRIST CUFF.

104 EXT. CAMP IN TEXAS WOODS - DAY 104

VERN, with a thousand yard stare, sits alone by a fire. Off a NOISE, Vern raises his GUN - FUZZ steps in, hands raised.

FUZZ
 Honest man lookin' for a cup of
 coffee...n friendly conversation.

Vern regards him coldly...then uncocks the pistol.

VERN ELWOOD
 Know what them gals do in Paree?

105 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT 105

In the middle of a discussion, Emily appeals to Houston...

EMILY WEST
 I won't allow you to refuse this,
 Sam. It's too important.

SAM HOUSTON
 Asked you to be my wife. I meant it--

Her eyes are misting, but her voice resolute...

EMILY WEST

I will always love you for that,
but times being what they are -
You, destined to be in the light -
Me in the shadows. Just know...I
will be right there beside
you...forever.

Houston doesn't budge. Adamant, Emily firmly gestures...

EMILY WEST (CONT'D)

Now go. You have an election to win.

106 INT. BUCKLEY'S SALOON - NIGHT

106

Lorca tends bar while TWO BARFLIES (40s) drink at the bar with KNOWLES, all pretty wasted, recounting a legend...

BARFLY #1

A demon called "Lorca" rode in on a
wave of brimstone, gutted over a
hundred Mexicans - Slit 'em open 'n
fed 'em their own bile.

BARFLY #2

S'right, a ghostrider who kills in
the name of Satan hisself. Look 'im
dead in the eye turn ya to stone.

EPHRAIM KNOWLES

Well I'M the onliest one here
looked 'im square in the eye, 'n I
didn't turn to stone.

(looks Lorca in the eye)

Gimme another beer, ya old goat.

LORCA

(serves beer, deadpan)

It's on the house, hero.

Houston comes downstairs, bellies up to the bar, to Lorca...

SAM HOUSTON

Have we had the occasion?

LORCA

No, sir. What'll it be?

SAM HOUSTON

Beer, cold as you have it. My
friend, our paths have crossed.

LORCA

Today they damn sure did. It's an honor, sir. Tom Paxton... late of Missouri, General.

He plants a frothing mug before them. Houston knocks it back, pays...then, with another glance at him, walks out--

--As Pauline walks in, passing Houston.

PAULINE WYKOFF

Where you been hiding, Mr. Thomas Paxton? I'm makin' a dish for our Sunday supper at the church social. If I didn't know better, I'd swear you don't care for my cooking.

LORCA

Ma'am, I'd fistfight the devil for a bowl of your Irish stew.

107 EXT. VICTORIA - EMILY'S SALOON - NIGHT 107

Framed in the upstairs window, Emily watches Houston ride off.

BELOW HER, Nate, Jack and Big Foot, take down the "Buckley's" sign replacing it with the NEW: "JUPITER'S HOTEL & EMPORIUM."

ACROSS THE STREET - BUCKLEY scowls at the sign...and Emily.

108 INT. THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT 108

AN ELEGANT TABLE - The CENTERPIECE: A BALD EAGLE faces the MEXICAN FLAG--a symbolic DUEL OF EAGLES. Santa Anna, in his finest uniform, across from U.S. President ANDREW JACKSON--

SUPER: THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON, D.C. -- JANUARY 17, 1837

ANDREW JACKSON

Of course, prudence dictated that I not intervene in Texas.

Santa Anna shoots him a look like "Oh, really."

SANTA ANNA

Of course not. Interesting. Though Texas' newly elected President is Sam Houston--an officer in your command in the Creek War, Congressman in your political party, Governor of your home state. An independent spirit?

ANDREW JACKSON

Best to view the situation as it is now... In the interests of a peaceful solution, do you think the Mexican Congress will cede Texas for a fair consideration? And by Texas, I mean all the land between the Sabine and the Pacific.

Santa Anna is galled, looks around... full of bluster.

SANTA ANNA

I very much like your house. It would suit me.

ANDREW JACKSON

I admire your candor--since you came here in chains.

SANTA ANNA

A blunder, certainly. But you too erred by bringing me here, since you have obvious designs on Texas.
(off Jackson's glare)
Have I come as your prisoner? No. I am welcomed as a head of state.

ANDREW JACKSON

Forgive my presumption - The news hasn't reached you as of yet. You are no longer President of Mexico - Vice-President Farias has replaced you.

SANTA ANNA

(shaken, but dismissive)
A necessary formality until my return. Regardless, France, Italy, Germany, even England--whose troops burned this house down around you--regard Mexico as their ally.
(pointed)
You cannot have Texas, much less California, without provoking all of Europe into a war you can never win. The next time we dine, Sir, you may find yourself a guest at my table--the Napoleon of the West.

ANDREW JACKSON

Indeed. Did not Napoleon succumb to the Duke of Wellington?

SANTA ANNA

What bearing does that have?

ANDREW JACKSON

I crushed Wellington's troops at
New Orleans. Should my country
face a foreign threat, Sir, I
myself will answer.

(offers a toast)

To peace between our nations!

A CHIME of crystal glasses, ANGRY EAGLES above, claw to claw.

109 EXT. THE ALAMO - DAY

109

A DIRGE--sung by a single, unseen woman as FLOWERS fall--

REVEAL A MASS GRAVE in the courtyard of the Alamo.

JUAN SEGUIN, in formal military uniform, carries a chest
which he opens to let ashes and bone tumble into the grave,
his Tejano officers & soldiers forming ranks behind him.

SAM HOUSTON (O.C.)

Deeply impressed with a sense of
responsibility, devolving on me--

110 EXT. REPRESENTATIVE HALL, COLUMBIA, TEXAS - DAY

110

Rusk, Hockley, and political and military figures stand in
solemn tribute as HOUSTON makes his inauguration speech to an
ENTHUSASTIC CROWD - Burnet and Lamar stand by grimacing...

SAM HOUSTON

--I cannot repress the emotion of
my heart or restrain the feeling
which my sense of obligation to my
fellow citizens has inspired. We
are only in the outset of the
campaign of liberty... A subject of
no small importance is the
situation of an extensive frontier
bordered by Indians and open to
their depredations--

111 EXT. TEXAS PRAIRIE - DAY

111

BUFFALO HUMP stands bare-chested, raising his scalp-laden
lance and firing up his devoted band of YOUNG WARRIORS...

BUFFALO HUMP

*Each day, the American half-faces
swallow more of our land with an
undying hunger for MORE!*

CROSS-CUT - SAM HOUSTON'S INAUGURAL SPEECH W/BUFFALO HUMP -
Both speakers working their followers into a frenzy...

SAM HOUSTON

Treaties of peace and amity with
the Indians present themselves as
the rational grounds on which to
obtain their friendship.

BUFFALO HUMP

*Our only hope is WAR! A STORM of
fire and blood that will sweep
every last white eye into the sea
that delivered them to our land!*

INTERCUT - SAM HOUSTON'S INAUGURAL SPEECH

SAM HOUSTON

Admonished by the past, we can not
in justice disregard our national
enemies...or Santa Anna.

112

EXT. DECK OF THE *PIONEER* - VERA CRUZ PORT - DAY

112

The ship nears the port - Santa Anna sees the crowds gathered
on the dock, becoming more anxious and depressed...

SANTA ANNA

Make no move against them, Almonte,
when they come to execute me. I
chose to ride the whirlwind of fame
and power. I accept as fate that I
will be dashed against the rocks.

The boat docks, the gangplank lurches out, and Santa Anna
steps onto it without hesitation, chin lifted high, to face
an angry, blood-thirsty crowd.

INSTEAD, Santa Anna's greeted by deafening CHEERS FROM
ECSTATIC MEXICANS welcoming their HERO home. To Almonte:

SANTA ANNA (CONT'D)

Do not get too accustomed to home
life, Almonte. Within a year, we will
be cockfighting in Texas again.

He grins, throws up his arms in VICTORY as THOUSANDS CHEER--

113

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

113

--SEGUE TO WAR CRIES & WHOOPING from BUFFALO HUMP'S WAR PARTY as
they SWOOP down on a WAGON TRAIN, beginnings of a MASSACRE.

114 EXT. MISSION CONCEPCION - DAY

114

A CHURCH SUPPER - Lorca gives out LICORICE to kids, among them Moises...who reacts to seeing the X-SHAPED SCAR on LORCA'S WRIST.

Serving her Irish Stew, Pauline smiles at Lorca, who smiles back and stands in line to await his turn.

Feeling good, he gets his bowl, samples a taste, smiles at Pauline and nods, savoring it...when...

BOOM! A SHOT blows through Lorca's clean white shirt. He drops his bowl of stew and falls across the table, which collapses beneath him. Women SCREAM, everyone's in shock--

MOISES holds a smoking pistol - A stunned Lane slaps his empty holster and jerks the gun from Moises.

Pauline goes numb with shock as MEN converge to roughly grab the boy - A bloody hand reaches up, clutching onto him...

LORCA

Let the boy be. I make no claim
against him...

Pauline, distraught, collapses beside him - He smiles at her.

Lorca's eyes find Moises, who glares at him. Compassionately:

LORCA (CONT'D)

I understand.

Pauline sees peace in Lorca's eyes as he goes still in death under the shadow of a church cross.

115 EXT. REPRESENTATIVE HALL, COLUMBIA, TEXAS - DAY (RESUME) 115

With ceremonial flair, Houston presents his SWORD.

SAM HOUSTON

It now, sir, becomes my duty to
make presentation of this sword,
--this emblem of my past office.

Houston pauses, staring at the gleaming blade, overcome a beat by emotion...then rallies himself, holds out sword to a JUDGE--

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

I have worn it with some humble
pretensions in defense of my country
Should danger again call for my
service, I expect to resume it--

(MORE)

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)
 --and I will respond to that call
 with my BLOOD and my LIFE!!!

THE LONE STAR FLAG UNFURLS as the CROWD CHEERS. Houston
 crosses to Burnet and Lamar.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)
 Thanks for all the publicity,
 David. Folks offer me free drinks
 and fresh eggs everywhere I go.

PRESIDENT BURNET
 What is it about you? What kind of
 spell do you hold on Texas?

SAM HOUSTON
 Maybe it's because everybody here
 is just like me. They see me rise
 in spite of my flaws - And they
 know they can too. It's not me
 they celebrate, David...
 (waves to CHEERING CROWD)
 It's HOPE.

116 INT. JUPITER'S HOTEL AND SALOON (VICTORIA, TEXAS) - DAY 116

BEER MUGS SMASH TOGETHER in a raucous, frontier celebration!
 In a gorgeous alluring gown, EMILY presides over the OPENING:

EMILY WEST
 To our new President, Sam Houston!

RANGERS Karnes, Anderson, Gator, Kit, Flores, Knowles, along
 with Jack and Big Foot hoist glasses. Flores makes another:

MANUEL FLORES
 To the hero of San Jacinto, owner
 of Jupiter's Saloon... Our Yellow
 Rose of Texas.

He STRUMS his guitar, Gator joins in, Knowles plays spoons as
 the crowd SINGS along: *"She's the Yellow Rose of Texas that
 I am going to see - No other darky knows her, no darky only
 me - Cried so when I left her, it like to broke my heart, and
 if I ever find her, we nevermore will part--"*

EMILY BEAMING, blushing, tearful...can't keep from laughing.

As they're singing, Guadalupe, Doc Ewing & other townspeople
 join in. Sarah brings in Half-Breed, who excitedly greets
 old master Karnes, jumping up and almost knocking him over--

--as Jack turns to Big Foot, tossing him the WRIST CUFF...

JACK HAYS
Almost forgot...this belongs to you.

Big Foot can't believe it - Hands it back to Jack.

BIG FOOT WALLACE
Came to Texas lookin' for one
brother... 'n found another one.

A bloody, HYSTERICAL TEXAS SETTLER (30s) BURSTS inside--

HYSTERICAL SETTLER
HELP! Comanche attack! They're
comin' this way--

HENRY KARNES
Rangers... SPUR UP!

Flores, Gator, Kit, Anderson, and Knowles head for the door.
Karnes sees Big Foot and Jack hesitate.

HENRY KARNES (CONT'D)
What're you waitin' for?

BIG FOOT WALLACE
We ain't been sworn in.

HENRY KARNES
Hellfire... Hold up your hands.
You're Rangers.

BIG FOOT WALLACE
What about the sacred ritual?

JACK HAYS
(a wry grin, rushing out)
Reckon we missed it.

117 EXT. STREETS OF VICTORIA - DAY

117

In an instant, all eight surviving RANGERS leap onto their horses, put their spurs to flanks and CHARGE OFF - Karnes in the lead, Jack riding up alongside, w/Big Foot, Anderson, Flores, Kit, Knowles...and a BARKING Half-Breed racing after!

On this ACTION SHOT of fury, leather, guns, grit and courage,
Like a Remington painting...FREEZE FRAME...

THE TEXAS RANGERS

FADE TO BLACK: