

TR:  
NIGHT TWO  
WORKING DRAFT

## TEXAS RANGERS

### NIGHT TWO

1 EXT. STAND OF TREES - DAWN 1

Under a scraggly grove of Texas Hackberry trees along a wagon trail, SIX MEXICAN SOLDIERS escort two SUPPLY WAGONS, one driven by a PEASANT COUPLE, the other by TWO ROUGH-LOOKING MEXICAN WOMEN armed with rifles and pistols.

They travel fast, the soldiers ducking under low-hanging branches of the largest tree when--

SOMEONE swings down from the tree and SMACKS INTO THE LAST SOLDIER, a tiger pouncing on its prey - They THUMP to the ground as the rest of the supply detail RIDE ON, unaware.

There's no struggle, WITHOUT SEEING HIS FACE, the UNKNOWN ASSAILANT scalps the dead man, then begins stripping him of his uniform hat and distinctive blue coat.

2 EXT. ROAD TO GOLIAD - DAY 2

GENERAL SAM HOUSTON leads the Rangers across the prairie - Deaf, Karnes, Anderson, Gator, Beans, Kit, Vern, and Knowles. The heat of the day has caused them to slow their horses to a trot. Deaf moves up to ride alongside Houston.

DEAF SMITH

Still a ways to Goliad--  
(patting his horse)  
--horses are tuckered.

HENRY KARNES

There's a waterin' hole a few miles  
yonder. Best rest up there...

DEAF SMITH

Charmaine needs a good drink.  
(patting horse)  
'N a graze. Don't cha, ole girl?

GATOR DAVIS

Deaf, I believe you love that horse  
more'n your wife!...

Gator grins with a "watch this" glance to everyone...

GATOR DAVIS (CONT'D)

DEAF! Who's the better mount, your  
wife or your horse?

DEAF SMITH  
 (only reading last part)  
 My horse?

LAUGHTER. Deaf realizes it's a joke he didn't hear.

DEAF SMITH (CONT'D)  
 Y'all havin' a jest at the expense  
 'a my impairment. Good thing is I  
 don't hafta hear disparagin'  
 nonsense from the likes of you.  
 (to Gator)  
 Anything that matters you best say  
 it to my face!

The men love their leader, laugh & yell "You tell 'im".

KIT ACKLIN  
 No sense in gettin' all hot 'n  
 bothered, Cap'n.

GATOR DAVIS  
 We was just wonderin' who bucks  
 harder.

Ignoring their laughter, Deaf rides off. The men follow. Houston, sipping from his canteen, notices Knowles, subtly trying to hide his face with his hat as he rides past.

SAM HOUSTON  
 SERGEANT KNOWLES!

Knowles shrinks, "oh, shit, caught" ready to bolt. All the Rangers stop. Deaf, not hearing, keeps moving ahead.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)  
 You trying to hide from me?

EPHRAIM KNOWLES  
 Un, no...I mean...yes? Yessir,  
 General Houston?

SAM HOUSTON  
 I've had my eye on you... You're  
 Rangering now, are you?

BILLY ANDERSON  
 He prefers it to bein' executed.

SAM HOUSTON  
 How's he doing?

HENRY KARNES  
 Passable. Ain't tried to run off.

KIT ACKLIN

Still say we oughta shoot him, sir.

VERN ELWOOD

I tried, General--

BILLY ANDERSON

Executin's the Army's job.

BEANS WILKINS

We let him ride with us. Didn't know what else to do with him.

SAM HOUSTON

Sergeant, what qualities do you possess to commend you for a pardon?

VERN ELWOOD

He don't have no good qualities!

KNOWLES

Uh...uh...ummm, well, I...I like this part'a the country a lot, ya know, breathin' the air, sleepin' under the stars and, uh, breathin'--

VERN ELWOOD

Ya said that already.

BILLY ANDERSON

Dammit, Knowles, can't you think of anything good about yourself?

\*

Knowles can't take it, breaks under the pressure, blurts out:

KNOWLES

I ain't no good, sir. Never have been. I lie, cheat, steal, cuss... Don't care 'bout nobody but myself. I'm bullheaded, onery as a snake--

SAM HOUSTON

(catching this, quickly)  
Onery's good... not a bad quality for a Ranging Company

Rangers murmur agreement. Houston spurs his horse to catch up to Deaf... Knowles slack-jawed at the General's reprieve.

3

EXT. WATERING HOLE - DAY (LATER)

3

HORSE HOOVES POUNDING the ground... The Mexican's convoy has paused to water the horses - Hearing the horses hooves--

--the MEXICAN CAPTAIN squints into the sun, holding up a hand to shield his eyes from the sun's glare.

CAPTAIN'S POV - A GALLOPING SILHOUETTE

Refracting SUNLIGHT obscures the horseman's face, but he appears to be wearing the uniform of a Mexican Soldier.

MEXICAN CAPTAIN

Private Ortiz, where've you been?

Confused, the Captain frowns, taking a few steps forward to where, HE'S ALSO SILHOUETTED by the sun. For some reason, "Private Ortiz" rides with his SWORD RAISED--

MEXICAN CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Ortiz...?

His last word as the SWORD SWINGS...SWWAAAKKK! The Captain's HEAD TOPPLES while his arm remains raised - as if still shielding his eyes from the sun...with now nothing to shield.

As their Captain's headless body collapses, the dumbstruck supply detail can only gawk a couple of crucial beats--

Time enough for the UNKNOWN ASSAILANT to use the surprise (and the sun) to his advantage to LANCE ANOTHER SOLDIER--

--before the others, now YELLING & SQUEALING, SCRAMBLE for weapons - The PEASANT TEAMSTER COUPLE, both SCREAMING bloody murder, dive from their wagon into the water to get away as--

Soldiers FIRE but miss. The UNKNOWN ASSAILANT rears his horse and bears down to SHOOT TWO MORE SOLDIERS!

The TWO WOMEN WAGONEERS are the fiercest fighters, standing up in the wagon bed to FIRE GUN AFTER GUN. BULLETS slam into the UNKNOWN ASSAILANT's HORSE, which TUMBLES INTO THE WAGON and knocks them off. Falling with his horse, the UNKNOWN ASSAILANT BOUNDS OVER the wagon beside the shaken women.

All their guns dropped in the collision, the female wagoneers and UNKNOWN ASSAILANT lunge for the weapons at the same time-- Despite their heroics, the women fall. The Unknown Assailant PUNCHES and KICKS at them like rag dolls as--

THE LAST SOLDIER raises his hands in surrender, muttering a panicked prayer. He backs away from the UNKNOWN ASSAILANT, whose is back to us as he slowly walks.

Only the Last Soldier sees the UNKNOWN ASSAILANT's face clearly, (WE DO NOT YET SEE HIM CLEARLY) - In doing so knows he will receive no mercy. He cuts and RUNS from the man's gun into the pond, SLOSHING through the shallow part until--

BOOM! He SPLASHES forward, his blood clouding the water.

Only the Peasant Teamster Couple remain alive, flailing in the depths of the pond. The wife can't swim, so her husband, with nowhere to go, pulls her back towards shore--

--where their killer awaits. He watches the pitiful lone survivors as compassionately as a shark.

OFF APPROACHING HOOFBEATS, the UNKNOWN ASSAILANT turns to see a newly-arriving SILHOUETTED RIDER - Like the Captain before, the Unknown Assailant raises a hand to shield his eyes as--

UBALDO (Santa Anna's messenger) rides INTO VIEW - the Mexican private gapes at the carnage of the battle scene around him--

THE UNKNOWN ASSAILANT stands amidst his blood bath... he lifts his head and reveals himself...LORCA.

Ubaldo stares at Lorca. Lorca stares back.

4

EXT. PRAIRIE - DAY

4

Hot and sweaty, Big Foot rides his horse as Jack, pissed-off that his horse was stolen, walks alongside, eyes ahead.

BIG FOOT WALLACE

Sticks in my craw them trash got off with my wrist cuff.

JACK HAYS

You are out a trinket. I'm on FOOT. That was a blooded thoroughbred those wastrels took. Raised him from a cold I did.

BIG FOOT WALLACE

That's why you got your mind set on walkin' all the way to Goliad?

JACK HAYS

I have a choice?

BIG FOOT WALLACE

An' that was NO trinket, Hardcase. It's a precious family heirloom - Made by my Pa for me 'n my brother.

Jack notices something, stops walking to stoop down and examine it - Rubs BLOODY DIRT between his fingers...

JACK HAYS

Still damp... she's bleedin' out.

BIG FOOT WALLACE  
Pissant-she-devil bitch, hope so.

JACK HAYS  
Blood trail leads thataway...

BIG FOOT WALLACE  
(nods opposite direction)  
Goliad is thataway...

Jack follows the blood trail, Big Foot follows Jack, who reaches the top of a small knoll, peers down into the gully: \*

RUTHIE, of the teenage killer/thieves, the one Jack shot... lies dead - VULTURES pick the eyes and flesh off her body.

JACK HAYS  
You got your wish.

BIG FOOT WALLACE  
She wearin' my wrist cuff?

JACK HAYS  
Nope.

BIG FOOT WALLACE  
(mutters)  
Pissant bitch... Sure you don't wanna ride?

JACK HAYS  
Like I said, two grown men can't ride double. It ain't dignified.

BIG FOOT WALLACE  
You want dignity or blisters?

5 INT. HARRISBURG TAVERN TEMPORARY OFFICE OF STATE - DAY 5

White-haired Texas PRESIDENT DAVID BURNET (48) packs his belongings as his AIDES burn documents. THOMAS RUSK (30s), Secretary of War, reads a report amidst the chaotic activity.

THOMAS RUSK  
Mr. President, our scouts report that the Santanistas are moving in faster than we anticipated. They just burned Bellville--

Mirabeau Lamar barges in unannounced, with an agitated, officious, gap-toothed aide FRANCISCO (20s) on his heels.

MIRABEAU LAMAR  
Sirs, I'm here under urgent  
dispatch of Colonel Mosely Baker--

FRANCISCO  
Senor, I told you, you can't come  
in here! President Burnet is busy--

MIRABEAU LAMAR  
(handing Burnet papers)  
It is my duty to present this  
petition from your rank and file--

PRESIDENT BURNET  
And you would be?

MIRABEAU LAMAR  
Private Mirabeau Bonaparte Lamar,  
of Fairfield, Georgia.

PRESIDENT BURNET  
Spit it out, boy. We gotta go  
before Santa Anna gets here!

MIRABEAU LAMAR  
Houston will not engage--

PRESIDENT BURNET  
(to Rusk)  
Why won't your man meet the enemy?

MIRABEAU LAMAR  
It reeks of cowardliness.

THOMAS RUSK  
Houston may be many things, but a  
coward he is not!

MIRABEAU LAMAR  
Perhaps when younger he was a brave  
soldier and valiant leader, but--

PRESIDENT BURNET  
(ignores Lamar, to Rusk)  
Then, for the love of God, what's  
in that man's head?

THOMAS RUSK  
I presume General Houston is  
picking his ground--

MIRABEAU LAMAR  
Or ceding it as fast as he can.



THOMAS RUSK  
MIND YOUR PLACE, PRIVATE!

MIRABEAU LAMAR  
Forgive me, Mr. Secretary.  
(respectfully composed)  
President Burnet, it's of desperate  
necessity you come to the front. I  
fear we face a mass desertion--

PRESIDENT BURNET  
Look around you, son... Santanistas  
are a half day's ride from here.  
We are abandoning our capital. If I  
am captured or killed the rebellion  
is finished... I'm all that's left.  
God knows where Stephen Austin is.  
We're catching a boat off Galveston  
Island, enroute to New Orleans, to  
set up the provisional government.  
(orders Rusk)  
Rusk, you go tell Houston both his  
troops and the enemy are laughing  
him to scorn. He must fight. Or  
find me someone who will.

Francisco struggles with Burnet's belongings and a trunk.

PRESIDENT BURNET (CONT'D)  
(as they exit)  
Francisco, stop lollygagging.

6 EXT. WATERING HOLE - LATE DAY

6

Houston & Rangers (Deaf, Karnes, Gator, Beans, Kit, Anderson,  
Vern, and Knowles) ride in to water their horses, unnerved by  
Lorca's massacre site. Knowles wanders off to take a piss.

KIT ACKLIN  
Comanche attack?

They dismount, look around. Blood, but no bodies. Fight-torn  
ground, the overturned wagon, etc. Anderson investigates...

BILLY ANDERSON  
Nope. No stray arrows. No unshod  
pony tracks. No scalped bodies...

\*

HENRY KARNES  
Bandits?

EPHRAIM KNOWLES (O.S.)  
Ohhhh, GOD, sweet Jesus...!

BARKING incessantly, Half-Breed runs into a STAND OF TREES as Knowles stumbles back from the trees, as if seeing a demon.

EPHRAIM KNOWLES (CONT'D)

It...it's awful...it...it...

He VOMITS and points. Houston and the Rangers draw their weapons, cautiously walk to...

LORCA'S TORTURE SITE

Horrible. Grotesque. The victims of Lorca's massacre strung up like sides of beef, tortured before being brutally killed.

Like something envisioned by Hieronymus Bosch - Bodies hang upside down, in various mangled states - twisted, hacked, disemboweled. Karnes SHUSHES Half-Breed's BARKING.

BEANS WILKINS

What the hell...?

KIT ACKLIN

It's gotta be Comanches--

Houston and the Rangers are agape at the horror. The sadistic Vern, fascinated like a kid in fairyland, pokes a stick in one's chest cavity, muttering a sick joke...

VERN ELWOOD

Kinda gives ya a hankerin' for barbecued antelope.

HENRY KARNES

Makes no sense butcherin' em then stringin' em up.

DEAF SMITH

That's not the point of it.

SAM HOUSTON

Someone's sending a message.

LORCA (O.S.)

(bellows)

THAT LUCIFER HIMSELF HAS RISEN...

Startled, the Rangers whip around to see the specter of evil incarnate, Lorca looming high on his horse under a tree.

LORCA (CONT'D)

FROM THE BOWELS OF HADES to pare the turgid flesh off the bones of all Meskins...

(MORE)

LORCA (CONT'D)  
 ...to pluck their eyes 'n eat their  
 livers 'til their wretched screams  
 for the Angel of Death... DEAFEN  
 THIS GOD-FORSAKEN EARTH!

Lorca's mad eyes bore in on the Rangers, who point their guns  
 at him. Visibly shaken, Knowles can hardly find his voice.

EPHRAIM KNOWLES  
 Who... who are you?

LORCA  
 I am the PUNISHMENT! A ghost  
 warrior trapped between light and  
 dark, here to smite every Jumpin'  
 Bean Lubricano man, woman and child  
 from the Texas plains.

SAM HOUSTON  
 This is war... not a crusade--

LORCA  
 Had you witnessed the abominations  
 at the Alamo and Goliad, you'd  
 think otherwise.

HENRY KARNES  
Goliad--

SAM HOUSTON  
 (pointed)  
 You have news?

LORCA  
 Steel yourself unflinching,  
 Houston, as do I. Because to feel  
 pain or fear would be to allow  
 ourselves a mercy we cannot afford  
 and I will not abide!

DEAF SMITH  
 Goddammit, ya crazy bastard, speak  
 plain.

LORCA  
 They are all DEAD. Murdered.  
 400... slain. Slaughtered after  
 surrender... So much blood the air  
 turned to a crimson mist...

Houston and Rangers are horrified and speechless.

SAM HOUSTON  
 Colonel Fannin?

Knowles gawks. Standing too close, Lorca jabs his fingertip like a "gun" against Knowles's forehead...

LORCA  
Shot in the Face.

"PICHOO", he makes the sound of a bullet penetrating flesh, snapping Knowles' head back with his finger...

LORCA (CONT'D)  
Colonel Portillo pulled the trigger himself... then stole his watch...

HENRY KARNES  
Two of my Ranger boys were there.  
One wore a funny hat--

LORCA  
--in a red checkered shirt?

Karnes nods. Hopeful, the men react as...

LORCA (CONT'D)  
He made a worthy run for it. Got ambushed... Shot by so many bullets they shred the skin clean off his body and splintered his skull beyond recognition.

Deflated, the Rangers are numb with grief. Knowles is shaken.

LORCA (CONT'D)  
All the bodies lay as they fell, left to rot for maggots and buzzards.

SAM HOUSTON  
By what RIGHT do you come before us to slaughter in the name of war?

LORCA  
I claim the ANCIENT RIGHT! By MY own blood betrayed, by my own death denied. There are no innocents in this land. Be warned, Ranger: The demons and dark spirits that inhabit my horde understand that I have NO RIGHT to let Meskins live. I will kill them ALL, sanctioned by Satan. I answer to neither man nor God.

Lorca WHACKS a rope with his sword - A BODY, hidden in the tree branches above, COMES HURLING down--

LORCA (CONT'D)

I bring the General a message.

--it's Ubaldo, Santa Anna's messenger, barely alive, his body swaying back and forth, hanging suspended by another rope.

LORCA (CONT'D)

You best make haste - it's a fresh dispatch from Santa Anna himself.

(galloping off, yelling)

I am the servant of Lucifer...  
Death to Santa Anna and all his  
brown-skinned MESKIN NIGGERS!

7 EXT. HARRISBURG, TX - SUNSET

7

A fiery sunset - *IN SLO-MO...* Turns to FLAMES which build and ROLL through the doors of a CHURCH - THROUGH this smoke...

THE MEXICAN CALVARY (*BACK TO SPEED*) BURSTS THROUGH! Throwing torches, whooping it up. SANTA ANNA'S ARMY burns the town. BUILDINGS in FLAMES as terrorized TOWNSPEOPLE FLEE.

**SUPER: "April 15, 1836 - Harrisburg, Texas"**

From the smoke and flames, Santa Anna emerges, his arm linked with Almonte's. Santa Anna turns to feel the force of the heat on his face, eyes closed to heighten his other senses:

SANTA ANNA

The bite of the flames; the sting  
of the smoke - do you feel it? Are  
you hard, Almonte?

Almonte is surprised, almost enough to forget his discomfort.

ALMONTE

Hard, General?

SANTA ANNA

Your manhood - Is the flush of  
victory and dying cries of your  
enemy not as exciting as a young  
boy's first look at his virgin  
sister's naked buttocks?

ALMONTE

I...I'm not erect, sir--

INTERCUT - MEXICAN SOLDIERS LOOT, RAPE, & DESTROY - Several CRASH from a SALOON, pulling a SCREAMING WOMAN, ripping her clothes, drag her to the LIVERY - MEN SHOT DOWN or BEATEN.

SANTA ANNA

Disappointing, Almonte. To be a successful leader, you have far to go. What an ordinary man feels as pain or revulsion, a real soldier must learn to feel as pleasure.

Almonte braces for a tempest...

ALMONTE

I regret to inform you, Your Excellency, that President Burnet has escaped with his entourage. We were only moments too late.

Santa Anna pauses, then surprisingly shrugs it off. Amidst the insanity, he guides Almonte on down the street.

SANTA ANNA

(reflective)

A soldier's life is not an easy one, Almonte. Not even mine, though I have more comforts than most. Long absences, hard travel, short rations, the coarse company of soldiers for months at a time -

As they walk, we notice in the b.g.--

RANGER FLORES has infiltrated the Mexican army, now dressed as a common Soldado - When Santa Anna & Almonte pass, Flores grabs a WOMAN & BABY, as to attack them like other Soldados.

SANTA ANNA (CONT'D)

Most of our men, even some of our officers, would desert if not for fear of being shot. Battles are few and far between, and many little more than skirmishes. Our enemies are a paltry rabble, our weapons antiquated and inadequate. The public's gratitude is uncertain, the politicians fickle, at best.

He gestures at the mayhem all around them--

SANTA ANNA (CONT'D)

This, Almonte, *this* is our thanks.

(a deep breath)

It's what makes our work worthwhile, giving purpose to all our sacrifices.

8

EXT. TRAIL SIDE CAMPSITE FIRE - NIGHT

8

DISTANT NIGHT-TIME SOUNDS - and the quiet VOICES of weary, dispirited men. Horses mill around. A coffee pot percolates over bed of coals. Houston writes in a journal. Deaf feeds his horse oats from his hat. Half-Breed is asleep as Karnes dictates a letter to Beans, who writes by the campfire light.

\*  
\*

HENRY KARNES

There is little more I can add,  
Mrs. Fincham, 'ceptin' that Truett  
and Yancey accounted for themselves  
in this campaign with-- What's a  
fancy word for *cojones*?

BEANS WILKINS

(thinking, licks pencil)  
Reckon' *valor* fits pretty good.

HENRY KARNES

With *valor*... You ought be proud  
of your son, as the Rangers hold  
him in highest regard.  
Sincerely... H. Karnes.

Silence but for crackling fire as they reflect on the loss.

BEANS WILKINS

They was good boys.

HENRY KARNES

Read that all back to me from the  
start. It's gotta be suitable.

BEANS WILKINS

Hold your horses...  
(dips out beans on plate)  
I'm so hungry my belly button's  
startin' to gnaw on my backbone.

KNOWLES, GATOR, ANDERSON, on bedrolls, stare up at the stars...\*

GATOR DAVIS

That crazy old coot... I ain't seen  
nothin' like him in the good Lord's  
Christian world...

EPHRAIM KNOWLES

His eyes were dead, like chunks of  
black coal.

GATOR DAVIS

I don't recall the Bible speaking  
'bout a demon of his ilk--

BILLY ANDERSON

*Lorca.*

GATOR DAVIS

What?

EPHRAIM KNOWLES

That some Injun name for Beelzebub?

BILLY ANDERSON

It's Kiowa legend, from ancient times... about a Atakapan warrior killed in battle without honor. His spirit rose, peeled the skin off his barbarian enemies till the sun burned their insides to a crisp.

GATOR DAVIS

Sweet Jesus! That's what he...

(nervous stutter)

He... he did...

EPHRAIM KNOWLES

I likely will soil myself if we chance upon his like again.

BILLY ANDERSON

More than likely, in your case...

EPHRAIM KNOWLES

Not sure this Rangerin' suits me.

ANOTHER ANGLE - VERN AND KIT, backs propped against their saddles. Kit plays solitaire with weathered RED CARDS. Low:

VERN ELWOOD

If'n these jackasses won't say it, I will. Our cause is lost, damnit. Onliest thing we're gonna find in Texas is our grave.

KIT ACKLIN

Turn and run? Is that it, Vern?

VERN ELWOOD

Why, hell, no! Turn, run, and fornicate! Texas is fine country, but Texican women are so ugly they could back a buzzard off a gut wagon. I'd sooner service a sow. I best get back to France...

(MORE)



VERN ELWOOD (CONT'D)  
 in Pareee, the missys paint their  
 faces like dolls, wear bodices that  
 make their teets hang out. And the  
 clencher is...  
 (lecherous whisper)  
 They perfume their bush to smell  
 like lilacs.

KIT ACKLIN  
 (shocked, laughs)  
 You are a sinner. Marked by a  
 terrible stain.

VERN ELWOOD  
 Now your British wench is kinda  
 husky, stinks a little when she  
 sweats--and she's gonna sweat  
 plenty if I'm ridin' her. 'Course,  
 your best poke, in my experience,  
 is ports-of-call off Spain--

KIT ACKLIN  
 You've been to Spain too?

VERN ELWOOD  
 Don't interrupt... Them skinny,  
 dark-eyed Gypsy girls twirl 'round  
 on your pecker like a butter churn.

KIT ACKLIN  
 Come near my sisters, I will shoot  
 your lecherous ass graveyard-dead.  
 (serious)  
 And you best not so much as glance  
 at Rebecca, that sweet gal we  
 rescued at Gonzales.

VERN ELWOOD  
 (draws close, serious)  
 Come with me, Kit. We can catch a  
 schooner outta N'awlins with some  
 of my old swabbies. We got so much  
 livin' to do. We ain't gonna do  
 nuthin in Texas but die young...

9 EXT. HARRISBURG, TEXAS - NIGHT

9

CHARRED, SMOLDERING BUILDINGS. Throngs of drunken Mexican  
 soldiers revel in the smoky, haze-covered streets. PAN the  
 ruins to an ALLEY...clumps of weeds PARTED by a bloody hand--

The terrified face of LANE WALTERS(30) emerges, searching for  
 a way out.

Fit, handsome, but freshly fight-scarred, he stays motionless, silent, as the soldiers wash past him until ...a TORCH nearly hits his head, thrown by a MEXICAN SENTRY.

LANE picks up the torch, hurls it right back at the Sentry, limps into the shadows as the Sentry & cohorts pursue him.

Out of breath, panicked, trapped, Lane raises his arms in surrender, when out of the darkness...a HAND grabs his collar and YANKS him into a building doorway--

10 INT. BUILDING - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS) 10

IT'S FLORES, who clamps his hand over Lane's mouth, SSSHHH.

The pair thread their way through the abandoned storage building, until they reach a door. Flores RAPS his fist in a staccato pattern. The door slowly SQUEAKS OPEN TO A...

BACK ROOM - A safe house for a DOZEN TOWNSPEOPLE rescued by Flores, including the Woman & Baby seen earlier. Flores peeks through a crack in a BOARDED-UP WINDOW at the outside chaos.

MANUEL FLORES

The drunker they get, the better our chances.

FLORES' POV - HARRISBURG STREET

Francisco, President Burnet's aide, rides into town, spotted by a drunk Mexican soldier, JOSE (20s), who calls to him...

JOSE

Francisco! My friend!

FRANCISCO

Where is Colonel Portillo?

11 INT. BARN - NIGHT 11

A COCK FIGHT... SOLDIERS & their WOMEN CAMP FOLLOWERS drink, bet, holler, jeer the center-ring action.

Santa Anna and Emily sit on planks above the ring, enjoying the day's victory. Almonte, smoking a pipe, stands nearby.

Portillo, followed by Francisco, enters, makes eye contact with Romolo. Seeing Portillo's signal, Romolo whispers to Santa Anna, who reluctantly gets up...

Emily firmly grabs Santa Anna's crotch, opens her mouth and kisses him hard... Exerting her sexual domination until--

--she permits the aroused, flustered general to leave, his mind conflicted between duty and pleasure... Romolo fumes and follows his General. After they're gone, Emily sneaks away--

12

INT. LIVERY STABLE STALL - NIGHT (CONTINUING)

12

VOICES IN THE SHADOWS. The door creaks open, Romolo enters to find Santa Anna in a hushed conference with Portillo, Almonte, and the spy from the Texas Government: Francisco.

ALMONTE

...and you know this how?

INTERCUT - EMILY sneaks into another stable stall to listen.

FRANCISCO

I heard it from President Burnet's own mouth. He is fleeing to New Orleans by way of Galveston Bay.

SANTA ANNA

(to Almonte)

Intercept him at first light. The Texians' resolve will crumble once we capture their President.

(to Francisco)

And General Houston? What is his position?

FRANCISCO

Somewhere west of the Sabine below Gonzales. Tattle is he's rattled, his troops mutinous. Burnet ordered Houston to meet you on the field.

SANTA ANNA

This is very good news... He shall have his wish.

EMILY -- Eavesdropping as the men walk around the labyrinth of stables - She ducks in the shadows, slipping into the darkness...just before Almonte or Portillo look her way.

SANTA ANNA (CONT'D)

We will divide the army into multiple divisions to pursue and destroy all remnants of the rebel army-- Have Urrea sweep the coast, tell Ramirez y Sesma to cut a swath north of our position. Pull a select garrison of dragoons, grenadiers and riflemen from their regiments for me.

(MORE)

SANTA ANNA (CONT'D)

I will lead them directly into the heart of Houston's army.

EMILY - Quietly climbs up a LADDER TO THE HAY LOFT.

ALMONTE

General... if you'll indulge me: Our many triumphant victories have been because we maintain an overwhelming force... Perhaps we should consult your Generals?

PORTILLO

His Excellency needs only to consult himself. Brilliant strategy, sir.

ALMONTE

A locust by itself chews a hole into a leaf. A swarm of locusts annihilates a forest.

Santa Anna, distracted by the sounds of CHEERS for his winning bird, hurries back to the ring as they walk and talk.

PORTILLO

(ignoring Almonte)

I applaud your military genius, General. It is an honor to serve with you in this campaign.

EMILY - Following their movements, she scoots around in the loft to overhear, KNOCKS LOOSE HAY--

ROMOLO notices WISPS OF HAY drifting from the loft above.

ALMONTE

(irritated)

And how can we be certain that President Jackson will not intervene?

EMILY - TRAPPED, she sees where they're going, panics--

SANTA ANNA

He has already intervened. Jackson hides behind treaties, moves in shadows, whispers in corrupt men's ears. He stole Florida from Spain. Then made erroneous claims that Texas was part of Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase.

As they come back around to the main cockfighting arena, Romolo looks around for Emily, notices a ladder to the loft--

PORTILLO

Ridiculous. How can he assert that the French could sell a territory they never controlled?

SANTA ANNA

Greedy Yankee logic... When Mexico won Texas from Spain, then wouldn't concede it or sell it to the United States, Jackson had no choice but to try and steal it... That's what this Texas revolution is truly about... Houston is Jackson's dog.

PORTILLO

As was David Crockett.

Perturbed, Santa Anna stops to punctuate his thought.

SANTA ANNA

If President Jackson chooses to meet me on the field of battle in my own country, I will, in turn, invade HIS. We will march all the way to Washington. As was Rome in the time of Caesar, Aurelius, and Trajan, it is OUR destiny to be masters of this hemisphere. The day of the Mexican Empire has dawned.

Santa Anna reaches into his pocket. Pulls out a bag of GOLD COINS - Drops ten into Francisco's palm.

SANTA ANNA (CONT'D)

I reward results, Francisco. Locate and join up with Houston's army - Bring me news.

FRANCISCO

Yes, Your Excellency.

Off the sparkle of GOLD IN FRANCISCO'S EYES, go to...

ROMOLO - Climbing up to LOFT, he's about to catch Emily - He jerks around to look about... But no one is there.

13

EXT. LIVERY STABLES - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

13

Emily climbs down the loft from the outside entrance. Looking around, she's GRABBED and pulled to--

A SHADOWY SPOT away from all the noise & activity. Her abductors are the drunk soldiers, Jose and chunky, obnoxious HECTOR (30s), who leers at her with a toothless grin...

HECTOR  
A woman with full meaty bosoms--

JOSE  
(lasciviously)  
I liiike that.

Emily struggles to escape. Hector raises his KNIFE as Jose RIPS the front of her dress and pulls down his pants.

MANUEL FLORES  
Be careful, my friend. She is the  
Presidente-General's property.

The would-be rapists WHEEL around to Flores crossing to them.

HECTOR  
You lying thieving whoremonger!  
You want her for yourself.

JOSE  
Easy, my friend. We will share her.  
She is plenty woman for all...

Boozy, half-lid eyes finding focus, Hector squints at Flores.

HECTOR  
Manuel? I know you, Manuel Flores!  
It is me, Hector Ovaldo. We played  
cards at your cousin Tito's in Vera  
Cruz - Remember? I won.  
(draws gun, w/contempt)  
I was proud to take your money  
'cause you join the filthy rebels--

MANUEL FLORES  
You have me confused--

HECTOR  
NO! I am quite certain. YOU ARE A  
TRAITOROUS SPY--

Hector raises his gun, but Flores THROWS HIS KNIFE FASTER!

MANUEL FLORES  
--and YOU are a dead card cheat.

With the knife sticking through his throat, Hector drops his gun and keels over. Shocked, Jose DROPS his liquor bottle, takes off running, YELLING with his pants around his ankles.

JOSE

HELP! HELP! We have a--

BLAM! He falls into the light of the street - Emily holds Hector's gun. Several see Jose fall, among them Portillo, and rush toward them. Emily whispers fast and low to Flores:

EMILY WEST

I have vital news... Meet me here at the witching hour...

Seeing Portillo approaching, Flores takes the gun from her.

EMILY WEST (CONT'D)

(adjusts ripped dress)  
This soldier rescued me.

MANUEL FLORES

Colonel, sir... They tried to rape the General's woman.

Santa Anna and Romolo hurry to them. Emily falls into Santa Anna's arms, buries her head in his shoulder as he embraces her. Santa Anna spits on Jose's dead body, orders Portillo:

SANTA ANNA

String their bodies up. Where everyone can see.

14 EXT. TRAIL SIDE CAMPSITE - LATE NIGHT

14 \*

The Rangers sleep, Houston, tossing and turning, wakes up from a nightmare... He notices Deaf nearby, lovingly brushing and tending to his horse "Charmaine." Houston lights a cigar.

SAM HOUSTON

Lord knows I wanted to be wrong about Fannin... At least, I didn't want to be this right.

No response. Deaf didn't hear a word. Houston picks up a stick and gently pokes Deaf in the ribs.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

I'm hungry for counsel. I'd welcome yours...

Deaf gives Charmaine a last brush stroke & nose-to-nose hug.

DEAF SMITH

One thing Santa Anna's done in your favor. He's let every Texian know that to surrender means death.

SAM HOUSTON

The sonofabitch is cagey. He probably figures that by committing such war atrocities, he will provoke America into interceding.

DEAF SMITH

Why pick a fight with the States?

SAM HOUSTON

By luring U.S. troops across the Sabine, Jackson breaches the Adam-Onis Agreement, forcing his European allies to honor their treaties with Mexico and enter the war against Texas AND the United States.

DEAF SMITH

Santa Anna wants to rule all of North America?

SAM HOUSTON

That's what I'd do if I were him. But I'm me, standing between him and the conquest of our people, and for the life of me... I'm at a loss on how to oppose him.

DEAF SMITH

I say we fight him like Comanches.

SAM HOUSTON

Meaning?

Deaf, a man of few words, takes this rare occasion to speak his mind. He turns from Charmaine to sit next to Houston.

DEAF SMITH

I know you been trying to coax Santa Anna's Army east to the U.S. border. So'as you kin squeeze 'em 'tween us 'n General Gaines. But, now I say, we circle back. Get real close to 'em. Near enough to feel his breath.

(COUGHS, gets control)

Watch. Wait. Let him know you're always there and he can't touch ya. Sooner or later, he'll show ya his tender underbelly. When he does, stick your knife in to the hilt, then slit him through 'n through.



SAM HOUSTON

And what about Generals Urrea,  
Filisola, Cos and Sesma?

COUGHING harder, Deaf turns away to spit bloody mucus in one of his wife's cloths. Houston waits, watches with concern.

DEAF SMITH

You don't need to kill all of 'em,  
Sam. Just need to kill the *one*.

Deaf pulls out another handkerchief to wipe his clammy sweat.

15 INT. LIVERY STABLES - LATE NIGHT

15

Torchlight. Tobacco smoke hangs in the air. The crowd from the cockfight gone, the birds are being put back in cages.

MEN AND WOMEN sleep, passed out, a few smoking, intoxicated, hard-core GAMBLERS remain, playing backgammon for money.

Flores, ever vigilant, plucks a slow tune on a guitar (NOTE: BEGINNING THE MELODY for the song "The Yellow Rose of Texas")

Raking in his winnings, Francisco struts, triumphantly clucks and flaps his elbows like a chicken... amusing all.

FRANCISCO

Everybody pays Francisco! You, you,  
you, the rebel Presidente Burnet  
...even His Excellency Santa Anna  
himself! EVERYONE pays me! And soon  
the pirate Houston will pay me.

He trips. Flores catches him, masking his fury with a smile.

FRANCISCO (CONT'D)

I almost pissed myself.  
(grabbing his crotch)  
I need go to shake hands with my  
wife's best friend.

Cackling at his joke, he starts off - Stops, uses his shirt tail as a ponch to catch and hold his pile of money.

16 EXT. LIVERY STABLES - LATE NIGHT

16

Francisco takes a leak - Clutching his shirt-tail of coins, he fumbles to unbutton his trousers and SPILLS the money.

As he bends to pick it up, he gets GRABBED BY HIS HAIR...

It's FLORES...whose KNIFE SLICES FRANCISCO'S JUGULAR--

MANUEL FLORES

This is how Houston pays spies.

BLOOD DRIPS ONTO FRANCISCO'S DROPPED PILE OF GOLD COINS.

17 INT. SANTA ANNA'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT 17

EMILY lies with her hair cascading on a silk pillow, wide awake, WATCHING Santa Anna. She strokes his cheek to test if he's sleeping soundly. He rolls over and starts to snore.

Emily slips out of bed, her naked form in silhouette from the moonlight beaming through the window. She retrieves her silk gown, walks to the armoire where she pulls a hidden serape and a sombrero. Last, she pulls a leather diary (w/pencil), tucks it inside her gown and tiptoes toward the door.

SANTA ANNA

(eyes closed)

Where are you going, my angel?

Emily freezes. Deliberates... Her back to him.

EMILY WEST

I'm thirsty, Antonio.

SANTA ANNA

Didn't you see the pitcher on the dresser? Drink all you want and come back to bed.

Santa Anna opens the covers, beseeching her. Emily closes her eyes in frustration...then turns to Santa Anna with a beaming smile and tosses the hat to re-join him.

18 EXT. LIVERY STABLES - LATE NIGHT (WITCHING HOUR) 18

Flores helps Lane Walters load women and men refugees into a wagon--covering them with a tarp.

MANUEL FLORES

Head east towards Houston's Army.  
Keep a lookout for Comanches.

LANE WALTERS

God bless you...

As they ride off, FLORES pulls out his pocket watch... CLOSE ON THE WATCH FACE: Time reads: 2:27 AM - O.S. FOOTSTEPS...

Flores reacts, begins to reveal himself...STOPS at seeing two Mexican SENTRIES, patrolling - He ducks back behind cover--

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

We have no time.

OUT OF THE SHADOWS walks EMILY, covered by the serape and wearing the sombrero. She passes Flores a handwritten NOTE.

EMILY WEST

President Burnet must be warned, they know his location. Colonel Almonte is leaving at first light to Galveston Bay to intercept him.

MANUEL FLORES

Horses are ready, we go now...

EMILY WEST

I'm of better use to Texas stayin' here, gatherin' information.

MANUEL FLORES

There's no time to argue. General Houston's orders.

EMILY WEST

(firm)

I don't answer to him.

Flores, stares into her eyes. Reading her. Understanding.

MANUEL FLORES

If you haven't killed Santa Anna yet, you never will.

EMILY WEST

I've come to believe killin' him is not enough - Death without knowin' the shame of losin'... Defeats its purpose. We destroy his army - which kills his dream. Then, I will be the last thing that bastard sees when the light goes dim in his eyes. I swear it. Now GO!

MANUEL FLORES

It may cost you your life.

EMILY WEST

I'm a nigger born outta punishment to my mammy... grown up to be a whore. What life?

MANUEL FLORES

Anything you want me to tell  
General Houston?

EMILY WEST

Santa Anna is pursuing him  
personally. It's an obsession...  
(hands him her SCARF)  
Give the General this...he'll know.  
Be vigilant. Be safe. Hurry!

Flores mounts up, rides off. Emily slips back in the shadows.

19 EXT. A ROCKY LEDGE - DAWN 19

Among the rocks, a DIAMONDBACK RATTLESNAKE coiled, HISSING-  
STRIKES OUT... the angry snake gets caught... REVEAL--

--LORCA capturing the squirming Rattler with a pronged stick,  
stuffs it into a gunny sack filled with other snakes.

20 EXT. TRAIL BACK FROM GOLIAD - DAWN 20

Houston and the Rangers are riding in the early morning...

A BARRAGE OF FLAMING ARROWS ZING OVER A RISE SMACKING TO THE  
GROUND IN front of them. The horses rear and jump.

FIFTY COMANCHES, LED BY BUFFALO HUMP, RACE OVER THE RISE  
encircling them, WHOOPING savagely, bows drawn--

The Rangers raise their guns, but Houston holds up his hand--

SAM HOUSTON

HOLD FIRE!

Surrounded, the Rangers keep their guns pointed, back their  
horses rump to rump to face the two rings of warriors riding  
around them - one circling clockwise, outer riders counter-  
clockwise. Half-Breed BARKS but off Karnes' "SHHH" shushes.

GATOR DAVIS

Lord Jesus, help us...

KIT ACKLIN

It's what I've know'd all along -  
I'm gonna get tortured n' massacred  
by Comanches.

EPHRAIM KNOWLES

(panicking)  
They's ridin' with Kiowa--

VERN ELWOOD

Told ya we shoulda cut out--

HENRY KARNES

Don't nobody throw a conniption.  
Keep your wits about ya...and your  
fingertips on them triggers.

Anderson scrutinizes the braves in the circling war party.

BILLY ANDERSON

The one in the middle... He's the  
War Chief... Buffalo Hump.

SAM HOUSTON

Keep your eyes on your sights!  
Fire only if we fall DEAD!

Houston makes a show of DROPPING HIS GUN on the ground.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

Anderson, throw down your rifle.

Anderson follows suit. Houston nudges his horse forward. The \*  
Rangers exchange confused looks. Deaf keeps his gun raised. \*

INTERCUT - THE COMANCHES

Slowly closing the circle, tightening on their prey. Human  
bones and scalps decorate their lances and shields.

BEANS WILKINS

What're they waitin' for?

Guns on the Indians, the Rangers share a hushed exchange:

HENRY KARNES

They like to watch the fear  
a'workin'.

VERN ELWOOD

I say we open up on 'em now!  
Survivors get to them rocks 'n  
stand 'em off!

HENRY KARNES

Follow orders, else YOU die first.

HOUSTON & ANDERSON - about fifty feet away when--

A COMANCHE BRAVE lets out a terrifying HOWL, throws his lance  
- It GRAZES Anderson's shoulder - Both he and Houston ignore  
the lance, keep riding. Knowles is shaking, terrified...

EPHRAIM KNOWLES

They's just gonna lance 'em both  
straight off.

HOUSTON & ANDERSON RIDE THROUGH the two circling rings of braves.  
Anderson holds up a hand in peace, *SPEAKS IN COMANCHE...* \*

BILLY ANDERSON

*We come unarmed to parlay.*

INTERCUT - THE RANGERS watch, keep their voices low...

EPHRAIM KNOWLES

Anderson talks Injun?

VERN ELWOOD

He's part savage his ownself.

GATOR DAVIS

Mostly savage, kidnapped by the  
Kiowa when he was 11 years old--

VERN ELWOOD

--They run stakes through his mama  
'n cut her guts open--

BEANS WILKINS

--Then built a fire inside her  
after the ants were done.

EPHRAIM KNOWLES

Shit. That settles it for me.  
They ain't takin' me alive.

Away from the others, Deaf holds a finger to his lips to  
indicate that they ought to stop moving their lips. \*

BACK TO HOUSTON, ANDERSON & THE COMANCHES

SAM HOUSTON

Tell him I am Chieftain...

BILLY ANDERSON

He's aware.

SAM HOUSTON

Good. Then tell him to KILL ME--if  
he wants war like the Comanche have  
never seen.

His loud defiance brings shocked reactions from the Rangers--

BILLY ANDERSON

What?

SAM HOUSTON

Do it, Anderson. Exactly what I said.

BILLY ANDERSON

Not sure that's such a good idea.  
...me standing beside you 'n all.

Buffalo Hump is bemused by Houston's bellicose demeanor.

SAM HOUSTON

I said, tell him to KILL ME!  
(eyeballs Buffalo Hump)  
Go ahead and light the FIRE that will scorch the Comanche from this earth! Or take his warriors and ride out in peace. Sam Houston grants him safe passage in OUR land.

Anderson *TRANSLATES IN COMANCHE* - Buffalo Hump listens, incredulous - *MUTTERS IN COMANCHE* to his warriors....and they all share in a BOISTEROUS LAUGH at the dead-serious Houston.

DEAF SMITH

Can't read his lips from here...

HENRY KARNES

You'd prefer not knowing. I know I would.

Buffalo Hump *ANSWERS IN COMANCHE*. Anderson translates...

BILLY ANDERSON

He says you ought lay off the fool's water when you enter the *Comancheria*.

Houston steps toward Buffalo Hump, TEARS OPEN HIS SHIRT, GRABS BUFFALO HUMP'S WAR LANCE, and presses the tip into the skin of his exposed chest deep enough to make it bleed.

SAM HOUSTON

My death brings Yankee soldiers like buffalo herds. Buffalo Hump's grave and ALL those of his people, will lie beside mine. "THE CROAKING RAVEN DOTH BELLOW FOR REVENGE!"

Houston glares at Buffalo Hump, who glares back. Anderson stops translating, a little stumped.

BILLY ANDERSON

Shakespeare don't go easy into Comanche.

Buffalo Humps *SPEAKS IN COMANCHE* as Anderson translates...

BILLY ANDERSON (CONT'D)

The winds say the Cherokee call you  
"The Raven," but Comanche call you  
"Wild Turkey" because you drape  
yourself in foolish colors, make  
silly sounds, and lose your head  
when the coyotes comes.

The warriors making GOBBLE SOUNDS, LAUGH at Houston. Buffalo Hump speaks, and again Anderson translates.

BILLY ANDERSON (CONT'D)

Buffalo Hump allows brown men to  
kill white men, and white men to  
kill brown men, because in the end,  
only the Comanche will be lord of  
this land, as has always been, and  
will forever be.

Buffalo Hump flicks his wrist, slicing the wound in Houston's chest in the shape of a crescent moon.

Houston stands fast, takes the pain, lets the blood trickle down his chest without breaking eye contact as Buffalo Hump *SPEAKS AGAIN IN COMANCHE...*

BILLY ANDERSON (CONT'D)

He says, IF the Mexicans don't kill  
you... he will.

Buffalo Hump withdraws his lance, bellows his WAR CRY and GALLOPS OFF - His war party falls in behind and races away.

THE RANGERS, too stressed to let out a cheer, allow themselves visible expressions of relief.

As the War party leaves, a handsome KIOWA BRAVE, YELLOW KNIFE (16) lingers a moment to wave his lance, making sure Anderson sees the THREE SCALPS dangling from it. Then, he rides away.

BILLY ANDERSON (CONT'D)

Barely sixteen years old and three  
scalps already.

SAM HOUSTON

Friend of yours?

The young brave rides off; Anderson's face glows with pride.

BILLY ANDERSON

His name is Yellow Knife. He's my  
son.



21 EXT. GALVESTON BAY - DAY

21

PANIC. President Burnet buzzes about his guards on the dock by a LARGE DORY. Trunks and cargo strewn.

OARSMEN CARRY THREE FRANTIC WOMEN IN BONNETS WITH PARASOLS to the boat, fighting the wind and choppy surf.

FLORES comes galloping up. Burnet sees A MEXICAN charging and becomes unhinged - Draws his pistol and takes aim--

PRESIDENT BURNET

My God...

(to his guards)

Prepare to defend yourselves!

MANUEL FLORES

DON'T SHOOT! I'M A TEXIAN.

President Burnett, DON'T SHOOT!

Burnet barks at his men to stand down. Catches the reins of Flores' mount, Burnet's eyes wild and anxious.

MANUEL FLORES (CONT'D)

Santanistas not far behind me, Sir.

PRESIDENT BURNET

How could they know where I'd be?

MANUEL FLORES

Your man, Francisco. He was a spy.

PRESIDENT BURNET

Was?

MANUEL FLORES

I attended to him. You gotta go NOW!

22 EXT. THE DUNES ABOVE THE DOCK - INTERCUT

22

ALMONTE arrives with his CAVALRY and ARTILLERY DETAIL - He yanks out his telescopic looking glass, looks to the dock...

ALMONTE'S TELESCOPIC POV - THE DOCK

President Burnet and his people scurry around in chaos, wade to the boat - WIND BLOWS OFF BURNET'S HAT - PAPERS and CLOTHES from a dropped trunk FLUTTER IN THE WIND--

BACK TO SCENE

CAVALRY OFFICER

Yankees always hide behind women.

ALMONTE  
 (to his Cavalry)  
 Ride right at them! Cut them off!  
 I want Burnet alive!  
 (to Artillery)  
 Position your cannon to fire on  
 that boat!

INTERCUT W/PRESIDENT BURNET

Burnet plows into the surf, dives into the boat. Guards launch him into the waves, then climb in the boat, nearly capsizing it in confusion. Oarsmen bury oars in the water and dig hard with frantic strokes. To his men on the dock:

PRESIDENT BURNET  
 Go on, make tracks! Do not stand  
 and fight! Long live Texas!

The remaining guards form a firing line and DISCHARGE A VOLLEY at Almonte's advancing cavalry.

Flores herds their horses to them, helps them mount up, and leads them through the dunes, away from the Mexican cavalry.

ON BURNET - At first relieved to escape the Mexican cavalry - Then, WITHERING, as ALMONTE'S CANNONEERS loaded, taking aim.

ON ALMONTE - His artillery officer makes final adjustments.

ARTILLERY OFFICER  
 I can drop this 8-pounder right in  
 President Burnet's lap, sir.

Almonte uses a TELESCOPIC GLASS to eye the dory.

TELESCOPIC POV - Sees Burnet, crimson from ranting... then PANS to the WOMEN in fine dresses weeping inconsolably.

ARTILLERY OFFICER (CONT'D)  
 Fire, sir?

Almonte collapses the telescope. Takes a deep breath.

ALMONTE  
 Under no circumstances are you to  
 fire on that boat. We are  
 soldiers...not murderers of  
 frightened women. He's leaving  
 Texas. That's good enough.

ON THE LANDING - ALMONTE'S DRAGOONS rifle through President Burnet's abandoned documents and debris - PAN TO THE SURF... a tattered TEXAS FLAG drifts in the foam.

23

EXT. VICTORIA - STREET - DAY

23

One of oldest towns in Texas...everyone is fleeing Santa Anna's army in what history calls the "Runaway Scrape."

CHAOS - Throngs of frantic people hustle through the streets, carrying cherished possessions. Shopkeepers nail board against their doors. Furniture, crates, buckets, clothes litter the streets. Dust, paper and trash blows in wind.

Men frantically hook teams to wagons and carts, anything that will roll. In the middle of the street stands strapping, thick-chested COLE HORNFISCHER (52), a frontier wagonmaster, who drags his heel in a line across the dirt street. \*

COLE HORNFISCHER

Listen up! First wagon sets this side of the line! Single file, all the way to the Nueces if that's what it takes. Men, see to your spokes! Grease them axles! Make sure them water barrels is full to the hilt. Pour oats to your teams and check them shoes. We pull out for the Sabine, and safety, in an hour. If you ain't ready, you're on your own.

A HORSE RIDER gallops through town...

HORSE RIDER

THE MEXICANS ARE COMING... GOLIAD'S  
FALLEN! SANTANISTAS ARE KILLING  
EVERYONE - FLEE FOR YOUR LIVES!

COLE HORNFISCHER

Make that a half-hour!

As every wagon in town falls in Hornfischer's train, facing EAST, a lone wagon enters town, headed WEST - THE WAGON, driven by JAMES WYKOFF (40s), his austere wife PAULINE (30s) beside him, children LUCAS (10), STEPHANIE (8), and gigantic slave NATE (20s) in back - pulls up. The family gawks at the mayhem surrounding them. Stephanie cradles a PUPPY in her lap. Pauline looks at her children, then locks her concerned eyes with her husband. Resolved but anticipating...

JAMES WYKOFF

Took everything we got to get this far. An' there ain't nuthin' for us back home. We're gonna bow our heads, stiffen our backs and make this work--no matter what.

24

INT. EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY'S LAND OFFICE - DAY

24

A DISTRESSED SETTLER stands before EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY (50s), an unshaven, bombastic slob who covers his sweaty body in a wool suit with a broad hat, holding court behind a BIG DESK.

DISTRESSED SETTLER

Please, give me back three cents per acre. That's less'n half what I give for it! Not counting my homestead I built...

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

I have no money to give back! It's done been sent to Vera Cruz... You bought that land, legal 'n proper! I ain't obliged to buy it back.

DISTRESSED SETTLER

Ain't no good to me if I'm buried under it.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

Fine. I got an extra wagon 'n a mule parked out back. I'll swap it. For your deed.

The Landowner hesitates only a second before he SLAPS down the official paper, signs it and stomps off. Buckley turns to CLARENCE (30s), one of THREE THUG-LIKE SLAVES near him.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY (CONT'D)

Give him the swayback and that pine wagon.

CLARENCE

Yessir, mass'a...

(tentative)

But, mass'a, the axle is cracked.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

Nigger, I give you an ORDER!

25

EXT. WAGON TRAIL - FROM HARRISBURG - DAY

25

The REFUGEES who Flores helped escape the burning town of Harrisburg have been captured by a MEXICAN PATROL.

The old, very young and infirm ride in the wagon, many more trudge alongside, their hands tied together - Among the prisoners, the wounded Lane Walters, recovered enough to limp in front - A Dragoon prods Lane with his lance to go faster.

PULL BACK TO A ROCKY LEDGE ABOVE THEM...

...where LORCA spies on the Mexican Patrol and their captives  
- Lorca's squirming BAG OF RATTLESNAKES beside him.

26 INT. EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY'S LAND OFFICE - DAY (CONTINUOUS) 26

Wykoff, Pauline, their kids enter, their slave Nate left in  
the wagon. Buckley, writing in his ledger, doesn't look up.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY  
There are no refunds.

JAMES WYKOFF  
I'm here trackin' Empresario  
Buckley.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY  
Then you're trackin' me. What can  
I do for you...  
(looks sternly)  
But no refunds. As I've stated...

JAMES WYKOFF  
Interested in a land grant.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY  
(eyeballs them)  
If'n ya don't mind me askin', with  
all the goin's on, why you here?  
You runnin' from the law?

JAMES WYKOFF  
No sir. We just come after good  
farmland. Make a fresh start. But  
now I hear that the Mexican army's  
drivin' all the Americans out--

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY  
Honest settlers have nothing to  
fear. President Santa Anna protects  
all legal land owners. It's the  
thievin' squatters and  
revolutionaries who get shot.  
Mostly. You swear allegiance to the  
Republic of Mexico?

JMES WYKOFF  
For six cents an acre I surely do.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY  
I can grant a hundred and seventy  
acres for farming...  
(MORE)

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY (CONT'D)

But no whiskey brewing-gun running-tobacco smugglin' or frontier riff-raffin'.

JAMES WYKOFF

No sir... I mean, yes sir.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

By law, improvements must be made timely. But you've been shot in the flanks with good luck... there's a property cleared with a sturdy cabin on it, ready to farm.

Buckley presents the same Deed executed earlier by the DISTRESSED SETTLER...

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY (CONT'D)

I can let you have it for seven and a half cents an acre. You can pay on time, cash or trade. 'Course I favor cash.

JAMES WYKOFF

Hoping to pay a percentage of my crop yield.

Buckley looks through THE WINDOW: Nate in the wagon.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

You got that blue-gum nigger yonder? Well damn, that sambo is half the down-payment right's here.

JAMES WYKOFF

(anxious, yet politic)

I need Nate to help plow the fields ...to make sure I can pays ya--

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

Awright, I'll settle for the pup... My little one's been naggin' for a doggie. It's worth two dollars down on this here Deed.

Young Stephanie comes unglued, tugs the puppy to her chest.

STEPHANIE

No, Daddy! Please, mister, not my Tilly.

JAMES WYKOFF

I'll pay 10% of my first year's yield. 20% a year afterwards.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

(false sincerity)

I'll make an exception...but don't  
tell nobody - Special circumstance,  
because I tend to favor family men -  
But at the very least I'll need ya  
to put the nigger up as collateral.

Wykoff reluctantly nods.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY (CONT'D)

I can also allocate another four  
hundred-forty acres for ranchin'--

JAMES WYKOFF

Ranchin'?

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

Comes from the Spainards. Cattle  
roam free, proliferate, then sold  
on the hoof. Mexicans been doin' it  
now for pert-near a hundred years.

JAMES WYKOFF

Farm land's all I'm after.

Buckley starts filling out papers, writes new names...

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

What religion are you?

JAMES WYKOFF

My wife's a Hardshell Baptist--

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

Mexico only recognizes those of  
Catholic faith.

(salesman smile)

Bein' Catholic's not all that bad.  
You ignore a priest instead of a  
preacher.

JAMES WYKOFF

We'll do right by ya, Mister.

Buckley signs the deed, puts his seal on it. He passes it to \*  
Wykoff for his signature. Buckley grins, offers a handshake.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY

Welcome to Mexico.

27 EXT. ROAD NEAR GOLIAD - JACK HAYS & BIG FOOT WALLACE - DAY 27

A LIGHT RAIN has begun to fall as Jack walks beside Big Foot on horseback. In the distance...the Goliad EXECUTION SITE.

MOSLEY BAKER (PRELAP)

Our families are alone on the roads  
facing the Mexican onslaught...  
Comanche... Kiowa... bandits -  
while we sit here doin' NOTHIN'!

28 EXT. TEXAN ARMY CAMP, SOUTHEAST TEXAS - DAY 28

It's RAINING here as well, as Baker & Martin speak to a LARGE GROUP OF DISGRUNTLED SOLDIERS, fervently rabble-rousing...

**SUPER: "April 18, 1836 - Texan Army Camp, Southeast Texas"**

WILEY MARTIN

I came to fight, not run!

Which draws a HUGE CHEER from the crowd.

MOSLEY BAKER

I came for blood.

JUAN SEGUIN

(yells over crowd)

Patriots, listen! We must stand by  
our General! Our duty is to--

The CROWD drown him out, CHANTING "Stand and fight! Stand and Fight!" drowning him out - THE CHANT echoes over... \*

29 EXT. ROAD NEAR GOLIAD - JACK & BIG FOOT - DAY (RESUME) 29

Seeing the STREWN BODIES of the Goliad defenders in the mid-distance, Big Foot's brow creases with concern, and he SPURS HIS HORSE toward the Execution site. Jack follows on foot.

INTERCUT - BACK TO TEXAN ARMY CAMP

Where Seguin, Hockley, and Burleson futilely try to establish order, drowned out by the disgruntled SOLDIERS' CHANT...

ED BURLESON

You men are ordered to disperse!

MOSELY BAKER

Next time Houston orders graves  
dug... It will be HIS!



OFF THE ARRIVAL OF HORSEMEN, the men turn, react, their angry CHANTING DYING OUT, replaced by a tense volatile MURMUR as--

GENERAL SAM HOUSTON AND THE RANGERS (Deaf, Karnes, Anderson, Kit, Gator, Beans, Vern, and Knowles) just returned from the horrors of Goliad and Lorca's massacre, ride into the crowd.

Houston, dismounts, strides to Baker without a word - PUNCHES him square in the jaw, picks him up...PUNCHES him again--

He then grabs Baker by the jacket, drags him to the creek--

SAM HOUSTON

Cold water'll cool that hot head.

With a ROUNDHOUSE PUNCH, Houston knocks Baker into the creek. Blustery, aristocratic COLONEL SHERMAN (40s) charges forward.

COLONEL SHERMAN

You can beat us... but you can't  
silence us.

The DISGRUNTLED SOLDIERS grumble, begin to push one another, mutiny imminent. A SHOT FIRES into the air... Deaf holds his rifle - The Rangers draw their weapons, stand at the ready.

DEAF SMITH

Y'all cool down, cuz we's all  
that's left! Colonel Fannin and  
all his men are gone - Goddamnit to  
hell... Goliad is no more.

Stunned silence. Juan Seguin steps in to broker a truce.

JUAN SEGUIN

Today is a sad day... Our brothers  
gave their lives for our cause.  
Let us not mourn... but celebrate  
them and thank God they lived.

INTERCUT - GOLIAD - JACK HAYS & BIG FOOT WALLACE

Big Foot arrives at the EXECUTION SITE, shocked by what he sees. He dismounts, anxiously scans the blood-drenched rows of DEAD TEXAS SOLDIERS as we hear Juan Seguin continue...

JUAN SEGUIN (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Fannin disobeyed orders - His army  
did not survive because of it.

As the stunned Big Foot walks around, PAN TO COLONEL FANNIN'S DEAD BODY... face blown off... dumped here with his men.

JUAN SEGUIN (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
 Should we do the same? Fight each  
 other? DISOBEY OUR GENERAL?

BACK TO TEXAN ARMY CAMP --

JUAN SEGUIN (CONT'D)  
 And you, General - Will YOU lead  
 your men?

Houston, emotional and raw, composes himself, walks back.

SAM HOUSTON  
 I know what you think of me. I  
 hear your judgment. Feel your  
 scorn. And it makes me burn with  
 rage to the point of hatred...  
 because I know I'm the cause of  
 your dissent- when our cause can  
 least afford it.

The SOLDIERS' FACES reflect shock and uncertainty at their  
 General's soul-baring confession. But Houston isn't  
 contrite, he speaks frankly, defiant and electrifying...

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)  
 Much of what is said about me is  
 true - I was broken when I came to  
 Texas. I failed at my marriage. I  
 turned my back on the people of  
 Tennessee I had sworn to serve. I  
 took refuge among the Cherokee, who  
 had loved me as their own child...  
 and I, in turn, failed them, too.

As Houston continues, his words underscore what we see at...

INTERCUT - GOLIAD

Overwhelmed, Big Foot surveys the mass slaughter as Jack  
 catches up, stunned by the sight of the sea of dead bodies.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)  
 I have disappointed my family,  
 dishonored my mother, tarnished my  
 name...shamed myself - I'll answer  
 for all that when my time comes.  
 (passionately)  
 But I am not what I once was. And  
 the reason is TEXAS. I was given a  
 new life. My heart beat strong  
 again. My head cleared. I saw a  
 FUTURE, beckoning us.

INTERCUT - GOLIAD

Big Foot rushes among the corpses, desperately searching for his brother - FLASHES OF DEAD FACES, BULLET-RIDDLED BODIES--

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

If we have heart enough to rise  
TOGETHER from the ashes of the  
Alamo and Goliad, we owe it to the  
dead who fought beside us. I did  
not ask to be your general. Our  
government asked me to lead you. I  
now ask you to follow me East -  
where I know victory awaits us, in  
our own home country, where God  
Himself has willed that no tyrant  
will ever rule.

INTERCUT - TEXAS ARMY CAMP W/GOLIAD

Big Foot sees in the mass of bodies...HIS BROTHER SAMUEL'S  
ARM, wearing the SILVER BRACELET that matches his own.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

I swear by my Maker, I am prepared  
to die for Texas and YOU. Find it  
in your hearts to follow me a  
little longer down this twisted,  
bloody road, I'll prove it to you.

On Houston's emotional last words, we see...

AT GOLIAD...

JACK reacts to BIG FOOT - His devastated friend holds onto  
his dead brother Samuel - Jack kneels beside him to gently  
remove the Wallace family wrist cuff...hands it to Big Foot.

30

EXT. WYKOFF HOMESTEAD - DAY (SUNSET)

30

A BARE, DOG-RUN CABIN - Raw cedar posts form a corral for  
livestock. Crop fields stand in weeds, surrounded by an  
impenetrable OAK THICKET. Wykoff climbs off their wagon.

The kids, Lucas and Stephanie, jump off to rummage around the  
grounds, laughing. Nate unloads trunks, sacks, barrels.

PAULINE WYKOFF

It's really ours?

James Wykoff proudly nods, taking stock of their new home and  
holdings, standing tall.

Pauline throws her arms around her husband's neck and kisses him. Stephanie screams in joy. Runs back to her mother carrying a soiled doll.

STEPHANIE

Look what I found, Mommy!

PAULINE WYKOFF

Why, she's gorgeous. Just like you, my two baby dolls...

LUCAS (O.S.)

(from inside the house)

Come look in here... Hurry up!

31 INT. WYKOFF CABIN - DAY (SUNSET) (CONTINUOUS) 31

Pauline and Wykoff walk in. The kids jump on a feather bed.

PAULINE WYKOFF

Lord, God. There are feather beds.

Pauline notices clothes and dishes left in place.

PAULINE WYKOFF (CONT'D)

James...isn't it strange that someone would leave all this?

He leans against the open door, his attention lasers on:

A BROKEN SHAFT/ARROWHEAD imbedded in the wooden door facing.

JAMES WYKOFF

Don't be jinxin' us, woman. It's bad luck to question good fortune.

Careful that no one else sees, he snatches the arrowhead and tosses it in the weeds. Concerned, he scans the dark woods.

32 EXT. TREE GROVE - DAY (SUNSET) 32

MOUNTED MEXICAN SOLDIERS drive their PRISONERS, now including the COLE HORNFISHER WAGON TRAIN SURVIVORS, along with Lane Walters & the Harrisburg Refugees, all tied together, limping along, some wounded with women & children in wobbly wagons.

An EXHAUSTED TEXAS PRISONER meanders off the road - A MEXICAN SOLDIER, for fun, LANCES him in the buttocks - Laughs.

ANOTHER SOLDIER hands Cole Hornfischer a canteen...empty. Cole hands it back to the amused soldier - straggles on.

A tattered TWELVE YEAR OLD GIRL faints from exhaustion. An ANGRY MEXICAN SOLDIER bears down on her - Lane trots over, scoops her up in his arms to carry her on down the road.

Ahead, a majestic OAK TREE, its leafy canopy shading the road - Outer limbs hanging low - A FAINT, BRIEF O.S. RATTLE that could be CICADAS as the prisoners walk under the massive oak--

--as the soldiers on horseback behind them duck their heads to clear the branches, when...a BRANCH comes ALIVE, SNAPS--

--BITING the first soldier - It's a RATTLESNAKE tethered to the branch STRIKING, BURYING ITS FANGS in the soldier's NECK!

The other soldiers react...too late--

MORE HISSING, ANGRY, RATTLING DIAMONDBACKS STRIKE the faces and bodies of the soldiers on horseback!

HORSES BUCK & JERK AROUND as panicked Mexican soldiers fend off the snakes, while other soldiers SHOOT at the serpents or SWING THEIR SWORDS WILDLY to fend them off...accidentally SLICING INTO HORSES and OTHER SCREAMING DYING MEN!

THE TEXAS PRISONERS gape in terror as--

LORCA LEAPS DOWN from the branches of his rattlesnake-booby-trapped tree - SCREAMING, he SHOOTs, HACKS, STABS the few Soldiers not already dying of snake bite in the horrible din.

LORCA turns to the stunned prisoners, that crazed look in his eyes. Lane pulls his shoulders back, defiant--but helpless.

LANE WALTERS

You gonna kill us too?

Lorca's SWINGS HIS SWORD... CUTTING Lane's binds free.

33

EXT. WYKOFF HOMESTEAD - CABIN PORCH - NIGHT

33

Wykoff sits on the front porch whittling, eyes ever alert. Through the open doorway, Pauline can be seen fussing over pots in the fireplace. Stephanie plays with her found-doll. Lucas plays with wooden toys. Nate brings in firewood.

JAMES WYKOFF

Nate, first thing we need is a root cellar. 30 paces north of the house, under that scrub oak, in the brush, hidden so the coons and coyotes can't find it.

Overhearing them, Pauline walks out on the porch...

PAULINE WYKOFF

What? With all we've got to do?

JAMES WYKOFF

My woman wants her jams and jars  
fresh and cool in the summer.

He slaps her ass, growls like a bear, buries his beard  
against her neck. Pauline blushes, loving his affection.

PAULINE WYKOFF

Not in front of the children.

Wykoff laughs...looks out at the horizon, ever vigilant.

34

INT. MEDICAL TENT, TEXAN ARMY CAMP - DAY (MORNING)

34

Doc's daughter Sarah sews up a BLOODY GASH on a man's arm as  
the Doc wraps the ankle of the pretty, 19 year old Rebecca  
Pit, who Kit helped across the river in the Runaway Scrape--

DOC EWING

It's just a sprain, not broke.

Kit stands next to Rebecca, having brought her here.

KIT ACKLIN

Told ya Doc would fix ya up.

DOC EWING

Yep, a few days, you'll be able to  
run away from this guy.

Rebecca smiles, twinkly eyes on the smitten Kit.

DOC EWING (CONT'D)

He was very gallant, tryin' to  
relieve me of my embarrassment.

KIT ACKLIN

T'weren't nothin'.

VERN saunters over to flirt with Sarah, whispering...

VERN ELWOOD

I got a ache I'd like ya to look at  
- But it'd hafta to be in private.

The young girl blushes, stays focused on her stitching. Not  
hearing Vern's hushed flirtation, the Doc nonetheless reacts  
to the lecherous Ranger lurking around his daughter.

DOC EWING

Boy, your rudeness appalls me.  
Under no circumstances are you to  
talk to my daughter. Now CLEAR OUT!

VERN ELWOOD

(glares, then, exiting)  
Thought this was a free country!  
'Least that's what we fightin' for.

35

EXT. TEXAN ARMY CAMP, SOUTHEAST TEXAS - DAY (MORNING)

35

Rebecca's 17 year old brother Colby carries a PISTOL, keeps  
CLICKING the trigger mechanism as Vern exits Medical Tent.

COLBY PIT

You's a Ranger, so I reckon you  
must know all about guns.

VERN ELWOOD

I know about a lotta things. Who  
the hell are you?

COLBY PIT

You don't remember? Name's Colby  
Pit - You 'n the Rangers swummed me  
'n my sister across't the Brazos.

VERN ELWOOD

Swum half 'a Texas cross that river  
(off Colby CLICKING)  
You tryin' to break that pistol?

COLBY PIT

No sir, was my Daddy's. Reverend's  
been keepin' care of it - So now,  
me bein' of age 'n my Daddy bein'  
dead, he give it to me to keep.  
(clicks hammer again)  
Only it don't seem to ratchet quite  
right. Lock won't stand cocked.

Crossing back to the other Rangers, Karnes, Gator and Knowles \*  
drink coffee - Deaf and Anderson clean weapons. Beans cooks. \*

BILLY ANDERSON

Get the blacksmith to fix it.

COLBY PIT

Y'know where I can find him?

Gator winks at Anderson, points to Sam Houston's tent.

GATOR DAVIS  
 Snortin' in his tent like a Peach  
 Orchard Boar.

COLBY PIT  
 What do I tell him?

BEANS WILKINS  
 Fix my damn gun, ya lazy sumbitch!

BILLY ANDERSON  
 Tell him you ride with the Rangers.  
 He hears that he'll fix your pistol  
 straightaway--

KNOWLES  
 --or know he can count on a good  
 ass-whoopin'!

\*  
 \*  
 \*

Not keeping up with the conversation, Deaf looks to Karnes who  
 quietly tells him. As the others cover their low chuckling,  
 Deaf lets loose with his high-pitched CACKLE, watching Colby...\*

36 INT. HOUSTON'S TENT - DAY (MORNING)

36

Houston lies on his cot SNORING. Colby enters, stands by the  
 cot a moment, then gives Houston a SHOVE.

SAM HOUSTON  
 What...what is it?

COLBY PIT  
 I need you to fix this here weapon.  
 Somethin's awry with the mechanism.

He sits up, sleepily focuses, narrows his eyes at Colby.

COLBY PIT (CONT'D)  
 Without delay. I'm a Ranger 'n  
 might be called upon to use it for  
 the common defense at any moment.

SAM HOUSTON  
 (sticks out hand for gun)  
 Give it here.

37 EXT. HOUSTON'S TENT - DAY (MORNING) (CONTINUOUS)

37

Exiting the tent, Colby runs into Hockley on his way in.

GEORGE HOCKLEY  
 The General awake?



COLBY PIT  
 (stops, blanching)  
 General...? General Houston?

GEORGE HOCKLEY  
 Only General we got here.

Mortified, Colby doesn't know which way to turn, looks over to see the RANGERS HOOTING & CRACKING UP! Rushes back in--

38 INT. HOUSTON'S TENT - DAY (MORNING) (CONTINUOUS) 38

Houston's studying Colby's gun, a panicked Colby darts in, followed by an amused Hockley - Tripping over himself...

COLBY PIT  
 General Houston, I... I... I had no idea... I thought... I mean... I am bust-out sorry 'n shamefaced for disturbin' your sleep like a dumb stupid idjit 'n I am prepared to take the whuppin' I deserve, only--

Red-faced, he pauses. Houston tests the pistol's mechanism.

SAM HOUSTON  
 Only what?

COLBY PIT  
 Only I'd like my Daddy's gun back as he was shot down by outlaws 'n it's the only thing he left me.

SAM HOUSTON  
 The pawl needs adjusting. Come back later, you'll find it serviceable.

He hears the laughing Rangers through his open tent flap. Houston stands, calls out to them.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)  
 Since you fun gentlemen seem to have extra time on your hands, I have an assignment for you.

39 EXT. WYKOFF HOMESTEAD - DAY 39

James Wykoff's and Nate's heads above the ground, shirtless, sweating, and filthy, digging the "root cellar." Stephanie and little Lucas haul the dirt with buckets into the woods.

JAMES WYKOFF

Gotta go deeper, Nate. Then hide  
it like it ain't even here.

Pauline delivers a gourd of water. Wykoff throws it back,  
passes it to Nate, who hesitates to share the gourd. Wykoff  
nods, so Nate drinks, too. Wykoff studies the timber line  
intently, always watching.

40

EXT. WOODS - MEXICAN ARMY CAMP - DAY

40

Near the main camp, Santa Anna and Emily enjoy a picnic at a  
lavish table under a tree, served by Romolo... MUSICIANS PLAY  
a beautiful SPANISH MELODY. Santa Anna smokes an opium pipe.

SANTA ANNA

To this day it surprises me I've  
become a General, let alone the  
President of Mexico.

EMILY WEST

Why is that, Antonio?

SANTA ANNA

There are so many other things I'm  
better suited for. I might have  
become an accomplished musician.

EMILY WEST

What instrument do you play?

SANTA ANNA

I never had time to learn one.  
(takes hit from the pipe)  
But I'm very sensitive to all types  
of music. It moves me profoundly.  
I might as well have been a  
painter, a sculptor, or a poet, or  
a trainer of champion gamefowl--  
(another hit off pipe)  
--but God in his wisdom decreed I  
should serve my country instead.

He offers the pipe to Emily. She deflects by picking up a  
newspaper, admiringly flashes him the headline...

EMILY WEST

The Texas Telegraph calls you  
"The Napoleon Of The West?"

SANTA ANNA

After I defeated the Spanish at Vera Cruz, the newspapers started calling me that. I have now fought and won more battles than Bonaparte. Like him, I am building an empire.

EMILY WEST

Mexico's war for independence... Was that much different than what the Texians are doing?

SANTA ANNA

(irritated, snapping)  
Of course! The Anglos are the invaders. I fight for the liberty of my people!

ALMONTE

(hurrying to them)  
Your Excellency! You are needed!

Men and camp followers turn to watch an ODD-LOOKING MOUNTED PATROL trot across the field toward them... It's the Mexican Soldados who were ambushed with Lorca's rattlesnakes.

Frightened WHISPERS among troops & observers: "Demon!" "Ghost killer!" "El DIABLO NEGRO!" But most whisper, "LORCA..."

High on the opium, Santa Anna gapes in horror--

SANTA ANNA'S DISTORTED POV - THE DEAD MEN RIDING IN, propped up by their own lances which impale them to their saddles -- Their horribly SWOLLEN, DISFIGURED, SNAKE-BITTEN FACES and loose-limbed bodies bounce eerily toward them.

SANTA ANNA

(stifling his fear)  
Get those men down from there!

TERROR sweeps through the crowd...a SOLDIER leans in to look--

A RATTLESNAKE SNAPS OUT from inside the jacket of one of the Dead Soldados to BITE DOWN ONTO THE CURIOUS SOLDIER'S FACE!

SCREAMING, the Soldier wildly flails, but the snake stays attached! PORTILLO RIDES IN TO SWING HIS SWORD, WHACKS the snake in two...but the snake's head stays clamped on, fangs sunk into the man's face. ONLOOKERS SHRIEK, ERUPT IN CHAOS--

Stoned, freaked-out, Santa Anna staggers back, LOSING HIS AUTHORITATIVE COMPOSURE - HIS PEOPLE YIELD GROUND TO HIM as if he's a leper. Portillo dismounts to help, Emily lends no comfort. Santa Anna looks to his officers to restore order.

ALMONTE

They're frightened, Excellency.  
LORCA, they say, has risen from the  
dead of the Alamo and Goliad. They  
say his spirit comes for you and  
brings death to everyone around you.

PORTILLO

It's a stupid Indian legend!

Santa Anna can't break his stare on the dying man with the  
snake head stuck to his neck. He hears "LORCA...LORCA"...

PORTILLO (CONT'D)

I know it's a peasant superstition,  
but it's taken hold--

It's taken hold on Santa Anna, too, struggling for control--

SANTA ANNA

There is NO GHOST! No DEMONS!

Portillo helps Almonte hustle Santa Anna clear of the  
despairing crowd. Santa Anna leans in close to Almonte's  
ear, his childlike expression begging for reassurance.

SANTA ANNA (CONT'D)

It's...it's just a man...

Emily watches, her expression shows not a drop of pity.

41

EXT. THE TRAIL FROM GOLIAD - DAY

41

START BY INTERCUTTING CLOSE-UPS of Jack and Big Foot somberly  
riding - Reflecting on the loss of Big Foot's brother and all  
the death at Goliad. After a long moment...

BIG FOOT WALLACE

Where you plan on headin' now?

JACK HAYS

With you, I reckon - Join up with  
the Texian Army. Figure it's what  
your brother Samuel would do.

The sentiment brightens Big Foot's mood, makes him smile.

WIDER ANGLE - STARTING ON BIG FOOT WALLACE

Riding his sleek, commanding horse, Big Foot looks back...

SWING TO JACK - REVEAL him riding a knock-kneed BURRO, boots almost dragging the ground. Rather than being sentimental, Big Foot shakes off his sadness to break his friend's balls:

BIG FOOT WALLACE  
Must say, you're lookin' mighty  
dignified.

Jack passes him without a glance. Sits on the burro upright and proud, like he's riding a fine Tennessee thoroughbred.

JACK HAYS  
I'd sooner ride on a burro than  
with an ASS. He smells a whole lot  
better, too.

Big Foot flicks his reins, and together they ride on.

BIG FOOT WALLACE  
I will rectify the stink upon  
arrival at Buckley's Way Station.

JACK HAYS  
I can only hope. But I fear the  
ASS will linger.

42 EXT. BUCKLEY WAY STATION & CANTINA - DAY 42

A way station for travelers in the middle of nowhere on the road to Victoria. O.S. DISCORDANT MUSIC PLAYS.

Approaching the rough-board building, Jack and Big Foot take note of a SIGN POSTED OUTSIDE: "NO SHOOTIN', NO CUSSIN', NO FIGHTIN' AND ABSOLUTELY NO SPITTING ON THE GODDAMN FLOOR!"

The painted notice signed by: "EMPRESARIO HAYDEN R. BUCKLEY, PROPRIETER, SURVEYOR, BOOKKEEPER, FARRIER, BARKEEPER, AND MAGISTRATE--ONLY LAW WEST OF VICTORIA EXCEPT GOD." In smaller print: "CAN SERVE AS PRIEST IN A PINCH"

43 INT. BUCKLEY WAY STATION & CANTINA - DAY (CONTINUOUS) 43

CLOSE UP--ON PEDRO, Deaf & Guadalupe's adopted child - The toddler's curious eyes watch through cracks in a board. GUADALUPE, holding onto him as they hide, peeks out as well.

THEIR POV: The teenage outlaws who robbed Jack & Big Foot - FUZZ, ROY, AND CURLS sit at a card table. TWO BODIES lie sprawled on the floor in pools of blood. Sitting on the bar, two MUSICIANS nervously play guitar and fiddle. Against the wall are THREE more terrified, bound and gagged HOSTAGES (TWO MEN and a WOMAN), travelers waylaid by the young outlaws.

AT THE CARD TABLE sits another hostage, a gagged, wide-eyed, trembling OLDER MAN (60s), bound to a chair, his arm out, palm face down on the table, fingers spread.

44 EXT. BUCKLEY WAY STATION & CANTINA - DAY (CONTINUOUS) 44

As they arrive, Jack reacts to the HORSES among those tied up at the hitch. One of them is HIS! O.S. A MAN SCREAMS.

Jack signals to Big Foot to hold...swings his leg over the burro, SLAPS its ass...it just stands there, looking at him.

From his stolen horse, Jack retrieves his knife, pistols from saddlebag, rifle from scabbard, shares weapons with Big Foot.

INTERCUT JACK & BIG FOOT with...

INSIDE - Little Pedro shifts his position. Guadalupe puts a hand to his lips to be quiet. He wraps his arms around her.

IN THE MAIN ROOM - FUZZ pulls his BOWIE KNIFE, runs his finger along its edge. Takes a big swig of a half-empty Tequila bottle - SMASHES it along with several others that lie in shards against the foot of the bar.

ROY shoves out a stack of crumpled bills, his wager. CURLS counts from her wad to match it, crosses to the woman hostage - YANKS a gold locket from her neck, tosses it in the pile.

FUZZ

Pot right?

(off Roy's & Curls' nods)

Mighty fine.

FUZZ grips his knife over the hostage's hand, sets his elbow on the table...STABS THE POINT between the fingers, IN RAPID SUCCESSION. Roy concentrates. CURLS squeals in delight.

FUZZ misses and STABS the knife through the bone of the man's finger, pinning it against the table - He SCREAMS in agony...

CURLS

(to Roy)

You lose! I win!

ROY

(to Fuzz)

Goddammit! You're too damn nervous for this game.

Roy pulls out his pistol - BLAM! Blows the hostage away. The Musicians STOP PLAYING - Off Roy's look, START UP AGAIN.

IN STORAGE ROOM - Shuddering, Pedro pees his pants, darkening from URINE. Guadalupe comforts her sniffing toddler as...

THE MAIN ROOM - BANG! BIG FOOT bursts the back door open - Roy flies at him with his knife, Big Foot CLUBS him with his rifle butt, down he goes. Big Foot points at Curls' wrist.

BIG FOOT WALLACE

Fetch me MY wrist cuff, bitch.

\*

FUZZ & CURLS SHOOT at Big Foot who FIRES BACK as JACK BURSTS THROUGH through the front door, FIRING at Fuzz, who scrambles like a bobcat and CRASHES through the window. Pistols in each hand, CURLS FIRES one gun at Big Foot, the OTHER at Jack - Both men dive for cover as she scrambles out the door.

Caught in the crossfire, the TWO MUSICIANS catch bullets, WOUNDED, as Jack springs up to pursue the outlaws, SLIPS in blood, GOES SPRAWLING - Right behind him, Big Foot STUMBLES, falls over Jack as they HEAR O.S. HORSES GALLOPING AWAY.

BIG FOOT WALLACE (CONT'D)

Well, goddamn. We may have gone about this the wrong way.

He rushes out after the fugitives - Jack stays behind to cut the hostages loose - One falls to his knees, hugs Hays' legs.

JACK HAYS

No need for that...

Guadalupe carries Pedro, coming out from the storeroom.

GUADALUPE SMITH

*Gracias, gracias...the saints sent you to answer our prayers -*

With Jack's help, she begins to nurse the injured victims.

45

EXT. BUCKLEY WAY STATION & CANTINA - TWILIGHT

45

The FREED HOSTAGES toss a rope over a limb. Big Foot drags Roy, the punk killer/thief that Big Foot knocked out, kicking, neck veins pulsing, BAWLING like a baby, as Jack exits the way station and reacts to the hanging preparation.

JACK HAYS

What, in God's name, is your intention?

Big Foot cinches the noose tight, Roy's face turning blue.

BIG FOOT WALLACE

I'd think it obvious, 'n pretty  
sure God ain't got nuthin' to do  
with this snotnose son of Satan.

Big Foot nods to the men - ROY GETS HOISTED UP - Blood and  
slobber drain out of his mouth as he twitches and kicks.

Jack pulls his knife, SLICES through the rope. Roy crashes  
to the ground, crying. Big Foot flares.

BIG FOOT WALLACE (CONT'D)

This is rough country, Hardcase.  
Ain't but one cure in Texas for  
cutthroat killin' 'n thievin'. I  
got plenty of rope--

Big Foot grabs his coil of rope to string Roy up again. Jack  
spins him around - SHOVES HIM HARD in the chest.

JACK HAYS

There's lynching and there's the  
LAW - This is the province of the  
civil authorities!

\*  
\*

Big Foot stares, nonplused by Jack's righteous commitment.

BIG FOOT WALLACE

Aw, hell, Jack, they're gonna  
hang his ass anyway!

JACK HAYS

Maybe so, but we're delivering him  
to the magistrate in Victoria.  
(glare turns lethal)  
Otherwise, you'll find me most  
unaccommodating.

Big Foot shrugs, takes out his frustration on Roy, KICKS HIM.

BIG FOOT WALLACE

You'll GET what ya GAVE, ya  
sonofabitch! Just a matter of when.

46

EXT. WYKOFF HOMESTEAD - DAY

46

James Wykoff and Nate cover the roof of the cellar. Re-plant  
brush, toss rocks and dead limbs to conceal the fresh earth.  
Pauline crosses from the cabin to greet Wykoff with coffee.  
He lifts her off her feet, twirls her around. Kids giggle.

JAMES WYKOFF

Let's plant us some corn.



PAULINE

--N' peas 'n taters.

LUCAS

Squash. Cucumbers.

STEPHANIE

Tomaters. Butter beans.

JAMES WYKOFF

Whatever you want.

(as kids jump for joy)

Nate, go see Empresario Buckley.  
Fetch seeds and supplies. Tell him  
to put it on account. Best hurry,  
it'll be dark 'fore you get back.  
We start plantin' come morning.

47

EXT. BUCKLEY WAY STATION & CANTINA - DAY

47

The THREE MURDERED HOSTAGES lie in a row on the porch. The other travelers ride away as Guadalupe arranges the wounded musicians into the wagon bed, adjusts blankets for comfort.

GUADALUPE SMITH

We was heading to my cousin's in  
Nacogdoches, until we got waylaid--  
They took everything me and my  
husband saved our whole lives for.

BIG FOOT WALLACE

Don't lose hope, ma'am. They stole  
what was ours too, 'n we ain't  
stoppin' til we get it all back.

Jack delivers corked gourds of fresh water for the trip.

JACK HAYS

We'll be along come morning.  
(re: COVERED BODIES)  
We owe these folks a Christian  
burial. Inform Empresario Buckley  
we're bringing in a prisoner.

BIG FOOT WALLACE

Sure you don't wanna wait 'n come  
with us? Roads are dangerous,  
swarmin' with Mexican troops.

GUADALUPE SMITH

These people need doctoring bad.

JACK HAYS

You're a brave woman.

GUADALUPE SMITH

You remind me so much of my  
husband, a good and decent man.

(an endearing look)

Deaf Smith. He rides with the  
ranging companies. When you find  
Houston, you'll find him.

BIG FOOT WALLACE

Yes'm, we'll look for him.

GUADALUPE SMITH

Tell him that Pedro and I are safe  
in Victoria. And please, tell him  
to drink his cough elixir.

JACK HAYS

I'll make a point of it, ma'am.

GUADALUPE SMITH

Bless your hearts.

She makes the sign of the cross for them, crosses herself,  
flicks the reins - The wagon lurches forward. Pedro waves.

48

EXT. RIVER CROSSING, SOUTH TEXAS - DAY

48

RANGERS Deaf, Karnes, Gator, Vern, Knowles, Beans and  
Anderson ride along the river toward a LOADING DOCK.

\*

EPHRAIM KNOWLES

You're tellin' me we're here to  
escort twin sisters?

VERN ELWOOD

Finally! A task to enjoy. How old?

DEAF SMITH

Brand shiny new.

\*

\*

VERN ELWOOD

Young, huh? I like 'em young.

GATOR DAVIS

Vern, ya like anything s'long as  
she's breathin'.

BEANS WILKINS

They the daughters of some big  
Texas politician or somethin'?

They arrive at a horse-drawn, CANVAS-COVERED WAGON where  
tough, bearded BEN McCULLOCH (20s) waits on the dock.

HENRY KARNES

You'll see. Boys, y'all know Ben McCulloch.

\*  
\*

EPHRAIM KNOWLES

Where are they?

BEN MCCULLOCH

Who?

VERN ELWOOD

The girls!

Ben, Anderson, Karnes, Gator laugh as Ben throws back the canvas to reveal TWO SHINY CANNONS. Deaf gets the joke a beat later. \*

BEN MCCULLOCH

Boys, meet "The Twin Sisters" - all the way from Cincinnati, Ohio. A doctor donated to the cause... has twin daughters they's named after.

YELLING from O.S. KIT ACKLIN rides in from a scout, hot...

KIT ACKLIN

Mexican Supply Convoy headin' this way! Right behind me!

HENRY KARNES

We best get a move-on...

\*  
\*

GATOR DAVIS

Hold on. What're they packin'?

\*

KIT ACKLIN

Couldn't hardly tell. Vittles? Gun powder, medicine--

GATOR DAVIS

--Whiskey maybe?

The Rangers exchange looks. Karnes mouths Gator's idea to Deaf, who shrugs maybe, looks to Anderson, who turns to Ben.

\*  
\*

BILLY ANDERSON

How fast d'you think we can get one 'a these "sisters" ready?

Ben grins as the Rangers jump in to assemble the cannon as--

\*

OVER A RISE - THE MEXICAN CONVOY appears above them.

EPHRAIM KNOWLES

Oh, shit-me-a-new-asshole, HURRY!

The MEXICAN CAPTAIN spots the Rangers below, signals his MOUNTED DRAGOONS to charge!

\*

DEAF AND KARNES raise their weapons, anxiously as the OTHER RANGERS scramble to finish loading and LIGHT THE FUSE!

\*

\*

GATOR DAVIS

Don't hit the wagon.

\*

Ben makes an adjustment... BOOM!

49

EXT. OUTSIDE BUCKLEY'S WAY STATION - DAY

49

One grave finished, Big Foot and prisoner Roy dig two more.

BIG FOOT WALLACE

I'm a Christian n' all, but who's gonna know if we stuff two bodies in one grave? This ground's goddamn hard.

Jack drags a body over, wrapped in a sheet for burial.

JACK HAYS

God will know - We'll know. Only one more and we're done.

Roy pauses a moment, leaning on his shovel...

BIG FOOT WALLACE

God don't give a shit - He left Texas a long time ago...

(to Roy)

Back to work, boy! Or I'll plant you in one of these.

Big Foot turns back to dig as Jack goes to get the last body -

THUMP! Roy CLOBBERS Big Foot in the back of the head with his shovel, RUNS FOR IT -

ON ROAD BEHIND THEM - EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY & THUG/SLAVES ride in on a wagon, stunned at seeing the graves and bodies - Off Buckley's look, Clarence jumps off to circle around...

Buckley reacts as Jack drops the corpse, SHOOTS Roy in the back.

ROY

HELP! They's... killin' me...

He drops dead. Jack sees Buckley, but before Jack can speak, Clarence blindsides him... KNOCKING Jack unconscious.

50 EXT. TEXAN ARMY CAMP - DAY

50

Rusk and the duplicitous Lamar ride in tandem. As they pass the sentries at the fringe of Houston's camp, Lamar leans over for one last private parlay.

MIRABEAU LAMAR

You realize, sir, as Secretary of War, you are empowered to assume command yourself.

THOMAS RUSK

You've certainly made me aware of that, Private Lamar.

Upon seeing Rusk, the Texas government's emissary, ALL ACTIVITY STOPS - Soldiers rise to their feet. A MURMUR begins with those closest to Rusk and sweeps through ranks. Rusk greets the men, rides through them, his expression grave.

PAN ACROSS the men's expressions - Depending on their allegiance to Houston, concern...or utter contempt--

BAKER and MARTIN exchange a malignant smile...

WILEY MARTIN

Rusk gonna dig Houston's grave now.

MOSELY BAKER

I wanna see that blowhard's face for myself when Rusk strips them patches off his shirt.

51 INT. HOUSTON'S TENT - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

51

Houston tinkers with COLBY's pistol, almost has it fully re-assembled... looks up when RUSK appears at his entrance.

SAM HOUSTON

Well, I figured if it wasn't Santa Anna causing all that racket it had to be you.

They shake hands...too formally for such good friends.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

Come to relieve me, Tom?

THOMAS RUSK

It has been suggested.

SAM HOUSTON

There's a surprise. By Burnet?

THOMAS RUSK  
By just about everybody, Sam.

Rusk unfurls the PETITION - Houston slaps it away.

SAM HOUSTON  
Do it then, you son of a bitch,  
and let's be done with it.

THOMAS RUSK  
(temper rising)  
Give me one damn reason why I  
shouldn't?

SAM HOUSTON  
I'd think you, of all people,  
would defend me.

THOMAS RUSK  
I have! For weeks. But nothing  
changes... Actually, the situation  
gets worse. The problem is YOU.

SAM HOUSTON  
Relieve me of command, Mr.  
Secretary. But do not insult me.  
It's easy to villainize me.  
Thousands in both nations already  
have - But know, whoever you put in  
my place is still left with  
untrained, undisciplined,  
incorrigible troops and impudent,  
disloyal officers.

THOMAS RUSK  
(snaps back)  
What do you expect? You told them  
you would hold at Gonzales...you  
didn't. That you'd fight at the  
Colorado...you didn't. You swore  
the Mexicans would never cross the  
Brazos... they DID!

SAM HOUSTON  
I was waiting on Fannin, who  
decided only that he couldn't  
decide. Cost me half my army!

THOMAS RUSK  
President Burnet doesn't see it  
that way.

SAM HOUSTON

This is war, not politics. It's  
now a matter of confidence in me.

O.S. A HUGE CHEER from outside distracts their attention.

52

EXT. TEXAS CAMP - SAME TIME

52

The entire camp population SWAMPS and CHEERS the Rangers who ride in with the captured Mexican Convoy wagons. Deaf, Karnes, \* Anderson, Knowles, Gator, Kit, and Vern pass out provisions. Knowles and Beans dole out food and blankets. Tears fill the eyes of the hungry refugees as they thank and bless the Rangers. Knowles cockily accepts the kudos with false bravado...

EPHRAIM KNOWLES

It's nothin' outta the ordinary for  
me... all a part of Rangerin'.

Billy Anderson judiciously distributes weapons, lead balls, and powder to arm the ragged army volunteers...

DEAF SMITH

Y'all need this on the front line.

\*  
\*

GATOR distributes bottles of LIQUOR to let them cut loose.

GATOR DAVIS

Y'all need this more.

Officers Hockley, Seguin, Burluson, Sherman and others huddle around as Deaf and Ben unload the TWIN SISTERS cannon - the firepower energizing the troops. O.S. WHISTLES and CHEERS--

--as Houston walks from his tent with Rusk - All eyes track them, wondering what Rusk has decided. Martin and Baker watch with callous eyes. Lamar buzzes around like a hornet.

MOSLEY BAKER

Houston's about to get his, and  
good riddance.

HOUSTON AND RUSK continue their exchange as they approach...

SAM HOUSTON

It's tragic that battlefield  
decisions are left to politicians,  
miles from the front lines, with  
their heads up their asses.

THOMAS RUSK

You leave me little choice, if  
all you have for me are excuses.

SAM HOUSTON

The odor of righteousness! Would you have me fight Santa Anna with almost no chance to WIN?

THOMAS RUSK

(points to men)

They would!

Houston sees Baker, Martin, Sherman and Lamar conferring.

SAM HOUSTON

A boy stormed into my tent. Given my dingy surroundings, he didn't recognize his commanding officer and ordered me to repair this.

He brings out COLBY'S PISTOL - Rusk reacts to the rusty gun.

THOMAS RUSK

That's asking a lot.

Houston points the pistol skyward, BOOM! It works perfectly.

SAM HOUSTON

My point being that despite his blunder, he came to the right place. His FAITH, regardless that it was initially misplaced, will be rewarded none the less.

Ignoring Houston, several dissident officers salute Rusk.

MOSELY BAKER

What are your orders, Sir?

THOMAS RUSK

(points to Houston)

Ask him. He's your General.

FLORES rides in on a lathered horse, exhausted and covered in dust, he slips from the saddle and seeks out Houston.

MANUEL FLORES

General Houston...

(hands him EMILY'S NOTE)

Details of Santa Anna's plans and troop movements.

As men gather around him, Houston reads EMILY'S NOTE, looks up, galvanized - Motions Deaf over to him as he announces...



SAM HOUSTON

Tomorrow, we march. Tonight we salute our Ranging Company.

(privately to Deaf)

Deaf, I need to send Scouts out tonight, three of your best riders.

(off Deaf's nod, turns to...)

Colonel Baker... Colonel Martin. You are ordered to serve in rear-guard capacities, watching the river crossings and supply lines between this camp and Harrisburg.

\*

\*

WILEY MARTIN

Sam, please. We will, most likely, engage Santa Anna.

SAM HOUSTON

Most likely, we will.

(addressing entire camp)

TOMORROW WE MARCH!

A HUGE CHEER, WHOOPS & HOLLERS overrides - People raise the bottles of stolen liquor to toast. Houston winks at Rusk as the celebration begins - Houston pulls Flores aside...

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

Miss West chose not to return?

\*

MANUEL FLORES

Said to give you this.

Flores gives him Emily's scarf - Houston stuffs it in a pocket. If he is moved, he shows no sign.

53

EXT. COMANCHE CAMP - DAY

53

A DEAD DEER--angrily gutted by PIAKINI (16), a fiery Comanche Warrior. Buffalo Hump sits near his fire, cooking pieces of venison, surrounded by his warriors, including YELLOW KNIFE.

*IN COMANCHE - SUBTITLED...*

PIAKINI

*I have no scalps. No captives to trade for guns and powder. How am I to win honor riding with you?*

YELLOW KNIFE

*Your fight, Piakini, is with Maguara and the elders... Not Buffalo Hump.*

BUFFALO HUMP  
 (to Piakini)  
*You're right. We ride.*

YELLOW KNIFE  
*Against who?*

BUFFALO HUMP  
*White settlers.*

YELLOW KNIFE  
*What have they done against us?*

BUFFALO HUMP  
*That's your half-breed white blood  
 talking, Yellow Knife--*

PIAKINI  
 (with disdain)  
*Kiowa.*

BUFFALO HUMP  
*Settlers scar the Earth. The more  
 land they inhabit, the less we have  
 - And more of them come every day.  
 We must destroy the white man.*

Piakini smugly stares at Yellow Knife... who doesn't respond.

BUFFALO HUMP (CONT'D)  
*You ride with Buffalo Hump,  
 Kiowa... so will you.*

WAR WHOOPS as he leads the war party to mount their ponies.

54

EXT. BUCKLEY WAY STATION &amp; CANTINA - DAY

54

Jack, regaining consciousness, finds himself and Big Foot CHAINED to the trunk of a mesquite tree - He looks around: Empresario Buckley supervises his thug/slaves cleaning up the mess made by the punk killer/thieves Roy, Fuzz, and Curls.

BIG FOOT  
 Yep. He thinks we're the outlaws.  
 "There's lynchin' and the law?"  
 Guess which one he favors...

JACK HAYS  
 (calls out to Buckley)  
 Saw your sign - This about us  
 cussin' or spittin' on your floor?

Buckley spins around to BACKHAND Jack across the face.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY  
I am the law, JUDGE, jury--

JACK HAYS  
I once knew a man got callouses  
from patting himself on the back.

Off ANOTHER SMACK, Jack recoils, shoots a look at Big Foot.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY  
Light 'em up, Clarence.

Clarence unfurls a python WHIP, twirls it fancily over his head...CRACK!--knocks a bug off a leaf. CRACK!--a DRAGONFLY out of the air. CRACK!--the buckle off Big Foot's belt.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY (CONT'D)  
(gloats to his prisoners)  
Clarence is an artist. When I find  
my property abused and vandalized,  
hanging just ain't quite enough.

BIG FOOT WALLACE  
Mister, you smack me with that whip  
you best not stop till I'm dead!

Off Buckley's nod, Clarence raises the whip. Jack yells--

JACK HAYS  
As the LAW, you're obliged to  
hear testimony in our defense!

Buckley puts up a hand to postpone Clarence's whipping.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY  
From who? Y'all gonna testify that  
you're innocent?

JACK HAYS  
We have witnesses for that.

BIG FOOT WALLACE  
They've gone to Victoria.

JACK HAYS  
Folks tend not to take a lawman  
seriously if he murders innocents.  
Kill us, ya might find yourself in  
our boots.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY  
(scratches his chin)  
Witnesses? Damn, pesky witnesses--

BIG FOOT WALLACE  
Just thinkin' of you, Empresario.

EMPRESARIO BUCKLEY  
I gotta go back to Victoria for a  
foreclosure. If'n I find out you're  
wastin' my time, when I return, my  
niggers will strap the hides off ya  
til there's nothing left to hang!

JACK HAYS  
Best hurry then. From a "fair man"  
like you, I'd expect nothing less.

55 EXT. WYKOFF HOMESTEAD - NIGHT 55

Forboding darkness...wind rustles trees...an eerie silence.

56 INT. WYKOFF HOMESTEAD - NIGHT 56

WYKOFF'S EYES POP OPEN. Careful not to wake his family, he  
springs out of bed, grabs his rifle - LISTENS - eases the  
shutter open on his gun port, and scans his surroundings.

WYKOFF'S POV - OUTSIDE - The twitch of an oak limb...a covey  
of QUAIL FLUSH. His HORSES WHINNY, prance nervously.

WYKOFF looks out. Waits. Watches. All is still. He  
carefully closes the shutters, bolts them tight. Checks the  
beams behind the front door - Rests his rifle against the  
wall by his bed. Two loaded pistols set nearby on a shelf.

Nate's bunk is empty--he's gone to town for seeds & supplies.

Wykoff tosses more wood on the fire. Covers his children.  
Climbs back into bed beside his sleeping wife.

57 EXT. ARMY CAMP - NIGHT 57

A GALLOWS CELEBRATION - Beans sizzles BACKSTRAP in a SKILLET.  
Everyone drinks, reflecting on their future. Some sit alone,  
scribbling letters home, others read their BIBLES. FLORES, by  
the fire, strums a somber melody, tries a tune in his head...

MANUEL FLORES  
*"The cactus queen of... the tulip  
of ol' Tennessee..."*

FLASH - IN FLORES' IMAGINATION - A vision of Emily West as he  
last saw her, tossing back her hair.

MANUEL FLORES (CONT'D)  
 ....the Yellow Rose of Texas...da  
 da DA DA... tee da...

GATOR, DRUNK, steps up with his guitar. Gator watches Flores' fingers until he's got the melody down.

GATOR DAVIS  
 Not bad - But step it up, son!

Gator strums hard and loud, drowning out Flores, who plays along faster, Knowles joins in on Flores' HARMONICA. Slave DRUMMER carries the BEAT, the FIDDLER listens, hums along.

GATOR DAVIS (CONT'D)  
 Wants a chorus, don't it? Y'all  
 give this a twirl.

He plays the song even faster. Slowly, piece by piece, The revelers work out "The Yellow Rose Of Texas" - WHOOP their approval- and begin to dance! The glum mood shifts... the catchy melody inspiring the camp to life.

For the first time, we see a small smile from the grieving Alamo survivor Susanna Dickinson. She nods her head to a beat much slower than the beat to which everyone around her dances. Susanna clutches her infant, slow-dances by herself

Rebecca slides in beside Kit, clapping...

Vern slinks over to Sarah, offering her a whiskey bottle.

VERN ELWOOD  
 Care to partake...

SARAH  
 (nervous)  
 Don't suppose a sip would hurt.

VERN ELWOOD  
 (ogling her breasts)  
 Two sips might even help.

KIT & REBECCA dance at a respectable distance.

KIT ACKLIN  
 Vern 'n me thinkin' 'bout shippin'  
 out as swabbies for parts beyond...  
 Y'know...see the world.

REBECCA  
 Oh, the world's pretty big right  
 here. Just look up at them stars.

Off Rebecca's bright smile, Kit's quick-fade grin grows wide.

Now others join in, clapping and singing "The Yellow Rose of Texas... da da da da... te da da!"

58

INT. SANTA ANNA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

58

EMILY, wrapped tightly in a sheet, hair still wet from her bath, glares coldly into her own eyes--so lovely, but in this moment, they are dim. She stares at herself in the MIRROR, allowing the sheet to fall away from her taut, golden body.

Her expression tells us that she sees no hint of beauty before her. She kisses a wooden cross, clasps it between her palms - Closes her eyes in a barely audible PRAYER...

EMILY WEST

Lord, I's come to you alone, weak,  
sick at heart 'n so awful stained--

She opens her eyes, looks as if she doesn't quite recognize herself, her soft voice that of an innocent slave child...

EMILY WEST (CONT'D)

Why? Why you's put me in this time  
'n place...when so many suffer...  
(tears welling)

As a chile we had bad eatin', stale  
bread n' rotten meat fed to us in  
troughs like hogs... Rough, smelly  
men comes to me in da dead 'a night  
when I still slept with rag dolls.

Crying now, she looks up, anger rising as she accuses...

EMILY WEST (CONT'D)

YOU made those men covet me! Made  
me..."Beautiful?" Beauty is a  
CURSE. A plain nigger woman lives  
by her labors, has some kinda  
home...a husban' 'n chillen' who  
love her... Helps her endure. Dis  
"beauty," it bring me plenty 'a men  
but not one who love me...not one  
who walks 'side me in this world.

She BACKHANDS Santa Anna's crystal goblet, which SHATTERS.

EMILY WEST (CONT'D)

Learnin' me to read 'n write s'pose  
ta lift me up, make me better...

(clenches fists)

T'ain't so. My heart grow so cold,

(MORE)

EMILY WEST (CONT'D)  
 it don't feel nuthin' - I'm burnin'  
 alive in the fire of my own rage. I  
 don't live. I survive... I exist.

Applying her makeup, Emily begins a transformation--mascara,  
 ...eye-liner...like a knight strapping on armor for battle.

*(NOTE: Her slave dialect slowly shifts to her normal speech  
 as she transforms herself, mirroring her personal evolution)*

EMILY WEST (CONT'D)  
 But if my brother Jupie loved Texas  
 enough to die for it...the least I  
 can do is my part to liberate it.  
 (smearing rouge on)  
 No matter what it costs me, on  
 earth, and in heaven--

Puts on elegant, glittering jewels, gifts from Santa Anna.

EMILY WEST (CONT'D)  
 I have become what YOU made me. I  
 do not ask for forgiveness, the  
 worst I must do lies yet ahead.  
 (brushes her hair)  
 In the Good Book, You say there's a  
 time to heal...and a time to kill.

Emily slips on a provocatively sexy dress.

EMILY WEST (CONT'D)  
 I know which time it is for me.

She stands and looks coldly at herself in the mirror. Having  
 transformed herself into a beautiful China doll.

EMILY WEST (CONT'D)  
 Judge me as You will... Amen.

59 EXT. IN A CLEARING - NIGHT (WIDE SHOT) 59

BUFFALO HUMP rides silhouetted against the rising moon.  
 Behind him, his WAR PARTY follows in single file.

60 INT. SANTA ANNA'S TENT - NIGHT 60

Santa Anna steps out of his bath into a silk robe held by  
 Romolo. He points to a glass atomizer. Romolo mists his  
 underarms...his manhood as EMILY ENTERS, a glowing, glamorous  
 vision that takes Santa Anna's breath away.

SANTA ANNA

Did you enjoy the cockfight?

Emily fixes their drinks...surreptitiously turns to pour LAUDANUM in one of them from a SILVER VIAL. Her self pity is over... She's all business now. Seductively...

EMILY WEST

I know very little of cockfighting.  
But I can tell a champion cock by  
the look in its eye.

Santa Anna chuckles as Romolo hands him a starched shirt, and fine breeches - Getting dressed, he waxes philosophical...

SANTA ANNA

Through the eyes, one sees into the  
heart of anything, human or beast.

Emily delivers the drinks, patting Santa Anna on his ass.

EMILY WEST

I don't see the point in putting  
those on.

Off Romolo's glare, Emily regards him with equal contempt.

EMILY WEST (CONT'D)

Your man is fiercely devoted to  
you. Why is he jealous of me?

She caresses Santa Anna, eyeballing and challenging Romolo. Rubbing her body against Santa Anna, she forces him onto the bed. Santa Anna's enjoying this game...her sexual control.

SANTA ANNA

He was taken by Comanches, the  
squaws cut off his tongue and  
sexual organ.

She ties his hands to the bedpost, has him spread-eagle in front of her, a riding crop nearby. Santa Anna's breathless in anticipation, his voice coming now in heated gasps...

SANTA ANNA (CONT'D)

He...he's never liked women since.

EMILY WEST

Then he definitely won't like this.

Opening her mouth, Emily dives her head BELOW FRAME...and Santa Anna's eyes roll back...



61

EXT. DEEP IN THE WOODS - LATE NIGHT

61

LIGHTNING FLASHES - A NEAR-NAKED SAVAGE IN NATIVE HEADDRESS, turtle shell RATTLES strapped to bare ankles, a TOMAHAWK gripped in his hand, a BLACK RACER SNAKE between his teeth--

His body coated in dried BLACK RIVER MUD, the "savage" pours whiskey to enrage a ROARING FIRE, consumes himself in a feverish WAR DANCE, HOWLING at the moon.

It takes us a beat to recognize...

SAM HOUSTON - His body glistening with the mud and sweat, he SLICES the head off the snake, lets its blood drip on his body, swigs from his bottle, CUTS seven grooves in his chest with the tomahawk blade, and lets his BLOOD mix with the Snake's. He chugs more whiskey, *CHANTS IN CHEROKEE*--

HE THROWS EMILY'S SCARF INTO THE FIRE, letting the smoke purify his body and *SCREAMS IN CHEROKEE* to the black skies and INTERMITTENT LIGHTNING - As the FLASHES REVEAL...

DEAF SMITH stands at the edge of the woods, calmly scratching his chin at Houston's Cherokee ritual. He's seen worse.

AS HOUSTON TWIRLS AROUND THE FIRE...he STOPS - Locking eyes with Deaf - LIGHTNING FLASHES again. Deaf looks up.

DEAF SMITH

All that thunder 'n racket n' not  
a drop of rain.

SAM HOUSTON

It's not a rain dance, it's a  
purification ritual - Supposed to  
cleanse my spirit, free my mind.

Houston offers him a drink. Deaf takes a swig.

DEAF SMITH

Doin' anything for ya?

SAM HOUSTON

Nothing at all.

DEAF SMITH

Don't know if I should report to  
you or run like hell. Coupl'a my  
scouts come back - Says Santa Anna  
splittin' up his army...just like  
your spy gal's report said.

\*

Houston nods, dips in the creek to bathe, his back to Deaf...

SAM HOUSTON

DEAF! Ever miss something you've never had and know you never will?

Not hearing, Deaf picks up a wooden stick, starts to whittle.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

But that doesn't stop me from missing her. You could have knocked me over with a feather when I saw Emily... She was back.  
(wistfully)  
Now she's gone again.

Houston returns to the fire, begins to slip on his clothes.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

The most precious moments that ever come in this world are when a woman loves a man...just as he is.

Deaf doesn't respond, keeps whittling. Houston sighs.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

That's it in a hickory nut...

Houston takes a swig, passes the bottle. Deaf doesn't respond, keeps whittling. Houston smiles, ironic...

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

Good thing about talking to you, Deaf...I can tell you anything.

A BEAT. Deaf winks back. Houston laughs.

Deaf hands Houston the product of his labors--a little wooden HEART with a HOLE bored through its middle.

62 INT. WYKOFF CABIN - NIGHT

62

The family sleeps. Off NOISES OUTSIDE, Wykoff jumps out of bed - The family rouses, freezes in fear. Wykoff grabs his rifle, cocks it, opens the gun port, looks outside...

63 EXT. WYKOFF HOMESTEAD - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

63

Agitated horses kick at the corral in the moonlit night.

INTERCUT - WYKOFF & FAMILY INSIDE with...

WYKOFF'S GUN PORT POV - Nothing. The horses settle down.

WYKOFF watches a moment longer. Silence. He shrugs it off, turns back to his family...a SWOOOSH thru gun port...THWACK!

Wykoff's face goes blank. Pauline, Lucas, Stephanie gawk in horror as he staggers, drops his rifle...Stephanie SCREAMS!

A KIOWA ARROW sticks out her daddy's back; Wykoff staggers--

JAMES WYKOFF  
 RUN! THE CELLAR! HIDE!

INTERCUT - At the edge of the thicket, YELLOW KNIFE holds his bow, eying the flight of his arrow as it has just flown true.

Buffalo Hump nods approval at his young Kiowa ally, signals Piakini and the other Comanche braves to surround the cabin--

INTERCUT - INSIDE - Young Lucas grabs a rifle, pokes the barrel through the port. Stephanie beside her, Pauline rushes to her mortally-wounded husband - But Wykoff refuses to go down, pushing them away - Fading, he drops to a knee...

JAMES WYKOFF (CONT'D)  
 Leave me...get to...the cellar...

MORE ARROWS THWACK around the gun port - Lucas FIRES the rifle, the recoil KNOCKING the slight boy on his ass.

Buffalo Hump *YELLS ORDERS IN COMANCHE*; his braves swarm round the cabin - Piakini lights a TORCH - Tosses it on the roof.

64 EXT. ROAD TO WYKOFF HOMESTEAD - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS) 64

NATE returns from town, carrying a burlap sack, STOPS off the sight of a GOLDEN DOME OF FLAMES SWELLING in the distance.

Panicked, Nate drops the bag - SPRINTS toward the homestead, cuts off the road to take a shortcut through the woods--

65 EXT./INT. WYKOFF CABIN - NIGHT (RESUME) 65

In full attack, WARRIORS BARGE THROUGH the burning door--

Pauline, by Wykoff's body, grabs her husband's pistol, points it at the Comanches - The PISTOL SPARKS...but doesn't fire.

Lucas yanks the ramrod out of the bore...raises his rifle--

--Buffalo Hump SWINGS his tomahawk down on the boy's head, then CLUBS Pauline - ANOTHER WARRIOR SPEARS her through the ribs. Piakini aims an arrow at the SCREAMING Stephanie--

Off the THUMP of the arrow silencing the girl's screams--

INTERCUT - NATE - NEAR WYKOFF CABIN

Crazy with fear, Nate charges through the brush, BRIARS shredding his skin, sweat and blood soaking his torn clothes.

Nate stops at the edge of the homestead, sees the Comanche attack, dives back in the brush for cover - Circles wide of the WAR PARTY - Crawls through the BILLOWING SMOKE towards...

THE BACK OF THE BURNING CABIN

Backlit against the FLAMES, Buffalo Hump order his war party to re-mount, rides to the corral to gather WYKOFF'S HORSES--

STEPHANIE'S PUPPY runs YIPPING from the fire - Buffalo Hump pauses at the corral to grab an arrow, draws his bow to full length, tracks the RUNNING PUPPY, lets the arrow FLY--

The ARROW ARCS in the firelight, SKEWERS the LITTLE DOG in the neck. The puppy YELPS, DIES as Buffalo Hump turns away.

NATE - INSIDE CABIN

He fights through the FIRE, spots the bodies of Wykoff and Lucas - Stephanie with an arrow through her heart, her rag doll smoldering beside her. In shock, Nate reacts to...

MOVEMENT...a MOAN...PAULINE IS ALIVE!

Nate scoops Pauline up in his arms, dodging flames, staying low under the thick smoke towards the back door when--

--PIAKINI charges in the front, wielding a knife in search of scalps. He stoops over Wykoff's body, grabs his hair as--

--NATE, freezes, crouched behind a table in the smoke, waits until Piakini turns his back to begin scalping Wykoff--

OUTSIDE CABIN

Choking, Nate crawls out the back, holds tightly to Pauline, slow and careful not to make noise, lest Piakini sees them--

With the YELPING COMANCHES galloping around, stealing horses, or re-mounting after the attack, Nate crawls with Pauline--

TO THE HIDDEN ROOT CELLAR

Nate lays Pauline aside to pull back the cover, looks up--

YELLOW KNIFE, mounted on his rearing horse, is surprised to come upon the black man and the bleeding, unconscious woman.

NATE boldly rises to stand between Pauline and Yellow Knife, protecting her - Nate's only weapons are his FISTS as--

PIAKINI runs out of the cabin - WAVES THREE BLOODY SCALPS, gloating to Yellow Knife, but not seeing Nate behind him.

BUFFALO HUMP WHOOPS, a signal for his warriors to depart. Piakini turns, leaps onto his horse and rides off, YELPING.

As the rest of the war party disappears into the trees... Yellow Knife stares at Nate, looks at the burning cabin, then at Pauline - Nate doesn't move. Yellow Knife bows his head, partially in sorrow, but also in tribute to Nate's courage-- Then, Anderson's half-breed son WHOOPS LOUDLY, GALLOPS AWAY. \*

66 EXT. SOUTH TEXAS ROAD - SUNRISE

66

Led by Houston, the ragged but determined Texas Army marches. He rides up next to an ESCORTED WAGON carrying Susanna Dickinson and her infant starting in an opposite direction.

SAM HOUSTON

Good luck to you and your daughter, Mrs. Dickinson. Your husband was a true patriot. Texas is eternally grateful for his heroic sacrifice.

The young mother stares straight ahead as they ride away to the north, while the Texas Army continues marching south. \*

67 EXT. WHICH-WAY TREE - TEXAS CROSSROADS - MORNING

67

Deaf & Rangers ride up front near Houston, who's mounted on SARACEN, his new, enormous white stallion. Houston pauses by a huge TREE at an intersection of two roads, Rusk, Hockley and Seguin beside him, met by a leathery, scarecrow of a FARMER-- \*

SAM HOUSTON

Which way?

FARMER

This road'll take you back up to Trinity and Nacogdoches - But that right-hand road will carry you to Harrisburg straight as a compass.

SAM HOUSTON

(turns to troops, loudly)  
To the LEFT: the Sabine River and the safety of the United States! To the RIGHT: Santa Anna and the Mexican army!

THOMAS RUSK

You're leaving it to them?

SAM HOUSTON

A man fights harder if he  
thinks it's his decision to do  
so - Besides...

(louder)

We know which way!

--ON DOWN THE LINE, SOLDIERS pick up the call "WHICH WAY?"  
"REMEMBER THE ALAMO! REMEMBER GOLIAD" as all turn RIGHT. A \*  
NEGRO BOY (16) with a DRUM strapped around his waist, PLAYS a  
DIRGE-LIKE BEAT, keeping time to the troops' slow march forward\*

THOMAS RUSK

Step it up, boy. Something a  
little more lively.

The drummer boy PICKS UP THE TEMPO, a FIFER starts playing \*  
"Come To the Bower", a popular song of the day in taverns and  
grogshops. ANOTHER FIFER & a FIDDLER trot to join in with  
the other musicians, a few men sing along as they march-- \*  
*"Come to the bower I have shaded for you - Our bed shall be* \*  
*roses all spangled with dew - Come to the bower with me!"*

Off a look from Houston, DEAF & KARNES kick into a run, riding \*  
away from the army to scout ahead. Half-Breed chases after. \*

68 INT. WYKOFF ROOT CELLAR - MORNING 68 \*

DARK w/only cracks of light around the hinged overhead doors  
until Nate OPENS THEM - He looks around at the devastation,  
determines that Comanches are gone, then turns back to...

PAULINE, lying unconscious. Nate tenderly removes her dress,  
a bottle of liquor nearby. Seems like a forbidden sexual  
encounter until he gently cleans her wounds with warm water.

Dabbing the liquor on a cloth, he carefully sterilizes  
Pauline's spear wound, moving up the bruises and cuts on her  
naked body to the gash on her head from Buffalo Hump's club.

69 EXT. WAGON TRACK, NEW WASHINGTON, TX - DAY 69

The MEXICAN ARMY on the move, Emily sits in the carriage with  
Romolo at the reins, leading THREE WAGONS carrying General  
Santa Anna's personal effects, his octagonal tent, bathtub,  
his sterling candelabra, crystal stem ware, etc.

BOTH would sooner ride with the devil than each other.  
Romolo glances at Emily...she sticks out her tongue.

SANTA ANNA rides his magnificent WARHORSE, the saddle gleaming with silver, his uniform glittering with medals and gold braid, Cranky, he complains to Almonte by his side...

SANTA ANNA

I am stuck in this Texas shithole,  
swatting mosquitos, chasing rats.  
The rebels are too stupid to know  
they've lost... Mother Mexico calls  
to me. I mean to leave, Almonte,  
the moment we crush these pirates.

Portillo, accompanied by some of his Dragoons, catches up...

PORTILLO (O.S.)

Excellency... Your Excellency!  
(slows next to Santa Anna)  
Our scouts report that Houston has  
turned his army around to Lynch's  
Ferry! He's heading this way!

ALMONTE immediately strips his leather canister from his saddlebags, pulls out his MAP, and unfurls it across the withers of his horse. He runs his finger across the paper.

ALMONTE

The plains of San Jacinto. They've  
apparently halted their retreat.

SANTA ANNA

Wonderful news.

PORTILLO

Honor and Glory are upon us!

ALMONTE

The important thing is they've  
decided to face us. Over-confidence  
will not be our ally.

Santa Anna considers the implications of Houston's reversal of tactics. Studies Almonte's map, taking charge...

SANTA ANNA

Call up dispatch riders - send for  
our generals. We have preparations  
to make - And they must begin NOW!

Portillo signals for SANCHEZ (30s), an athletic dispatch rider. Santa Anna draw his sword, spurs his warhorse, and races gallantly up and down the ranks of his men.

SANTA ANNA (CONT'D)  
 MY COUNTRYMEN, REJOICE! THE ENEMY  
 IS COMING! My gallant children!  
 The victory I promised you is upon  
 us! The one that will carry us  
 back to our HOMES! *VIVA MEXICO!*

THE CHEERS of his soldiers crescendo as SANCHEZ sprints past--

70

EXT. LORCA'S RIVER BED CAMPSITE - DAY

70

A FRESH WATER SPRING - On a BLUFF overlooking...sits LORCA.

LANE, COLE HORNFISHER and the other survivors that Lorca rescued, almost 50 people buzz about the campsite, tend fires, cook meals, wash clothes, fix wagons, service weapons. Children play naked in the springs - Lorca's followers.

Near the heart of the camp lie stacks of captured rifles, swords, and even an artillery piece - For Lorca's army.

LORCA, sharpening his sword, doesn't react as Lane and Cole come up the path. They remove their hats, astonished by the assortment of weapons, scalps and other confiscated items.

An anxious moment passes, Lorca does not acknowledge them.

COLE HORNFISHER

Beg your pardon, sir, but I give my word to these people that I'd take them across the Sabine.

(off Lorca's silence)

Thing is...Comanches are on the war trail to the north of us. Mexican army loose between the coast and God knows where, comin' this way.

Still no response. Lorca continues to sharpen his sword.

LANE WALTERS

What do you propose we do?

Lorca's total disinterest confounds them. Trying persuasion:

COLE HORNFISHER

We believe we're better off with you than on our own.

(trying guilt)

If we leave you, I'm afraid these people might die.

Lorca glares at both men in judgement. Then...



LORCA  
I kill Meskins.

LANE WALTERS  
Hardly a one-man job.

COLE HORNFISCHER  
If we've got to die, we'd all  
prefer to go down fightin'.

Another long moment of silence. Lorca finally looks up.

LORCA  
My word is *absolute*.

COLE HORNFISCHER  
No argument from me, you know what  
you're doin'. I'm Cole Hornfisher.  
This here's Lane Walters. We never  
did catch your name.

Lorca returns to sharpening his sword. They are dismissed.

71 EXT. ALONG THE RIVER BANK - DAY 71

Santa Anna's COURIER, SANCHEZ, rides for dear life, PURSUED  
by KARNES and his BARKING Half-Breed. Till they round a bend-- \*  
--where a smirking DEAF, astride his horse, points his gun.

TRAPPED, Sanchez pulls back on his reins. Half-Breed lunges,  
knocks Sanchez off his saddle, nearly bites his ankle in two.

72 EXT. SAN JACINTO - DAY 72

Houston rides with Hockley, Seguin, Burleson, and Colonel  
Sidney Sherman, a proudly defiant Houston adversary.

**TITLE: "April 20, 1836 - SAN JACINTO RIVER, TEXAS"**

Houston pulls back on his reins. Says nothing. Shades his  
eyes to study the ground. Raises a hand to halt the column.

SAM HOUSTON  
This is it.  
(points to thickets)  
God gave us our battlements.  
Cavalry cannot operate in such  
thick woods. Cannot flank us  
through the marsh. There is only  
the field between us and them, the  
sun at our back.

(MORE)

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

If they choose to cross it, we will pour fire from these woods and cut them to shreds.

GEORGE HOCKLEY

Make camp in those woods, by company. Six tents to a unit.

SAM HOUSTON

One fire each. Without exception, all fires doused at sundown.

ED BURLESON

You heard the General, and no unnecessary talking. All men remain as quiet as possible.

SAM HOUSTON

(rides a few paces more)  
Position the cannon there.  
(appraises the bayou)  
I want sentries posted at the Ferry. There...there...and there. On the rise yonder, and directly across the river.

JUAN SEGUIN

We should order Ranging companies to reconnoitre Santa Anna and all his forces around us--

SAM HOUSTON

Yes, send scouts to confirm the proximity of Urrea, Cos, Filisola and Sesma's advancing armies.

73 EXT. MEXICAN CAMP (OPPOSITE THE TEXANS) - DAY (SAME TIME) 73

Only a half-mile away, SANTA ANNA seems joyous, riding through his camp on his warhorse as Almonte, Portillo, CASTRILLON (60s) and others follow. Santa Anna commands:

SANTA ANNA

Erect every tent we have, in plain sight, build fires in front of each one. They must burn all night. The rebels cannot know we are not yet at full force.

Santa Anna studies the expanse between him and the Texans.

## SANTA ANNA (CONT'D)

Construct a barricade there -  
rocks, brush, saddles, everything  
we can find - to protect the camp  
from a frontal assault.

INTERCUT - HOUSTON & HIS OFFICERS

BOTH OPPOSING GENERALS continue to prepare for battle...

## SAM HOUSTON

Feed, water, and rest your men.  
Have teams forage for grass for the  
horses. Weapons serviced and ready  
to fire, blades razor sharp. Fresh  
powder and ball for every rifle.  
In addition to the cannon balls,  
chop up horseshoes, wire, any scrap  
metal on hand for the Twin Sisters.

INTERCUT - SANTA ANNA & HIS OFFICERS

## SANTA ANNA

Position artillery there, the  
Golden Standard on the knoll, and  
load them with grapeshot. Portillo,  
I want scouts in the field now -  
Gathering information on the  
enemy's position and movements.

ANGLE - HIDDEN IN THE TREES - DEAF and KARNES - Spying on  
Santa Anna & his officers - The Ranger scouts ease in to get  
a closer look - Sanchez, bound and gagged, pulled in tow.

SANTA ANNA dismounts to work alongside his men, takes off his  
jacket to help drag logs to the barricade...his troops CHEER.

## SANTA ANNA (CONT'D)

My brave men, I know you are tired!  
But by your heroic toil you save  
the life of the man next to you!  
If we are ALL willing to die for  
each other, we will ALL LIVE to see  
our homes again! VIVA MEXICO!

CHEERS erupt, inspired by their General's leadership.

UP ABOVE...DEAF & KARNES wheel around, heading back to camp.

HORSES THUNDER over a rise to the river, galloping hooves  
SPLASHING through a shallow shoreline - REVEAL...

LORCA - like Genghis Khan leading his Mongol Horde - rides in front of at least thirty savage-looking riders, his warrior refugees, (COLE, LANE, etc.) wielding guns, lances, swords.

THEY RIDE TOWARDS...

A RIVER CROSSING not far from San Jacinto. A small platoon of dismounted DRAGOONS hang around the dock - smoke, eat, cat-nap - watching for a MEXICAN SUPPLY BARGE slowly drifting in.

A Dragoon lazily drinks from a gourd canteen, off THUNDEROUS HOOFBEATS, looks up, eyes growing wide...drops the canteen.

SCREAMING & WHOOPING, LORCA & CO. ride in, swinging swords, shooting guns, bearing down on the surprised Mexican Detail.

The Dragoons don't have a chance.

75 EXT. BUCKLEY WAY STATION AND CANTINA - DAY 75

Empresario Buckley rides away on his wagon, leaving his three SLAVE THUGS to guard prisoners Jack & Big Foot, still chained to the tree. Clarence grins, practices his WHIP CRACK.

Big Foot flinches off the intimidation, mutters to Jack...

BIG FOOT WALLACE

This here's what ya call irony.

76 EXT. HOUSTON'S CAMP - DAY 76

SEQUIN, DEAF, and KARNES approach HOUSTON. They present him with their prisoner, Sanchez, Santa Anna's Courier.

DEAF SMITH

Our neighbor, General Houston, is ole Santa Anna hisself.

JUAN SEQUIN

(reads Mexican dispatch)  
Generals Filisola, Cos and Urrea are enroute to join him. Cos' troops are only hours away.

COLONEL SHERMAN

We have to attack now before they're reinforced!

Rusk darts an anxious look to Houston, expecting decisive action. Houston appears to be mulling it over when...

BOOM! A CANNON EXPLOSION from the Mexican camp RAINS DOWN GRAPESHOT on the Texans, shattering limbs from trees - Leaves drift down over frightened, bewildered men, who, along with officers scatter for cover...except for Houston, peering off.

SAM HOUSTON

That's for show, letting us know  
he's here. It's not an attack.  
(aside to Burleson)  
But make sure I'm right.

In the confusion, Vern SHOTS courier Sanchez. Everyone's startled by the cold blooded murder. As they turn to him...

VERN ELWOOD

He was at the Alamo.

GEORGE HOCKLEY

How you know that?

Vern reaches for the Courier's deerskin saddlebags, holds them up - Engraved printing reads: "WILLIAM BARRET TRAVIS"

77

EXT. MEXICAN CAMP, SAN JACINTO - DAY

77

With senior officer Castrillon nearby, SANTA ANNA personally supervises his crews as they man their HUGE CANNON (twice as big as the Twin Sisters), named the "GOLDEN STANDARD."

SANTA ANNA

You have a fix on their battery?  
(enjoying this)  
Castrillon, give them more to  
worry about. Make sure they get  
no sleep tonight.

Castrillon adjusts the angle of the cannon trajectory, FIRES--

INTERCUT - TEXAN CAMP

THE MEXICAN BLAST HITS near the Twin Sisters, SHRAPNEL GRAZES Ben McCulloch's shoulder, he winces in pain.

BEN MCCULLOCH

PULL 'EM BACK!

SAM HOUSTON

NOT YET! Answer the General's  
greeting!

Ben hesitates, then FIRES TWO BLASTS FROM THE TWIN SISTERS--

INTERCUT - MEXICAN CAMP

--WHICH EXPLODE A CAISSON, SCATTER BOXES, and SPOOKS TWO MULES that buck wildly!

Santa Anna motions for Castrillon to withdraw their Golden Standard out of range.

SANTA ANNA

Excellent. Now we know. They have at least two six-pounders and officers who know how to fire them.

INTERCUT - TEXAN CAMP

Houston, the officers and troops remain frozen. SILENCE. Everyone waits for another cannon blast...but NOTHING.

THOMAS RUSK

He's done... made his point.

JUAN SEGUIN

Keep the regiment on high alert!

DEAF SMITH

(low aside to Houston)  
What's gnawin' on ya now?

SAM HOUSTON

Ride out to Martin and Baker, order them to return with their regiments posthaste. We will need them.

78 EXT. RIVER CROSSING - DAY 78

All the DRAGOONS are dead, slaughtered by LORCA and his followers, who pilfer the Mexican goods from the barge.

79 EXT. TEXAS PRAIRIE - DAY 79

NATE - eyes glazed, in shock - carries PAULINE in his arms down the wagon trail towards Victoria.

80 EXT. MEXICAN CAMP, SAN JACINTO - DAY 80

Galvanized, Santa Anna strides along the barricades, issuing orders as his soldiers work to fortify their position.

SANTA ANNA

Most likely they won't attack but prepare as if they will. Send a cavalry regiment to reconnoiter.

PORTILLO  
It is my honor, Sir.

INTERCUT - TEXAN CAMP - Col. Sherman storms up to Houston.

COLONEL SHERMAN  
General! Why don't we attack?

SAM HOUSTON  
Because I'm not ordering one.  
(before Sherman retorts)  
You may reconnoiter with your  
cavalry after sundown, but under no  
circumstance are you to engage.  
(turns to Rusk)  
You're anxious for action, ride  
along with him.

Sherman glares at him a beat. Nods, seemingly mollified.

INTERCUT - MEXICAN CAMP

Santa Anna confers with Portillo before he rides out. Emily smiles at him, and he motions to her to join him.

SANTA ANNA  
A kiss for luck?

He reaches down and sweeps her into his arms. An expression of alarm sweeps across his face. He reaches into her jacket, and finds Emily's SMALL PEPPERPOT PISTOL. In an instant, he becomes a different man. He slides off the horse, points the loaded pistol directly at her forehead, eyes frozen over.

SANTA ANNA (CONT'D)  
Why do you need this? So you can  
shoot me with it?

EMILY WEST  
For protection, Antonio.

SANTA ANNA  
Protection? You are under my  
protection. No civilian, for any  
reason, is allowed to carry arms in  
my presence!

He BACKHANDS HER, sends her reeling to the ground, SNATCHES Emily by the throat, pulling her up. She chokes, CLAWS at his hand - When she does, Santa Anna SMACKS her again.

Emily grimaces in pain, tries to crawl away - The enraged Santa Anna goes after her, KICKS her, leans in to HIT her with his fists. Emily fends off the blows, but is no match for a man frenzied with rage.

Soldiers gape at the beating or turn away. Romolo watches with gleaming eyes. Almonte rushes to pull Santa Anna off--

An echo of the pounding of Emily's heart...O.S. HOOFBEATS!

Santa Anna's attention is diverted... He stops to listen.

EMILY, an expression we've never seen before - Composed, smiling through bloody teeth, her eyes burn with hatred--

--as the O.S. HOOFBEATS, GROW LOUDER...

81

EXT. SAN JACINTO FIELD - DAY

81

COLONEL SIDNEY SHERMAN leads his CAVALRY of about 30 TEXIAN RIDERS - among them Secretary Rusk, the firebrand Mirabeau Lamar and Kit Acklin. Sherman advances on his reconnaissance mission--but in his exuberance cannot wait until dark.

COLBY, who had Houston fix his gun, watches the Cavalry go, hurries to sneak to a line of tethered horses to STEAL ONE--

THE OPEN FIELD

Instead of moving along the shadowed treeline, Sherman leads his cavalry troop straight down the middle until--

PORTILLO spots them coming. Perplexed but amused, Portillo signals his Dragoons to form ranks--

INTERCUT with...

SHERMAN sees Portillo & Dragoons, grins, RAISES HIS SWORD--

SHERMAN

Ready weapons... CHARGE!!

They take off, SHOOTING from the saddle!

PORTILLO SMILES and orders cavalry to meet them head on.

TEXAN CAMP - HOUSTON

OFF THE THUNDER OF GUNFIRE, Houston immediately realizes--

SAM HOUSTON

Goddamn Sherman--!!



HOUSTON MORE RATTLED THAN ANGRY. Concern on his face. He and Burleson grab their weapons, rush toward the battlefield--

THE OTHER RANGERS - Anderson, Beans, Gator, Vern - scoop up their rifles to scramble toward the battlefield, except for--

KNOWLES--slinking off to his horse, ready to run off, desert. A SQUAD OF GUNG-HO REGULARS ride up to him, scoop him along with them, assuming he's riding into BATTLE. Off Knowles' sickened expression--

AROUND CAMP - VARIOUS VOLUNTEERS & REGULARS

Grab weapons, hurry off behind the Rangers toward the edge of camp - Among them, a confounded, infuriated General Houston.

IN THE FIELD - THE TWO CAVALRIES CHARGE EACH OTHER

SHERMAN leads his men, Secretary of War RUSK alongside--

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)  
STAND DOWN! DO NOT ATTACK!!!

COLBY bounces in the saddle, barely holding onto his stolen horse, galloping onto the battlefield, yards behind Sherman--

THE MEXICAN DRAGOONS draw sabers, bear down on the Texans--

KIT AND LAMAR, the best riders with Sherman, gallop hellbent for leather into a maze of flashing sabers & lances--

ON THE MEXICAN SIDE

THE BATTERED EMILY closes her eyes - Almonte bends down to check if she's alive or dead. OFF THE O.S. GUNSHOTS--

The grinning Romolo WAGGLES HIS STUMP OF A TONGUE at her--

SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS

--CONFUSION AT THE TEXAN ARMY CAMP - Rangers, Regulars and Volunteers scramble to the edge of the battlefield, fumbling with their weapons, sharply CONTRASTING--

--THE MEXICAN ARMY CAMP - Well-drilled, seasoned INFANTRYMEN assemble in perfect lines, rifles ready.

--PORTILLO, joyous, leading his charge - SABERS DRAWN.

GENERAL SAM HOUSTON shouts orders (MOS) in red-faced fury--

SEGUIN, HOCKLEY, AND BURLESON try to order their battalions back as well...but no one heeds them as Texan soldiers grab weapons and rush to the edge of the battlefield to FIRE across at the distant enemy...too far away for any effect.

SAM HOUSTON (CONT'D)

(sotto voce)

Madness. Dumb bastards are about to cost us the war...

As GUNSMOKE wafts in, he peers through his TELESCOPIC SIGHT GLASS, the insane FRENZY consuming his entire command--

HOUSTON'S TELESCOPE POV - CHAOS of the skirmish in full fever -- HIS TELESCOPIC POV PANS THE ENEMY CAMP...coming to...SANTA ANNA's personal STANDARD, waving in the wind, but then--

SOMETHING ELSE CATCHES Houston's eye...

EMILY - Bruised and battered from Santa Anna's beating.

MEXICAN CAMP - SANTA ANNA

The General-Presidente *feels* something...like a cold breeze.

He gazes across the field, raises his own TELESCOPE--

HIS TELESCOPIC POV - HOUSTON astride his white horse.

Santa Anna smiles - To himself...and Houston...

SANTA ANNA

I am waiting.

HOUSTON'S POV - SANTA ANNA, brazenly grinning.

HOUSTON

Son of a bitch.

OFF THE SOUNDS OF WAR--

THE TWO GENERALS stare at each other, CHAOS around them...

FADE OUT.

**END NIGHT TWO**