

LONESOME, CROWDED WEST

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. PRISON - DAY

An expansive prison campus under the big Texan sky. No other structures around. Just desert. Everywhere.

TITLES: LONESOME, CROWDED WEST

TITLES: West Texas, July 1980

INT. PRISON - DAY

CLANG!

Bars slide to let DARYL out. Skinny with scruff, 40s. No stranger to this joint. He carries a pile of clothes. On his way out, a GAURD stops him--

GUARD
Daryl, right?

DARYL
That'd be me.

GUARD
(smiles)
Tell ah, Moses, that I say hello.

DARYL
And who's you?

GUARD
Tell him Johnny Boy says hi.

OUTSIDE

Daryl walks with his clothes to a waiting sedan, dusty and hot. He gets in, and it pulls out, leaving a trail of dirt.

EXT. PLATANO DURADO - DAY

The car pulls up to an isolated, dusty strip club that's seen better days. Or maybe it never had them in the first place.

A few girls, in street clothes, unload their outfits from the trunks of old sedans. This isn't a place one typically sees in the daylight.

It's called "Plátano Durado," Spanish for "Golden Banana."
And it looks as tacky as it sounds. Daryl heads in-

INSIDE

Low light, musty. Doesn't get much air. Some neon lights
FLICKER on as the place seems to shake sleep from its head.

DARYL

Moses?

Door opens, sunlight floods in to reveal: WENDELL. A fleshy
mountain of a man. A main heavy.

WENDELL

He's in the back. Expectin ya.

INT. PLATANO DURADO - MOSES' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A crummy, cramped office. Posters of centerfolds stick to the
walls. At a small desk:

MOSES FELICIANO, 49, with city miles. He's razor thin, patchy
goatee, greasy, shoulder-length hair. But his intense eyes
warn off anyone who may fuck with him.

He speaks low and quick, with a slight Texas drawl.

MOSES

Welcome back. Have a seat.

Daryl obliges, SIGHS and stretches.

DARYL

Shit is it good to be back! Woo!

Moses, all business, doesn't match the energy here.

MOSES

Said somethin bout Walter flippin.

DARYL

Yeah, yeah that's what I said.

MOSES

After a big stint in the can for us
he's flippin for a softer parole?

DARYL

I can't seem to believe it neither.
After a while in the clink, starts
catchin up to ya.

Moses watches him.

DARYL (CONT'D)
You know how they do it. Make ya
feel like there ain't no options.

Silence from Moses. Daryl gets uncomfortable.

DARYL (CONT'D)
Say, this guard in there, some, ah,
Johnny Boy? Says "hi." He can
collaborate my story, too.

MOSES
"Corroborate."

DARYL
Sorry?

MOSES
Alright fine, Daryl. I'll trust ya
on this one.

DARYL
(sigh of relief)
Oh, gee thanks Mose-

MOSES
I'm gettin the Sniper. You and
Pistol Pete wait at the cabin. I'll
set Walter up in a motel. You
confirm the hit in the mornin.

DARYL
Wait why do I gotta get out there?
The man with the gun can't take the
photograph?

MOSES
You know the deal. He's never seen,
never speaks, just takes the shot
and leaves. Why don't you
just..."collaborate?"

Daryl stands--

DARYL
Copy that, chief.

MOSES
Send in Pistol Pete and Skinny
Charlie. Stay outta trouble, now.

Daryl walks out. Moses, alone in the office. Spits in a dip bottle he had under the desk. Then--

PISTOL PETE and SKINNY CHARLIE (40s, both soldiers) walk in and sit, smoking.

PISTOL PETE
You really think Walter's flipping?

Moses spits again. He thinks.

SKINNY CHARLIE
Been a made man for years. Helluva time to flip now.

CLOSE ON MOSES: the gears turn in his head--

--WENDELL BURSTS IN, dragging a man who's taken a few punches. Wendell tosses him at the desk.

MOSES
In a goddamn meetin here!

WENDELL
Sorry boss. But we got Arty.

ARTY is the man with a new shiner. He rolls on the floor, groaning. Then Moses smiles.

MOSES
Well, Arty, get up on ya feet now.

ARTY
Look, I can pay.

Moses *tsk tsks*.

MOSES
Hoo, buddy. Your luck ran out with them Cowboys, huh? You owe us a goddamn fortune.

ARTY
I can pay, I swear--

MOSES
Football season ended six months ago...I want the store.

ARTY
Oh, no! You can't--

POP! Wendell smacks him. And tosses a pair of night vision goggles on the ground.

WENDELL

Had a shipment of these come in
when I grabbed'im.

Skinny Charlie lights up.

SKINNY CHARLIE

No shit! These night vision? Aw,
shit Moses, you tried these yet?

ARTY

Oh, fuck, not the store.

Moses stands. Arty shuts up.

MOSES

Don't worry, we won't be attached
to it. But I tell ya, we sure as
shit gonna get our money, you
degenerate cocksucker. Don't care
if we run it through the dirt.

ARTY

Moses. Please. My family- my wife's
father, started that store--

MOSES

You made this bed, so sleep in it.
(to Pistol Pete)
Pete. Go to the desert with Daryl.
To the cabin. Make sure this goes
our way.

He pushes past him. Arty sinks to the floor. Skinny Charlie
tries on the night vision goggles with a child's excitement.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLES: Chapter 1: Cards, Whiskey & Other Stories

FADE IN:

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The Guadalupe Mountains stretch out as far as the eye can
see. Hot, deserted, but goddamn it's majestic. The late
afternoon sun roasts the clouds out of the sky.

In the midst of this landscape of endless desert and towering
mountains sits a tiny, dilapidated cabin.

INT. CABIN - DAY

A rifle rests against a thin wall in the corner.

Daryl and Pistol Pete sit at a small table with paper cups of whiskey. Pete shuffles and tosses some cards.

DARYL

So how much time you spent inside?

PISTOL PETE

Oh, bout three months. Few stints.
You?

Daryl smiles. Happy to answer:

DARYL

Three years. But never more than
six months at a time. Turns out
plea bargains are my friends.

PISTOL PETE

Sure.

Pistol Pete freshens the cups with cheap rye.

DARYL

Wanna hear a story?

PISTOL PETE

I don't got one, so don't expect
one in return.

DARYL

Shouldn't care. It's from the
inside.

PISTOL PETE

Shoot, then.

Daryl leans back and stretches, excited to share.

DARYL

Did a stint in Cali once. There was
this real *bad* bastard man, I
mean...bad. White guy. Becker. He'd
cuts yer nuts off, 'Spic style, and
enjoy it, too. Balding, like, but
he'd shave it with a razor each
day. Like he'd meditate with it or
somethin.

PISTOL PETE
(bullshitting)
Sure sounds tough.

DARYL
That's right.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

MUGSHOT - BECKER

BECKER (45), a hard motherfucker. Big, sturdy, muscular. Huge "Don't fuck with me" energy as he holds the placard.

INT. CALIFORNIA PRISON - CELL - DAY

Younger Daryl in a prison jumpsuit, looks out of his cell at:
Becker finishing his daily head shave.

DARYL (V.O.)
He ain't one of them skin-head
nationalist types, neither.

PISTOL PETE (V.O.)
Was that your crew?

DARYL (V.O.)
Naw, I dealt with 'em a few times to
keep their peckers out my way, but
I'm white anyway. But Becker. He
was independent. And in for life.

Becker pats his head with water, cleaning off the rest of the
shaving cream from his smooth scalp.

DARYL (V.O.)
Now, Becker had beef with these
real skinhead boys, and figured,
rightly so, that they had their
sights on him. Their leader was
this *real* disturbed cat named Dil.

CUT TO:

MUGSHOT - DIL

DIL, tall and skinny, a pure psycho with a gap-filled grin.

INT. CALIFORNIA PRISON - COMMON AREA - DAY

A group of SKINHEADS color sketches around a card table.

DARYL (V.O.)
Shit ain't much different inside
way it's run out here. Rivals take
each other out.

Dil is surrounded by two absurdly muscular SKINHEAD SOLDIERS,
each with their own sheet they're coloring in.

PISTOL PETE (V.O.)
So what'd Becker do then?

Dil holds his up to the light and smiles that spine-chilling
grin. (The sketch and coloring job sucks - think 6-year-old.)

DARYL (V.O.)
Well...There was this new recruit,
just come in.

CUT TO:

MUGSHOT - NEW RECRUIT

A frail man, civilian-type, not the hard, inked prison lifers
we've seen thus far. Deer in the headlights. The NEW RECRUIT.

DARYL (V.O.)
Not hard or nothin. Manslaughter
maybe.

INT. CALIFORNIA PRISON - CELL - DAY

The new recruit huddles in his cell, writing a letter.

DARYL (V.O.)
One of them the judge makes an
example of. But he still had a
family that cared about'im, poor
bastard.

LAUNDRY ROOM

New Recruit folds laundry. Another INMATE lifts clothes from
a large cart.

Then: Dil and his muscle appear.

DARYL (V.O.)
So Dil is doin his routine. Makin
him his bitch and whatnot.

New Recruit shivers, tear rolls down his cheek. Dil closes
in. The other inmate backs out of the room.

DARYL (V.O.)
New whites were usually easy for
Dil. But this one had pride.
Couldn't let go yet.

New Recruit FIGHTS Dil off, but is quickly overtaken by the
huge guys.

He GRIPS the table, SCREAMS, holding on with everything he's
got. But the guys are too much.

BECKER'S CELL

Becker reads a paperback. Looks up to see the New Recruit,
face bloodied, limp back to his cell across the hall.

DARYL (V.O.)
So this goes on for a bit. Few
weeks or so. And Becker starts,
like, formulatin this plan. He's
got dirt on this fuckin guard, man,
for layin down with inmates. Like,
pervin.

CUT TO:

HEADSHOT - GUARD

The GUARD (50s), round, bushy hair, makes kissy faces
directly at the camera. Fucking creep.

DARYL (V.O.)
And Becker's got a few of them
inmates ready to turn the guard in.
So he springs it on him, shit if I
remember the guard's name.

LAUNDRY ROOM

An INMATE walks through the halls with a pile of folded
blankets. Places them down next to--

BECKER, who reaches in and pulls out A GUN.

DARYL (V.O.)

He uses the leverage to get a motherfuckin gun into camp. That's how tapped this goddamn guard was. Got a family of his own, was risin in the system ranks.

Becker slips the weapon into his jumpsuit.

EXT. - PRISON YARD -DAY

Becker watches as the New Recruit sits alone reading a book at a table. Then Dil and his boys come through, harass him.

DARYL (V.O.)

So Becker has this gun, and waits for the fish to take a few more beatings.

The New Recruit backs away, BEGS to be left alone...

MESS HALL

The New Recruit sits alone, shoveling the food into his face.

DARYL (V.O.)

Then Becker, the sick sonofabitch...Reels the fish in a lil' bit...

Becker sits down next to him. New Recruit is cautious, but Becker puts an arm around him. The poor guy eases up.

DARYL (V.O.)

Right under his wing. Nice and desperate. Treats it like their little secret.

BECKER'S CELL

Open hours. Becker beckons New Recruit into his cell.

DARYL (V.O.)

And bout 'nother week later. Becker hands him the damn gun.

We hear Daryl take a big swig of rye.

DARYL (V.O.)

And he waits...

INT. COMMON AREA - DAYS LATER - DAY

A few dozen prisoners mill about the common area. Cards, books, weights, TV privileges.

A few SKINHEADS color at a card table.

DARYL (V.O.)
And bout two, three days later...

New Recruit sits with A paperback.

DARYL (V.O.)
Dil comes around with his pair a
guys....

Dil and the guys approach New Recruit. Who immediately stands and whips out the gun--

Before anyone can react--

SLOW MOTION: BANG! Dil's head explodes, the blood washes over one of the soldiers next to him.

DARYL (V.O.)
Boom. Fish pulls out the piece and
blows all three of'em away. I still
remember the way Dil's head ended
up on his guy's face. Like the way
one of them toboggans whiz by and
splash. Just this wash of blood and
bone. Not all at once.

The guy SCREAMS, bits of Dil's skull and brains and blood cover his face.

DARYL (V.O.)
And the guy screams, which makes
him choke on Dil's blood, then
takes two in the chest.

BANG! BANG! The guy falls.

DARYL (V.O.)
And that one. Does not. Stop.
Howlin.

Inmates run and hide, New Recruit points and fires, seemingly at random. He connects on more than a few shots...

DARYL (V.O.)

And by now the place is goin nuts,
like, screamin and the fish is
panickin and firin off rounds at
random guys and they're dyin and he
even pops a guard.

A GUARD tries to talk him down, but the New Recruit POPS him
in the head. He's mortified at the work of his own hand.

DARYL (V.O.)

He can barely hold the thing,
shakin so damn much. I gotta think
in maybe thirty seconds, there's
maybe eight guys bleedin all over
the room, some of'em crawling, and
it's louder than you'd s'pect. Even
these tough guys'll scream when
there's a bug with a fuckin hand
cannon on the loose.

Daryl cowers behind an overturned card table and watches the
gunman: Shaking, point, aim...shoot. SPRAY of blood. Again...

DARYL (V.O.)

The fish barely knows what's going
on and he might not even know how
deep a shit he's in but it's like
reflex now, he's just pointin and
shootin. Don't even think it's a
power thing, he can't even process
it.

...More bodies fall.

CUT TO:

AT THE STAIRS

New Recruit, shaking and devastated, holds the gun and backs
up a flight of stairs to a second level.

RIOT GANG, in full protective gear, ease up after him.

DARYL (V.O.)

Then the riot gang shows up and
they beg him, in their own special
way, to put the gun down, stop what
he's doin, there's no way out.

Behind a face shield, an OFFICER SCREAMS.

ANOTHER POINTS A GUN--

SLOW-MOTION CLOSE ON GUARD: Screaming the words "Get down!"

New Recruit keeps backing up to the top of the stairs.

DARYL (V.O.)

And you can see the gears turnin in
this guy's head, like, starting to
get what he's done. And he's backed
all the way up the stairs and
they're closin in.

Only a few feet between them now. They STEP over a guard.

DARYL (V.O.)

And the riot police step over the
twitchin guard he popped in the
forehead. And the fish, his back
hits the door to a cell on the top
level.

We see Daryl peer from behind the overturned table, up at:

New Recruit, back against a door now.

DARYL (V.O.)

And his head lines up with the
observation window of this cell.
The gang's maybe five paces away,
thinking they're gettin an arrest--

But New Recruit jams the gun in his mouth--

DARYL (V.O.)

When he spins the gun around and
swallows the barrel. Could see it
shakin from downstairs. And then
the back of his head just explodes
all over the observation window.
And I swear, the cell?

A SPRAY of brain and blood splatters the observation window.

PISTOL PETE (V.O.)

Becker's.

DARYL (V.O.)

Damn straight.

Becker's face appears in the observation window, looking out
at the carnage.

DARYL (V.O.)

Shit, man, he's lookin through that window, through the splattered brain that *he manipulated*. His whole plan come together perfect as the third skinhead's coughin up the last of his blood, and I see his face and I just gotta think that there's this poetry to all of it.

END FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

INT. CABIN - DAY

Daryl leans back and kills the cup of whiskey. Pistol Pete shakes out of trance.

PISTOL PETE

Goddamn. What in the hell do you make of that? Poetry? It's tragic, don't care if it's inmates or what. That just sounds like starin down the void. Don't even sound human.

DARYL

Don't know. Makes me think of somethin bigger out there.

PISTOL PETE

Now what's out there that we're part of, that goddamn fucked up.

As Daryl freshens his cup:

DARYL

See that's my point. I don't think we're a part of it. But it's out there. And it makes itself known to us in times like that. Dark times, things we can't get out of life otherwise. We don't think about the things we can't think about. Until they happen. And then...we can't process.

Pistol Pete's just not having it.

PISTOL PETE

Well that don't sound like no poetry.

DARYL

I ain't talkin bout that kinda poetry. It ain't staring at a goddamn sunset and jottin down your love for Mary Jane Rottencrotch. I'm sayin it's gettin your head around things we can't understand. When they show themself to ya.

PISTOL PETE

And this Becker guy. What's he showin you?

DARYL

Becker ain't showin me shit. It's that void you said, showin me what it can do. Go stare into it. It stares right back. And makes me think of things I can't think of on my own.

PISTOL PETE

Well why's it only the dark times? What about when it's so good you're beyond understandin.

Daryl hikes his leg up on the table, a hotshot.

DARYL

Well, that ain't the type a shit I tend to find myself around.

OUTSIDE

The sun dips below the highest peak. The grass has lost its bronze from the sun.

INSIDE

Pistol Pete thinks for a beat.

PISTOL PETE

Well. I got a story for you. No violence shit, though. Just a bit unsettling.

DARYL

Ok. We got time.

Pistol Pete sits up in his chair and leans forward.

PISTOL PETE

So. Year's 1969. The Apollo 10 mission is orbiting the moon. Bout an eight-day mission. And it goes pretty well. But there's this small hiccup they get, as they're orbiting.

DARYL

I'm holdin my breath.

OUTSIDE

Twilight has reached this cabin. The sky yawns overhead, a mess of color and clouds.

PISTOL PETE (V.O.)

They're swinging across the moon, to simulate the landing. Carry out every process of the launch, the orbit. Everything but the landing. They get all these numbers and figures about how it'll go when they do land.

DARYL (V.O.)

So.

The wind picks up and loose dirt forms a dust bowl that swirls around the cabin. The moon, a proud beacon, radiates in the fresh night sky.

INSIDE

Pistol Pete really leans into this story.

PISTOL PETE

So. They swing around to the dark side of the moon.

DARYL

Don't get no light?

PISTOL PETE

No. Dark in the sense that it was unknown to Earth. Always faces away from us, and we'd never seen it.

DARYL

So.

PISTOL PETE

So. When Apollo 10 reached that
dark side of the moon,
communication with us went quiet.

DARYL

Why's that?

PISTOL PETE

Can't send shit through the moon.
They was on the far side. So total
silence from us. But...they didn't
hear silence up there. There was
this kind of soft, high-pitched
music they heard. A little bit like
static, but an elegant drift to it.
Just kinda floatin across their
radio waves.

DARYL

Bullshit.

PISTOL PETE

Space music, it was called.
Astronauts heard noises comin from
somewhere when they were passing by
the dark side of the moon.

DARYL

Radio shit. What's it called?
Feedback? Interference? Radio
interference, that's all it was.

PISTOL PETE

Well it ain't from us, cuz we was
on the wrong side of the moon to
get signals up there.

DARYL

Bullshit. Stuff can bounce all
around up there.

PISTOL PETE

My point is, that's some unknown
shit right there. Kinda like that
feeling you got with that Becker.

DARYL

You layin God shit on me now?

PISTOL PETE

No more than you laid poetry shit
on me. You believe in god?

DARYL
When I'm playin him.

PISTOL PETE
Well I don't think anybody plays
god with shit like that happenin
out there. Not our level.

EXT. CABIN - DESERT - NIGHT

Darkness has set in. A single tree, dead for years, implores
the open sky next to a lone streetlight. Beneath it: Pistol
Pete's idle pickup.

A large borer beetle emerges from a rut under the truck and
crawls up the tire.

It BURIES the pinchers into the rubber, and falls back to the
earth.

Then it begins its climb again.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Daryl gazes out the window. Pistol Pete sizes him up. They're
both woozy with the booze, now.

PISTOL PETE
So how long you been out, Daryl.

DARYL
Bout a week. First job Moses got me
back on. Simple one...So you know
anything bout the cat they hired to
take Walter out?

PISTOL PETE
I know he's good.

DARYL
You ever seen his face?

PISTOL PETE
Nope.

DARYL
Heard he was an old-fashioned
Nickajack man.

PISTOL PETE
I heard he was from West Texas.

DARYL

Well we can agree he's good. And he
don't get used often.

Daryl eyes Pistol Pete.

DARYL (CONT'D)

You ain't been drinkin much.

PISTOL PETE

Not thirsty no more.

DARYL

Don't find it polite, makin a man
drink alone.

PISTOL PETE

What exactly did you tell Moses
bout Walter?

DARYL

The truth. That Walter gon flip
with the investigation. Why.

PISTOL PETE

What'd Moses say to that.

Shrugs.

DARYL

Talked bout settin Walter up.
Shipped him out here, motel. Got
the sniper in town. Same as he told
you, reckon.

Pistol Pete cracks a smile.

PISTOL PETE

So you really think Moses gonna
clip Walter?

Daryl straightens.

DARYL

What you talkin bout.

He locates his rifle in the corner of the room.

PISTOL PETE

Just want your thought process,
Daryl. That's all.

DARYL

Relax. Have a drink. Don't like
your tone much.

Pistol Pete JERKS to his feet. Daryl pulls a revolver from
his boot and aims it right between Pistol Pete's eyes.

DARYL (CONT'D)

Don't like your standin much.

Pistol Pete stays calm.

PISTOL PETE

Ain't it weird, Moses would send us
out here to huntin country to wait
out the night and then drive into
town just to mark a motel where
Walter's staying? Don't it sound
like, I don't know, some sort of
unwanted risk?

DARYL

Unwanted risk is comin out of your
mouth right now.

Pistol Pete puts his hands in the air and widens his smile.

PISTOL PETE

I'm unarmed. Don't worry.

DARYL

Fuck is this?

He pulls back the hammer and shifts his aim to the door.

PISTOL PETE

Oh, nobody's coming through that
door. Nobody but you, and the
moment you do, you're gonna hit the
dirt without even hearin the shot.

Daryl goes pale.

DARYL

The sniper?

PISTOL PETE

You really think Moses would take
your word over Walter's? He's made,
and paid his time.

DARYL

He's here for me?

PISTOL PETE
Fuck you think, asshole.

Daryl shakes the gun in desperate plea.

DARYL
No...hear me out, Moses got it all
wrong.

Pistol Pete backs to the door, keeping his hands up.

PISTOL PETE
Listen, pal, I ain't a goddamn
messenger boy. I'm a delivery boy.

DARYL
No...wait...

From the doorway:

PISTOL PETE
Anyway, have yourself a good night.
And ah, thanks for takin this so
well, man.

And Pistol Pete is gone.

Daryl is left alone, the gun pointed at the door, shaking. He
listens to Pistol Pete walk to his truck, start it, and go.

DARYL
No...no, no, no, no, no, no...

He stands and paces the room, desperation mounting. Picks up
his rifle.

DARYL (CONT'D)
What...make a run for it...where's
that fuckin sniper...

He DOWNS the rest of a pint.

DARYL (CONT'D)
Where! Sniper! Fucking sniper!

CUT TO:

EXT. CABIN - DESERT - NIGHT

Endless black sky overhead, pierced by infinite stars. The
dark shades of mountain tops add to the texture.

Desert, mountains, nothingness. Then a voice echoes:

DARYL (O.S.)
Fucking! Sniper!!!

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLES: Chapter 2: The Sniper

FADE IN:

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

A small town breaks the endless plains. The landscape is dotted with browned farmland.

TITLES: The Dust Bowl. Oklahoma, 1935.

A huge DUST STORM moves toward the feeble buildings, ready to fucking swallow them whole.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

It's small, and more than modest - these people are poor.
MOTHER (25), thin and worn, searches empty cupboards--

Bare.

To the fridge, she pours a glass of milk. It barely fills half. Then she adds a splash of water and puts it on the table in front of:

BOY (9), bushy crop of hair, sun-browned skin. And thin.

MOTHER
Drink, now boy.

He eyes the glass...

Across the table: a GIRL (2) with physical disabilities. She adorably smacks her lips on a bottle.

Her brother smiles at her in a moment of peace--

BANG!

FATHER (27) bursts in. Mother has raw nerves.

FATHER
Fuckin storms!

He SLAMS the door behind him and now we notice: all the windows have been boarded to protect from the oncoming dust storm. Looks like they've prepared for an apocalypse. It's a shoddy job, too.

MOTHER
Quit yer hollerin. We ain't got
nothin for dinner.

FATHER
Heat some milk for me.

She lights a cigarette.

MOTHER
We're out.

FATHER
Fuck!

BANGS the table in frustration.

MOTHER
Stop slammin, the baby gonna cry.

He plops down and takes a flask from his overalls.

FATHER
Well she should save her fuckin
energy.

A long pull from the flask, then a SIGH. Now the room quiets.
Father looks at the Boy.

FATHER (CONT'D)
You alright, boy?

A feeble nod.

FATHER (CONT'D)
Yer daddy's havin a bad stretch
right now, you understand? Farm's
dry. Land's choked.

The boy pushes his glass of milk toward his father.

FATHER (CONT'D)
Thank you, son.

Mother watches, exhaling smoke. The baby babbles.

Father stares at the milk...

MOTHER
(to the boy)
You wanna move west, baby?

FATHER
He wanna stay right here.

Anger and turmoil simmer in Father.

FATHER (CONT'D)
We gonna stay right here, in this
goddamn farm we started.

MOTHER
We been there, don't be stupid now--

Father JERKS UP, knocks the chair over. Girl starts to CRY.

FATHER
Fuckin unemployment line's four
days long. Government ain't shit.

MOTHER
Well the food's out, so we gotta
act.

He PUNCHES the wall--

FATHER
You're about done actin!

Baby WAILS.

Father grabs Mother's shoulders and pulls her close, shouts:

FATHER (CONT'D)
I was ready to give my fuckin life
to this land!

Boy lifts the girl from her highchair.

FATHER (CONT'D)
And what'd it give back? Huh!
Nothin! We're ruined!

Tears stream down Mother's face.

The boy carries his crying sister upstairs. This is a
practiced routine.

Father SLAMS Mother into the wall.

FATHER (CONT'D)
We're fucking ruined!

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Morning light streams into the Boy's bedroom, illuminating swirls of floating dust.

He sits up in bed and sees his sister, awake, trying to catch floaters in the air.

MOTHER (O.S.)
Get the fuck up! You drank all
goddamn night feelin sorry for
yourself!

Boy smiles, going after other floaters with his sister. She GIGGLES.

MOTHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Got a black eye now, cuzza
you...fuckin good for nothin--

FATHER (O.S.)
Get the hell offa me!

We hear him STORM out--

FATHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'm talkin to my brother--

Mother goes running out after him. Boy watches them in the front yard through a window. His sister plays behind him.

MOTHER
Don't get no ideas, now, you can't
be doin what ya'll been talkin
bout...

FATHER
You said yourself we ain't got no
options. I'm actin...

MOTHER
You can't do that, we can all go.

SLAMS the door of his truck.

FATHER
You gon do what I tell you.

He PEELS out.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER

Sun sets on the plains. Red light suffuses across the dirty floorboards.

The Boy and Girl have papers and pencils spread out on the floor. He draws a stick figure family in front of their house. Mother, Father, Boy and Girl.

The Girl babbles happily, marking her paper with jagged lines.

DOWNSTAIRS

The Mother, eyes red from crying, takes a greedy pull from a cigarette with trembling hands.

We hear a TRUCK pull up outside and she darts to the door.

UPSTAIRS

Boy hears some COMMOTION outside. He goes to the window and sees:

Father and his BROTHER, talking closely. Mother listens, then falls to her knees in ANGUISH.

Father looks strung out.

Something isn't right.

The boy watches from the window.

His little sister scribbles on the paper.

EXT. PLAINS - NIGHT

Dark. Still. Among the endless sea of black, deserted land, there rests one small light.

It is the house. The only ones awake.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Morning. More sunlight and dust. The Boy blinks awake and rolls over--

Empty bed beside him. No sister.

The rest of the room: empty.

Mother pushes through the door--

MOTHER

C'mon now, baby, we gotta go.

She's been crying. A total, sleepless mess.

He goes to the window--

His father has the truck packed to the gills. All their belongings.

BOY

What's going on?

MOTHER

C'mon. We're leavin.

The Boy runs--

DOWNSTAIRS

And sees the house empty. And still no sister.

Mother storms out behind him and goes to the truck, the pile of sheets in her arms.

MOTHER

(to Father)

Get the mattress and we'll go.

She gets in the truck and SLAMS the door.

Father walks in and the Boy runs into him, his tiny fists pounding on the man's barreled chest.

BOY

Where is she! Where is she!

Father pushes the Boy away. He dives right back in.

BOY (CONT'D)

Where is she!

FATHER

C'mon now, boy, we gotta get movin.

BOY

What did you do! Where is she!

In the truck, Mother has a thousand-yard stare.

Father SHOVES the boy away now, pushing him down.

FATHER

You listen to me! Git yer shit, and
get in the truck! Your mother
wanted to leave, well, we're
leavin.

The Boy's chest HEAVES.

FATHER (CONT'D)

I'll drag ya out bitchin and moanin
if I have to. But we ain't staying.

The Boy runs outside and up to his mother in the truck.

OUTSIDE

Boy BANGS on the window.

BOY

What did he do, Mama! What did you
do!

Nothing. She just stares ahead.

The man's Brother watches, leaning on the side of the house.
The Boy sees him.

MOMENTS LATER

Truck's full. Father in the driver's seat. Mother stares
straight ahead, letting the tears roll.

The Boy: WAILING. He pounds on the rear windshield of the
pickup.

They pull away, down the dirt road.

The Brother watches them drive away, smoking. He's got dirt
covering his hands.

The truck drives off, the Boy HOLLERING.

Behind the Brother, to the side of the house:

A FRESH MOUND OF SOIL.

The sun blasts overhead.

The truck disappears in the distance.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT - MOUNTAINS - BACK TO THE SNIPER

Dawn light rises over the mountains.

At a ridge peak, we see a small camp set up: cooler of food, military-issued ammunition box, and a camo blanket where--

THE SNIPER (55) lay on his belly, a long-range scoped rifle up to his eye. In the distance:

THE CABIN.

The sniper has an even beard, graying. A military haircut.

CROSSHAIR POV: The open door of the cabin.

INT. CABIN - MORNING

The first rays of sunlight spread across the filthy floor.

Daryl VOMITS--

Coughs and wipes his mouth. Rinses it out with another swig of rye, which causes him to gag. There's a burn on his neck.

Behind him, we see an overturned chair. A snapped rope. *He tried to hang himself.*

DARYL

Fuck...

He peeks out of the window to see the harsh desolate landscape that surrounds him. But no sign of the sniper.

DARYL (CONT'D)

Where you hidin...

He grips his rifle, breathing HEAVILY.

Beat.

He stands, drunk and desperate. Picks up the last bottle of whiskey and DOWNS it, choking on the swallow.

Face streaked with tears. Throat red and throbbing. The cabin's a mess. So is Daryl.

Mountains loom all around the tiny cabin, imposing and massive. Somewhere, the sniper waits.

Daryl clutches his rifle and SURGES THROUGH THE DOOR--

OUTSIDE

Daryl SCREAMS and points his rifle up to the sky--

DARYL
God! If I have to die, you will
have to die--

BANG!

A single shot EXPLODES through his head. Straight through his mouth. His skull and its contents spew everywhere.

He collapses to the dust.

Now it's just dirt, mountains and sun again.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLES: Chapter 3: Mrs. Horse

FADE IN:

EXT. RANCH - DAY

A small house overlooking a small, quiet ranch. Goats, sheep, and horses graze lazily in the morning dew.

On the front porch, a small sign reads: "Horse Family Ranch." There sits:

MICHAEL HORSE (50s), a Native American man in a denim jacket, sips coffee, looking out at the rising sun.

A police cruiser rolls down the dirt road and comes to a stop. The man rises and smiles.

TRACY HORSE (50) steps out - weathered face, thin, strong arms and hair in a neat bun. She smiles up at him.

TRACY
Howdy.

MICHAEL
Well hello.

She walks up to the porch and pecks him on the cheek. They sit, and she hikes a leg up on the porch railing.

TRACY
How you enjoying the mornin
Michael?

MICHAEL
It's as fine as it gets. And
somehow, it managed to get a whole
lot better now that you're here.

TRACY
Ain't you sweet.

MICHAEL
Let me get you coffee.

TRACY
That'd be just fine.

But then--

Her radio CHIRPS.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)
(over radio)
Ah, Sheriff Horse?

Michael pauses. She leans into her walkie.

TRACY
(into walkie)
Go 'head.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)
(over radio)
Ahh, we have a report of a 10-54,
most likely a 187.

TRACY
(into walkie)
How violent?

Beat.

DISPATCHER (O.S.)
(over radio)
You're gonna want to see this...

TRACY
(into walkie)
10-4. En route.

MICHAEL
A murder?

She stands. Michael takes her gently by the shoulders and
kisses her.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Please, for the love of god, be
careful Tracy.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Tracy pulls up to the cabin where a group of four police officers wait for her. She throws it in park and steps out.

TRACY
What do we got fellas?

The deputy, RAMON (35) hands her a coffee and shows her to--
THE BODY OF DARYL. Head blown open. Dried blood in the dust.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Oh, boy. That's a doozy, ain't it
Ramon.

RAMON
Sure is. Local hunter called it in
bout an hour ago. Heard a shot and
investigated. Was lookin for
pronghorn. Found this.

TRACY
What's inside?

An old cop named BUCK (65), a lifer, fat and gentle, speaks:

BUCK
Buncha empty bottles. The man sure
did imbibe before this happened.

TRACY
Anything else?

BUCK
Well...

TRACY
Well, spit it out Buck.

RAMON
It looks like he tried to hang
himself.

TRACY
Hang himself?

RAMON
That's right.

The other two officers, LOUIE and DANNY (20s) are twins, and often speak in turn.

LOUIE

Now who'd wanna shoot a man who's
tryna hang himself?

DANNY

He was tryna save'im the trouble...

Tracy thinks. Sips her coffee.

TRACY

Well. If he knew he was gonna get
shot, maybe he tried to do it
himself instead.

Louie and Danny nod. They hadn't thought of that.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Ain't nowhere to run to out here,
his prospects were grim.

BUCK

Well if the hangin didn't do the
trick, someone out here sure did.

Tracy squats to get a better look at the body. She winces at the gore.

TRACY

They sure did. Right through the
mouth, huh?

LOUIE

That sure shut'im up, dinnit?

DANNY

Don't be insensitive Louie.

She stands again, another sip of coffee.

DANNY (CONT'D)

What do ya think Sheriff?

TRACY

Well Danny. I believe this was done
at hand of a sniper. Sharpshooter.

LOUIE

A sniper?

DANNY

Shoot...

They look around, trying to imagine where a sniper would be hiding.

RAMON

A damn good one, then...what makes you say that?

Tracy looks out into the mountains.

TRACY

Hey, Buck? How far you reckon them mountains are from us? How many football fields.

Buck considers.

BUCK

At least four, maybe five or six.

TRACY

I'd say about that, yeah. That's pretty far, ain't it?

BUCK

Sure is.

She hikes up her belt.

TRACY

I seen this before. Military man, shootin folks through the mouth. We gotta doozy alright. Ramon.

RAMON

Ya chief?

TRACY

Go to the hardware store, get some supplies for an overnight trip. You said it was called in bout an hour ago?

RAMON

Yes ma'am.

TRACY

Reckon we'll be about two hours behind. Make it snappy. I'll get the horses, meet back here in forty-five. We can catch'im on horseback by nightfall.

LOUIE

Uh, what should we do chief?

TRACY

Collect all the evidence you can,
radio me if you get any
revelations. Ramon and I, we're
headin into the mountains. Buck,
make sure the whole damn town don't
burn down while we're gone. Copy?

He nods. Ramon sets out in his cruiser. Tracy CRUNCHES
through the dirt back to her car.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Ramon walks through the aisles with a carriage, picking
various camping and hiking supplies.

His radio CHIRPS--

SON (O.S.)

(over radio)

Dad come in, over, Dad come in,
over.

Ramon beeps into his walkie.

RAMON

(into walkie)

Buddy, what're you doin? You gotta
stay off this line, pal.

INT. RAMON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Ramon's SON (9) sits at the table over a bowl of cereal with
a walkie talkie.

Ramon's WIFE (35) at the sink behind him, turns and smiles.

SON

(into walkie)

Aw, c'mon dad, first time this
week!

INTERCUT RAMON / SON

RAMON

(smiles)

Buddy, it's only Tuesday...

SON

Watcha doin?

RAMON

I'm at the hardware store right now, getting some supplies. Hey, is mom there?

SON

Yeah, she's here.

RAMON

Well tell her I'm going to be late tonight.

He reaches the check-out counter and unloads the supplies. ARTY, the victim from earlier, looking disheveled, rings him up.

RAMON (CONT'D)

Sheriff and I are taking a trip into the mountains. We gotta look for somebody.

Arty overhears and perks up.

SON

Awww man...did you find a body?

RAMON

Yeah we did, now no more talk about it.

SON

Gross!

RAMON

Just tell mom we may have to camp overnight.

SON

Alright...Hey dad?

RAMON

I gotta go pal, what's up?

SON

I wanna go camping.

Arty watches Ramon.

RAMON

Alright, well, we'll go when I get back.

SON

Promise?

RAMON

I promise...now, get ready for school, and please stay off this line.

SON

Alright.

RAMON

Love you, buddy. Have a good day. I'll see you.

SON

Love you too. Over and out!

RAMON

Over and out.

Ramon forks over some cash to Arty.

ARTY

Chasin after somebody, huh?

RAMON

People these days, man, don't make'im like they used to.

ARTY

Ain't that right. Take care of yourself, now.

Ramon takes the goods and leaves. Arty watches him go.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE - DAY

Tracy's cruiser trails dust as she approaches.

INSIDE

A dozen or so cats mewl and climb around. They scatter when Tracy opens the door.

TRACY

Bec?

BEC (O.S.)

Kitchen!

Tracy steps through the reeking house past the cats to see:

BEC (70s), an old woman in a padded rocking chair sits at the kitchen table, knitting.

BEC (CONT'D)
Mornin, Tracy.

TRACY
How ya do, Bec.

BEC
Oh. You're lookin at it, mostly.

TRACY
How many those things you got, now?

BEC
Cats? Oh, quite a few. They keep
showin up long as I keep feedin'em.

TRACY
Most things that breathe would do
that.

Tracy sits.

BEC
Speaking of feeding, do you eat?

TRACY
'Scuse me?

BEC
Look like you could hide behind a
goddamn straw. You eat like a bird,
woman. Make fun of me and these
cats, but at least I'd keep you
fed.

TRACY
I'll accept the compliment.

Beat.

BEC
Called the house this mornin.

TRACY
Musta just missed me.

BEC
Michael said you're goin out on a
bit of a trip.

TRACY
That we are.

BEC

Well here--

She hands her a knit blanket.

BEC (CONT'D)

Was gonna wait til your birthday,
but you might need it when the sun
drops tonight.

TRACY

Thank you. Too kind. You're gettin
a little too good at this...

BEC

It's nothin. Passin the time, is
all. Last thing to do when there
ain't nothin else.

TRACY

Listen, did Michael tell ya who it
is we're goin after?

Bec looks up from her knitting.

BEC

No he did not.

TRACY

I think-- well, I think they're
back, Bec.

BEC

Those fools?

She waves it off.

BEC (CONT'D)

How many times I gotta tell ya, I
don't want no revenge. I done made
my peace, and that's that.

Tracy stares at her.

BEC (CONT'D)

You can't spend all your time tryna
get back what's been took cuz you
end up losin even more. Got no
right to try and balance things on
your own...Eddie...Eddie wouldn't
have wanted it anyhow.

TRACY

Didn't say anything about revenge.

BEC

Well, it was implied. And we both
had somethin special took from us
so I know how you think.

Tracy looks around the kitchen- filthy, cluttered. Bec
catches her looking around.

BEC (CONT'D)

That all you came to tell me?

TRACY

I came for the early birthday
present, too.

BEC

Ha! Bullshittin me.

Smiles. Tracy pets a cat.

BEC (CONT'D)

Listen, now, Trace. You be careful.

TRACY

Michael already told me.

BEC

That ain't what I mean. These
people, desperate people, act
different. Not like a man.
Desperation strips that. Instinct
don't care bout morals. Out'er yer
mind, that's when people turn to
depravity.

TRACY

Aren't you learnin.

BEC

Damn straight. But listen what I'm
tellin you. Survival is a different
thought process. You're entering
something around depravity,
people'll do anythin. So, with that
in mind, dammit, girl, be careful.

Tracy stares.

BEC (CONT'D)

There's people still here that care
about ya. Don't go chasin outta
spite and give them a loss, too.

Tracy stands. More cats hop and scatter.

TRACY
Thanks for the blanket.

Fast fade out.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Tracy and Ramon on horseback, the beasts loaded up with supplies. They set out--

RAMON
You really think we can catch'im by nightfall?

TRACY
If we move at a good clip and guess right, think we do, yeah.

RAMON
How do you know we're guessin right?

TRACY
You're guessin. I been doin this a long time, Ramon, I can track a fucker through the dirt. Don't care how light his foot is.

RAMON
Ain't you something.

She *tsk tsk* and pulls ahead of him.

Ramon gets his horse to trot after her.

RAMON (CONT'D)
Say, chief?

TRACY
Ya?

RAMON
How you so sure it's a sniper? And what's it really gotta do bout everything?

TRACY
Ha, you on that again?

RAMON
Well, I figured you had a story but didn't wanna spill it in front of the boys.

TRACY
You figured right.

RAMON
We gotta ride ahead of us, maybe
you could indulge me?

Tracy can't help but crack a smile.

TRACY
You inquisitive child.

RAMON
Humor me, chief, c'mon. Boys wanna
know about ya. You come in and take
over just fine, but it's been a few
years and we'd like to know bout
our boss some--

TRACY
El Paso, 1970.

RAMON
What's that?

TRACY
El Paso. In 1970.

RAMON
What about it?

TRACY
You asked for the damn story, boy,
I'm tellin you.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

EXT. BANK - DAY

A group of BANK ROBBERS, adorned in different cartoon
character masks, pillowcases of cash in their hands, take
shelter behind a line of parked cars as--

A line of COPS get positioned behind the doors of their
cruisers and FIRE at the crooks.

One crook in a SCOOBY-DOO MASK, we get the sense he's the
leader, barks orders:

SCOOBY DOO
Fuckin spread out and return fire!

BANG! BANG! BANG!

TRACY (V.O.)

Was a bank robbery, gone wrong. One
of the nuts shot a fuckin teller
cuz she hit the alarm, and cops
flooded the place.

Another crook, a CASPER THE GHOST MASK, stands up to shoot--

BANG!

Takes one in the forehead. Drops, blood seeps through. Scooby
Doo looks at him and SHOUTS.

In a rage, he stands and FIRES--

Hits a cop--

Police fire ceases for the moment.

SCOOBY DOO

Damn fuckin pigs! Move! Where in
the fuck is our backup!

The crooks move--

A third, in a FRED FLINTSTONE MASK, follows Scooby Doo.

TRACY (V.O.)

It got bloody, quick. Few cops went
down early, they only clipped one
of the bastards.

Civilians cower in the streets. Scooby Doo GRABS one, a young
WOMAN, and keeps moving. She SCREAMS.

TRACY (V.O.)

Was broad daylight, folks out and
about. 'Fore long, they took a
hostage. Kept good cover.

Scooby, Fred, and the fourth in a YOGI BEAR MASK, crouch
behind a short wall and plan their next move.

SCOOBY DOO

We wait for fuckin backup!

FRED FLINTSTONE

What about her?

The hostage looks at them, wild-eyed.

SCOOBY DOO
Shit goes south, we got some
leverage.

She MOANS.

TRACY (V.O.)
And that's when shit *really* went
south.

BANG!

A SCREAM--

Scooby peaks his head over the wall and sees a cop face down.
He looks at a cruiser--

THE GLASS WINDOW EXPLODES with another CRACK.

A civilian SCREAMS again.

Scooby ducks back down.

SCOOBY DOO
Our boy's here.

YOGI BEAR
Bout fuckin time!

Cops scramble...another gets PICKED OFF.

TRACY (V.O.)
They had some sorta backup. A
sniper. Real good, military-level.
Investigation reckoned later he was
on top of this factory. Pickin cops
off from behind.

The robbers stand and FIRE in unison. Cops COWER. Glass
rains.

More sniper shots ECHO through the chaos.

We find a COP among the huddled force. Balding, 40, slight
pudge. This is EDDIE. He waits for a break in the sniper fire
and stands--

BOLTS for the wall. Squeezes off a few shots at Scooby.

SCOOBY DOO
Fuck! Run!

Scooby PUSHES the hostage at the charging cop and the gang
BOLTS.

Eddie grabs the hostage, spins, and squeezes off a shot--

CLIPS Fred Flintstone in the shoulder--

Eddie drops to the ground, covering the hostage.

EDDIE

It's gonna be--

BANG!

His head explodes, gore washing and bone splintering all over the hostage's face. She opens her mouth in a silent scream, in total shock.

TRACY (V.O.)

When he hit my Eddie, they 'spect it was from about four hundred yards. Never felt a thing, they told me.

Scooby and Yogi turn to see Fred Flintstone moaning on the ground. They keep running, bags of cash in hand.

TRACY (V.O.)

Despite that distance, he was able to hit each target the same...Through the mouth.

The scene is pure chaos. Shattered glass, WHOOPING alarms, civilians cowering, cops crouching. And bodies laying in the street...

TRACY (V.O.)

Folks stayed like that for nearly an hour, afraid to leave cover cuz of the sniper. Gave the gang more than enough time to get away.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Scooby Doo and Yogi The Bear hop a fence and run to a van. They start it up and peel out.

TRACY (V.O.)

Fourteen dead total, my Eddie one of'em. Closed casket, too. All were. Never caught the other fuckers, but they made out with a decent loot.

CUT TO:

HEADSHOT - SCOOPY DOO

Scooby Doo pulls off his mask to reveal:

MOSES FELICIANO, a little younger but still showing those city miles, flashes a shit-eating grin.

TRACY (V.O.)
Moses Feliciano is their sorta de facto chief.

CUT TO:

HEADSHOT - YOGI THE BEAR

Yogi pulls off his mask to reveal:

A young PISTOL PETE, who winks at the camera.

TRACY (V.O.)
Pistol Pete Bolero, been ridin with Moses for a while.

CUT TO:

MUGSHOT - FRED FLINTSTONE

Fred Flintstone stands for his mugshot. A hand comes and RIPS the mask off to reveal:

WALTER. He frowns.

TRACY (V.O.)
And the bastard we caught? Walter Corman. Managed to get out on parole few weeks back. Did ten years.

END FLASHBACK.

EXT. DESERT - MOUNTAINS - DAY

Ramon rides next to Tracy up the mountain trail.

TRACY
I was pushin for the chair. In a goddamn miracle in this state of Texas, he avoided it cuz he himself didn't shoot no one. He won a new lease on life.

Ramon looks out to the distance.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Gang's been doin petty shit on and
off ever since. But we never caught
the sharpshooter. Ain't a
coincidence this new guy takes one
through the mouth from five
football fields away same month
Corman gets out?

Tracy spits--

TRACY (CONT'D)
I'm gonna get this fuckin guy,
Ramon. And then I'm gonna get
Moses. Been runnin this show for
too damn long.

Ramon nods.

TRACY (CONT'D)
I'm taking this motherfucker down.

RAMON
You got it, chief.

The unforgiving West Texas landscape beckons them onward.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLES: Chapter 4: Rats & Traps

FADE IN:

EXT. PLATANO DURADO - DAY

Again, it's too early in the day for this place. Sun beats
down, dust swirls.

A STRIPPER in street clothes pulls her outfits for the night
from the trunk and walks to the door.

We follow her inside--

INT. PLATANO DURADO - CONTINUOUS

Adjust to the light as the stripper walks by tables with
chairs on top, JANITOR sweeps the floor.

She walks up to Wendell:

SRIPPER

Moses in? Wanna talk about--

WENDELL

In a meeting. Try later.

Through the door--

MOSES' OFFICE

Moses sits at his desk across from Walter, Pistol Pete, and DAVEY SCHNOOKS (40), another soldier.

PISTOL PETE

Didn't hear the shot til dawn. But he got'im alright.

MOSES

Good. Now, track the sniper. Told me he'd depart south, toward Mexico, but I don't believe him.

Walter leans in--

WALTER

Go after the sniper? Boss...

MOSES

I reckon he's headed east, toward the airport, maybe fly abroad or somewhere far away in the states.

WALTER

Why in god's name would we go after him?

Moses clears his throat. Phlegmy.

MOSES

Walter you want this job or not?

He shuts up.

PISTOL PETE

Now, boss, I ain't criticizing...

Moses flicks his eyes over to Pistol Pete.

PISTOL PETE (CONT'D)

But ain't it seem unnecessary? Just let him run.

MOSES

You remember the fightin rings we
use to have?

PISTOL PETE

The dogs? Shit, was a while ago.
But yeah.

MOSES

'Member King David?

PISTOL PETE

Proudest pit in the west.

MOSES

Had a good run, didn't he?

Moses SNORTS more phlegm.

MOSES (CONT'D)

Bout, last two, three fights, you
remember he started actin a little
different? Didn't quite have that
same charge. Almost like, he's
waitin for the younger pit to make
the first move. Sorta like, he knew
how it was ending, but was thinking
about the ending a little too much.

DAVEY SCHNOOKS

You think a dog thinks all that?

WALTER

Shut up, Davey.

Moses ignores him. Takes out a pouch of tobacco and rolling
papers, and spreads them out on the desk.

MOSES

He still won his fights, we still
took a haul. But was just a little
off, and we knew, old King David's
time was runnin thin.

He pinches the tobacco onto the rolling paper as he talks:

MOSES (CONT'D)

He was a good fighter, but you
can't just retire a fightin dog.
Society got no place for him once
the fightin's done. Now, he's been
a good fighter for us. Discreet,
dependable. Successful.

(MORE)

MOSES (CONT'D)

Last time we spoke, however brief,
I got the sense the charge wasn't
quite there. The spark left the
stable, so to speak. And I ain't
too keen on havin the likes of his
knowledge simply fade into the
sunset.

He finishes rolling. The guys listen.

MOSES (CONT'D)

Every dog has his day, as they say.

Moses wets the rolled cigarette, spits a bit of loose tobacco.

MOSES (CONT'D)

Now. You three are my most trusted.
And I figured Walter could use a
nice little welcome-back-job. No
risk of the law, if our guy ran
into the Guadalupes.

FLICKS his lighter.

MOSES (CONT'D)

Go after him, get him, leave him
there, I don't care. Just get it
done.

The three guys stand.

MOSES (CONT'D)

Careful, now.

DAVEY SCHNOOKS

Don't 'spect he knows we're coming?

MOSES

I didn't tell him Davey. Don't mean
he don't know. Out ya go, now.

They leave.

Moses PUFFS his cigarette.

EXT. PLATANO DURADO - DAY

Davey Schnooks, Walter and Pistol Pete climb into Pete's
truck just as an old sedan RACES up to the club.

Arty jumps out and hustles inside.

MOSES' OFFICE

Moses leans back, puffing smoke and enjoying the cigarette.

Arty BURSTS in, trailed by a furious Wendell.

ARTY

Moses!

Wendell grabs him--

WENDELL

Sorry boss he come stormin in--

Wendell GRIPS him and yanks him for the door. Moses doesn't react.

ARTY

No, Moses, wait, I got info!

WENDELL

Out ya go, punk--

ARTY

It's the law!

Moses raises a hand.

MOSES

Hold it.

Wendell stops in the doorway.

Moses beckons him inside. Wendell TOSSES Arty to the floor.

MOSES (CONT'D)

Speak. Quick. You gotta a business to run.

Arty catches his breath.

ARTY

I heard the law. That Spic deputy. At the store, buyin supplies.

MOSES

And?

ARTY

Talkin bout chasin someone into the mountains. Sounded heavy, thought it coulda been one of your guys with all the stuff goin on.

Moses thinks.

MOSES

Good boy. Now get outta here.
Wendell, send in Charlie and come
back.

OUTSIDE

Wendell TOSSES Arty into the dust and disappears back inside.
Arty rolls over, MOANS.

WENDELL

Ask nicely next time!

INSIDE

Wendell walks behind the bar, where Skinny Charlie sits in
the dark with the night vision goggles on.

CHARLIE'S NIGHT VISION POV: Everything's green and bright.
Then, the meaty hand of Wendell blocks his view.

SKINNY CHARLIE

Hey!

WENDELL

Boss time. Don't fuck this up.

MOSES' OFFICE

Wendell and Charlie sit opposite Moses, who rolls another
cigarette.

MOSES

Our fine hardware store pup come in
and told us the law is also after
our sniper. Now, I just sent
Walter, Pete and Davey Schnooks out
there after him.

They watch him pinch the tobacco.

MOSES (CONT'D)

I need you two to arm yourselves
and head in after the law.

Rolls the paper--

MOSES (CONT'D)
Trail the first crew, and when you
see the law...

Licks the paper--

MOSES (CONT'D)
Man, them mountains sure is harsh,
ain't they?

Off Wendell and Charlie, absorbing the reality of their task.

EXT. GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS - DAY

Walter, Davey Schnooks and Pistol Pete -- the FIRST GANG --
set to rest. They put down their packs and rifles by a rock
formation.

DAVEY SCHNOOKS
Ten years in the can prepare you
for this Walter?

They catch their breath, huffing and puffing.

WALTER
Shit, Davey. If I knew this was
waitin for me I woulda botched my
parole hearing.

Chuckles. They sip water and all three light cigarettes.

WALTER (CONT'D)
So what kinda ship Moses been
running?

PISTOL PETE
What's that?

WALTER
Well. The Feliciano squad don't get
much press inside. Wondering just
how active ya'll have been.

PISTOL PETE
We had that dog fightin ring he was
talking about. But that got busted.
And we had a nice little marijuana
business with the Mexicans, but ah,
that sort of soured.

WALTER
So how you been earnin?

Davey shrugs.

PISTOL PETE

Well now we got this hardware store.

WALTER

Yeah, but like, what're you *really* doin to earn?

DAVEY SCHNOOKS

Small stuff, mostly, I guess. Moses ain't been too keen on attracting a lot of attention.

WALTER

Hm. He ain't lost his edge, has he?

Davey and Pistol Pete exchange a glance.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Alright, let's move on.

They all flick their cigarettes, gather their things and set out again.

EXT. GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS - DAY

Tracy and Ramon have their horses trotting. The sun blazes.

Ramon looks at her...

RAMON

So. What was Eddie like? Don't mean to prod.

TRACY

It's alright. He was a good man, a worker. A lifer of a cop, taught me a lot about it.

RAMON

You join up at the same time? Together?

TRACY

He started a bit earlier than me, but I was training when I met him.

RAMON

And you met Michael...?

TRACY

When I moved here. He was just...in the community.

Ramon looks out at the landscape.

RAMON

Gabby and I, we talked about what'd happen, if...somethin were to happen.

TRACY

That so?

RAMON

Yeah. And, maybe it's just cuz nothin has happened, but, I'm not so sure I'd be thrilled about her remarrying. No offense, of course.

TRACY

None taken. You do your own thing, I'm doing mine.

RAMON

Didn't mean nothing--

TRACY

I know, deputy, you're fine.

RAMON

Just heavy stuff, that's all.

TRACY

Oh I'm aware.

No sound but the bugs and the horses.

TRACY (CONT'D)

I met Eddie at a party. A retirement for one of the guys, Eddie was in line to move up. He said the sweetest things, and in such a way that I believed every word.

The sun blasts down.

TRACY (CONT'D)

I really don't think you stop loving a person, like that anyway. You just, become someone different, really.

(MORE)

TRACY (CONT'D)

And I haven't become anyone that I did not want to be. It's just, not who I was.

Ramon isn't sure how to take that. Tracy clarifies--

TRACY (CONT'D)

So next time it comes up with Gabby. Or if you're just thinking about it, know that. She won't stop, she'll just be someone else.

A beat, then:

RAMON

Well shit.

EXT. GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS - RIDGE - DAY

Far away from the main trails, among various rock formations. Up near a high point, with a vista of the mountains.

THE SNIPER situates himself behind a bit of cover.

Unloads his ammunition box: some water, non-perishable food. Lays down the blanket.

Assembles his rifle -- stock and magazine, then attaches the scope.

Adjusts to get into position, and eyes the scope--

SCOPE POV: TRACY AND RAMON, trotting up on horseback.

EXT. GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS - DAY

Further down the trail, at a lower elevation, Wendell and Skinny Charlie hike. Wendell pours sweat in this heat. Skinny Charlie WHEEZES and pulls from a cigarette.

It's slow going with these two, the SECOND GANG.

Through labored breaths:

WENDELL

This is a real chance to make an impression on Moses, if we catch the law the right way. Don't fuck this up for me, Charlie.

SKINNY CHARLIE

Shit, I ain't gonna fuck nothin up.
Don't you worry.

WENDELL

I seen the way you been playin with
them night goggles. You seem
distracted.

SKINNY CHARLIE

What you know about bein
distracted, fat boy? You're the one
huffin and puffin up this hill.

WENDELL

Least I'm focused. Your mind's
never on the prize.

SKINNY CHARLIE

You don't know what the hell you're
sayin. Moses never lets you do
anything worthwhile other than toss
out drunks cuz he knows that big
head of yours is empty.

A GROAN:

WENDELL

Alright, does us no good bickering.

SKINNY CHARLIE

You started it.

WENDELL

I just wanna catch this fuckin law.

EXT. GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Tracy and Ramon bring their horses up to the same rock
formation where we saw the first gang. They set to rest.

Tracy climbs off her horse and reaches for water.

TRACY

Not sure how fast he's movin in
this heat.

Ramon SWIGS water.

RAMON

Hey chief? Boys back at the station
are gonna wanna know a little about
their boss.

TRACY

You mentioned that.

RAMON

Well, I'd like to share some of your history, if you'd be OK with that.

TRACY

That's fine.

RAMON

They're good kids, those twins. And Buck couldn't hurt a fly, much less disrespect a superior.

TRACY

You're a small town station, I understand. Sorry I been closed-off, just takes me a bit to warm up to a place.

RAMON

It's alright--

TRACY

This is my first big case since I moved in. And ya'll handled takin a new boss well.

RAMON

I had to talk'em into it, not gonna lie. The twins may be kind but they ain't bright.

TRACY

Cancer took the last fella, that right?

RAMON

Yes ma'am. A drunk anyway, probably in cahoots with Moses one way or another. I was kinda hopin for a hardass, anyway.

TRACY

What'd you call me?

She winks, he smiles. Tracy looks down at her boot--

TRACY (CONT'D)

What do we have here?

She bends down and picks up:

A cigarette butt.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Don't see many pronghorn rippin
American Spirits, do ya?

RAMON
Think it's our sharpshooter?

Tracy's eyes search the surrounding area. She picks up another.

TRACY
Could be, if he rested here a
while. Wouldn't think he'd be so
careless.

RAMON
You think he wants us to find him?

Tracy looks at him, thinking.

TRACY
Could be. Let's be wary of a setup.
You gotta sidearm besides that
rifle?

RAMON
Yes ma'am.

TRACY
Good. Keep them clean and loaded,
we may just need'em.

Ramon does a quick sign of the cross as he mounts his horse.
And they're off.

EXT. GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS - A FEW MINUTES LATER

This time, the second gang limps up and plops down: Skinny
Charlie and big Wendell.

They light cigarettes and catch their breath. Wendell
finishes his water--

WENDELL
Ay, you got any water left?

SKINNY CHARLIE
I got my own supply.
(smiles)
You didn't stock up big man?

WENDELL

Shit.

SKINNY CHARLIE

Well let's get movin then, if
you're outta water. Can't get stuck
out here. Let's get this law.

He flicks his cigarette. Wendell puts his arms up--

WENDELL

What the hell are you thinkin?

SKINNY CHARLIE

What?

WENDELL

Fuck man, you can't just throw a
cigarette in the grass like that.

SKINNY CHARLIE

And why the hell not?

WENDELL

It'll start a brushfire out here.

Scoffs--

SKINNY CHARLIE

You shittin me?

WENDELL

Am not. You can't be doin that.
It's serious!

He bends down to pick up the cigarette--

SEES TWO BUTTS.

SKINNY CHARLIE

You're so fulla shit, man--

WENDELL

Hey. How many those you smoke?

SKINNY CHARLIE

What? You saw me fat man. One.

Charlie walks over and looks down--

SKINNY CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You idiot. That means somebody else
was here.

WENDELL

Hey, I found it. Does that mean
it's the law?

SKINNY CHARLIE

Must be. Sniper ain't that dumb.
Law must not know we're comin if
they're gonna be that careless.

They stand and get their shit together.

SKINNY CHARLIE (CONT'D)

We'll follow their trail. Let's
move.

EXT. GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS - OFF TRAIL - DAY

The first gang is tired, thirsty, and lost.

PISTOL PETE

Fuck is this shit, man, this is
bullshit. What're we supposed to
do? Wandering the damn desert.

DAVEY SCHNOOKS

Ooh, Pistol Pete now where's that
resilience I'm told of.

PISTOL PETE

It's wherever that right mind of
yours is hidin.

WALTER

Enough, both of ya. We're exposed
out here. Keep quiet, stay alert.

PISTOL PETE

Easy bossman.

DAVEY SCHNOOKS

All a sudden you're running things?

WALTER

Just keep quiet. I'll pull rank if
I have to you dipshits.

Pistol Pete motions to the endless terrain around them.

PISTOL PETE

We don't have sign of a trail.
We're in the middle of nowhere. Did
Moses send us to die?

WALTER

Alright, let's break then. I'm gonna have a thought and pinch a loaf.

DAVEY SCHNOOKS

Weren't you just talkin about bein exposed?

WALTER

Gotta go, ya gotta go.

He walks off, down a small ridge, to do his business.

Pistol Pete plops down on his pack. Davey stretches out on a patch of grass and SIGHS.

DAVEY SCHNOOKS

This day, is gonna be long.

PISTOL PETE

How you think I feel? Had to go out here to clip the sonafabitch that started this whole thing, didn't sleep a wink, now he's got me back out here soon as it gets hot again.

DAVEY SCHNOOKS

Moses been pushin.

PISTOL PETE

What you make of Walter's comment earlier?

Davey shrugs it off.

DAVEY SCHNOOKS

Who knows. Long as my bills get paid, I don't care who has to call himself captain.

CUT TO:

BEHIND A RIDGE

Tracy and Ramon hop off their horses and duck behind a rock formation. Tracy hands Ramon binoculars.

TRACY

Ain't the sniper. I see two. Think I recognize the taller one, Pistol Pete Bolero.

Ramon peers out at them.

RAMON

Oh, that's the Feliciano crew
alright. They after us?

TRACY

Doubt they know anybody's out here.
Probably looking for the sniper,
too.

Ramon readies his rifle.

TRACY (CONT'D)

But we found'em first.

RAMON

How you wanna handle this?

THE FIRST GANG

Davey picks his teeth. Pistol Pete stands and rummages
through his pack--

DAVEY SCHNOOKS

How long you think we're gonna have
to chase this bastard.

PISTOL PETE

Long as he's runnin.

TRACY (O.S.)

There will be no runnin, now, you
hear?

The guys looks up to see:

Tracy and Ramon, approaching with rifles raised...

Pistol Pete chuckles.

PISTOL PETE

Well, shit. Hello Sheriff.

TRACY

Don't start. Lemme see your guns.
Now.

Pistol Pete CLICKS his tongue and tosses a hand gun to the
dirt. Davey follows suit.

TRACY (CONT'D)

How bout the sidearms?

Beat.

Ramons COCKS his rifle.

RAMON
Do as she says.

Pistol Pete reaches down to his sock and tosses a .38.

DAVEY SCHNOOKS
I ain't got one.

RAMON
You speak English?

DAVEY SCHNOOKS
Do you? Fuckin beaner.

Ramon steps closer.

RAMON
You're gonna drop the sidearm. Or
I'm gonna drop you.

TRACY
Ramon...keep your head...

DAVEY SCHNOOKS
Yeah, keep your head kiddo.

Pistol Pete watches her.

TRACY
On your bellies, the both of ya.

She takes cuffs from her belt and walks up to the guys.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Go on, now. Make this easy.

Davey and Pete hesitate, and their EYES WIDEN.

RAMON
She said--

SKINNY CHARLIE (O.S.)
Oh, we heard her. Just don't think
they'll be obliging.

Fuck.

Ramon and Tracy turn to see Skinny Charlie and Wendell, each
with a hand cannon outstretched.

PISTOL PETE
Good to see you boys.

WENDELL
Heard the law was after ya, so we
came runnin.

Ramon aims the rifle at Skinny Charlie.

PISTOL PETE
How bout you tell your wetback to
stop pointin that gun, Sheriff?

Ramon looks at Tracy. She nods.

Ramon puts the gun down.

DAVEY SCHNOOKS
Sure am glad you didn't fuck this
up, Wendell.

Wendell shrugs. Then Pistol Pete takes over:

PISTOL PETE
On your knees you two.

Tracy and Ramon exchange a glance.

PISTOL PETE (CONT'D)
Man, been wantin to say that to
you, Sheriff. Now, on your knees,
lady. And toss them guns.

They throw the rifles. Davey smiles and picks up his own.

DAVEY SCHNOOKS
Sidearms, too.

They relinquish the sidearms. Pistol Pete walks over and
KICKS Ramon to his knees.

Then he walks up to Tracy, gliding a finger across her
shoulder.

PISTOL PETE
Get to your knees for me.

The other guys watch. Tracy slowly drops to her knees. Pete
bends down and grabs her cuffs, cinching them TIGHT on her
wrists. Tracy winces.

Pistol Pete picks up his hand gun and squares up on Tracy.

PISTOL PETE (CONT'D)
 Been watchin you for bout a year
 now Sheriff. Your little station
 has always seemed to have a hard-on
 for us.

He smiles.

PISTOL PETE (CONT'D)
 You gotta hard on for me, Sheriff?

She stares up at him. If looks could kill.

PISTOL PETE (CONT'D)
 Well now, lookie here, I got one
 for you.

He strokes his handgun and places it back in his holster.

BEHIND A RIDGE

Walter finishes his business and crouches out of sight,
 watching. He sees Pistol Pete walk up to Tracy.

BACK TO THE GROUP

Wendell, gun outstretched, GULPS. Davey watches as Pete:

Unzips his pants.

PISTOL PETE
 What do you think, Sheriff? Don't
 think that Injun Michael Horse-Man
 gonna mind, is he?

Tracy PULLS at the cuffs, to no avail. Pete approaches--

RAMON
 Motherfucker!

He lunges--

THUD!

Davey HITS him with the rifle. Ramon drops, blood streaks his
 forehead and he MOANS.

PISTOL PETE
 Oh, you'll be dead soon and this'll
 be over. I just can't let you rot
 until I see what you was like...

He looks at Ramon--

PISTOL PETE (CONT'D)
I'm sure he's curious too, so we'll
keep him alive to watch.

The other guys are SILENT.

Pistol Pete smiles. Ramon GROANS. Tracy shuffles back on her knees, but with her hands tied, it's hard.

PISTOL PETE (CONT'D)
Don't back away from me.

He grabs her--

PULLS HER TOWARD HIM--

BANG!

Tracy flinches, her face flecked with blood.

Pistol Pete's head has a hole blown through it. He waivers for a second, then collapses in a gore-strewn heap.

The rest of the group reels, ducking and lunging to the dirt.

From the skies above:

BANG!

Wendell takes one. Blood spurts from his neck and he goes down.

Tracy rolls away from the group, fumbling for her keys--

Gets a hand on them,

AND GETS HERSELF FREE.

Ramon army crawls toward her as:

DAVEY SCHNOOKS
Sniper! Where are you!

The surrounding mountains stretch forever. *The Sniper is nowhere and everywhere.*

Skinny Charlie sees Tracy go for a gun--

BANG! A shot erupts in the dirt next to Charlie. *Missed.* Charlie gathers himself and points his gun at Tracy--

BANG!

Tracy gets there first, takes down Charlie.

WALTER

Makes a beeline down the ridge, stumbling and sprinting away from the carnage.

BACK TO THE GROUP

Davey glances at the bodies of Wendell, Charlie and Pete. Sees Tracy aim her handgun at him.

Another shot ERUPTS right next to Davey. Just missed him.

DAVEY SCHNOOKS

Fuck it--

Shoves the barrel under his jaw and FIRES.

Blood and gore SPRAY into the air above him.

And it's over.

TRACY

(to Ramon)

Are you hit?

Trembling, Ramon shakes his head. Tracy looks to the horses:

One sprints away. But hers is still tied down. She turns back to Ramon.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Listen to me. We have to run for my horse.

Ramon shakes his head again, scared shitless.

TRACY (CONT'D)

He's not gonna shoot us. We just have to get to the horse. We know where he's shooting from.

Tries to catch his breath. Hyperventilating.

TRACY (CONT'D)

He's near the caves. The shots came from that direction. We get to that horse, we can get him.

(beat)

He's not gonna shoot us. He won't shoot us.

AND SHE RUNS.

Beat.

Ramon follows.

They sprint through the field, hauling ass for their lives.

AT THE HORSE

Tracy gets there first, rips the horse free and jumps on.

Ramon hops up behind her.

AND THEY BOOK IT.

EXT. GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS - ON HORSEBACK - DAY

Tracy grips the reins and leans into the horse's neck. Ramon hangs onto her for dear life.

TRACY

Shots came from the North East, bet
my ass he'll try to lose us in the
cave entrances.

RAMON

Fuck, if you say so!

EXT. GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS - CAVE ENTRANCES - DAY

Tracy ties the horse up to a rock formation at the entrance to a trailhead that leads to a network of caves.

TRACY

You get your gun back during that
carnage?

RAMON

Just my sidearm.

TRACY

Good enough. We move quick, and
quiet. Stay low, and keep your
goddamn ears wide open.

He stops her.

RAMON

How'd you know he wasn't gonna
shoot?

She looks at him.

TRACY
I didn't. But it was the only thing
that was gonna get you to run,
wasn't it?

Jesus Christ.

RAMON
Damn you, woman.

She winks.

TRACY
C'mon now. Ain't outta this yet,
Deputy.

EXT. GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS - CAVES - CONTINUOUS

A trail snakes among arching rock formations and small cave outlets. Some sections are wet with runoff.

Tracy crouches and runs her fingers across some scuffed mud.

TRACY
He's been through here. Not long
ago. Keep moving.

DEEPER IN THE CAVES

Tracy walks slow and cautious. She unclips her gun. Ramon sees her and grips his handgun, eyes watchful.

Tracy touches Ramon's arm--

Points to another track. Ramon sees it.

She brings a finger up to her lips: *Shhh.*

They inch along.

A NOISE--

Small rocks fall from a ledge--

Tracy keeps moving.

The light behind them FLICKERS,

TRACY SPINS AND POINTS HER GUN--

THE SNIPER.

Ramon, eyes wide, The Sniper holds a hand gun, barrell pressed against the back of his head.

Tracy aims hers right between his eyes. *She's got him.*

TRACY

Don't move, now, you hear?

The Sniper looks at her.

TRACY (CONT'D)

You shoot him, you go too. It's your life. Can't take us both like this.

Beat.

THE SNIPER

If you shoot, I could take him down with me.

Ramon's eyes go wide, watching Tracy.

RAMON

Trace...

Tracy stares absolute NAILS through The Sniper. Every fucking fiber of her being flames from her eyes through this man.

CLOSE ON HER FACE: weathered, bold. And understanding.

TRACY

It's alright, Ramon. We aren't about to leave a few heads blown open in this fuckin cave, are we?

THE SNIPER

That's up to you.

TRACY

Well it's about as up to you as it is up to me. So I'm going to lower my gun--

RAMON

Trace--

TRACY

I'm gonna lower my gun, and you're gonna back out of this cave.

He watches her.

TRACY (CONT'D)

I'm fighting the desperation right now, sir. I'm fighting it off hard. So back the fuck out before I lose the battle.

She lowers her gun.

Ramon's hands SHAKE.

And The Sniper lowers his.

And he back away, eyes glued to Tracy. Just as he reaches the opening--

TRACY (CONT'D)

If you return, so will my vengeance. You ain't getting away from me twice.

A smile twitches on The Sniper's lips.

THE SNIPER

Neither would you.

TRACY

Don't reckon you'd take that gamble. Get the fuck out of my state.

And he's gone.

Ramon BREATHES. She looks at him.

RAMON

I don't know whether to smack you or thank you.

TRACY

Right now, it'd be smarter to just thank me. Now get your shit back together. We're going to take down Moses and whatever's left of his pathetic crew.

Sweat pours down her face.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLES: Chapter 5: Into A Setting Sun

FADE IN:

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Oppressive heat, big sky, endless plains.

WALTER comes limping, panting, sweating, into view.

He's stripped his shirt and wrapped it around his head for feeble protection from the sun. His shoes are ripped. He's exhausted and helpless.

EXT. DESERT - LATER

Walter can barely keep himself upright. His lips are split with dried sunburn. Certainly has sun poisoning. He looks out in the distance:

Can see the faint outline of a structure. The Platano Durado!

He MOANS and limps onward.

EXT. PLATANO DURADO - DAY

Walter stumbles up to the front door and pushes through.

INT. PLATANO DURADO - MOSES' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Moses leans back in his chair, his head arched to the ceiling. A stripper kneels between his legs, her head bobbing up and down.

Walter SPILLS onto the floor, fully collapsing now, finally.

The stripper and Moses jerk to their feet, alarmed.

MOSES

Walter? The fuck happened? Where
are the others.

Walter GASPS on the floor, uttering the only word, the only thing, that matters in his whole world--

WALTER

Water...

Moses disappears. Walter, on all fours, breathes heavily. TAP WATER runs and Moses reappears.

He crouches down and hands him the water.

MOSES

Explain. Quickly.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Ramon holds onto Tracy as she pushes the horse to a sustained gallop.

In the distance: their town awaits in the blurry heat.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Tracy and Ramon come up to the station, the horse in a trot. Ramon HOPS down and ties the horse.

Tracy swings off.

TRACY
Nobody here?

RAMON
This don't look good.

Tracy draws her weapon and KICKS in the door--

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Tracy points the gun through the halls. Ramon follows.

TRACY
Buck?

Nothing.

She turns a corner--

Nothing again. They split up.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Boys?

RAMON
Who's home? Speak now!

Ramon reaches an office and FLICKS on the lights... His face says it all.

On the window to the office: a bullet hole, spider-webbed.

Tracy comes up behind him and lowers her gun. Emotion washes over her face. They stare down at:

The bodies of Buck, Louie, and Danny, their torsos ravaged by bloody bullet holes. Eyes still open, faces showing shock and fear captured in a moment: death.

Ramon covers his face. Tracy walks to the boys and closes their eyes.

TRACY

I'm gettin the state on the line.
Give me the address of their shitty
strip club.

INT. POLICE STATION - TRACY'S OFFICE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Tracy hangs up her walkie and leans back, downing a glass of whiskey.

Ramon sulks on the other side of her desk, his glass untouched.

TRACY

Feds are on the way from El Paso.
Take'em a minute to get their asses
out here. Let's move, make sure
Moses and company stay there.

Ramon stares into the floor.

TRACY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, deputy. They were good
men.

He's fighting tears.

TRACY (CONT'D)

But waiting ain't gonna do us any
good. We gotta get down there and
see if they're holding out.

Nothing.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Deputy!
(beat)
Ramon!

Phone RINGS, snapping the tension.

TRACY (CONT'D)

(into phone)
Ya?

She waits.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Speak, dammit!

Ramon looks up at her.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
(over phone)
Hello.

TRACY
Michael? Where are you?

Ramon straightens in his chair--

MICHAEL (V.O.)
(over phone)
I'm-- I'm at a strip club.

TRACY
What?

There are muffled VOICES on the other line.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
(over phone)
El Platano Durado.

Tracy goes pale.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
(over phone)
There are men here. I am-- I'm tied
to a chair. They're telling me...

Tracy covers her mouth in shock.

Ramon stands and opens a cabinet of WEAPONS. He takes two
handguns and begins to load them.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
(over phone)
They are telling me that they are
going to kill me in twenty minutes
if you do not walk through the
door.

TRACY
Michael...

Ramon holsters the handguns and moves to rifles.

MICHAEL (V.O.)
(over phone)
Tracy, I--

TRACY
It's going to be ok Michael--

More NOISES and static over the phone.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Michael? Michael!

MOSES (V.O.)
(over phone)
See you soon, sheriff.

CLICK. Her eyes wet with tears.

Ramon hands her a gun.

INT./EXT. TRACY'S CRUISER - MOVING - DAY

Tracy and Ramon sit wordless as she drives.

The landscape extends into infinity around them.

Sky. Sun. Dust. And the cruiser.

EXT. PLATANO DURADO - DAY

The cruiser SCREECHES into the parking lot, roiling dust. Two STRIPPERS book it out of the club, jump in their cars and take off as--

Tracy and Ramon step out, guns at the ready.

TRACY
Michael! Moses! I'm here!

The club seems to slouch in the sun.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Everybody just slow down, let's talk!

Beat.

Then: the door CREAKS open and out steps:

Arty. A black eye, swollen, his nose busted. Somebody took out their anger on this guy.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Arthur?

ARTY
(shameful)
Sheriff.

TRACY

The hell you doing here?

ARTY

Moses sent me out to tell you that
you're...you're cordially invited
inside the Platano Durado.

TRACY

Well thank you for that Arty.

ARTY

Yes ma'am.

Like a scolded dog, he hangs his head and walks away.

AT THE FRONT DOOR

Tracy doesn't watch him go. She walks up to the door, which
is cracked ajar. Just before she walks in:

MOSES (O.S.)

'Fore you come through that door,
Tracy, do know that we got four
guns pointed at it.

Tracy freezes.

MOSES (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Proceed with caution.

TRACY

You gonna let me come in and talk
to you, Moses? Figure this out?

MOSES (O.S.)

Well that depends, now.

Frustrated:

TRACY

On what?!

MOSES (O.S.)

Ha. Do you bemoan my stipulations?

TRACY

Why don't you put the thesaurus
down, and the guns, and let Michael
go.

A CHUCKLE.

MOSES (O.S.)

Clever, girl, clever. Just make sure before you dare to step foot in my club, you call off that backup. I know you called it, cavalry's coming, and before I'm comfortable chatting I need that to no longer be the case.

TRACY

Alright. I'll have Ramon call if off--

MOSES (O.S.)

No ma'am. You yourself will call it off. And if you lie, and anybody else shows up at any time, I will shoot Mr. Horse in his head.

Tracy hesitates.

MOSES (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I don't hear you walkin, Mrs. Horse.

TRACY

Michael?

Nothing.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Let me hear Michael's voice so...so I know he's ok.

GRUNTS--

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Hello, Tracy. I am ok for now.

She SIGHS...

MOSES (O.S.)

I have a peculiar skill of ensuring that your husbands disappear, Mrs. Horse. And now it's up to you whether or not that happens again today.

Tracy keeps it together--

MOSES (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Go call off the cavalry and we'll talk.

TRACY
I'll be back for you, Michael.

BACK AT TRACY'S CRUISER

Ramon waits, clutching his weapon. He watches Tracy approach.

RAMON
What's the deal, ma'am.

She picks up her walkie.

TRACY
(into walkie)
Cavalry this is station 62, repeat
station 6-2. Calling about a Code
8, calling about the previous Code
8. Now a Code 4, repeat, now a Code
4, no backup or assistance
required, over.

Ramon looks at her like she's fucking crazy.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
(over radio)
Ahh, repeat Station 6-2 over?

TRACY
(into walkie)
No further assistance required,
Code 4 please, over.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
(over radio)
Ahh, copy that 6-2, you're clear,
over and out.

RAMON
The fuck's the matter with you? We
can take these guys down!

TRACY
If anyone else shows up, they're
gonna kill him.

RAMON
Fuck...

TRACY
Let's go get him.

Then she stops him--

TRACY (CONT'D)

Deputy. I know you gotta boy. And Gabby...You follow me as long as you can, but I won't hold it against you if you don't. These people are desperate.

RAMON

You kidding me? Like I'm gonna let you go in there alone after everything? With you the whole way, Sheriff.

She nods, touches his shoulder. And they move.

EXT. PLATANO DURADO - FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Tracy approaches, Ramon in tow. She unclips her weapon and leans up to the door.

TRACY

Backup's cancelled, Moses. Just us now.

She eases at the door--

Pushes it open--

Reveal: the empty strip club. Neon lights flicker and BUZZ inside. Not a soul in sight.

Tracy steps inside. And then Ramon.

INT. PLATANO DURADO - CONTINUOUS

Tracy moves along the wall, keeping a view of the entire floor. Motions for Ramon to take the other wall.

They creep along the edge, guns pointed.

Pink light washes over Tracy's intense face. Eyes alert, entire body tense. She reaches the private VIP rooms. There are three, each door is closed.

Tries one: Locked.

A second: Locked.

A third: OPEN!

KICKS the door and wields the gun. Inside:

EMPTY. Colored lights rotate on a disco ball that hangs from the ceiling.

AT THE BAR

Ramon crouches in front of the bar, easing his way along.

BEHIND THE BAR:

WALTER (sunburned) crouches on the floor, clutching a huge handgun. He listens to Ramon's footsteps pass.

TRACY

Steps away from the VIP room and slinks along the wall. She meets Ramon's eyes from across the room. Ramon motions to--

A door between them. MOSES' OFFICE.

Tracy nods, and they make their way for it, sticking to the outer edge of the room.

AT THE OFFICE DOOR

Tracy and Ramon meet. She nods at him, makes a hand motion for him to follow her lead.

BEHIND TRACY AND RAMON-- we see Walter stand up from behind the bar, gun in hand.

INSIDE MOSES' OFFICE

Michael is tied to a chair and gagged, face bloody and beaten.

Moses has the NIGHT VISION GOGGLES positioned on his head. He stands at the circuit breaker, ready to pull the plug on the lights.

AT THE OFFICE DOOR

Walter aims the gun behind them.

Tracy rears back and KICKS IN THE DOOR.

INSIDE

Just as the door busts in, Moses HITS THE CIRCUIT BREAKER and flips down the goggles.

EVERYTHING GOES BLACK.

OUTSIDE

BANG!

FLASH of light from the gun barrel.

Walter fires, can't tell if he hit anyone. There's a SCRAMBLE, but in the pitch black, we can't see anything.

Darkness, silence.

Michael WHIMPERS.

Beat.

We find TRACY, huddled behind an overturned table.

Suddenly--

THE FRONT DOOR OPENS, flooding the floor with light--

ARTY

Moses? Sheriff? I heard a--

BANG BANG BANG!!

Tracy huddles behind the table.

Arty collapses in a heap of bullet spray.

The door shuts again, cinching out all light.

Tracy's face: sweaty, scared.

Desperate.

She moves.

MOSES

Crouches just outside his office, the goggles on his face.

MOSES NIGHT VISION POV: the floor is awash in green glow. He's a few feet from the door. Watches as:

TRACY SNEAKS INTO THE OFFICE.

He's got her in his sights. Moses raises his gun and steps to the doorway after her.

TRACY

Slips into the office, quiet as she can.

Waits. Hears BREATHS.

TRACY
(whispers)
Michael?

He MOANS, soft and low.

TRACY (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Oh, thank god.

MOSES NIGHT VISION POV

He sees Tracy crouched in the center of the room. He reaches the gun out, setting his sights on her head.

Sees her hands wavering in front of her, feeling for Michael. Pure fear on her face. *We can practically feel Moses smile at his prey.*

TRACY

Tries to control her breathing. She reaches out in an attempt to feel Michael. And grips her gun.

She contains panic and desperate fear.

Inches forward--

And HEARS SOMETHING BEHIND HER.

Instinct takes over.

She spins, drops to the floor, and squeezes off two perfect shots.

BANG! BANG!

In the flashes, we can catch Moses' goggles.

THUD--

Moses collapses, without ever getting a shot off.

Tracy EXHALES.

MICHAEL
(muffled)
Tracy...

She drops the gun and darts over to him. Feels for his hands, starts to rip at the binds.

TRACY
I can't get them. I can't see.

MOANS.

Tracy finds Michael's mouth and removes the gag.

MICHAEL
(gasping)
Circuit breaker is behind you.

TRACY
Oh god, Michael.

She feels along the wall for the circuit breaker.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Are you ok?

MICHAEL
I'm ok. Just get the lights on and
we can get out of here.

She finds the box--

TRACY
Got it!

Fumbles for a beat. Then--

CLICK

The lights come on and FLOOD THE ROOM.

Michael's eyes adjust.

Tracy squints, takes in the sight of:

WALTER IN THE DOORWAY.

Huge gun in his hand, shit-eating grin on his face. He points it at Tracy.

Tracy sees her gun on the floor and slouches ever so slightly.

Oh come the FUCK on...

Walter CLICKS the hammer back--

TRACY (CONT'D)
Wait, Mr. Corman--

BANG!

Tracy flinches.

Blood spurts from WALTER'S HEAD. And he collapses.

Ramon!

He clutches his rifle in the doorway and looks at Tracy.

RAMON
Got nothin to hold against me, huh?

Tracy releases a SIGH/SOB/LAUGH. And falls to her knees behind Michael. Tears at the binds and releases him.

He falls into her arms with a SIGH. She brushes the hair out of his sweaty, bloodied face.

Tracy weeps.

Ramon watches them from the doorway.

RAMON (CONT'D)
I'll start with cleanup.

He turns and leaves Tracy and Michael alone, in each other's arms, together.

Tracy kisses Michael.

The desperation drains from her body. Relief and love take its place.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLES: Epilogue: A Lonesome, Crowded Terminal

FADE IN:

INT. AIRPORT - TERMINAL - DAY

Rows of people wait in uncomfortable seats. Most of them fat, many of them with cowboy hats, bolo ties, baggy slacks.

A fat man MUNCHES peanuts.

Another SIPS a drink.

Then we find: THE SNIPER, with a paperback. He's fit and clean-cut, and stands out from the rest of the crowd. He has a placid contentedness on his face.

An intercom DRONES overhead:

INTERCOM (O.S.)
Attention all passengers, you are
in the gate for Flight AA0217 to
Boston, Massachusetts, we'll begin
the boarding process shortly.

The Sniper's eyes drift to:

A young Mexican-American WOMAN (20), in a university sweatshirt, PLUCKS at a banjo. The pleasant sound drifts over the scene.

She makes eye contact with The Sniper as he enjoys her playing, and she smiles.

The Sniper smiles back, adds a slight head nod.

INTERCOM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Group A for Flight AA0217 to Boston
now boarding, Group A.

Some people stand. Others don't. The Sniper stays put as a new sound comes into the mix:

CLUCK CLUCK, CLUCK CLUCK, CLUCK CLUCK.

The Sniper turns to see:

An adorable young GIRL (7), dressed well, skips along the marble corridor. She HUMS a little tune as she does this.

Again, The Sniper smiles, charmed. So does the banjo player.

CLUCK CLUCK, CLUCK CLUCK, CLUCK CLUCK.

INTERCOM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Group B for Flight AA0217 to
Boston, please board, that's Groups
A and B.

The fat man munching peanuts stands. The Sniper watches the little girl skip back and forth, and the banjo's notes seem to soothe him.

For a moment, he seems at peace.

CLUCK CLUCK, CLUCK CLUCK, CLUCK--

But the rhythm is thrown off as the little girl TRIPS and soars through the air--

SMACK--

She lands face-first into the hard marble corridor.

The Sniper watches.

Blood flows from her face immediately. A beat later, she starts WAILING.

A young MOTHER rushes over to check the damage. As the child wails, we see fresh gaps where her teeth have been knocked out. Her nose: broken.

Faces turn and look on in shock and awe. There's an alarming amount of blood.

WAILING.

The blood pools around her. Some people cover their mouths. Others look on in morbid fascination.

The banjo player cranes her neck to see, no longer playing.

INTERCOM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Group C, please board, Groups A
through C please come aboard.

The Sniper barely pulls his eyes away from the howling child as he gathers his luggage and makes for the boarding line.

He glances to the banjo player, transfixed on the violence. She doesn't meet his eyes this time.

The WAILING pierces the onlookers' hushed voices. An ATTENDANT beeps the flyers through.

ATTENDANT
(shaking head)
That's a trip to the hospital...

The Sniper waits for his turn, and as he's beeped through, a MAN behind him:

MAN

Jesus, sure is a lotta blood.

The Mother lifts her crying child and tries to calm her. Just as she does, her foot slips in the pool of blood--

And she TUMBLES TO THE GROUND with the child, falling right into the blood. Which stains their clothes.

GASPS--

More shock from onlookers as people rush to their aid.

The Sniper walks down the boarding bridge, leaving the spoiled scene behind him.

INT. PLANE - CONTINUOUS

The Sniper puts his carry-on in the overhead compartment and sits, buckling up at once.

He turns to the window.

INT. PLANE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

The Sniper looks out the window as the plane accelerates on the runway, pavement racing beneath him.

Placid. Emotionless. He stares outside at the landscape.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

The plane lifts off the runway and soars into the sky.

It leaves the wilderness of West Texas behind, disappearing into a sea of blue sky, due east.

The plane escapes the risen sun.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.