

AT THE FOOT OF FAITH

by

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AT THE FOOT OF FAITH

FADE IN:

EXT. GREENVILLE SOUTH CAROLINA - WINGATE PLANTATION - NIGHT

There is a shed in the back corner of the plantation grounds.

INT. SHED - NIGHT

The lights are dim and there are shovels and carts everywhere. ISSAC DODD, a heavily-built African-American man in his early 30's, is chained to the wall. Bruises on his face and upper body are clearly visible.

He lifts his head when he sees BELLA, a 17 year-old mulatto girl who is clearly pregnant. They speak in whispers.

BELLA

Master Wingate be saying you killed
Adam Stack's younga son.

ISAAC

(scoffs)
Wish I could take credit for it.

BELLA

They gonna hang you at sunrise. You
gotta get gone. A pack mule's
loaded with supplies. Two horses
are saddled.

ISSAC

Why two?

BELLA

I'm coming with you.

ISAAC

No need for you to go running off.
These white folks good to you. You
high yaller.

BELLA

(points to belly)
How can you say they good to me?

ISAAC

They what? Who?

Isaac raises up, turning to Bella. Beat. Issac Sighs.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Jesse?

BELLA

I don't even know which is the
Daddy.

ISAAC

Shit, girl. What you mean you don't
know. Is it Jesse or his father?

BELLA

Could be either one.

Isaac sits up, an angry expression on his face. Bella begins
to cry.

ISAAC

Both...

Bella nods, pain written across her face.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Your daddy knows about his?

Again she nods her head.

BELLA

He don't do nothing.

ISAAC

He's a chicken belly coward. He
ain't got no nuts. Man got to have
some nuts.

BELLA

What he gonna do?

Isaac grim faced reaches over and pulls Bella to him, holding
her in his arms.

ISAAC

You gonna come with me. Far away
this time. From this day on I want
you to know that you got me.

Isaac holds Bella close to him.

*

FADE TO BLACK.

*

SUPER: MONTANA TERRITORY - ONE YEAR LATER

FADE IN:

EXT. SNOW-CAPPED MOUNTAIN PEAKS - ROLLING GREEN HILLS - DAY

Distant rumble is heard, like thunder. Ground vibrates. Rumbling sounds grow louder and louder. A herd of buffalo explodes into the scene, running across the hills in the direction of a fenced-in pasture at the bottom of the hill.

BLACK COWBOYS flank the bisons on all sides.

Issac, the trail boss of the drive, rides on the left point. *

To his right is JAKE LOGAN the ramrod. Jake is tall, lean and easy-going, in his early 40's.

PREACHER, a weather-beaten, razor-thin man with hard, dark features is on the left swing position. The oldest among the Runaways at age 45. *

Riding across the herd, on the right swing, is JEREMIAH, early 30's. He's a tall, lanky man with light skin. *

Riding drag, up the rear of the herd, are DAKOTA JOHN and FUZZY, both late 30's. Dakota John is a brash, handsome runaway in his early 20's. Fuzzy is a raton, fat-cheeked man. A large cigar dangles from his lips and a guitar hangs on the side of his saddle. *

Five other runaways, DEAD EYE, ELMO, BOOTINBULL, MANNY and TANKS help push the herd down the hill and into the pasture.

EXT. HILLSIDE - OVERLOOKING PASTURE - DAY

Three men sit on horseback watching the Runaways drive the last bison into the pasture.

WILEY is a government land agent. He's impressed as he watches the last buffalo enter the pasture. Two other LAND AGENTS sit on horseback beside him.

WILEY
Damn good work.

AGENT#1

Never see them Boys around these parts before.

WILEY

Been around a year or two. Funny thing, your best cattle drivers are boys just like them.

AGENT#2

Didn't know niggas could do this kind of work.

WILEY

Guess we learn something every day.

Wiley rides down towards the pasture with the Agents following.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO PASTURE - DAY

Isaac and Jake stand next to the gate. Wiley and his two Agents ride up.

WILEY

Issac, good to see you. Jake, good to see you, too. How many you lose?

ISAAC

Five.

JAKE

Always lose a few.

WILEY

Five? We can live with that.

Wiley dismounts, moves over to Isaac and Jake. They shake hands. Wiley removes an envelope from his pocket, hands it to Isaac. Isaac looks inside the envelope and smiles.

ISSAC

Thanks.

Wiley nods.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE PASTURE - DAY

Fuzzy and DEAD EYE, another cowboy, sit under a tree overlooking the pasture. Jeremiah is off to himself, leaning against the fence. Fuzzy's guitar rests on his lap, cigar in his mouth. Dead Eye nods towards Isaac, Jake and Wiley.

FUZZY

Look at that.

DEAD EYE

White man shaking a Negro's hand.

(Pause)

Now I seen everything.

EXT. MAIN STREET - BOZEMAN - DAY

A busy town. People everywhere. FUR TRAPPERS, MINERS and everyday TOWN FOLKS. Sounds of a blacksmith's hammer echo up and down the street.

Stage coach pulls up in front of the hotel.

Two slave hunters, HANK and CODY, move down the sidewalk handing out new posters, tacking some to the side of buildings. A few of the locals look at the posters, but most don't give them any thought.

POSTER: "WANTED: Runaway Slaves. \$500.00 Reward. Capture and return of Issac Dodd and Bella Summers. Property of Jesse Wingate. Greenville, South Carolina."

Right next to it are old posters of other runaways.

POSTER: "WANTED: George Taylor, a.k.a. Preacher, WANTED: for the lynching of his Master Henry O. James and his family in Fort Smith, Alabama. Capture and return. \$4000 reward."

POSTER: "WANTED: Fuzzy Jackson, WANTED: for stealing world liquor and distributing it illegally across state lines. Capture and return, Vicksburg, Mississippi sheriff station: \$200 reward."

POSTER: "WANTED: Jake White WANTED: for the burning of his master Federick Rowler's store. Capture and return Greenville, South Carolina. Reward: \$1000."

POSTERS of others are tacked to the wall, including Runaways Jeremiah, Bootinbull, Manny, Dead Eye, Elmo and Tanks.

HANK

Jesse's been looking for them a year already.

CODY

Loved her didn't he?

Hank gives Cody a stern look.

EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

A WANTED: poster is tacked on a post just outside of the Sheriff's office. SHERIFF PICKINS, late 50's, walks out of his office and snatches the poster down. He looks it over just as JESSE WINGATE, mid 30's, a white planter, is walking up. *

Jesse extends a hand to Sheriff Pickins.

JESSE

Name's Jesse Wingate. I'd be mighty thankful for your help.

PICKINS

Help for what?

JESSE

Getting my property back.

PICKINS

What property?

JESSE

Isaac. A runaway. Heard he might be around these parts.

PICKINS

Lookin' for him ain't gonna do you a bit of good in my town.

JESSE

How's that?

PICKINS

It's peaceful here. I wanna keep it that way.

JESSE

You'd rather rub your big ol' belly and scratch your nuts than help me?

PICKINS

We get along with our niggas here.
Don't think you gonna come in here
and start a bunch of trouble.

JESSE

I intend to claim my property,
Sheriff. And no nigga lover gonna
stop me.

PICKINS

I ain't got no love for no niggas.
But I ain't got no hate for em'
neither. You try something, I just
might throw you in jail. Who knows?
Could decide to hang you just for
the hell of it.

JESSE

I got a right, too. What about
enforcing those laws?

PICKINS

Naw, ain't got no laws on the
books. I just kinda make ' em up as
I need ' em.

JESSE

Issac is rightfully mine.

PICKINS

Maybe you have a point there. But
then again, maybe you don't.

Pickins walks off leaving Jesse grim faced.

EXT. FAR END OF MAIN STREET - DAY

The Runaways ride up main street. Locals stop, noticing the
Black cowboys.

A young Black kid, BUGGERS, 14 years-old, thin and frail-
looking, emerges from a building. He sees the Runaways moving
up the street.

His eyes light up, a big smile sweeping across his face. He
wears baggy pants, a large coat, floppy hat pull down on his
head. Buggers has a large burlap sack slung over his
shoulder.

As the Runaways continue up the street, Buggers hurries along the sidewalk, keeping pace with them.

BUGGERS
(shouting)
Where 'bouts y'all from?

Buggers is excited, still keeping pace with the Runaways.

Jake looks at the kid and smiles.

The Runaways ride up in front of FARMERS GENERAL STORE and dismount.

Buggers runs up to them. He's still excited. He looks from one man to the other. Finally he moves over to Jake.

BUGGERS (CONT'D)
You in charge here?

JAKE
I am indeed. Why you asking? *

BUGGERS
Looking for work. Can you take on another hand?

DEAD EYE
You ain't old enough. Be too dangerous.

BUGGERS
I can take care of myself.

JAKE
Don't need no more workers.

PREACHER
Fuzzy and I are going for a drink.
(pause)
Or two.

JAKE
You ain't gonna stop at two. Why lie about it?

Preacher and Fuzzy laugh and leave.

Jake and Dakota John walk off.

ISAAC

Well, me, I got a whole lotta
business to take care of.

Issac heads off by himself.

The rest of the Runaways scatter in different directions.
Buggers watches them. Buggers is still determined, and
catches up to Jake. They stop.

BUGGERS

Mister, I live a real clean life. I
don't drink a lick. And I don't
chase women, either.

JAKE

Good to know. But you still ain't
old enough.

Jake and Dakota John move off, leaving Buggers standing in
the street.

BUGGERS

You're making a mistake.

JAKE

Wouldn't be the first one. Or the
last.

Buggers walks off.

INT. SALOON - DAY

Saloon is crowded. Card games, piano music, and saloon girls.
Everybody's having fun. Preacher and Fuzzy walk up to bar.
BARTENDER comes over.

BARTENDER

What you drinking, Boys?

PREACHER

Your biggest jug of whiskey and two
glasses.

Bartender leaves.

Preacher and Fuzzy look things over.

Bartender returns and sets down a jug of whisky and two
glasses. Preacher pays and the Bartender walks away.

*

FUZZY
Mighty big jug.

Preacher pours two drinks.

PREACHER
(dryly)
Got a mighty big thirst.

Preacher turns up his glass, downs the drink in one big gulp, then pours himself another. Fuzzy looks on as Preacher pounds away the drinks.

FUZZY
Whew! You thirsty alright.

FAR END OF THE BAR

Cody and Hank are drinking. They are not happy about the two Black cowboys being in the saloon.

CODY
Makes me sick.

Cody nods in the direction of Preacher and Fuzzy.

INT. FARMER'S GENERAL STORE - DAY

Jake stands at the counter, stacks of supplies in front of him. The STOREKEEPER is behind counter, adding more supplies to the stack.

Dakota John is in a far corner of the store trying on cattlemen's dusters. He stands in front of a mirror admiring himself.

DAKOTA JOHN
Looks good, huh?

JAKE
Sho' does.

Dakota John spreads his feet apart, squares his shoulders, pulls back the cattlemen's duster to reveal his sidearm. Then, in a flash, he whips out his pistol in one sweeping motion. He then places the pistol back in his holster, and smiles in the mirror.

DAKOTA JOHN

Gonna buy this coat, Jake. Wanna impress Nora when I see her.

JAKE

(smiles)

So buy it. But you supposed to be helping me with these supplies.

WES enters, moving towards the counter. Dakota John calls out to him. Dakota John shows off the coat to Wes.

DAKOTA JOHN

What you think, Cowboy?

Wes stops, looks at the coat and Jake with a disdainful glare then walks off.

DAKOTA JOHN (CONT'D)

What's the matter, cat got your tongue?

WES

You steppin' a little too high ain't you, Boy?

Jake can sense trouble. Dakota John steps forward, geared up to fight.

DAKOTA JOHN

What'd you say?

JAKE

(grabs Dakota John)
John, leave it alone.

DAKOTA JOHN

(to Wes)

He just saved you.

Dakota John smiles. Wes walks over the counter.

WES

You keep running off at the mouth I might have to put you in your place.

Dakota John, still wearing the duster, pulls it back to reveal his own pistol.

He looks Wes straight in the eye and waits for him to make a move. Wes realizes he may be in over his head and backs down.

DAKOTA JOHN
(Smiles)
Just like I thought.

Dakota John goes to the counter, pulling out some cash.

EXT. FARMER'S GENERAL STORE - DAY

Jake heads off in the direction of the stables.

Dakota John, wearing his coat and carrying two others over his shoulder, runs smack into his wife NORA, a beautiful Black woman, mid 20's.

Dakota John is knocked back and Nora rushes to aid him.

SAVANNAH, white, mid 30's, looks on in concern. *

NORA
John!

Nora hugs him. Their eyes meet and Dakota John smiles. Savannah can see the action between the two. She smiles.

NORA (CONT'D)
How long have you been here?

DAKOTA JOHN
Just today.

Again they stare at each other.

NORA
You didn't think of coming to see me?

DAKOTA JOHN
We was goin' later today. How is Martha?

NORA
Good.

SAVANNAH
We got to go, Nora.

Jake nods to the women. Nora is excited, as she continues to stare at the handsome man.

DAKOTA JOHN

As soon as we done here I'll be up
to the ranch.

NORA

Promise?

DAKOTA JOHN

Promise.

Dakota John tips his hat to the women and smiles. Nora smiles back. Dakota John walks away. The two women enter Farmer's General Store.

INT. SALOON - DAY

Dakota John enters, carrying two of the dusters. He moves to the bar next to Preacher and Fuzzy.

PREACHER

(to Bartender)

A glass for my friend here.

FAR END OF BAR

Hank and Cody. Wes walks up to them. Hank pushes a glass in front of him.

HANK

Have a drink.

Cody fills Wes's glass. Wes takes a drink and sees the Black cowboys standing at the bar down from him. *

WES

This ain't like back home.

Wes nods in the direction of the Runaways.

WES (CONT'D)

Them niggas over yonder. Had a run
in with one of them over in the
store.

Wes takes another drink, keeping an eye on the Runaways.

WES (CONT'D)
This needs to be fixed.

CODY
Alright. Go skin us some cats.

Wes pulls out his pistol and fires into the ceiling. The saloon is abruptly quiet.

WES
(points at Preacher)
Want y'all to hear this. Look at that ol' boy yonder.

Wes points at Preacher.

WES (CONT'D)
Bible under his arm, whiskey glass in his hand. Destroying the holy book!

Wes moves slowly down the bar towards the Runaways. The Black cowboys remain calm, watching Wes move towards them.

INT. ENTRANCE TO SALOON - DAY

Buggers peers inside, watching the action.

Wes moves up to the Runaways.

WES
(to Preacher)
What's this all about, Boy?

Preacher calmly holds out his glass, motions for the whiskey jug on the counter.

PREACHER
Have a drink, Cowboy. No need for all this.

WES
Don't drink with YOUR kind.

Preacher shrugs and turns back to the bar. Wes looks at Dakota John.

WES (CONT'D)
Can't seem to stay out of each other's way, can we?

DAKOTA JOHN
Sho' looks that way.

WES
I'm getting sick of your smart
mouth. You better leave. All of
you!

Cody and Hank move down the bar, stopping a few paces behind
Wes.

DAKOTA JOHN
Ain't going nowhere. Got me a whole
lotta drinkin' to do yet.

Dakota John smiles at Wes, and turns back to the counter.

Wes reaches over and knocks the whiskey jug from the bar,
breaking glasses and dishes. People scatter.

Preacher whirls, knocks Wes flying across the floor, landing
atop a card table, crashing it to the floor.

Cody moves on Dakota John, but he's much too late. Dakota
John raps him across the face with a beer bottle. Cody
crashes to the floor.

Hank goes to help Cody. Fuzzy steps in, picks Hank up, tosses
him behind the bar, breaking glasses, bottles of whiskey, and
the mirror before he crumbles to the floor.

In the meantime, Wes picks himself up off the floor and runs
at Preacher. Again, Fuzzy steps in and throws Wes behind the
bar with Hank.

Buggers watches, gleefully throwing punches in the air.

Bartender picks up Hank and Wes by the collar and throws them
back across the bar.

BARTENDER
You don't belong here.

PREACHER
(to Wes)
You owe me a jug of whiskey.

FUZZY
(also to Wes)
Look what you did to the man's bar.
(MORE)

FUZZY (CONT'D)

I think you need to pay for the
damage.

Fuzzy clenches his fists as the patrons clap with approval.

PREACHER

And buy a round for the house.

This time the patrons roar with approval as the town DRUNK
wobbles into the shot.

DRUNK

I'll drink to that.
(to Wes)
Pay up, Fella.

Wes reaches into his pocket, pulls out a wad of money, throws
it on the counter, and walks out with his friends.

TOWN DRUNK

(to Preacher)
I think you should be our next
sheriff.

Again they all laugh. Fuzzy rushes over to the piano and
starts to play an upbeat tune. It's good times again.

EXT. SALOON ENTRANCE - DAY

Buggers walks down the sidewalk, away from the saloon. He
practices his fast draw with an imaginary gun.

INT. LIVERY STABLES - DAY

A wagon is parked against the wall. A dozen mules are in
stalls grazing on a large pile of hay. Two are kept at a
distance from the rest.

Jake talks to the owner, ROY.

JAKE

How much you want for the wagon?

ROY

Fifteen dollars.

JAKE

Kinda high, ain't it?

ROY

It's in real good shape. Been right inside since I got it. It's a real good one.

JAKE

Got eight dollars.

ROY

Well... Tell you what. You seem like a nice fella. Gimme twelve and it's yours.

JAKE

I'll take it if you throw in two mules.

Buggers walks into the stable, stopping a few paces behind Jake. He just stands, watching Jake and Roy.

ROY

Suppose you want me to drive the wagon, too?

JAKE

Gonna be needing a driver and a cook.

Slowly the hay pile starts to move, startling Jake. He jumps back.

An old, wrinkly-faced, white man, TOMBSTONE, late 50's, crawls out of the hay, dusting himself off. Buggers continues to observe from behind Jake.

ROY

What did I tell you about sleeping there?

TOMBSTONE

It plum forgot my mind. Got a little drunk last night.

Tombstone extends a crude hand out to Jake. Jake shakes the old man's hand.

JAKE

Name's Jake.

TOMBSTONE

Nice to meet you. So you gonna be needin' a driver and a cook?

JAKE

(nods to Roy)

Guess I just found one.

Roy throws up his hands.

ROY

Not me. I don't cook very well.

Can't help you there.

Looks at Tombstone disapprovingly.

JAKE

Kinda puts me in a bind.

TOMBSTONE

I once drove a mule train across Texas, into New Mexico and I make a damn good possum stew.

JAKE

But you drink.

TOMBSTONE

Ain't gonna lie. Been known to have a drink once in a while.

BUGGER

Once in a while? How bout' everyday, sometimes all day.

Jake turns to see Buggers standing behind him.

Tombstone shrugs.

BUGGERS

And he ain't that good a cook.

JAKE

Boy! Seems like I can't get rid of you.

BUGGERS

No.

ROY

Kid's been around here just about two weeks now.

JAKE

What's your name?

BUGGERS

(extending a hand)

Buggers.

Jake and Buggers shake hands.

TOMBSTONE

(to Jake)

Tell you what. You let me have that job and I'll throw in Luther and Albert.

JAKE

Luther and Albert? I have enough hands already and they probably drink too.

TOMBSTONE

Naw, they don't do any of that.

(pointing)

Talking about my two mules yonder. Free of charge. Just water and hay. Fair enough wouldn't you say?

BUGGERS

Don't take it, Jake. I can beat that.

Roy leaves.

JAKE

(to Buggers)

Can you cook?

BUGGERS

I can learn.

JAKE

I don't have time to teach. And you're too young. Already told you.

TOMBSTONE

(to Jake)

It's a good deal. And I'm a fair man.

JAKE

Ain't got much of a choice do I?

Tombstone grins. Buggers rolls his eyes and walks out of the stables in disgust.

Buggers stands in the entrance to the stables watching Jake and Tombstone. Finally he walks off.

EXT. ROAD - OUTSIDE OF BOZEMAN - DAY

Runaways wear their dusters as they ride out of town. Tombstone follows behind in a wagon filled with supplies.

FUZZY

(to Issac)

Where you find that white boy?

PREACHER

Stables.

JAKE

That's Tombstone. He's our cook.

FUZZY

Cook! Shit, I ain't eatin' nothin' he makes.

Following in the wagon, Tombstone reaches back behind his seat, searching under a canvas. He pulls out a bottle of whiskey, takes a long drink.

TOMBSTONE

(to himself)

It's a good day. Good to be alive.

As Tombstone places the bottle back under the seat he is startled by a sudden movement under the canvas. He jumps, pulling back the canvas to find Buggers hiding under it.

TOMBSTONE (CONT'D)

Buggers! Damn you! Jake!

The Runaways stop. Jake and the others ride back to the wagon. Buggers crawls out.

TOMBSTONE (CONT'D)
Just about scared the piss outta
me, Boy.

Jake rides up to the wagon and stops.

JAKE
Boy! What did I tell you?

Buggers sits next to Tombstone, looking at Jake with sad
eyes.

JAKE (CONT'D)
You crazy or what? What's the
matter with you?

BUGGERS
I ain't crazy.

JAKE
Get your belongings and go back to
town.

FUZZY
He ain't that young, Jake.

JAKE
Can't take care of a child out
here.

FUZZY
I'll look after him.

Buggers remains on the wagon.

JAKE
You! You can't take care of
yourself. Get down.

Buggers picks up his burlap bag and jumps from the wagon.

BUGGERS
I can help.

JAKE
Mistake if I let you go with us.
Don't want a child's blood on my
hands. Go back to town, Boy.

Jake rides off. The others follow. Tombstone pulls off, leaving Buggers standing in the road. Buggers watches the Runaways ride off.

Buggers walks back toward town.

PREACHER

Got a bad feeling 'bout leaving that boy.

FUZZY

He ain't got nobody. Just a little boy.

JAKE

Cattle drive is no place for a child.

PREACHER

What's worse, being on a cattle drive or being taken by slave hunters? They out here too.

JAKE

How you know he's a runaway?

PREACHER

What else would he be?

Jake stops, looks back in the direction of Buggers and rides back.

JAKE

(yells)

Buggers! Buggers! Hold up, Boy!

Buggers glances over his shoulders to see Jake riding up behind him. He continues to walk, increasing his pace as Jake draws closer. Finally Jake catches up to him and rides along beside him.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Come on, you can ride back with me.

Buggers doesn't respond. He continues to walk, Jake riding along.

JAKE (CONT'D)

What's the matter. Change your mind?

Buggers is stubborn and continues to walk. He still won't respond to Jake.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Listen to me, Boy! Slave hunters
all over the place. Now either you
get your ass on this horse or I'm
gonna go 'bout my business.

Jake stops his horse. Buggers continues to walk for a few more paces, then stops.

BUGGERS

(emotional)

Why you make it so hard for me?

JAKE

'Cause life is hard.

Jake rides over next to Buggers. Buggers shows he's still just a child, almost in tears. Jake extends a hand.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Come on.

Buggers takes Jake's hand, climbs up and happily gets on the horse. They ride off towards the others.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HAYES RANCH - NIGHT

A spectacular place, sitting on rolling, green hills. A large bunk house is nearby. A barn and horse corral are off to the side. Several horses are inside the corral. A windmill is next to the corral.

EXT. STOCKYARD - REAR OF HOUSE - NIGHT

Stockyard is full of cattle. Wranglers mill about inside the pens, some sit on fences, watching the cattle.

BISHOP, mid 60's, and Issac stand next to the cattle yard.

BISHOP

That's pretty rough country where
my cattle be going. That ol' damn
Indian Chief, Moving Storm. One ol'
bastard.

ISAAC

We ain't going through his territory. And we can get this done.

BISHOP

You can't do worse than the last. You come highly recommended.

ISAAC

Mighty grateful for the job.

BISHOP

Better get some sleep. You might not be able to sleep again for a month.

He laughs and walks off.

INT. BUNK HOUSE - NIGHT

Walls are lined with bunk beds. Pot belly stove sits in middle of floor. Long wooden table, with benches in rear of room.

Jeremiah lies on his bed, gazing up at the ceiling.

Buggers is asleep on a bunk next to him.

Fuzzy is playing his guitar and singing. Some of the other Runaways join in.

EXT. HOUSE - NEXT TO A MAIN HOUSE - NIGHT

It's small, plain, but well-kept.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Just two rooms and a kitchen. Nora and her 10 year old daughter, MARTHA, sit on the side of bed. Nora is braiding Martha's hair.

NORA

Hold still.

MARTHA

It hurts, Mama.

NORA
Ought not be so nappy.

Nora kisses Martha softly on the cheek.

NORA (CONT'D)
But it's good hair.

MARTHA
Mama, we gonna stay here?

NORA
I don't know, Baby. Savannah real nice to us. We's free to go and come as we please. You'se daddy would be happy about that.

MARTHA
I miss Daddy.

NORA
(silently)
I miss him, too.

MARTHA
You think he's up in Heaven watching us?

Nora nods. Music can be heard coming from the bunk house. Martha reacts to the music and jerks her head around.

MARTHA (CONT'D)
Fuzzy? Ma, John is here!

NORA
I know Darling.

Knock is heard at door.

NORA (CONT'D)
Come in.

Door opens. Savannah enters. A big smile on her face. She moves over the bed.

NORA (CONT'D)
What?

SAVANNAH
He is here.

Savannah looks at Martha, then smiles at Nora.

SAVANNAH (CONT'D)

How bout' I watch over her for now.

Nora nods as she continues to brush her mahogany colored hair as Martha and Savannah walk toward the main house.

NORA

(singing)

*I stroll through the churchyard; I
walk in the moonlight, I walk in
the starlight; I'll go to judgement
in the evening of the day, And my
soul and thy soul shall meet that
day once again.*

Nora starts to hum. There is a rap on the door.

NORA (CONT'D)

Come in.

Dakota John enters and Nora smiles at him. Dakota John walks towards Nora and without saying a word begins to kiss her passionately.

NORA (CONT'D)

When you leavin'?

DAKOTA JOHN

Tomorrow.

NORA

We'll make the best out of it.

Inside the soft candlelit room the light begins to haze. While enthralled in the moment, Nora slowly begins to unbutton his shirt. With his free hand he lovingly hugs his wife, and crowns the top of her head with a kiss.

DAKOTA JOHN

A kiss for your prayers.

Dakota John kisses her once more. Nora smiles.

Nora without words, turns to her husband, anoints his lips with a kiss so inflaming that Dakota John almost falls off the bed.

DAKOTA JOHN (CONT'D)

I love you.

NORA

Love you too. And so does Martha.
You gonna be just like a daddy to
her.

DAKOTA JOHN

When we got married I said I would.

Dakota John smiles at Nora, his heart full of love. They go
back to making love.

EXT. BUNK HOUSE - NIGHT

Jake leans against the corner of the bunk house, rolling a
cigarette. He strikes a match, lights up and takes a long
drag.

Music can still be heard inside the bunk house.

Isaac walks up next to Jake.

ISAAC

Boys seems to be having some fun.
Us gonna leave at sun up. Beat some
of the heat.

JAKE

Sounds good. Set up camp on the
Redrock River?

ISAAC

Good place. Plenty of grass and
water.

Beat.

JAKE

I saw a sign today with youse and
Bella's picture on it. \$500 for
whoever catches you.

Another beat.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Issac, what happened to Bella?

ISAAC
(hostile)
Don't stick youse head into
business you ain't WANTED: in.

JAKE
And where is the child, Issac?

Silence from Issac.

ISAAC
Both dead.

Isaac walks off. Jake takes a long drag from his cigarette,
watching Isaac disappear into the night.

EXT. SIDE OF BUNK HOUSE - NIGHT

Preacher sits alone under a clump of trees, his Bible and
whiskey jug at his side.

Music from the bunk house can still be heard.

He pats his feet to the beat of Fuzzy's guitar.

Preacher takes a drink from his jug, smiles and staggers to
his feet. With his whiskey jug in his hand and Bible under
his arm, Preacher dances to the music, then suddenly stops.

He sags slowly to the ground, back resting against the tree.
Emotional pain sweeps across his face as he clutches his
Bible close to his chest.

Preacher opens the Bible and stares at the page, closes his
eyes then wrap his arms around the Bible once more. Holding
it close to his chest he silently weeps.

INT. SMALL HOUSE NEXT TO MAIN HOUSE-NIGHT

Dakota John looks at his watch. A quarter past 4:00. He looks
out the window and stares out at the night sky.

Nora watches Dakota John.

NORA
Do you have to go?

DAKOTA JOHN
You know I do.

Beat.

NORA

Don't get yourself kilt.

He turns to look at Nora. She turns, her back to him as she pretends to sleep. He looks at the ceiling, sighing.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FRONT OF THE BISHOP'S HOUSE - MORNING

A rooster sets on the corral fence crowning in the new morning. A windmill turns in the breeze. The Runaways are moving across the field to start the cattle drive.

Nora is running in the direction of the cattle drive. Dakota John rides to meet her. He stops his horse as Nora moves up to him.

She's out of breath. Dakota John dismounts, crosses to her.

NORA

I forgot. WANTED: to give you this.

Nora stands on tip toes and ties her wooden cross around his neck.

NORA (CONT'D)

You come back to Martha and me.

Dakota John rubs his fingers over Nora's wedding ring. Dakota John kisses Nora then mounts up.

DAKOTA JOHN

I will.

Dakota John rides off and catches up to the cattle drive.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TRAIL - OPEN PLAINS - DAY

Convoy of cowboys and cattle are stretched out for what seems like miles.

Isaac and Jake ride on the point, just in front of the herd.

Riding swing, on each side of the cattle are Jeremiah and Preacher.

Dakota John, Fuzzy and Buggers ride drag, eating all the dust.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PLAINS - ROLLING HILLS AND MOUNTAINS - DAY

The sun is starting to set.

Cattle drive continues across plane and hills.

ISAAC
Blackfoot River just over the hill.

Jake nods.

REAR OF HERD

Dakota John, Fuzzy and Buggers are covered in dust as they ride behind the herd.

FUZZY
(to Buggers)
How you feel?

BUGGERS
My butt hurts. Don't like it back here. Too much dust.

DAKOTA JOHN
Whining already?

BUGGERS
I ain't whining.

EXT. BISHOP'S RANCH - GRASSY KNOLL - DAY

In front of house. Nora and Martha walk across the knoll.

MARTHA
Mama, is John gonna come back to us?

NORA
Let's pray that he does.

Martha places her hands together in front of her and starts to pray. Nora lowers her head and closes her eyes.

MARTHA

Dear Lord, we ask you to protect Dakota John. We ask you dear Lord, to keep him safe and free from harm so he can return to Mama and me. Protect the ground he travels. Keep the sun off his back and a cool wind on his face. Bring peace and rest to his soul in Your holy name. Amen.

Nora pulls Martha into her arms. Nora and Martha get to their feet and walk back towards the house. They see Jesse and his men waiting by the house.

JESSE

Good day, Ma'am.

Jesse takes off his hat. Nora sees the excessive guns and ropes and is frightened.

NORA

Good day.

JESSE

Nice day for a walk, don't you think?

Nora sends Martha inside.

NORA

(curtly)

Took one already. I am a free woman. Got papers to prove it.

JESSE

Don't doubt a word you say.

Nora calms down a bit.

NORA

Here to see the Bishop?

Nora is about to call for the Bishop when Jesse dismounts.

JESSE

That won't be necessary.

JESSE (CONT'D)
I'm lookin' for Issac Dodd.

NORA
(Eyes narrow, suspicious)
Why?

JESSE
Ain't like that. I found his wife
and daughter and want to tell him
about it. You know where he is?

NORA
Issac? Didn't know he was married.

JESSE
Oh, he's full of surprises.

NORA
They headed for Hayes Ranch in
Fargo. They probably by the river
by now if I am not mistaken. You
still got time to catch up to him.

Jesse looks at his men and smiles. They smile back.

JESSE
Thanks for all your help Ma'am.

Nora nods and walks inside. Jesse and his men ride out.

EXT. VALLEY - HILL AREA - SUNDOWN

Cattle drive moves across valley, Redrock River in the
distance.

A nest of trees and shrubs line the winding river.

A small house sits on a knoll a short distance from the
river. Smoke bellows from chimney.

A mule is in the corral at rear of house.

Between the house and the river is a large clearing.

A grassy area is off to the side. The Runaways' campsite sits
at edge of river.

Smoke from the campfire is visible.

Runaways continue towards the campsite.

EXT. CAMPSITE - EVENING

Tombstone stands over fire, roasting a large side of meat.
Wagon is parked next to fire.

Dead Eye arrives carrying firewood. He throws it to the
ground next to the fire.

Elmo is stringing a rope-line between two trees at the edge
of the woods. Dozen or so horses.

Tombstone starts to sing as he pulls a bottle of whiskey
from his pocket.

TOMBSTONE

(singing)

*Burning sun, across the hills,
won't be long and I'll be home, me
and my sweetheart, all alone.*

Tombstone takes a long drink and chuckles.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Runaways drive the herd in front of house.

Front door opens slightly. An old Black man, RAYMOND, peers
out at the cowboys and the herd. He closes the door quietly.

EXT. GRASSY AREA NEAR RIVER - NIGHT

Herd is pushed into grassy area.

Runaways are dismounting.

Some unsaddling horses, leading them towards the river.
Others are unpacking for the night.

Jake and Isaac dismount.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. REDROCK RIVER - MORNING

Runaways are stirring about; some rolling blankets, saddling horses. Others are already saddled up.

Jake leads his horse over to Buggers, who is already in the saddle.

JAKE

You saddle this horse?

BUGGERS

Yep, Me and Johnny Boy.

JAKE

Stop lying. Boy, you ain't saddle no horse.

BUGGERS

Make you a deal. If I'm telling the truth I get to ride on the point with you and Isaac. If no I continue to eat dust with Dakota John and Fuzzy.

JAKE

Got to earn your spurs around here. Eatin' that dust make you hard. You got a plenty dust to eat yet.

Jake mounts up and rides off.

WAGON

Tombstone is ready to pull out. Dead Eye and Elmo are saddled up with the extra horses and pack mules. Isaac walks over to Tombstone to aid him.

EXT. RAYMOND'S HOUSE - DAY

Raymond is on the front porch. Jesse and his men ride up. Raymond has a big grin on his face.

RAYMOND

Mornin', Boss.

JESSE

This your place here?

RAYMOND

Sho' is.

JESSE

You say "Yes Sir" to me when I speak to you, Boy.

RAYMOND

Yessa, Yessa, Boss.

JESSE

I'm looking for a buncha niggas.

RAYMOND

(frightened)

Plenty of niggas go by here.

Jesse steps down from his horse and thrusts a poster in Raymond's face.

JESSE

Looking for this one. Seen him?

Jesse has a deadly look on his face, a look of a man who finally caught up to his prey. Raymond is frightened as he points towards the river.

RAYMOND

They stole your cows, Boss?

JESSE

They stole something much more valuable.

Jesse rides toward the river.

Raymond closes his door. They ride off towards the river.

Runaways are ready to move out as Preacher mounts up.

PREACHER

(points)

Riders coming up.

They all stop, looking towards Raymond's house.

Jesse and his men ride across the clearing towards the campsite.

The runaways watch as the men approach. Jake, Preacher, Jeremiah and Buggers ride up next to Isaac.

ISAAC

Preacher, Jeremiah, Dakota John. Go
check it out. Go with them, Fuzzy.
All y'all go.

The men ride off, straight at Jesse and his men, then stop.

Jeremiah breaks off from the others, riding to his right,
away from Jesse.

Dakota John does the same, riding to the left. They ride
until they meet, now behind Jesse and his men.

Manny and Bootinbull gallop off in opposite directions until
they are parallel to the approaching riders.

As Jesse and his Boys reach the center of the clearing,
Preacher and Fuzzy ride off and meet them head on.

Jesse is boxed in.

All the Runaways ride slowly towards Jesse and his pals.

JESSE AND HIS MEN

Still riding towards Isaac. Preacher and Fuzzy moving towards
them. The other Runaways are closing the circle around Jesse.

HANK

Don't know about this.

JESSE

I don't pay you to know. Don't pay
you to think.

The Runaways and Jesse meet in the middle of the clearing.
They ride up to each other and stop.

JESSE (CONT'D)

(to Preacher)

These your cattle?

PREACHER

Til we get'em to market.

Dakota John and Wes eye each other.

BOOTINBULL

(to Jesse)

What do you want?

JESSE

My property; Issac Dodd.

All the Runaways are silent.

Jesse spots Issac at the campsite and gives him a sly smile.

Issac frowns.

Jesse and his men move past the Runaways and ride towards the campsite.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY

Jesse rides up, with Cody, Hank and Wes following. The other Runaways bring up the rear. Jake, Isaac and Buggers are waiting for Jesse.

JESSE

Isaac.

ISAAC

Jesse.

JESSE

You know why I'm here.

ISAAC

What took you so long?

JESSE

Where's Bella, Isaac?

ISAAC

She died giving birth to your baby.

Or was the child your ol' daddy's?

(pause)

I buried her in the desert. With
the wolves and coyotes.

Jesse flinches. Jake stares at Issac in shock.

JESSE

Where's the child?

ISSAC

Died three days after her mother.

Jesse looks grief-stricken. His mouth starts to quaver.

ISAAC
(Sarcastic)
Aw, that make you sad?

JESSE
(Turns hard again)
You still my property.

ISAAC
Go ahead. Try to reclaim your
property.

Jesse holds up a long black whip.

JESSE
You remember this?

ISAAC
Markings still on my back.

JESSE
Don't make me use it again.

Isaac, in a fury, rides up to Jesse to make his point.

Wes, Cody and Hank reach for their weapons, realizing quickly the Runaways have their guns out, trained on them.

ISAAC
You a fool. I'm on a cattle drive
and I intend to complete it.

Isaac suddenly goes into a blind rage, furiously ripping the whip from Jesse's hand, and knocking him to the ground.

Instinctively, angrily, Jesse's men go to draw their guns, but the Runaways advance, boxing them in further.

Isaac's rage is ice cold. He hates these men with his whole soul. Breathing hard, he stares at them. Then, without any warning or sign that he's going to do it, Isaac draws and shoots all three of the men, Cody in the heart, Hank in the face, and Wes in the stomach.

Hank is instantly dead. Cody takes a little longer but not much longer. Wes is still alive and in agony.

The Runaways are stunned.

Jesse is terrified.

Everything goes so fast, the Runaways don't have time to act.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

(to Wes)

Could make you die slow and painful. But unlike your bossman here, I still got a smidgion of pity in me.

He fires, shooting Wes in the head, killing him.

Jesse crawls on the ground among the hooves of the horses, trying to get away.

Isaac dismounts and kicks him hard. Jesse rolls under the horses. Isaac continues viciously beating Jesse as he screams.

Buggers is nervous. He looks at Isaac, then over to Jake.

JAKE

My God, what have you done?!

Isaac hauls Jesse over to two trees, removes a rope from his saddle and quickly ties Jesse's hands above his head to a tree limb.

Jake tries to stop him, but Isaac shakes him off roughly. He quickly rips off Jesse's shirt, cracks the whip a couple of times and steps back to beat Jesse.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Isaac, no!

BOOTINBULL

Don't do it! For God's sake stop!
We gonna be hunted down like animals now!

Buggers is really scared now.

Issac cracks the whip on Jessie's back once, twice and a third time. Jessie screams.

DAKOTA JOHN

You just makin' it even worse!

JAKE

Issac!

PREACHER

Let him ride out, Isaac. Please.

ISAAC

Use your brains! If he alive people
gonna find out about this. He dead,
no one gonna be the wiser!

Off another whip lashing, Jesse crumbles to the ground. Isaac hauls Jesse up and roughly fashions a noose, looking up at a large tree limb.

Isaac places the rope around Jesse's neck.

Most of the Runaways are horrified. Dakota John stoops forward toward Isaac but Tombstone stops him.

TOMBSTONE

(whispers)

Man, he right. Dead men can't tell
no tales.

Isaac has the noose in place.

JESSE

NO!!!!

ISAAC

For Bella.

Issac pulls the rope as hard as he can. Jesse hangs, is spasms for mere moments, then dying.

The crowd is silent.

Buggers is really scared now.

Jesse's body hangs lifeless.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Now you gonna be with the wolves,
too, Jesse, yes you is.

Isaac climbs up on his horse as Dakota John looks at him with cold fury.

DAKOTA JOHN

I was a free man.

ISAAC
(twitches)
You still free. This stays between
us.

Everyone looks at Issac in shock. Issac takes off.

EXT. OPEN FIELD - NIGHT

Buggers' horse is running out of control. Buggers is hanging on for dear life. Jake is in a dead run behind him. Finally Jake catches up and brings the horse under control. Buggers is visibly shaken.

JAKE
Ain't easy, is it?

Buggers doesn't respond. He looks off, not wanting Jake to see he's afraid.

JAKE (CONT'D)
It happens.

BUGGERS
A man don't get scared.

JAKE
We's all scared. You ain't let
nobody down.

Jake rides back towards the camp.

Buggers watches him for a second, then rides off behind him.

EXT. CAMPSITE-DAY

Much later. Buggers and Jake ride up. The bodies are gone now. Jeremiah is standing next to the horse, rubbing his neck.

JAKE
What happened to the bodies?

JEREMIAH
What do you think?

Jake gets the drift and walks off. There is tension in the air. Dakota John is leaning towards a tree; and on an impulse he walks towards Issac and slugs him.

Dakota John slugs him again and Issac blocks it this time.

ISAAC

Nobody asked you to come with us.
You volunteered.

DAKOTA JOHN

(breathless)
You know how long it took me to
earn my freedom?!

ISAAC

Told you already. You still free!

Dakota John pushes Issac against a tree and beats him. Issac blocks a couple of the blows.

Preacher, Jeremiah and Fuzzy step in to stop the two. Preacher and Fuzzy pull Dakota John back while Jeremiah holds Issac.

PREACHER

John, it will be alright.

DAKOTA JOHN

No! My life was gonna be back at square one after this. And he ruined everything!! And now I'll be WANTED: too, guilty by association for his mistakes!

Preacher and Fuzzy keep hold of Dakota John, who finally sags, the anger draining from him.

There's dead silence as all the men look at each other. There's nothing really to say. Slowly, first one man, then the rest following, the Runaways start to break down the camp and pack up.

P.O.V. RAYMOND'S HOUSE

Raymond peers through the window. His eyes are wide. He mops sweat from his brow.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OPEN PLAINS - DAY

Long line of cowboys and cattle, pushing their way across the plains.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PLAINS - MOUNTAINS - CANYONS - DAY

The Runaways and the herd push forward. Buggers is still riding drag with Dakota John and Fuzzy.

JAKE AND ISAAC

Riding on the point.

Isaac glances up at the sun. Jake glances at Issac.

JAKE
Issac, look...

ISAAC
Nothing to talk about. What happened happened.

He rides up ahead a little. Jake shakes his head, frustrated.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CAMPSITE - CANYONS - MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

Cattle herding into a closed-in canyon. Campfire in middle of clearing.

Jake pokes aimlessly at the fire with a stick, coffee cup in hand.

Buggers, Fuzzy, Dakota John and Tombstone sit around the fire with Jake. Coffee pot sits on fire.

TOMBSTONE
How's the coffee?

Jake, rising to his feet.

JAKE
Shitty.

Jake throws out the last of his coffee and leaves.

TOMBSTONE

(to Buggers)

Know how to shoot a gun?

BUGGERS

Hell yeah. Can hit a moving rabbit
like shooting ducks on a pond.

Dakota John and Fuzzy laugh.

FUZZY

Boy, stop your lies.

BUGGERS

Wanna bet?

DAKOTA JOHN

You lost a bet with Jake already.

TOMBSTONE

Got a pistol and an old gun belt.
Gonna give it to you.

BUGGERS

(to Fuzzy)

Then you gonna be the first thing I
shoot.

They all laugh.

Issac leaning against several rocks, in deep thought.

Jake walks up to him. We can now hear Fuzzy's guitar, cowboys
singing.

ISAAC

You know the last words Bella said
to me was "watch over her."

(pause)

And that little girl died days
later. I let her die, Jake.

JAKE

If things was different we wouldn't
be out here. Trail dust and shitty
ass cows.

(pause)

Heck, if things were different it
would've been me with Bella, not
you.

ISAAC

Can't do nothing 'bout the past.
But I can sho' look for a better
tomorrow.

Jake starts to walk off. He stops, turns back to Isaac.

JAKE

I cared for her as much as you did.
But she chose you. If that's a
weakness, then I'm guilty.

Jake walks off. Isaac watches him.

Preacher is alone behind some rocks. Head resting on his
saddle. He drinks from his jug, his Bible resting on his
chest.

Dakota John walks up, takes a seat.

Preacher offers him his jug. Dakota John accepts, takes a
drink and hands the jug back to Preacher.

PREACHER

(to himself)
It will never end.

DAKOTA JOHN

Gonna go back and settle down for
good with Nora.

PREACHER

You lucky. Still young. My home is
where I unsaddle my horse.

Preacher takes another drink.

PREACHER (CONT'D)

(almost to himself)
Whisky good on cold, lonely nights.
Helps me keep yesterday in its
place.

DAKOTA JOHN

That why you drink so much? Cuz of
your past?

PREACHER

Like to keep moving. Mind don't
have a chance to wonder back too
much. Whiskey keeps the past where
it belongs.

DAKOTA JOHN

How's that?

PREACHER

Behind me.

DAKOTA JOHN

(Beat)

Look, might surprise you, but I
sorta think a lot of you.

Preacher looks surprised.

DAKOTA JOHN (CONT'D)

Guess I never had a daddy.

PREACHER

I ain't your daddy.

DAKOTA JOHN

When this drive is done, I want you
to come back with me. Start over
together.

Preacher smiles a sheepish grin. Dakota John gets to his
feet.

PREACHER

Aw, hell. Go on, get outta here.

DAKOTA JOHN

I mean every word of it.

Dakota John walks away.

Preacher takes another drink, picks up his Bible, opens it to
the first page. He looks at it for a long beat then closes
his eyes. A painful expression on his face.

Bootinbull walks up to Preacher, a warm smile on his face.

Preacher places the Bible down, picks up the whiskey jug,
offers a drink to Bootinbull.

Bootinbull quickly refuses. Preacher takes another drink.

BOOTINBULL

I never see you read your Bible.
How come?

PREACHER

You the appointed one sent from
above?

BOOTINBULL

Just trying to live in the Lord's
teaching.

PREACHER

You a saint. God's gonna have a
special seat for you. Big brass
chairs and streets of gold for you
to walk on.

BOOTINBULL

Don't want none of that. Just wanna
be up there with my family someday.

PREACHER

(smugly)

Us cowboys are a dying species.
Now you just keep readin' to the
others. I don't need you for no
readin'.

Bootinbull rises to his feet, looks down at Preacher.

BOOTINBULL

The Bible says, "Freely I receive
and freely I give." Bible works if
you work at it. It's God's words.
Take a look at Psalm 23. Powerful
message.

Bootinbull walks away. Preacher picks up his Bible, looking
at it carefully. He sighs deeply and closes his eyes.

EXT. CANYON - CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Jake and Buggers walk slowly along the canyon road, going no
place in particular.

BUGGERS

I'm sorry about the other day. Me
running off like a scared rabbit.

JAKE

Ain't no rabbit in you.

BUGGERS

Guess Isaac was real mad about what that white man done to him.

JAKE

Isaac got a lot of things inside. Didn't have it easy.

There is a bonding silence.

BUGGERS

Did any of us have it easy?

Jake is silent.

BUGGERS (CONT'D)

Didn't know you and Isaac went back so far.

JAKE

Maybe you don't know a lot of things. Don't know about being beaten 'til you bleedin' like a stuck pig.

(beat)

Ain't seen Isaac in a long time. Maybe something's gone bad in him.

BUGGERS

Still no excuse to go on a killing spree.

Jake changes the subject.

JAKE

Where your folks?

BUGGERS

They long gone. One day Mama told me to start running. Been doing that ever since.

Jake nods. They start to walk back towards the campsite. Jake places his arm around Buggers' shoulders as they walk.

BACK ON PREACHER

Still resting on his saddle, whiskey jug in his hand, Bible laying on his chest. Singing can still be heard. Preacher rises to his feet and starts to dance.

BOTINBULL AND DEADEYE

Sitting next to large boulders not far from Preacher. The music stops, Bootinbull pulls out his Bible and reads.

BOOTINBULL

The Lord is my Shephard, I shall
not want...

ISAAC

Isaac is laying back on his saddle looking up at the stars as Bootinbull continues reciting the 23rd Psalm.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TRAIL - OPEN PLAINS - DAY

The cattle drive pushes forward. Isaac and Jake ride on the point. The herd behind them, surrounded by cowboys.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PLAT PLAINS - STEEP HILLS - DAY

Cattle drive moves along the flat country. They reach a steep grade, and a light rain starts to fall. Jake glances up at the sky. Isaac rides off ahead of him.

EXT. SMITH RIVER - DAY

Cattle drive moves down a grade towards the river.

The rain is now a down-pour. River can be seen in a distance. Wagon's parked a short distance from the river.

Tombstone, Elmo and Dead Eye stand near the river watching the swift current. Isaac rides up to them.

P.O.V. RIVER

The river is wide. The current swift and dangerous. Countercurrents and whirlpools churn in the middle of the river. Uprooted trees and other debris float dangerously down stream.

UPSTREAM

Isaac rides up stream along the river's edge. He stops, looks at the washed-out bridge.

P.O.V. BRIDGE

Part of the bridge is gone. The other half hangs off the side, resting in the water.

ISAAC

Riding back towards the herd.

HERD - RIVER

The Runaways and the herd reach the edge of the river. The cattle are restless and nervous. The rain is now a gale force. Isaac rides up to Jake.

ISAAC
Bridge is gone.

JAKE
Maybe we better wait this one out.

ISAAC
We got no time. We're going across.

Isaac rides off, shouting out orders.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
Get that lead cow up front. We are going to cross! Get 'em ready!

Mass confusion sets in. Isaac rides over to Dakota John and Buggers.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
(to Dakota John)
Get a line on the lead cow and pull him across! The others will follow.

Isaac rides off as Fuzzy brings the lead cow to the front of the herd.

FUZZY

Isaac's losing his damn mind.

Dakota John nods as he dismounts, moves over the lead cow.

Issac rides up to the wagon. He stops next to Tombstone and Elmo.

ISAAC

Will your mules make it?

TOMBSTONE

Not with this wagon.

ISAAC

Unhitch' em, use the horses instead of the mules.

ELMO

Takin' a chance with the supplies on that wagon.

ISAAC

Mount all you can on the mules. Untie the horses and send them 'cross behind the herd.

Isaac rides off as Jake is riding up to Tombstone and Elmo.

JAKE

Tell me something. How did y'all know to come this way?

ELMO

Isaac told us.

JAKE

When?

TOMBSTONE

Day before we pulled out.

Jake nods and rides off.

RIVER'S EDGE

Dakota John and Buggers. Dakota John places a line on the lead cow. Buggers appears concerned.

BUGGERS

How we gonna cross this river?

DAKOTA JOHN

Gonna ride across.

Isaac rides up and stops as Dakota John hops back on his horse. A line is attached to the lead cow.

ISAAC

River ain't that deep. We went
through rivers 'fore.

DAKOTA JOHN

But not like this.

ISAAC

I've seen worse.

Isaac rides off as Jake rides up.

Buggers pulls his hat down on his head as he readies to cross.

JAKE

Come back here with me.

Buggers rides off with Jake. Dakota John heads out into the river.

RIVER

A stream of cowboys and animals strung out across the fast-moving water. Cowboys yelling and hollering to keep the cattle moving and from drifting too far off course.

Dakota John and the lead cow make it across. Isaac and several cattle move out of the river next to Dakota John.

Jake nears the other side. He looks back to check on Buggers.

Manny and Buggers are bringing up the rear behind the wagon.

UP STREAM

A large tree and a section of the bridge are moving fast down the river.

Cowboys and animals continue to pour out into the water. Jake reaches the shore with some of the others.

PREACHER
(points, yelling)
Manny! Buggers! Look out!

LARGE TREE AND SECTION OF THE BRIDGE

Moving dangerously close to the wagon.

PREACHER
Buggers! Get out!

The tree and the section of the bridge slam into the side of the wagon, knocking it around and into Buggers and Manny.

The horses are pulled over by the force of the impact. They break free of the wagon and tumble down stream before finding their way to the other side of the river.

The wagon, the tree and the section of the bridge continue down stream. Buggers and Manny are nowhere to be seen. Jake is hysterical. He rides back into the swift-moving water, yelling and screaming.

The other cowboys run down the bank of the river to get ahead of the wagon as it continues down stream. Isaac is frozen in fear as he sits on his horse watching, too horrified to move.

It is a mass frenzy to find Manny and Buggers. Jake is in the middle of the river screaming Buggers' name. Suddenly his horse is knocked over by the swift current. Jake disappears under the swift current. His horse is pushed fast down stream but manages to find its way to the bank.

Suddenly Jake surfaces and finds his way to the edge of the river. Several of the Runaways pull him out of the muddy water.

Further downstream Preacher, Fuzzy and Jeremiah locate Manny's body floating face down. They manage to get a line on it and pull it to shore.

Preacher, Jeremiah, and Fuzzy run toward Jake. Dakota John rides up and dismounts just as Jake arrives. Dakota John moves over to look down at the remains of Manny. Jake, realizing it is not Buggers, becomes relieved and then uncontrollable anger gushes out of him. He looks out at the river, and moves off down the embankment.

JAKE

I lost the boy! Buggers!

Bootinbull rides up, dismounts and moves over to comfort Jake.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I kilt him!

BOOTINBULL

No you didn't. He's in God's hands now. Don't blame yourself.

Bootinbull walks Jake back over to his horse. Jake mounts up.

Jake turns to leave as a distraught Isaac rides up. Jake's head snaps around, his steely eyes burning holes through Isaac. Jake rides up close to Isaac, his face twisted with pain and raging anger.

Through trembling lips and gritted teeth, Jake pulls out his pistol and trains it close to Isaac's face. He has finally reached his last straw.

Bootinbull moves over to Isaac and Jake.

BOOTINBULL (CONT'D)

I know how you feelin', but shootin' him won't change a thing. It'll just leave us short one man whose work will be left for us to do.

ISAAC

Jake .. I'm sorry.

Jake says nothing. He simply rides off. Isaac looks around at the other cowboys.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

DAKOTA JOHN

"I'm sorry?" What the hell are you sorry about? Is that gonna bring Manny back? What about that child! What about the white men you killed? What's gonna happen when the bodies are found?

ISAAC

Why you so sure they be found?! You
plannin' on tellin' someone?!

(beat)

Look, I just saw red. I'm SORRY.

Dakota John is angry and hurt; he looks out at the river,
then back to Isaac.

DAKOTA JOHN

It won't bring them back. You
could've waited! Damn you! Buggers
was a little boy. You ended his
life before it even started.

Dakota John mounts up, snatches his horse around and rides
off. Preacher, Fuzzy, Jeremiah and Bootinbull mount up.

Preacher glances up at the sky, then back to Isaac.

Rain has stopped. Preacher rides off, leaving Isaac alone.
Slowly, Isaac rides back up the river.

GRAVE SITE

Dead Eye, Tombstone and Elmo dig a grave. Fuzzy and Dakota
John ride up with Manny's body across a horse. They remove
the remains and place it on the ground next to the grave.

RIVER

Jake is alone, standing on the side of the river, looking out
at the water. Isaac walks up behind him and stops.

JAKE

We all got problems. You gotta be a
man and face yours. Manny's dead.
Buggers All by himself, trying
to find his way.

Jake walks off down the side of the river. Isaac follows him.

ISAAC

If I could do it over I'd do it
different. I'm asking for
forgiveness.

After a long pause Jake walks off.

GRAVE SITE

Jake and Isaac walk up, each at the opposite side of the grave. Bootinbull is reading from his Bible.

BOOTINBULL

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hill from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord. In the times of trouble make us strong. In the times of grief lift up our grieving hearts. Not before, not later, when it is your will.

Bootinbull closes his Bible and walks towards the others to help them make the campsite. They all mount up and ride off.

EXT. TRAIL - CATTLE DRIVE - DAY

The day is sparking with a cool breeze. Cowboys and cattle strung out along the open trail but not far from the river. Jeremiah and Preacher are searching the river for Bugger's body.

TIME LAPSE of a couple hours. Scenes of the cattle drive with the sun at various places in the sky.

JEREMIAH

No use. Current probably pulled him South.

Preacher sighs and shakes his head.

PREACHER

Poor boy. Died early.

Jake is sitting under a tree and smoking. Preacher and Jeremiah climb out of the river. Jeremiah looks towards Isaac and shakes his head.

Isaac nods at him.

ISAAC

We should be heading out soon.

Jake looks remorseful.

TRAIL

We see Buggers walking up the trail behind the herd. He's weak and battered with bruises on his face and arms. Buggers is covered from head to toe in river mud.

BUGGERS
(yelling)
Jake.

Buggers continues to walk, still calling out to Jake, trying to get his attention. There is rustling behind some trees.

Dakota John and Fuzzy have their guns out and trained on the unexpected noise and see Buggers walking up the trail. They then put down their guns.

FUZZY
Jake, it's Buggers! Good Lord!

Jake looks back down the trail.

JAKE
(screaming)
Buggers!

Jake rides off back down the trail like a bat out of hell.

DAKOTA JOHN
Buggers!

TRAIL

A string of cowboys race back down the trail behind Jake.

Jake stops his horse some distance from Buggers and starts to run towards him. Buggers and Jake run towards each other. As they move closer, Jake stretches out his arms as they run to each other.

Their joy is serious but there's something sweet and a little funny about the way it hearkens back to so many scenes of a guy and a girl running toward each other across a field.

Finally they reach each other. Buggers falls into Jake's arms.

JAKE
(teary-eyed)
Thought I lost you, Boy.

The Runaways ride up and stop. They are all overjoyed. Jake turns to them, his face beaming with joy as he ruffles Buggers' hair.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Just when I was starting to get
used to you.

BOOTINBULL

God is good. He works miracles.

Isaac dismounts, moves over to Buggers and Jake and gives them a look of respect. But Isaac sees he is unwanted. He mounts up and rides off ahead of the others.

JAKE

Got to get these clothes off. Got
river mud all over boy.

BUGGERS

Can't get rid of me that easy. You
are stuck with me like grits and
bacon.

They all smile.

DAKOTA JOHN

(to Buggers)

Gonna start calling you catfish,
Boy. All that river bottom mud on
you.

Again they laugh. Jake and Buggers start to walk as the other ride off.

Bootinbull is all smiles; he turns and rides off with the other men, leaving Jake and Buggers alone.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GRASSY PLAINS - DAY

Isaac rides up ahead of the herd across the grassy plains. Lightning streaks across the sky. Thunder rumbles in a distance.

EXT. GRASSY KNOLL - DAY

Drive continues up the knoll and down into an open area. The sky darkens, lightning bolts dash across the sky, thunder suddenly erupts. Isaac gets off and starts camp.

Jake rides off towards the herd. The cattle are driven into the grassy area next to the knoll.

CAMPSITE

Tombstone is preparing a campfire at the edge of the woods. Jake rides up next to him and stops.

TOMBSTONE

Got limited grub for the night.
Lost most of it crossing that damn
river.

JAKE

We'll make do with what we got.

Jake rides off.

WOODS

A rope line is attached between two trees. Several horses are tied to it. Jeremiah and Buggers are tying off the last horse as Jake rides up and dismounts. He moves over to Jeremiah and Buggers.

JEREMIAH

Elmo and Fuzzy got the night work
with the cattle.

JAKE

Think you better add another man.
These cows will spook real quick
with this damn weather.

Jeremiah nods and walks away. He hasn't eaten for hours and it is clearly visible. Jake turns to Buggers, looking at him for a long beat. They smile at each other and Jake rides off.

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

A small side of beef is roasting on a campfire. Tombstone stands next to it. Isaac walks up, stops next to the old man. Isaac looks concerned.

ISAAC

Not much.

TOMBSTONE

It ain't.

ISAAC

Got another few days. Think it'll
make it?

TOMBSTONE

If we eat light. But how do you
tell a buncha hungry cowboys that?

ISAAC

Give my share to the Boys tonight.

Isaac walks off before Tombstone can get a word out. Thunder
rumbles overhead.

PREACHER

Standing alone under a clump of trees. He takes a drink just
as Jake walks up.

JAKE

Been a little rough.

PREACHER

That's life.

Jake nods. Preacher takes another drink.

HERD

Thunder and lighting increases. The herd is restless. Elmo,
Tanks, Bootinbull and Fuzzy ride slowly around the herd,
keeping them from straying too far.

BACK ON PREACHER

Still drinking.

INSERT - MOON

Peeking in and out of ominous black clouds. Thunder and
lightning crackle across the black sky. A distant sound of
wolves howling.

CLUMP OF TREES

Dakota John and Elmo stand under the trees. They react to the
wolves howling.

ELMO

Wolves and cattle don't go
together.

PLAINS

A rumble of horse hooves are heard. Suddenly they appear, hooves, moving fast across the plains.

GRASSY KNOLL

Something is running swiftly through the tall grass.

CAMPSITE

Isaac and Jake standing near the campsite.

ISAAC

How many with the herd?

JAKE

Four men.

Jake and Isaac walk off.

BUGGERS

Standing under the trees wearing his rain gear. Jake walks up.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Bundle up good now. Gonna rain hard. Might be pretty nasty.

Buggers nods looking at Jake with affection. More thunder and lightning.

CAMPSITE

Issac leans against a tree, takes a swig of whisky and looks towards the open plain.

CAMPFIRE

The side of beef roasts on the fire. Lightening bolt streaks down and strikes the campfire and the fire goes out. Bootinbull looks around to find matches but finds none, so he goes off, apparently in search.

P.O.V. OPEN PLAINS

AMITOLA and his BRAVES watch the cowboys from a distance. The tall trees camouflage them. Amitola has his eyes on Issac, watching his every move.

TREE TOP

Huge thunderclaps, bolts of lightning zigzag across the sky and expose the Indians momentarily.

CAMPSITE

Issac has a sly smile on his face as he takes another swig of whisky. He watches the Indians as intently as they watch him.

A cow bellows in the distance.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VALLEY - MOUNTAINS - DAY

Cowboys and cattle are strung out across the mountain floor, surrounded by canyons and mountains. Jeremiah stops, looks up at a mountain top.

JEREMIAH'S P.O.V. MOUNTAIN

Sitting on horseback watching the cattle drive below is AMITOLA and his BRAVES.

BACK ON JEREMIAH

Still looking up at the mountain. He rides off to the front of the herd, next to Isaac.

JEREMIAH

(pointing)

Got some riders up on the mountain.

They all look up at the mountain. Amitola and his Braves are nowhere to be seen.

ISAAC

Rustlers.

JEREMIAH

No, Indians.

Isaac is clearly concerned. He glances up towards the mountain. Then an old redwood tree with ancient markings become visible for all the riders to see; the entrance to Moving Storm's reservation.

ISAAC

'bout two o'clock. Few more hours
of daylight left. Should make it
through this area.

Jeremiah rides to the rear of the herd. Isaac rides off ahead
of the others.

EXT. VALLEY - BLACKFOOT RIVER - DAY

An open area with patches of trees and undergrowth spotted
along the river's edge. Open fields of green grass surround
the river. The Runaways and the herd ride alone side the
river. Jake rides up next to Isaac.

JAKE

I thought you knew Moving Storm?
You don't seem too sho'.

ISAAC

Let me take care of it.

JAKE

All these white man's cows. We got
men's lives to look after. You
didn't piss off Moving Storm, did
you?

ISAAC

I said let me take care of it!

Jake's suspicion is confirmed. Jeremiah rides up, pointing up
ahead.

Suddenly a series of arrows land at the feet of the horses.
The drive stops, all looking up ahead of them.

JEREMIAH

More company. Lots of it.

RUNAWAYS' P.O.V.

A large force of Sioux Indians strung out across the valley
not far from the river. They sit on horseback watching the
Runaways. Amitola and several of his Braves are positioned
just in front of the other warriors.

REAR OF HERD

Dakota John, Fuzzy and Buggers look up ahead.

BUGGERS

I swear...That one got the nose of
a dog.

DAKOTA JOHN

Who?

BUGGERS

Jeremiah. Bet he can smell a
possum's breath ten miles away.

Fuzzy, Buggers and Dakota John laugh, the gravity of the
whole matter evading them.

ISAAC AND JAKE

Still watching the Indians.

ISAAC

(shouting)

Give'em a few cows. Preacher,
Fuzzy, get up here.

Preacher, Fuzzy and Jeremiah ride up to Issac.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Take five or six head of cattle up
to those Indians.

Preacher, Fuzzy and Jeremiah rides to the rear of the herd.
We stay with Isaac and Jake.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

That should be enough to get us
through.

JAKE

You know these folks. Don't you
think you should go talk to them?

Issac does not respond.

Preacher, Fuzzy and Jeremiah return with the cattle.

PREACHER

Six head.

Jake takes a deep breath and rides off with the cattle.

ON JAKE, PREACHER, FUZZY AND JEREMIAH

Riding towards Amitola with the cattle. Jake rides on the point. Preacher and Jeremiah are on the flanks. Fuzzy is riding drag.

AMITOLA

Tight jawed and pensive as he observes the Black cowboys and the cattle moving towards them. As the Runaways continue towards them, four WARRIORS ride off to meet them. They ride up to the Runaways and stop.

WARRIOR #1

(to Jake)

You come.

Turns to the other Runaways.

WARRIOR #1 (CONT'D)

You stay.

The four Warriors and Jake ride over to Amitola. The tight-faced warrior signals to Jake. Jake returns the gesture.

AMITOLA

My dark brother.

JAKE

I bring you cattle to feed your people.

AMITOLA

Do not speak to me about the white man's cattle.

JAKE

I come as your brother. We ask for permission to drive our herd through Moving Storm's territory.

AMITOLA

My dark brother speaks with the same tongue as the white man. All lies. We do not want his cattle.

JAKE

What about a few horses?

AMITOLA

No horses.

JAKE

What will it take to drive this herd through?

AMITOLA

Bring me Isaac Dodd.

JAKE

Isaac ...Why do you want him?

Amitola pulls one side of his shirt to show Jake a sort of macabre tattoo that looks like it's been cut into his flesh.

AMITOLA

(off tattoo)

Means you lost family in battle.

Amitola snatches his horse around.

AMITOLA (CONT'D)

Bring me Isaac Dodd.

Jake shakes his head.

PREACHER, JEREMIAH AND FUZZY

Jake is riding back towards them.

FUZZY

Jake's good, ain't he? Didn't have to give'em no cows.

PREACHER

Don't know about this.

Jake is stone-faced as he rides back to his men.

JAKE

Take the cows back. They don't want them.

FUZZY

What they want, then?

JAKE

Just take'em back.

ISAAC

I'll go see Moving Storm in the morning.

JAKE

Morning? What's wrong with now?

ISAAC

I'm gonna see him tomorrow.

JAKE

We are losing time, Isaac!

ISAAC

Goddamn it, you don't like the way I'm doing things you can ride out. My men, my cattle, my drive!

Jake's teeth are suddenly clenched with rage. Then just as quickly he sighs and regains his composure.

He rides back to the rear of the herd.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CAMPSITE - BLACKFOOT RIVER - NIGHT

Camp is nested in a clump of trees next to the river. All is quiet. Small fire burns in the middle of the camp.

Cowboys are scattered about. Some are resting on their saddles next to the fire. Others are off by themselves.

Dakota John and Dead Eye are riding the night shift around the herd.

Bootinbull is singing a gospel song.

CLUMP OF TREES

Jake and Buggers sit under the trees. Preacher walks up to them.

PREACHER

You ride out of here, I'm ridin' with you.

BUGGERS

Me too.

JAKE

Never walked off a job before.
Ain't gonna be my first.

PREACHER

(While walking off)

He's making me sick. Gonna get
drunk.

JAKE

One of these days you ain't gonna
wake up.

Preacher doesn't reply to Jake.

CAMPFIRE

Isaac sits alone. He takes a deep breath, gets to his feet,
saddles his horse and rides off in the night.

RIVER

Preacher is alone with his whiskey jug as he sits next to the
river. He takes a long pull from his jug. He looks around and
takes another drink.

JAKE

Jake is wide awake. Buggers is asleep.

Jake then saddles his horse and rides off after Issac.

Tombstone wanders over to Preacher and takes a seat next to
him. The two old men sit quietly for a moment.

Jake rides past them.

TOMBSTONE

Where he ridin' to this time of
night?

Preacher shrugs. Tombstone pulls out a bottle of whiskey,
holds it up so Preacher can see it.

TOMBSTONE (CONT'D)

Wanna share a few licks with me?

Preacher, holding up his own jug.

The two men smile, then turn up their jugs, each taking a
long drink.

PREACHER

(to Tombstone)

So, you white. Ever own slaves?

TOMBSTONE

I ain't never owned nothing but the dirt on my ol' rusty ass. Sometimes I wonder 'bout that.

PREACHER

Your folks own slaves?

TOMBSTONE

Shit, we wuz poor ass crackers.

Tombstone, taking another drink, thinking as he looks out at the river.

TOMBSTONE

My ol' daddy, he thought he own slaves. Used to work for this big ol' plantation owner back in Georgia. He wuz in charge of the slaves.

PREACHER

He beat 'em?

TOMBSTONE

My daddy was a screaming nigga-hater. He'd strut around on this big ol' horse like he was somethin' big. But he was nothin' at all.

Tombstone takes another drink and sighs deeply.

TOMBSTONE (CONT'D)

Reckon, one time I ask my daddy why he beat a little colored slave, little boy smaller than Buggers. My ol' daddy whip me so bad I puked.

PREACHER

You ever hear from your folks?

TOMBSTONE

(shrugs)

Think my daddy's dead now.

Tombstone reaches into his pocket, pulls out an old, crumbled letter.

TOMBSTONE (CONT'D)
Got this. Never opened it.

PREACHER
Don't you wanna know what happen to
your folks?

TOMBSTONE
Can't read.
(grins sheepishly)
Pretty shamin', asking a runaway
slave to read my mail for me.

Tombstone hands the letter to Preacher. Preacher reads the first couple lines of the letter. Feeling a little uneasy about it, he hands the letter back to Tombstone.

PREACHER
Don't feel right readin' another
man's mail.

The two men stare at each other then turn up their bottles and take long drinks.

EXT. TRAIL - ALONG THE BLACKFOOT RIVER - DAY

Jake rides at an easy pace behind Issac.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINS - FLAT COUNTRY - NIGHT

Jake continues to ride. He slows his horse to a canter before stopping.

FADE IN: SIOUX VILLAGE - RIVER - NIGHT

A beautiful 20 year-old Indian woman with long, jet black hair is bathing by the river and singing a tune.

MORNING STAR (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)
(singing)
I know moon-rise, I know star-rise;
(MORE)

MORNING STAR (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)
*I walk in the moonlight, I walk in
 the starlight; When I lay this body
 down.*

Issac enters from the left and unsaddles his horse. Morning Star is startled at first, but when she sees who it is she calms down and her singing dies down to humming.

MORNING STAR (IN SIOUX
 W/SUBTITLES)(CONT'D)
 Heard you were near.
 (silence)
 What brought you across the plains
 to me?

ISAAC (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)
 You did.

Morning Star laughs.

MORNING STAR (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)
 Sweet words don't move me. If you
 love me so much, why'd you leave?

Issac stares at the ground as Morning Star slowly comes out of the water, stark naked. She then starts dressing herself in front of her husband.

ISAAC (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)
 I left to protect you.

MORNING STAR (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)
 Lies, lies, lies. Just like the
 white man. You became the very
 thing you're running away from.

Issac is furious.

MORNING STAR (IN SIOUX
 W/SUBTITLES)(CONT'D)
 You left me for the dead woman,
 Bella -- the one you talk of when
 the sun hides behind the moon and
 our bodies need to rest.

Issac walks over to Morning Star and shakes her with all his might. Morning Star is frightened.

ISAAC (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)
 Don't talk about things you don't
 know.

Issac calms down and lets Morning Star go.

ISAAC (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES) (CONT'D)
 A couple months after our wedding I
 got them dreams of Bella fore' she
 died. Soon it was you dyin' every
 night instead of Bella, gettin'
 murdered by the same man who killed
 Bella. Sometimes dreams got a
 terrible power.

Morning Star is silent.

MORNING STAR (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)
 You said she died bringing a child
 into this world.

ISAAC
 Don't mean it weren't someone's
 fault. I saw the man coming for
 you. Killing you too.
 (pause)
 But he's dead now. We don't got to
 worry no more. He gone.

MORNING STAR (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)
 You loved her. More than me. More
 than your own life.

ISAAC (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)
 She was my past. Maybe now...
 (Beat)
 Maybe now you can be my future.

Morning Star looks up at her husband. Her feelings are
 pouring out of her eyes.

Issac passionately kisses her, then slowly begins to remove
 her clothing.

FADE IN: SIOUX VILLAGE - RIVER - NIGHT

Jake sees what's going on between Morning Star and Issac and
 the realization dawns on him.

He watches them for a moment and then he heads towards the Indians' village. Morning Star and Issac continue to kiss.

FADE IN: SIOUX VILLAGE - NIGHT

Bright lights glow from a campfire in the middle of the village. Colorful teepees and tents line each side of the village. A few people move about the camp.

Jake rides towards the village. Several Sioux appear from out of the darkness, surrounding Jake on all sides.

As they continue to ride towards the entrance of the village, Amitola appears. They stop. The two men study each other for a beat.

AMITOLA

Why you here, Dark Brother?

JAKE

To see Moving Storm.

AMITOLA

The Chief not receive you.

JAKE

This ain't about no cows and no horses. About more than that.

Jake, defiant, rides off towards the entrance to the village. Several warriors start to ride after him. Amitola throws up his hand, then stops them.

AMITOLA (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)

Let him go.

Amitola and his braves ride off behind Jake.

Jake rides through the camp, Amitola behind him. Several people exit their teepees to watch the Black cowboy ride towards the far end of the village. Jake rides up to a large teepee, stops and dismounts. Amitola dismounts and moves over to Jake.

Amitola enters the teepee. As Jake waits, all eyes are fixed on him. Finally Amitola returns and gestures for Jake to go inside.

Jake enters the teepee. Amitola remains outside.

INT. MOVING STORM'S TEEPEE - NIGHT

MOVING STORM is a rather large man, about 60 years old. He has sharp, piercing eyes and long, jet black hair with a hint of silver. Jake enters the teepee. Moving Storm motions for him to take a seat.

MOVING STORM

You rode great distance in the dead of night.

JAKE

I come in peace to ask your help.

MOVING STORM

You friend of the white man. Why should I trust you?

JAKE

I speak only for myself.

MOVING STORM

You speak for Isaac. Isaac drives the white man's cattle. You work for him. I talk only to him.

JAKE

I drive the white man's cattle. I seek safe passage to take his cattle through your territory. This is all we want. I do not speak for anyone else.

MOVING STORM

My Dark Brother, we suffer many of the same injustices. But sometimes your people stray from the truth. You are like wandering wolves. Isaac is your wandering wolf.

JAKE

I am not Isaac.

Moving Storm looks over his shoulder and shouts in the Sioux language.

MOVING STORM (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)

Morning Star, please come.

Morning Star enters from the rear of the teepee and stands off to the side looking flushed.

MOVING STORM (CONT'D)

(to Jake)

My daughter, Isaac's wife.

Jake nods, not a bit surprised.

MOVING STORM (CONT'D)

My people take Issac in when he had no place to go. I give him my daughter in marriage. In the middle of the night he leaves like a wandering wolf. And in return he kills one of my Braves.

Realization dawns on Jake.

JAKE

Amitola's scars...

MOVING STORM

The mark of the dead are given when someone close dies through the spear.

Moving Storm motions for Morning Star to leave but Morning Star stays rooted to the ground.

MORNING STAR (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)

(hesitant)

Father, Issac has returned.

Moving Storm turns and stares at his daughter. His expression gives nothing away. Morning Star continues to explain.

MORNING STAR (IN SIOUX
W/SUBTITLES)(CONT'D)

He promised to come back after the drive is complete.

MOVING STORM (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)

You believed the lies on his lips?
He wants to get across. He won't
come back after that.

Morning Star is crushed and Moving Storm signals for her to leave. Morning Star leaves.

MOVING STORM (CONT'D)
Bring Issac to me.

JAKE
I give you my word.

MOVING STORM
I believe you speak the truth.
Bring me ten cattle and ten horses.
Then I'll know your word is good.

JAKE
My word is my word.

Moving Storm nods as Jake is getting to his feet.

MOVING STORM
Keep your word. Remember, sometimes
even wolves become the hunted.

Jake nods, understanding the message, and exits the teepee.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BLACKFOOT RIVER - RUNAWAYS CAMPSITE - DAY

It's morning. The Runaways are up and moving about, getting ready to move out.

Isaac is cinching the girth on his horse as Jake rides back into camp.

Buggers runs up to him as he is dismounting.

Jake begins unsaddling his horse.

Isaac watches him with contempt.

JAKE
(to Issac)
We can drive these cattle through
Moving Storm's territory. He wants
horses and cattle.

ISAAC
You went to see Moving Storm?

Jake, turns to face Isaac.

JAKE

(nods)

And I got a lot to say to you.

Isaac is incensed. He knocks Jake to the ground. Jake falls under the feet of the horse.

Buggers is shocked.

Everyone gathers around.

ISAAC

Keep your ass in your place and out of my business.

Jake is still on the ground, looking up at Isaac, then over at Buggers.

Jake rises to his feet, brushing himself off.

BUGGERS

(to Isaac)

You stay away from him!

JAKE

Buggers! Be quiet! Back off!

Buggers doesn't budge.

Dakota John moves over to Buggers and pulls him away.

JAKE (CONT'D)

(to Isaac)

We got fifteen hundred head of cattle and twelve good men out here. I did what you shoulda done! Manny is dead cuz of you. How much more blood you want on your hands?

ISSAC

(coldly)

You had no right to go see Moving Storm!

JAKE

I got plenty of right. And now you need to see him too.

Isaac pulls out his pistol, and aims it at Jake.

ISAAC

Stay out of my problems or I'll
drop you where you stand! I already
did what I'm gonna do.

JAKE

Moving Storm wants to see you about
one of his Braves you killed.

Buggers breaks free from Dakota John and charges towards
Isaac.

Dakota John catches up to Buggers and hauls him away, kicking
and screaming.

Preacher moves over next to Jake, shouting at Isaac.

PREACHER

Gonna shoot him, too? How many
more, Issac?

ISAAC

Shut your damn mouth! You drunken
ol' fool!

Isaac swings his pistol around on Preacher.

Preacher looks at the weapon then back at Isaac. In a calm
but cold voice:

PREACHER

You surprise me.

Preacher moves a few paces to his left, pulling back his long
duster to reveal his weapon hanging low on his narrow hips.
Preacher spreads his feet, long bony hands dropping to his
right side.

Isaac's pistol is still trained on Preacher.

PREACHER (CONT'D)

You think you quick enough? Go
'head. Cock it and squeeze.

Jake realizes Preacher is serious. He moves to reason with
Preacher and Isaac.

JAKE

Isaac! Don't be a fool!

Nobody is moving. All frozen in their tracks. Preacher is coiled and ready to strike. Isaac's pistol is still trained on Preacher.

JAKE (CONT'D)

(to Preacher)

Step away before someone gets killed. I'll ride out. I'll leave!

BUGGERS

I'm riding too.

Jake moves over to his horse, tightens the saddle, and mounts up.

Buggers crosses to his horse and struggles up into the saddle.

DAKOTA JOHN

We ridin' together.

Preacher, still watching Isaac, crosses to his horse and mounts up. Preacher smirks.

Jake and Buggers ride off. Dakota John and Preacher sit on their horses and watch them.

Fuzzy sits on his horse, looking confused.

Bootinbull and Elmo stare at each other, not knowing what to do.

Jeremiah swings up into the saddle, rides over next to Preacher and Dakota John and stops. They look down at Isaac.

Issac, realizing he's about to lose it all, takes a deep breath, letting his pistol drop to his side.

Preacher, Jeremiah and Dakota John ride off behind Buggers and Jake.

Fuzzy follows.

Jake and Buggers riding off. Preacher, Jeremiah and Dakota John behind them. Bootinbull is seen riding fast.

He passes Preacher, Jeremiah and Dakota John. Bootinbull catches up with Jake and Buggers. They all stop.

BOOTINBULL

Jake! Hold on a moment. This is not the way.

JAKE

I am tired of his bullshit.

BOOTINBULL

He needs us.

JAKE

I ain't going back.

The other Runaways ride up and stop as Bootinbull continues to plead with Jake.

BOOTINBULL

Let's finish what we started. For our sake.

JAKE

No right to do what he did.

BOOTINBULL

Forgive him.

BUGGERS

Go knock 'im on his ass.

Bootinbull throws a quick look at Buggers.

BOOTINBULL

We've been through so much. God knows we have a long ways to go. We need to complete this drive.

Jake sighs, looks at the other men. He rides back towards the camp, Buggers at his side. The others follow.

CAMP

Jake rides in, moves over to Isaac, and stops.

JAKE

Let's get started.

ISAAC

We gonna go out through Silver Bow and over the Smith River.

JAKE
(protests)
No, you gonna go see Moving Storm.

ISAAC
I'm still in charge.

JAKE
You gonna lose everything if you
don't.

ISAAC
If I go, there is a chance I might
not come back.

JAKE
Might. It's the least you can do
for all the men you killed.

Issac mounts up and rides off. Jake follows him.

DISSOLVE TO:

SIOUX VILLAGE - DAY

It's bustling with people carrying on daily chores. Some women are cleaning vegetables; others are skinning buffalo.

Issac takes it all in with a hint of wistfulness. A group of men are socializing while smoking tobacco and some are practicing shooting arrows.

Issac gets off his horse and walks towards Moving Storm's teepee. A small boy recognizes him and shouts for the braves in the Sioux language. The braves appear immediately and start to beat at Issac. With all the commotion going on, Morning Star and Moving Storm come out of the teepee.

As soon as Morning Star realizes who it is, she runs to Issac -- shielding him from the braves.

MOVING STORM (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)
He must die.

The braves move forward to Isaac.

Morning Star tries to run to Isaac but Amitola grabs her.

MORNING STAR (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)
 (to Moving Storm)
 Don't let them do this. Let him
 explain. Please!

Moving Storm ignores her.

MORNING STAR (IN SIOUX
 W/SUBTITLES) (CONT'D)
 (eyes narrowing,
 desperate)
 I swear to you, I will take my
 life if his is taken!

Moving Storm looks at his daughter and realizes that she is
 serious. He looks at his braves and gestures for them to
 bring Issac into the teepee.

Jake rides up as soon as Issac is taken into the teepee.

INT. MOVING STORM'S TEEPEE - DAY

Moving Storm sits on his stool. The braves surround Issac and
 Moving Storm on all sides.

MOVING STORM (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)
 Explain. Explain killing a brother
 of the tribe. Explain your
 betrayal.

ISAAC (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)
 He desired her -- even knowing she
 was mine. Then he challenged me in
 battle. I tried to walk away but I
 swear to you, he threw the first
 blow. I had no choice.

Issac pulls back his shirt to show Moving Storm where the
 arrow hit him. There is a scar right above his artery.

MOVING STORM (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)
 If the death was honorable, why did
 you run like a coward?

There is a pause.

ISAAC (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)
 That was not the reason I left. It
 was another death I needed to stop.
 (MORE)

ISAAC (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES) (CONT'D)
 I feared Morning Star would suffer
 the same fate as my first wife.
 (pause)
 But if my blood is what you want,
 then take it.

Moving Storm ponders that. Long beat.

EXT. MOVING STORM'S TEEPEE - DAY

Issac exits the teepee and Morning Star rushes to him and hugs him. Issac sees Jake nod at him from the corner of his eye. Moving Storm comes out.

MOVING STORM (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)
 Take the white man's cattle through
 my plains.

Moving Storm nods at Jake. Jake nods back. Moving Storm goes back inside his teepee. Issac looks at Morning Star.

ISAAC (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)
 I will come back. I promise.

MORNING STAR (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)
 I believe you.

Issac kisses her on the forehead.

CAMP SITE - NIGHT

All is quiet. Cattle are scattered all over the place. Isaac and Jake walk in. Jake strolls over to Buggers.

Jeremiah and Elmo are digging a grave at the far corner. There is a man lying on the ground with some potato sacks covering him from head to toe.

ISAAC
 What happened?

All is silent.

DAKOTA JOHN
 Preacher passed on.

Issac and Jake are stunned.

DAKOTA JOHN (CONT'D)
 Buggers found him.

Issac and Jake look at Buggers for an explanation.

BUGGERS

I went over to give Preacher his breakfast. I left it there for him. After a while I went back to check on him and his food wasn't touched. I looked at him and realized he was gone.

(pause)

He died with his Bible in one had, whiskey in the other.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RUNAWAYS CAMP - BLACK FOOT RIVER - RISING SUN - DAY

Early morning. Bright sun burns the dawn's dew. Slight mist rises from the earth.

The only sounds are picks and shovels digging into the earth. Dakota John, Buggers and Tombstone are digging Preacher's grave. His body is wrapped up in dusters.

No words are spoken, just the sounds of picks and shovel.

CLUMP OF TREES NEAR THE CAMPSITE

Isaac and Jake ride up under the trees. Just above the hill side we see ten horses and ten cattle grazing. Isaac and Jake dismount, and tie off their horses.

They walk off towards the grave sites.

A RIDGE NEAR THE GRAVE SITES

Fuzzy is alone. Dakota John walks up to him and stops a few paces behind him.

DAKOTA JOHN

(to Fuzzy)

Gotta bury 'im and move on.

FUZZY

Ain't nothing left.

Fuzzy drinks from Preacher's whisky jug. He looks at the inscription on it and reads:

FUZZY (CONT'D)

"To my loving son George Taylor, If
you keep your head when all about
you are losing theirs, then yours
is the world and everything that is
in it."

Fuzzy chuckles as he takes another swig.

Dakota John wipes away a tear.

Then, in a sudden fit of anger, Fuzzy hurls the whiskey jug
towards a tree and walks off.

FUZZY (CONT'D)

(To himself)

What a waste...

Dakota John picks up the jug, reads the inscription and puts
it in his pocket. He walks off towards the grave site.

GRAVESITES

They are all gathered around the graves. Fuzzy and Dakota
John walk up. Buggers picks up Bootinbull's Bible and looks
at the open pages the way he found it. Buggers looks at Jake
and Isaac.

BUGGERS

It's the Twenty-Third Psalm. I can
read that.

He looks at Jake for approval. Jake nods his head. Quietly
Buggers starts to recite the 23rd Psalm.

EXT. GRASSY HILL - OVERLOOKING THE GRAVE SITES - DAY

Amitola and several of his Braves watch the Runaways below.
Bugger's and Dakota John's voices can still be heard.

P.O.V. JAKE - GRASSY HILLS - DAY

JAKE

(to himself)

I told 'im that whiskey was gonna
kill 'im someday.

Jake looks up at the hills and sees the silhouettes of men
with guns behind trees. He looks down at the grave. He looks
back up at the hills and the shadows have disappeared.

Jake shakes his head and walks away.

EXT. GRAVES - HILL - DAY

The cowboys mount up, preparing to move out with the herd. Amitola is sitting on his horse on top of the hill as he watches the cowboys.

Jake rides past where the horses and cattle are and stops. Jake tips his hat.

Amitola nods and points to the direction the cowboys should be heading. Jake rides back to catch up with the cattle drive.

Amitola and his Braves ride down the hill, towards the cattle and horses.

EXT. WIDE VALLEY - DAY

A long formation of cowboys, cattle and dust stretched out across the valley. Isaac and Jake on the point. The other cowboys in their usual positions.

PLAINS - DAY

Snow-capped mountains in a distance. Cattle drive moves on. Cowboys hollering and yelling to keep the animals moving.

JAKE
(to Isaac)
Almost there.

ISAAC
How the Boys holding up?

JAKE
Good. Hell, these fellows harder
than nails. Even ol' Buggers.

ISAAC
What you gonna do with him?

Jake is all smiles. He looks back at Buggers and grins.

JAKE
Probably keep him with me. He grows
on you real fast.

REAR OF HERD

Buggers, Bootinbull and Dakota John, riding drag. Eating trail dust.

DAKOTA JOHN

Boy, you drink river water and eat trail dust?

Buggers doesn't reply. He has a sad look on his face.

BUGGERS

I miss Preacher.

DAKOTA JOHN

Me too. But he's gone home to be with the Lord.

BOOTINBULL

He used to say cowboys were a dying species. Didn't think he was talking bout' himself.

DAKOTA JOHN

All those years of drinkin' do that to a man.

Buggers and Dakota John continue to mess around. Buggers picks up some dust and throws it at Dakota John. John returns the favor. They laugh.

EXT. PLAINS - DAY

Still a long caravan of cowboys and cattle. In a far distance we can see the town of Fargo. The Runaways yell and scream with joy. Wide smiles all around.

JEREMIAH, FUZZY, ELMO, DEAD EYE AND TOMBSTONE

They are all smiles.

DAKOTA JOHN AND BUGGERS

Yelling and screaming.

TOMBSTONE

Turning his head, wiping his eyes on the sleeve of his shirt.

ISAAC AND JAKE

Riding on the point.

ISAAC
We been through a lot.

JAKE
We finished. That's what matters.

ISAAC
You saved this drive, you know.

Jake shrugs.

ISAAC (CONT'D)
(With emphasis)
Thank you.

Jake nods.

Isaac rides off ahead of Jake. Jake tips his hat to Isaac. Buggers rides up to the point with Jake. They look at each other and smile.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STOCK YARD - FARGO - DAY

The gate to a holding pen swings open.

The Runaways drive the cattle inside.

A WRANGLER closes the gate and moves over to Isaac and Jake as they dismount.

WRANGLER
You boys from the Hayes Ranch?

ISAAC
That's right. Martin Hayes.

WRANGLER
Thought so. I'll get the head man,
Mr. Taylor, for you.

Wrangler exits. Tombstone walks up to Isaac and Jake.

TOMBSTONE
End of the line for me. Gonna
settle down here in Fargo with
Luther and Albert.

ISAAC

What you gonna do here in Fargo?

TOMBSTONE

Hell, I don't know. See which way
the wind's blowin' for a while.

JAKE

You got some pay coming.

TOMBSTONE

You can find me in the saloon.
Gonna get so drunk, I ain't gonna
know if it's today or tomorrow.

They laugh. Tombstone leaves.

CHARLIE TAYLOR walks up to Jake and Isaac.

TAYLOR

Charlie Taylor's the name. You must
be Isaac.

Isaac nods towards Jake.

ISAAC

This is Jake.

They shake hands.

TAYLOR

That's damn good work. Long damn
ways. Get yourself something to eat
and a good night's sleep. Be good
as new tomorrow.

Taylor hands them an envelope filled with money and walks
off. The Runaways head towards town.

EXT. OPEN PLAINS - DAY

The Runaways are riding back out of town, across open plains,
hills and green valleys.

JUNCTION

They reach a junction and pause for a moment.

Signs are posted:

Three Forks 22 miles, Miles City 30 miles, Little Big Horn 16 miles.

DAKOTA JOHN, FUZZY AND JEREMIAH

Ride towards Three Forks.

JAKE, ISAAC AND BUGGERS

Ride towards Miles City. Finally Isaac veers off and heads for Little Big Horn to Morning Star. Jake and Buggers continue to Miles City.

PANORAMA SHOT

We see Isaac, Jake and Buggers. Isaac is riding away from Jake and Buggers. They all stop to look back at each other. Jake and Buggers wave good-bye. Isaac smiles and nods. Once more they ride off in different directions.

Isaac relaxes and smiles to himself.

EXT. ROAD - NEAR THE HAYES RANCH - DAY

Dakota John, Preacher and Jeremiah are riding to the ranch. Nora and Martha are running across the field to meet Dakota John. He dismounts.

Preacher and Jeremiah continue towards the ranch. Nora runs into Dakota John's arms. They kiss and walk towards the house.

EXT. GRASSY HILL - CLOSE TO SIOUX TERRITORY - DAY

TIME LAPSE as we fast forward a couple days through fast sunrises and sunsets. The sky flickers as the sun rises. The canyons can be seen in the near distance. Isaac is on his horse riding towards the canyons as the wind blows on his face.

He looks up at the sun. From the corner of his eye he sees sudden movement behind some trees.

CLOSE on a rabbit.

Isaac takes out his gun and shoots it. Then BAM! Two shots are fired behind Isaac, hitting him in the shoulder.

Reveal ERIC WINGATE, late 30's, behind the tree holding a gun. He looks an awful lot like Jesse. Surrounding Issac are a couple of slave hunters JAMES, ROSS and Raymond, the Black man from the house near where Isaac killed Jesse.

ERIC
(off Isaac)
That him, Boy?

Raymond nods timidly.

Eric grabs Issac by the hair.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Now I am gonna put you in your
place.

Issac looks around to see the slave hunters aiming their guns toward him. He looks at Raymond in disgust.

Raymond looks frightened.

Issac then spits on Eric.

ISAAC
(coldly)
Go rot in hell.

Eric and the slave hunters drag him toward a large tree.

DISSOLVE TO:

SCREEN READS: SIOUX TERRITORY - EIGHT MONTHS LATER

EXT. CAMPSITE - CANYONS - MOUNTAINS - EVENING

As the sun sets the sky turns from blue to purple. Morning Star stands on a rock and faces the hills.

A heavy wind blows towards the east causing her hair to fly in the wind.

Moving Storm comes up behind Morning Star.

MOVING STORM (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)
Let's go. Its getting cold.

Morning Star sighs as Amitola helps her off the rock. She is visibly pregnant. Morning Star hums as she and Moving Storm walk toward the village.

MORNING STAR (IN SIOUX W/SUBTITLES)
Any day now. I know it. Any day now
he will come.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END