

OUTLAW TRAIL
a screenplay

by

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COMANCHERIA - HILLSIDE

A faint predawn glow illuminates the Great Plains, where it rises into the Antelope Hills and sparkles off the meandering South Canadian River fed by the Wichita Mountains.

SUPER: "ANTELOPE HILLS
OKLAHOMA INDIAN TERRITORY"

A mixed bag of a couple of hundred smartly dressed TEXAS RANGERS, including a motley crew of MILITIAMEN and an assortment of "friendly" Native American WARRIORS with white head bands, mostly KOWTONA, make their way up a steep hillside on horseback. The raiding party reaches the top of a rise to reveal nestled into an adjacent wooded hillside a small Penateka Comanche village. The Commanding Officer, a distinguished veteran Texas Ranger calmly signals a grim Kowtona War Chief, as his eager Second-in-Command efficiently directs the remainder of the group to quietly take their ease on horseback.

PENATEKA COMANCHE VILLAGE

The Kowtona warriors make their way down the hillside on foot, approaching a collection of five Comanche tipi lodges covered with decorated buffalo hides. They take their position by the entrance to each structure and await a sign from their Chief. Sprung by a subtle nod, the Kowtona war party burst into the unsuspecting lodges howling their war cries.

TEXAS GOVERNOR'S OFFICE - MAP

A large framed De Cordova wall map of Texas, New Mexico and the Indian Territory to the north.

SUPER: "TEXAS, 1858"

TEXAS GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

SR.CAPT. LEROY CORD (36), and CAPT. HARRY HARTMAN (32), sit uncomfortably, despite the lovely Spanish leather chairs in the grand office of TEXAS GOVERNOR HARDIN RUNNELS (46). Standing behind his massive antique carved oak desk with the large wall map behind him, the Governor holds forth while the officers take modest sips from their old fashioned glasses of elderly single-malt Scotch. The Governor pauses to take a drink from his own glass, then charges back into his rant.

GOV. HARDIN RUNNELS

Now, I have on good authority from our agent at the Brazos Indian Reservations, that the Kowtona would be most anxious to participate in this operation. Your first order of business will be to travel to the Rez and have words with Kowtona Chief Placido. Let me impress upon you the necessity of energetic effort and remember our reputations, yours and mine, depend on immediate and drastic action.

Sr. Capt. Cord sets down his glass and surges to his feet.

SR.CAPT. CORD

Governor, we take full responsibility for this mission. Am sure I can speak for Capt. Hartman.

Capt. Hartman nods in agreement.

Rest assured, any apprehension regarding our inability to contain the enemy and justify the expedition, will be minimal.

GOV. RUNNELS

Excellent, knew I could count on you. Gentlemen, drink up. Much work to be done.

Capt. Hartman also rises to his feet. Both sharply salute the Governor, as he circles his desk to firmly shake their hands and hand them their written orders.

PENATEKA COMANCHE LODGE

Kowtona warriors swarm through the Comanche sleeping quarters brutally hacking to pieces barely awake COMANCHE MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN. The SOULS of the slaughtered Comanche drift up from their bodies howling death songs to their ancestors.

PENATEKA COMANCHE VILLAGE - OVERLOOK

On an adjacent hillside the rest of the troops anxiously await the outcome of the attack. Cord and Hartman discuss the operation.

SR.CAPT. CORD

We were warned by Agent Rose what bloodthirsty bastards these Kowtona are.

CAPT. HARTMAN

Much is made of their bein' friends of the settlers, when they're cannibals for Christ sake! Despised by every other tribe on the Great Plains.

SR.CAPT. CORD

The governor said we'd be on a limited budget. Hell, didn't figure him to think we could do this with two hundred Rangers, a handful of ragtag Militia and a bunch of so-called "friendlies".

Leroy spits.

SR. CAPT. CORD (CONT'D)

That fella spends top dollar on decorating his office, but won't provide enough Rangers for his glorious campaign.

CAPT. HARTMAN

Can't be fussy about Injun volunteers. 'Specially when they're good fighters.

SR.CAPT. CORD

Long as the only flesh they eat for dinner is Comanche, I don't give a damn.

CAPT. HARTMAN

Seems neither side in this Texas-Indian War are observing rules respectin' non-combatants.

SR.CAPT. CORD

Whatever it takes to put fear of grim horrible death into these vicious Comanche.

PENATEKA COMANCHE VILLAGE

The Kowtona erupt from the lodges with triumphant howls brandishing bloody trophies of Comanche body parts.

PENATEKA COMANCHE VILLAGE - OVERLOOK

This is the signal the Texas Ranger officers have been awaiting. The Senior Captain murmurs affectionately to rouse his Appaloosa horse.

SR.CAPT. CORD

Sally, let's mosey on down the hill
and see what we can see.

Sally snickers in response.

CAPT. HARTMAN

Nice your Appaloosa's such a great
conversationalist. Though, I'd keep
your heart-to-hearts on the
down-low around the men. Might get
antsy about your feminine
companionship.

Leroy smirks back at his friend, as Harry moves off to motivate the troops around him. The rest of the Rangers and Militia follow the two senior officers down the hill to check the results of the Kowtona massacre.

PENATEKA COMANCHE VILLAGE - HILLSIDE

Three young Comanche women: WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN (24), feeding an INFANT (1), strapped across her chest, her older sister, SUNSET SPIDER WOMAN (27), younger sister, BLUE SKY WOMAN (18), and their parents, CHIEF BUFFALO HEART (48), and his Southern Ute wife, COYOTE WOMAN (45), enjoy the simple task of picking mushrooms in the early dawn. All startle at the horrific sound of howling. Sunset Spider Woman runs to a vantage point gazing down at the camp, gesturing to the others, cautioning quiet.

PENATEKA COMANCHE VILLAGE

From the Comanche camp anguished souls of the recently slaughtered COMANCHE MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN rise through their tipi into the sky. The recently deceased family and loved ones of the mushroom pickers struggle with the horror of their plight.

PENATEKA COMANCHE LODGE

Senior Captain Cord and Captain Hartman enter one of the lodges looking for survivors. The Kowtona warriors enthusiastically slice bloody strips of steaming flesh and stuff them into leather carry bags. ANADARKO CAPTAIN, JIM POCKMARK (27), lifts the hide flap and enters.

CAPT. POCKMARK

Senior Captain, found large Comanche camp nearby, where Little Robe Creek flows into South Canadian. Maybe seventy lodges...

SR.CAPT. CORD

Good work, Jim. Pass the word to the other friendlies. We'll pull out soon as we torch the lodges.

Jim shrugs in acknowledgment. Without a look at the carnage about him, he moves back out the door. The Senior Captain shakes his head at the elated Kowtona who follow the Scout with their booty.

CAPT. HARTMAN

Okay, Leroy. I'll get the men moving.

SR.CAPT. CORD

Thanks, Harry.

Both officers take one last look at the gore around them, then carry on.

PENATEKA COMANCHE VILLAGE

Cord climbs back on his appaloosa casting his eye about the scene of this first victory. NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS curse the troops into formation for the march to the next camp. The men chat excitedly among themselves.

QUAHADI COMANCHE VILLAGE - OVERLOOK

Adjacent the confluence of the Canadian River and Little Robe Creek about six dozen Quahadi Comanche tipi cover a raised embankment. Most in this thriving community busy themselves preparing their morning meals. Chief Buffalo Heart and his family, the lone survivors of the recent attack, rush towards the Chief's lodge.

CHIEF QUASHO'S LODGE

Chief Buffalo Heart, his wife and three daughters brusquely enter disturbing a tribal council meeting. CHIEF POHEBITS QUASHO (53) and five members of the TRIBAL COUNCIL OF GRANDMOTHERS rise to greet them.

CHIEF QUASHO

Chief Buffalo Heart and family
always welcome at Pohebits hearth.
Trouble, my friend?

CHIEF BUFFALO HEART

Grandmothers, Chief Pohebits
Quasho, Kowtona "wendigo"
(cannibals) raid camp. Two elder
daughters lose husbands and five
children, rest of band snuffed out.
Cowardly White soldiers watch from
distance, be here soon.

Chief Quasho motions council members in the lodge to listen up.

CHIEF QUASHO

Pass word to break camp. Need to
buy time for people escape down
"Gooalpah", (South Canadian River).
Warn eldest son, Chief Peta Nocona,
and other families up river.

Chief Pohebits Quasho looks sadly at Buffalo Heart and his family. He raises a hand in prayer.

CHIEF QUASHO

Hear me, powers of four directions,
behold us two-legged here on earth,
for flowering stick you gave us has
lost bloom and people in despair.
Hear my word, so future generations
walk good road with flowering
stick. Hear me, on behalf of our
people, all relatives, the sacred
seeds, four-leggeds and wings of
the air, may this be good day to
die.

Finishing his prayer, Chief Quasho drops his hand and looks about the lodge.

CHIEF QUASHO

In youth, fought to death with
brave Spanish soldier and earned

CHIEF QUASHO

right to take coat of iron, which
 many claim my blessing of survival
 in battle. Truth is, was strength
 of mountain lion ally give me
 courage to stand tall as warrior.
 Maybe this day we die, maybe not,
 but we fight, help others live
 another day.

CHIEF BUFFALO HEART

Great words by great Chief. Thank
 you, "Wakan Tanka" (Great Spirit).

With pride in their eyes the lodge empties, as the
 Grandmothers leave to spread word about immanent attack.

CHIEF QUASHO

Buffalo Heart, you are Fire-keeper,
 must live to protect Comanche way,
 to find balance and live in harmony
 with all life. Take this lodge,
 replace your loss, as I won't need
 it anymore. Last night had vision,
 Is it not good day to die?

Chief Buffalo Heart embraces his old friend, Pohebits.
 Buffalo Heart then approaches his family. Chief Pohebits
 Quasho's good wife dresses him with chainmail jacket,
 ceremonial buffalo robe and buffalo horn head-dress.

QUAHADI COMANCHE CAMP - OVERLOOK

Cord and the troops appear on nearby hillside. Hundreds of
 Comanche warriors circle horses in a field in front of a few
 remaining lodges, yipping and brandishing traditional
 weapons.

QUAHADI COMANCHE CAMP - WOODS

Heavily loaded non-combatant Comanche hustle through the
 woods.

QUAHADI COMANCHE CAMP - FIELD

On horseback, Comanche War Chief Quasho energetically
 charges through the experienced and confident throng,
 encouraging the Comanche warriors with loud cat-calls of
 their despised enemy.

CHIEF QUASHO
Kowtona cowards kill sleeping
children. Try wide-awake Comanche
warrior.

QUAHADI COMANCHE CAMP - OVERLOOK

CAPT. HARTMAN
Leroy, we must attack at once.

SR.CAPT. CORD
Don't know, Harry. Take a look at
that.

The Senior Captain gestures up the hill to the approaching
dust clouds of COMANCHE REINFORCEMENTS in the distance.

QUAHADI COMANCHE CAMP - FIELD

While fearless Chief Quasho harangues the wendigo Kowtona to
one-on-one combat, friendly Indian scout captain, Jim
Pockmark, raises his Sharps buffalo rifle and shoots Chief
Quasho in the chest. A group of distressed Comanche warriors
race to his side and lead the chief and his horse back to
camp. Pohebits's son, CHIEF PETA NOCONA (24), a proud and
respected warrior with a few hundred experienced COMANCHE
WARRIORS at his side, arrives in time to see his father shot
and immediately signs for all Comanche to move to shelter of
the woods.

QUAHADI COMANCHE CAMP - OVERLOOK

Captain Hartman struggles to rein in his skittish horse
beside the Senior Captain.

CAPT. HARTMAN
Leroy, we must attack.

SR.CAPT. CORD
These Comanche reinforcements
change everything, even with our
advanced weaponry.

Chief Placido (39), rides up.

CHIEF PLACIDO
Senior Captain, brave Kowtona must
teach Comanche dogs lesson.

SR.CAPT. CORD
All right, Chief. Let's see what
your men can do.

QUAHADI COMANCHE CAMP - FIELD

A brash KOWTONA WARRIOR (24), steps up to challenge a COMANCHE CHAMPION (25), and though both fighters are strong and skilled, the Kowtona is eventually dispatched by a brilliant feat of Comanche horsemanship and dexterity with weaponry. The triumphant COMANCHE WARRIOR removes headgear, to reveal that he is a she. The arrogant Kowtona men howl in outrage and humiliation.

SR.CAPT. CORD
Placido, stop this foolishness and
attack.

The War Chief signals his warriors and the frustrated Kowtona scream their war cries, as they charge the fearless male and female Comanche warriors.

SR.CAPT. CORD
Harry, did you notice the Kowtona
took off their white head-bands?
Our greenhorn troops aren't going
to know who's who. Quick, order the
bugler to signal the Kowtona to
retreat.

Before the battle has really begun, the bugle signal to retreat confuses the Kowtona.

SR.CAPT. CORD
Okay, Harry, order the Rangers and
Militia to attack.

Chief Peta Nocona quickly takes advantage of this false start and signals the Comanche warriors to retreat.

QUAHADI COMANCHE CAMP - WOODS

A chaotic running battle with individual skirmishes ensues. The bulk of the Comanche Warriors escape, though Chief Quasho's body is left behind in the melee. Large numbers of Comanche warriors from distant camps arrive and take up the fight.

QUAHADI COMANCHE CAMP

Capt. Hartman rides up to the Senior Captain.

CAPT. HARTMAN

Leroy, the odds have increased
against us and ammunition is
running low.

SR.CAPT. CORD

Spread the command for troops to
fall back. Prepare for an orderly
withdrawal.

QUAHADI COMANCHE CAMP

Kowtona decorate their horses with severed hands and feet
taken from butchered bodies in the first camp and the air
reeks of roasted Comanche flesh. White Soldiers also
celebrate, burning Comanche tipi, food stores and
possessions, with Chief Iron Jacket, getting special
attention. A group of Rangers and Militia string up his
mutilated corpse high on a nearby cliff face, where it can
be seen from a great distance.

AUSTIN - TEXAS GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

Sr.Capt. Cord and Capt. Hartman enter the Texas Governor's
inner office.

GOV. RUNNELS

Gentlemen, cannot begin to express
how proud I am of your great
success on the incursion into
Comanche Territory. Was confident,
you were the right men for the job,
but cannot sugar coat it and must
come right to the point. There will
be no follow up on this important,
this historic triumph.

Cord and Hartman are shocked and the Senior Captain jumps to
his feet.

SR.CAPT. CORD

Governor, please excuse my
impetuosity. Surely, you're joking.

GOV. RUNNELS

No joking matter, Senior Captain.
Though, you might be familiar with

GOV. RUNNELS
the whimsical saying: "no good turn
goes unpunished."

Cord collapses back back in his chair.

GOV. RUNNELS
While you men have been risking
your lives for the good people of
Texas, Washington in its wisdom has
again pulled the rug out from under
our best efforts. Horrified by the
thought of an independent armed
force in Texas, they demand the
immediate dissolution of the Texas
Rangers, while repeating empty
promises to renew their protection
of the citizens of Texas.

Once again the Senior Captain rises to his feet.

SR.CAPT. CORD
Governor, every effort must be made
to convince your confederates in
the State Capitol to reject this
high-handed and shortsighted
federal agenda. Everyone of our
brave soldiers behaved in a gallant
manner under fire. We cannot stand
by and let Washington reduce this
triumph to an insignificant
gesture.

The frustrated officer sits back down.

GOV. RUNNELS
This passionate defense of the
actions of your good and brave men
breaks my heart. Can only, humbly,
impress upon you my determination
to carry that message to Congress,
the state Capitol and the good
people of Texas. However, I am
obligated at present to require
your tokens of insignia and rank.

Leroy and Harry reluctantly unpin their beloved Texas Ranger
badges and set them on the Governor's desk. The Governor
attempts a grand diplomatic overture and reaches for his
antique humidior.

Gentlemen, am sure this has been as
difficult for you, as it has been
for me. Let me offer you one of

GOV. RUNNELS
 these excellent "Hoyo de Monterrey
 Habano" cigars. They are specially
 made for me, at the "Real Fabrica
 de Tabaco Partagas", in Havana,
 Cuba.

Ex-Sr.Capt. Leroy Cord and ex-Capt. Harry Hartman each pick a cigar from the humidor and look the Governor straight in the eye. As Governor Runnels reaches to hand them his cutter, they both tear their cigars to shreds onto his expensive antique carpet. Performing their smartest salute, the ex-Texas Rangers turn on their heels and parade march out of the Governor's office.

AUSTIN - ARMADILLO BAR & GRILL

Leroy and Harry dejectedly sit at a bar table playing poker with two ex-Militiamen, MICKEY "THE WEAZL" GALLAGHER (34), and JEAN BAPTISTE "J.B." MERCER (37). A tough, tattooed, pot-bellied, bald headed and bearded bartender, TRAVIS JUDD (31), calmly and wordlessly pours drinks behind the bar. A gorgeous, cigarette-smoking, big haired red head, NADINE MAGRUDER (24), is able to focus on the needs of the card players in the otherwise empty bar room.

J.B.

My deal... Let's have a little variety and play H.O.R.S.E. You know, bit of: Hold 'Em, Omaha High-Low, Razz, Seven Card Stud and Eight Or Better.

LEROY

Makes my head hurt tryin' to keep all these variations in mind.

The Weazl flags Nadine for a refill on the beer jug while glancing at his cards. Travis deftly flicks the tap and fills a clean jug with premium draft beer, as Nadine approaches the bar with the empty. The others continue assessing their cards.

THE WEAZL

Your head's hurtin' cause of that rot gut Bourbon yer drinkin'. Should stick to beer.

HARRY

Come on Leroy. Live dangerously...

LEROY

Maybe it'll improve my luck. Take three cards.

J.B.

No such thing as luck. Gotta seize the moment.

Nadine leans over the table with a newly filled jug of draft beer. Leroy's hand snakes out and grabs her butt, while J.B. deals Leroy more cards.

NADINE

Watch it smart ass, or you'll be wearin' this jug.

LEROY

Sorry, Nadine. All J.B.'s fault. Just followin' orders.

Though Nadine takes the indiscretion in stride, she peers suspiciously at him.

NADINE

Thought you were the highest rankin' officer here?

LEROY

When we finally get sick of cards, expect you to snap to attention and accompany me back to my hotel room.

He brandishes a winning smile at her.

NADINE

Yes, sir...

She smirks and gives a half-ass salute. Then she replaces the full ashtray with a clean one and returns to the bar. The protective Travis jabs a forefinger at Leroy, giving him his patented "Evil Eye".

LEROY

I know, Travis. Don't mess with the help.

HARRY

Don't mean to take your mind off the finer things in life, Leroy. As it was before my time, when did all this insanity with the Comanche come to a head?

THE WEAZL

Don't need an old history scholar,
like Leroy. Everyone knows was
their Great Raid of 1840.

J.B.

Goes back a tad before that.

LEROY

Just 'cause I know some shit, don't
mean I'm old! Was Chief Buffalo
Hump's retaliation for the Council
House Affair.

J.B.

One way of puttin' it. Chiefs came
in for parlay under a white flag of
truce. All of 'em get shot.

LEROY

More to it. Comanche Chiefs were
supposed to release all their
prisoners. Instead, they bring in
this one poor wretched woman been
horribly tortured. Figured
withholding prisoners would protect
'em. Thought wrong.

THE WEAZL

The Great Raid of 1840 was over the
top. First time savages attacked a
major city or two. Seriously looted
Victoria and Linnville.

LEROY

Was their undoin'! Wouldn't a been
caught at Plum Creek, if they
weren't saddled with a huge herd of
stolen horses and mules loaded to
the hilt.

J.B.

My Pappy was one of the Volunteers
fought with the Rangers at Plum
Creek. Claimed too many folk
stretch the truth about wipin' 'em
out.

LEROY

They did kill 'bout ninety of 'em.

J.B.

Only recovered twelve bodies. Drop in the bucket. 'Member, there were thousands of those Comanche bastards.

LEROY

Maybe so...

J.B.

Accordin' to my dear ole Pappy, most of 'em hauled ass and scarpered west into the High Plains. Got away with most of their loot. 'Member Buffalo Hump didn't surrender for two more years, afore bringin' in his starvin' band to the Brazos Rez.

THE WEAZL

See, told ya! All 'bout the Great Raid... Put folks over the top.

LEROY

Dammit Weazl, if you ain't just the smartest son-of-a-bitch in the valley.

The Weazl, annoyed by Leroy's attitude, rises out of his chair. Leroy bristles, jumps to his feet, picks up an old hickory tavern chair and smashes it to pieces on the floor. Travis whips around the bar and grabs the enraged Leroy in a choke hold.

HARRY

Travis, I'll pay for the chair, as it's all my fault bringin' up this ancient history. Talkin' 'bout the damn Comanche just seems to sour Leroy's usually sunny disposition. Reminds him of our gettin' fired today by corrupt political a-holes.

As Leroy calms down, Travis releases him. He takes the money from Harry, grabs another chair, pushes Leroy into it and returns to his station behind the bar. Nadine picks up the broken pieces, as both The Weazl and J.B. settle back nodding in sympathy.

THE WEAZL

Fine for wealthy politicians to fill their pockets at poor folks expense, but look out if you get caught robbing a bank.

J.B.
 Know what ya mean.

HARRY
 Okay, J.B., remind us again. How
 the Hell do ya play H.O.R.S.E.?

J.B.
 Rather take a break and discuss a
 little business proposition. Why
 don't you boys follow me outside
 for a breath of fresh air.

Broad smiles come over the faces of the four men. They all
 burst out laughing as they get to their feet.

AUSTIN - OUTSKIRTS

Leroy and Harry ride north out of Austin past darkened
 warehouses, shuttered houses and fields littered with
 debris. Now they enter the dusty but refreshing Texas
 prairie, with their two new pals, Mickey Gallagher and Jean
 Baptiste Mercer.

BELKNAP - ELLIS COUNTY SAVINGS & LOAN

The four desperados ride their horses down main street into
 the sleepy community and approach the weathered clapboard
 "Ellis County Savings and Loan" building.

SUPER: "BELKNAP, OKLAHOMA"

Leroy and Harry stop in front to share a smoke, while The
 Weazl and J.B. turn down an alley.

SAVINGS & LOAN - LOADING DOCK

The Weazl and J.B. turn off the lane and secure their horses
 at the rear of the bank by the loading dock and back
 entrance. They casually walk back down the alley.

SAVINGS & LOAN - FRONT ENTRANCE

Stepping up on the boardwalk The Weazl and J.B. enter the
 bank through the front door. After securing their horses to
 the tether rail, Leroy and Harry follow the others inside.

MAIN STREET BOARDWALK - BELOW

Two young lads, JESSE (18), and FRANK MCCOY (16), stare in wonderment from their hiding spot, beneath the boardwalk across the street from the bank.

FRANK
Something's up...

JESSE
Hot damn!

SAVINGS & LOAN - LOBBY

The four men pull kerchiefs over their faces and stride through the lobby into the main hall.

SAVINGS & LOAN - HALL

There's minimum staff, one spinster teller, Miss JOSEPHINE STEWART (32), helped out by the bank manager, FERGUS CAMPBELL (36) and half-a-dozen elderly BANK PATRONS lined up waiting for service. Harry and The Weazl dramatically draw their guns, as Leroy and J.B. jump the gate and hustle the manager towards the safe.

THE WEAZL
Hit the deck. No-one needs to get hurt.

To The Weazl's delight, the town Doctor, CLEMENT CODY (46), unexpectedly passes out erupting into a full-on seizure, convulsing and thrashing about the floor. One of the patrons, BLIND ANNIE BLAKE (48), struggles with her two canes, one elbow gently supported by her friend and tenant, DEKE GUSTAFSON (37).

BLIND ANNIE
Deke, what's going on?

Deke tries to help her to the floor.

DEKE
For God's sake, Annie. Bank's being robbed. Get down on the floor.

THE WEAZL
Shut the Hell up! Someone get a grip on this freak, or I'll settle his hash myself.

Old friends, GLADYS MACKENZIE (34), MIRABELLE GAUDIN (37), and LOUISA DAVIS (35), plunge into hysteria.

GLADYS

Oh my God...

MIRABELLE

What will we do?

LOUISA

We're all going to die.

GLADYS

Woke up today with that premonition.

MIRABELLE

Call every notion floats through your pea-brain, a premonition?

LOUISA

Only a premonition, if you mention it before the fact.

GLADYS

Think what you will, shouldn't have let you old gossips badger me into comin'.

MIRABELLE

Well, I never...

LOUISA

Let's go check accrued interest and flirt with that nice young man, manager Fergus Campbell. Not many in this bloody ghost town with a respectable job. That's what you said.

Gladys flushes with embarrassment. Harry and Leroy share worried looks across the room. The Weazl turns to deal with the three women.

THE WEAZL

Silly bitches, get on the floor, now! Or, you're all dead...

This only fans the hysteria of the panic-stricken ladies who burst into tears. They try to console each other, while poor Doc keeps flopping about like a fish out of water.

SAVINGS & LOAN - BEHIND COUNTER

J.B. rams his gun into the small of the bank manager's back.

J.B.
Open the damn safe.

MGR. CAMPBELL
Can't, it's on a time lock.

J.B.
Don't bullshit me. Time locks may be a bright idea, but no bank has 'em yet. Anyway, wouldn't time lock it when you need access. Don't play the hero. Losses are covered by company insurance. Head Office don't care if you get hurt.

Reluctantly, Mgr. Campbell flips the tumblers to open the walk-in safe and pulls back the heavy safe door. There on a central table sit a pile of full canvas bank bags. One is open, revealing newly minted Indian Princess Head \$3 U.S. gold coins in the process of being counted.

SAVINGS & LOAN - HALL

Meanwhile, Blind Annie bristles in outrage.

BLIND ANNIE
Rob the damn place, if you must.
For Christ sake, leave these good people alone.

Losing patience with Blind Annie, The Weazl fires his Smith & Wesson Model 1 hand gun, as Deke lunges toward him taking the bullet in his shoulder. Jolted out of her stupor by the feisty Blind Annie, the outraged Miss Josephine quickly withdraws a .31 caliber Colt Pocket Navy hand gun from a drawer and shoots The Weazl in the head.

SAVINGS & LOAN - BEHIND COUNTER

As Mgr. Campbell darts for a coach gun in a cupboard, J.B. shoots him in the back with his Pappy's old nickel barrel Colt Army Percussion. Miss Josephine, turning in horror at J.B.'s dirty deed, shoots him point blank as Leroy dives for the floor.

SAVINGS & LOAN - HALL

Immediately, Harry wings the brave Miss Josephine who crumples to the floor. Making his way through the counter gate, Leroy notices Deke crawling towards The Weazl's dropped weapon. Leroy gives him a solid boot and Deke flips over in agonizing pain, as The Weazl's gun skitters into the corner.

SAVINGS & LOAN - BEHIND COUNTER

Pulling himself together, J.B. staggers into the safe, grabs two full bank bags off the table and hotfoot's it out the back door.

SAVINGS & LOAN - HALL

Needing no further incentive, Harry and Leroy head for the front door.

ZERELDA'S BAKERY - FRONT ENTRANCE

All still seems peaceful in the neighbourhood.

ZERELDA'S BAKERY - UPSTAIRS BEDROOM

In his mother's tastefully decorated bedroom, Jesse kneels down and pulls out a box under the bed. He loads his deceased father's heavy Colt Walker .44 army pistol and slides it under his shirt.

ZERELDA'S BAKERY - SHOP

Jesse McCoy pounds down the stairs, as Frank peers through the curtains of the bakery shop front window.

ZERELDA'S BAKERY - KITCHEN

ZERELDA MCCOY (36), looks up from kneading dough at the sound of Jesse on the stairs.

ZERELDA

Walk, don't run.

She shakes her head in dismay, as the Bakery door bell tinkles on the boys' way out.

Don't know why I waste my breath.

SAVINGS & LOAN - FRONT ENTRANCE

Harry and Leroy, run out the bank's front door, untether their horses and prepare to ride away.

ZERELDA'S BAKERY - MAIN STREET

Jesse boldly strides out into the street, with his anxious brother close behind.

JESSE

Stop where you are...

Slow to fire, Jesse struggles to lift the heavy pistol as Leroy passes by, but succeeds in blowing Harry out of the saddle, spooking his horse. Unprepared for the powerful gun's recoil, Jesse falls flat, taking Frank with him, causing both boys to burst out laughing. Horrified to see Harry apparently dying in the street, Leroy spurs his horse in pursuit of J.B. and the loot.

ZERELDA'S BAKERY - SHOP

Zerelda crosses the shop to the front door and bellows in the general direction of her two boys.

ZERELDA

Frank and Jesse, you get in here, right this minute. I heard gun shot. No 'countin' for dangerous bushwhackers on that street.

SAVINGS & LOAN - MAIN STREET

The boys struggle to their feet.

JESSE

Aw, Mum, some guys are robbin' the bank. I got one of 'em.

ZERELDA

Don't you back-mouth me. You two'll get a tannin', won't never forget.

FRANK

Didn't do nothin', Ma.

ZERELDA

Not for what you did. What you was thinkin'.

The two dejected boys reluctantly obey their mother and slouch back into the shop. Though seriously wounded, Harry comes to, realizing he's lost his horse. Harry crawls under the nearby boardwalk, while the boys are distracted.

MAIN STREET - BOARDWALK

When the coast is clear, Harry crawls out and struggles to his feet.

MAIN STREET - BANK ALLEY

Harry sneaks away down the alley.

PRAIRIE SCRUBLAND

Meanwhile, Leroy follows J.B.'s tracks and blood splatter across the desolate prairie scrubland of cactus, sage and acacia shrubberies into the distant rolling foothills.

LITTLE ROBE CREEK CANYON

Bleeding badly, J.B. notices sunglint on a distant bluff and follows a dried out river bed. He gradually approaches a rocky bluff overlooking the hollow. He makes out the mutilated body, secured spread-eagle on the cliff face, of the legendary Comanche War Chief Pohebits Quasho, commonly known as Chief Iron Jacket.

LITTLE ROBE CREEK CANYON - CLIFF

Sliding off his horse, J.B. grabs his heavy saddlebags and drags them to the base of the cliff. Exhausted, he partially covers them with scree, before collapsing dead on the ground.

LITTLE ROBE CREEK CANYON - CLIFF LEDGE

The GHOST OF J.B., confounded by his new situation, floats up to a rocky ledge. The SPIRIT OF CHIEF IRON JACKET, hovers nearby, equally amazed.

SPIRIT OF CHIEF IRON JACKET

Is this gesture of spirit? Could
crazy White Man bring death
offering?

LITTLE ROBE CREEK CANYON - CLIFF - BELOW

An old mountain man, GABRIEL "GABBY" RUSSELL (58), approaches leading a PAINT MULE, his dear companion, MOLLY.

GABBY

What ya make of this, Molly?

MOLLY

Hee-haw...

Gabby stares up at the remains of some dead Indian strung high up on the cliff face. He turns to take notice of a more recently dead renegade soldier on the ground below and his grazing horse munching berries on a barberry shrub fifty feet away by the creek. Walking over to the body, Gabby notices something partially buried and after kicking away the gravel, drags out a pair of leather saddlebags and opens one of the flaps.

GABBY

My God, Molly. Bank bags full a newly minted gold coins. Look at 'em all.

Gabby re-ties the bank bags and lugs the loot over to Molly.

MOLLY

Whinny...

Molly snickers in alarm at a sudden loud hum and a deep rumbling. Gabby struggles to straddle the twin bags over Molly's neck, as the usually placid critter becomes twitchy and skittish.

Whinny. Hee-haw...

Gabby is transfixed by the terrifying sight of a tall dignified Indian transforming before his eyes into a large mountain lion. The sight of the vicious charging beast causes Gabby to clutch his chest and fall to the ground, stone dead. Molly takes the brunt of the attack, J.B.'s horse panics and gallops away, while the Ghost Of J.B. ponders the view.

BELKNAP FEED & STABLE - LOFT

Harry comes to in a hay loft. Feeling somewhat stronger, he saddles a horse, grabs a Sharps rifle and escapes into the night.

LITTLE ROBE CREEK CANYON - CLIFF

Leroy discovers the dead body of J.B. He ignores the remains of the old mountain man and the bloody carcass of his mule. Finding J.B.'s saddlebags, Leroy hoists them over his shoulder, then returns to his horse.

LEROY

Sally, where we gonna go now we got the gold? Authorities will be combin' the territory lookin' for this. Maybe here's as good a spot to stash it as any.

Leroy pulls a small spade out of his gear, returns to the canyon wall and digs out a large depression. He packs in the saddlebags and carefully covers them up. Relieved, he returns to his horse, stashes his shovel and pauses to drink from his water bag.

Folk find this geezer and his mule, right off goin' ta know it's not foul play. Critters will take care of their bodies, soon enough. Just got to disappear J.B.

Leroy muscles the dead man off the ground onto Sally's back and with a piece of hemp rope from his travel case ties J.B.'s hands and feet together under her belly. Leroy takes the reins and walks Sally farther down the trail, looking for a suitable spot to bury J.B.

LITTLE ROBE CREEK CANYON - CLIFF LEDGE

Spirit Of Chief Iron Jacket tries to chat up the Ghost Of J.B.

SPIRIT OF CHIEF IRON JACKET

Is there no hope for my people?
White men give with one hand, take
with other. Gift-giver, who this
new White man?

A life-long loner, J.B. ignores the Injun spook.

GHOST OF J.B.

Over my dead body anybody will make off with the loot. Question is, where the Hell's Leroy going to bury me? Better have a nice view and good drainage.

LITTLE ROBE CREEK CANYON - CLIFF - BELOW

Ghost Of J.B. follows Leroy. The forgotten Ghost Of Gabby hovers over the carcass of Molly, his poor sweet Paint Mule.

GHOST OF GABBY

All my fault, Molly, shoulda listened to ya. Mistake trying to get you do somep'n', you t'ought better of. Always were brains o' the operation.

Over his left ghost shoulder, Ghost of Molly rests her ghost head.

GHOST OF MOLLY

Don't sweat it, Gabby, we hauled a lotta gold out of these mountains. You always treated me good, best two-legged I've known. Let me give you some advice.

GHOST OF GABBY

Sure, Molly. Whatever you say.

GHOST OF MOLLY

See that ball of light over there.

GHOST OF GABBY

What about it?

GHOST OF MOLLY

Let's just say good bye. Then go walk into it.

GHOST OF GABBY

Sounds good to me, Molly. Always were my best pal.

GHOST OF MOLLY

You're breakin' me heart, you stupid son-of-a-bitch. Now walk into the light.

Ghost Of The Old Mountain Man and Ghost Of The Paint Mule walk into the ball of light and abruptly wink out of sight.

FOOTHILLS

Exasperated and fatigued, a young Mexican, FRANCISCO GASPAR RODRIGUEZ (23), rides along with his high maintenance travel companion, his black sheep cousin, CARMEN MARIA DEL MALAGA (24).

FRANCISCO

Carmen, please... Been a long hot ride, I know. We're almost there.

CARMEN

Gaspar, my little treasure, we must stop for the night. I'm just frazzled...

FRANCISCO

Maybe you're right, cousin. Should be shelter from the wind over there.

The two weary travelers pull up by a rocky outcropping and stiffly climb off their horses. Carmen finds a level spot for their bedrolls and begins unpacking food. Francisco takes care of their horses, then collects burnables to start a fire.

PRAIRIE

Harry Hartman slumped over his horse, gradually loses his grip and tumbles off. He lands hard on the ground.

FOOTHILLS

Hungry and fatigued, Leroy Cord peers into the dark. In the distance, he spots the glow from a small campfire. Leroy approaches, calling out as he draws near.

LEROY

Hello, the campfire...

FRANCISCO

Hello, stranger...

LEROY

Mind a visitor?

CARMEN

Welcome, if you come in peace.

LEROY

Mean no harm. Just tired and hungry. Spare a bite?

FRANCISCO

Willing to share what we have.

LEROY

Thank you. Most grateful.

Leroy climbs off Sally and walks her over to their two grazing horses. The Ghost Of J.B. steps out of the dark and smiles a hideous grin at Leroy.

GHOST OF J.B.

Leroy, old pal... Don't get too comfortable with your new friends.

Before Leroy can respond, the Ghost Of J.B. fades into the dark. Leroy stumbles towards the fire with his bedroll. Carmen beckons him to sit and hands him a bowl of chili and a chunk of dark rye bread.

FRANCISCO

Pleased to make your acquaintance, mister. My name is Francisco Gaspar Rodriguez.

Too tired to get up and shake hands, Leroy raises a few fingers to the brim of his cowboy hat and flicks them towards Francisco.

LEROY

Name's Cord. Leroy Cord.

FRANCISCO

This is my travel companion, Carmen Maria del Malaga.

LEROY

A pleasure, señorita.

Carmen snuggles up beside Leroy and gives him the eye.

FRANCISCO

We're traveling to Belknap, where our uncle Miguel is ramrod at a lumber yard. The owner is re-building a derelict troop camp and there's much work. For you too, if interested.

LEROY

Chili's delicious, thanks for your hospitality. Interestin' proposition, but I'm too exhausted to be good company. Open to the idea, but have to sleep on it.

FRANCISCO

Sure, mister, sleep well. Good night...

Carmen places her hand on Leroy's knee and smiles sweetly.

CARMEN

Very nice to meet you, cowboy.

Leroy spreads out his bedroll on a free spot by the fire and passes out.

FRANCISCO

What's this, "very nice to meet you, cowboy..."?

CARMEN

Go to sleep...

Francisco and Carmen each settle into their own bedding, falling asleep facing opposite directions.

DESERT SCRUBLAND

Young Comanche mother, White Buffalo Woman, her Baby strapped to her chest, gets off her horse by the fallen body of Harry, his horse grazing nearby. She kneels to assess his condition, unpacks her medicine bundle, then prepares a poultice and bandage for Harry's wound. Her older sister, Sunset Spider Woman approaches on horse back, dragging tipi poles and bundles wrapped in hides, followed by three other horses: the first, also dragging tipi poles and heavily loaded, with their father, Chief Buffalo Heart, the next with their mother, Coyote Woman and following behind, the youngest sister, Blue Sky Woman.

SUNSET SPIDER WOMAN

Little mother, out of sight for a moment and you pick up a stray.

Chief Buffalo Heart, pulling up by Sunset Spider Woman's pony, sighs wearily.

CHIEF BUFFALO HEART
Daughter, what have you found?

She nods towards Harry's horse.

WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN
A pony and a wounded white man.

SUNSET SPIDER WOMAN
We lose most of family in soldier
raid, now you help dying white man?
Help him die. Not with comfort,
with much pain.

Coyote Woman climbs down from her horse and stretches. She wanders over to inspect the unconscious White man, then turns to the others.

COYOTE WOMAN
Soldiers and Kowtona come, Comanche
scatter. We follow Gooalpah and
Trail of Ancients to Great Sage
Plain. Return to Ute family
territory, find shelter, make many
pots.

Coyote Woman kneels down, puts arm around White Buffalo Woman and gives her a sad, comforting squeeze.

CHIEF BUFFALO HEART
Since taken as little girl in
Comanche raid, Coyote Woman dream
of return to Ute homeland. We
honour gesture of spirit felt by
White Buffalo Woman. Camp here and
do what we can for dying White
stranger.

The old Peace Chief slides off his horse and begins to unpack. Blue Sky Woman joins him to help. With a snort of disgust, Sunset Spider Woman hops off her pony.

DEWALT WOODLOT

The three riders follow split-rail fencing, till they arrive at the front gate to the sprawling DeWalt ranch. Leroy, Carmen and Francisco approach the main buildings. MIGUEL DEON waves and runs over to greet his niece and nephew.

MIGUEL
Francisco, so good to see you and
Carmen. Welcome to the "DeWalt
Woodlot".

CARMEN

Good to finally arrive. Looking forward to getting off this damn horse. My ass is killing me.

This prompts a chuckle from the group.

FRANCISCO

Don Miguel, please make the acquaintance of our travel companion, Leroy Cord.

LEROY

Pleasure to meet you, sir. Heard from Francisco 'bout your construction projects. Hopin' you'd put me to work.

MIGUEL

Good to meet you, Leroy Cord. Much work to be done. Let's take care of these horses.

DEWALT WOODLOT - STABLE

Miguel finds free stalls and feed for the horses.

MIGUEL

Carmen, how's Doña Francisca? Able to spend much time with her, since returning from Barcelona?

CARMEN

Doña Francisca couldn't get rid of me any faster. Can't blame her... I've been nothing but trouble since just a girl.

MIGUEL

Not true, Carmen. She loves you dearly.

CARMEN

Must be difficult for her to show it.

MIGUEL

Esmeralda and I are very glad to have you both here. Come, she's dying to see you.

DEWALT WOODLOT - COOKHOUSE - ENTRANCE

Miguel takes them next door to a large adobe and log structure, where Tia ESMERALDA DEON meets them at the door.

ESMERALDA

Carmen... Francisco... So good to see you both.

Esmeralda gives Francisco and Carmen warm hugs and shyly smiles at Leroy.

Please, come in. Any time, breakfast is always ready.

FRANCISCO

Doña Esmeralda, missed you and Don Miguel so much. Have so looked forward to coming to work with you. Also crying tears of joy to spend time with Carmen after being apart so long.

CARMEN

I'm ready to cry from hunger. If I don't eat soon, am going to write an opera.

ESMERALDA

For a cook, you've come with the most treasured of gifts.

CARMEN

So sorry, I bring nothing...

ESMERALDA

But, you have! A good appetite...

Tiring of waiting to be introduced, Leroy takes the initiative.

LEROY

Pleased to meet you, ma'am. Name's Leroy Cord. Not to worry, Carmen, brought gifts enough for everyone, as I could eat a horse.

ESMERALDA

Happy to meet you too, Leroy. You've come to the right place. Though Miguel will be very upset, if you eat any of his beloved horses.

Charmed by the invitation, the group files into the building.

DEWALT WOODLOT - COOKHOUSE - DINING ROOM

In the dining area, various hired hands drink coffee and chat amongst themselves, while shoveling in large helpings of the day's special. ARTEMUS "ARTY" DEWALT (45), walks over to Miguel and the new arrivals.

MIGUEL

May I introduce the savior of
Belknap and owner of the DeWalt
Woodlot, Señor Artemus DeWalt.

Artemus laughs good-naturedly.

ARTY

You exaggerate, Miguel. Please
folks, call me Arty.

Miguel proudly gestures for Francisco and Carmen to step forward.

MIGUEL

My young relations, Francisco
Rodriguez and Carmen del Malaga.

ARTY

Miguel and Esmeralda bend my ear
endlessly about Francisco, Antonio
and Francisca's talented son.
Carmen, back in America a short
while, I understand. Hope you learn
to love it here, like we do.

Francisco looks at the strong middle-aged man, steps forward and firmly shakes his hand. Carmen performs a modest curtsy.

FRANCISCO

Pleased to greet you, señor.

CARMEN

Señor DeWalt...

ARTY

Please, call me Arty.

Arty DeWalt takes a breath and smiles at the beautiful young woman. Impressed with this large and important man, Carmen flashes a radiant smile and holds her hand out to be kissed like a lady. Happy to play the role, Arty takes her hand and bending low, places a soft kiss on it.

MIGUEL

This is their friend and travel
companion. Pardon me, what's your
name, again?

Arty DeWalt straightens up to take a look at Leroy, who
smiles back in a knowing way. Arty reluctantly lets go of
Carmen's hand. Leroy steps forward to introduce himself.

LEROY

Leroy Cord. Heard tell there might
be a job for another hard worker.

Leroy smiles at Francisco. Arty steps towards Leroy and
shakes his hand.

ARTY

Got that right, mister, happy to
have you on the crew. Expect y'all
could use a bite. Grab yourself a
plate and fill your boots.

Arty smacks Leroy on the back, as the group moves towards a
counter loaded with serving tureens. Esmeralda smiles
happily at Francisco and Carmen, as she pours coffee refills
for the hired hands.

DEWALT WOODLOT - SAW MILL

In a large open post and beam warehouse, Miguel leads
Francisco and Leroy along a corridor. They watch fresh-cut
beams move down a ramp, after coming through a noisy giant
saw blade spewing mountains of saw dust. Teams of workers
wrestle the beams onto various wagons.

MIGUEL

Lot of work moving timber around,
so you'll do your share of that.
What we really need are sharp
fellas to do the dangerous work
feeding this Beast. Got to keep
your wits about you, as it's easy
to lose a body part.

FRANCISCO

Tell us how it should be. Leroy and
I, we'll get it done.

Leroy smiles at the young man.

MIGUEL

Have lots of confidence in you,
nephew. That's why you're here.

Miguel turns to Leroy.

MIGUEL

You look like a solid character,
Leroy. Trust you're up for this?

LEROY

Truth be told, been a few years
since I did this kind of work.
Though am willin' and good at
payin' attention to detail.

MIGUEL

Good... Many details to this Beast
of a machine.

They nod with respect, as a group of workers wrestle another
large rough log into the Beast's hungry maw.

PRAIRIE - NORTHWEST OF BELKNAP

Harry Hartman comes to, strapped to a bouncing travois,
hitched to Chief Buffalo Heart's horse. Remarkably, the
ministrations of the beautiful White Buffalo Woman have
pulled Harry back from the brink of death. The family
continue traveling northwest following the South Canadian
River.

PRAIRIE

After a few days, having developed the strength to ride,
Harry pulls in beside the modest White Buffalo Woman.
However, Sunset Spider Woman abruptly forces her horse in
between Harry and White Buffalo Woman and sneers at Harry.

SUNSET SPIDER WOMAN

Sister, why do you encourage this
ignorant white man? He's too stupid
to realize you're still in
mourning.

WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN

You're right about his ignorance.
But he's only grateful for the help
I gave him. How is he to know about
the murder of my husband and two
girls?

SUNSET SPIDER WOMAN

You know how I feel about your nursing him back to health in the first place. He's no better than the white soldiers and their wendigo Kowtona. Now that he can ride, why is he still here?

Overhearing the angry words, Buffalo Heart lets his daughters overtake him.

CHIEF BUFFALO HEART

No more arguing over the "MALISEET", (Broken Talker). Coyote Woman and I have prayed over this. Wakan Tanka gave White Buffalo Woman a nudge to help this man, which we must honour. Who knows what gifts Maliseet may have to share?

DEWALT WOODLOT - COOKHOUSE - DINING ROOM

Tables are filled with tired and hungry men, chatting casually, clanking dishes and cutlery, while wolfing down their dinner. Esmeralda has put the reluctant Carmen to work with her busy kitchen crew, where she frantically fills plates for the men.

DEWALT WOODLOT - COOKHOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATER

Dinner winds down and after finishing her shift, the exhausted Carmen grabs a cup of coffee and joins Arty, Francisco and Leroy at their table.

ARTY

Been a long day for you newcomers. Why don't you go wash up? Hot water's waiting in the bath house and we even have a sauna. Guaranteed to make you feel human enough for a trip to town, to check out our work at the Hotel Stapleton and have yourself a drink.

FRANCISCO

Very kind, Mister DeWalt.

ARTY

Please, call me Arty.

FRANCISCO

Yes, Mister Arty. Has been a long day.

What do you think, cousin? Want to pass, or go have a drink at the bar?

CARMEN

Did I hear something about hot water?

ARTY

You most certainly did.

FRANCISCO

I have a question about our sleeping arrangements?

ARTY

You and Leroy grab an empty rack in the bunkhouse. Esmeralda and Miguel have a place for Carmen in the guest room of their adobe bungalow.

Arty eyes Francisco.

Is there something going on between you and Carmen? Thought you two were related, not married?

Francisco, sheepishly gazing at Carmen, shrugs with embarrassment.

FRANCISCO

My fondest wish, Mister Arty, is one day to tie the knot with Carmen.

CARMEN

We most definitely are not married. Yes, the sleeping arrangements will be fine. Thank you, señor, for the generous invitation, as after a reasonable period to bathe and dress, I'd be delighted to accompany you.

LEROY

A drink would hit the spot. Lookin' forward to checkin' out what you've done at the hotel.

Arty smiles.

ARTY

Worked on that vermin infested
piece of crap for over a year and
had to rebuild from the ground up.
Come a long way, that's for sure.
Will have my Studebaker wagon ready
to go at the stable in an hour.

Arty catches Carmen's look of horror.
I should brush down my horses and
see to the tack. Make that two
hours. No need to rush.

Francisco and Leroy nod in confirmation, while Carmen
groans.

LEROY

We'll get right on it. Won't we,
Carmen?

Carmen looks daggers at Leroy.

DEWALT WOODLOT - BATH HOUSE

Don Miguel accompanies Leroy and Francisco into the large
adobe and log structure, happy to show them the ropes.

MIGUEL

Hang your clothes on a hook and
stick your boots under the bench.
Grab fresh towels from this bin and
when you're done, toss the used
ones over here.

LEROY

Sounds good to me.

Francisco, Leroy and Miguel strip naked, wrap towels around
their waists, then walk into the busy mens bathroom.

DEWALT WOODLOT - MEN'S BATHROOM

Various EMPLOYEES soak their bones in tubs, while others
come and go. Miguel, Leroy and Francisco each choose one of
a dozen large cedar barrel tubs, fill it with buckets of hot
water, grab a cake of soap, then jump in. Francisco is
quicker on the draw than Leroy and Miguel.

FRANCISCO

Mother of God. Magnifico...

Leroy and Miguel jump into their own tubs, yelping with satisfaction, as they adjust to the hot water.

LEROY

Got that right, Francisco. Glad we have some extra time to get ready.

FRANCISCO

Don Miguel, you coming into town with us tonight?

MIGUEL

No! As a younger man, I often enjoyed hanging out in bars. Now have a wonderful woman who has my full attention.

LEROY

You're a lucky man, Miguel.

FRANCISCO

Don Miguel's the luckiest man I know.

MIGUEL

No such thing as luck.

LEROY

Somebody told me that once. Seize the moment.

FRANCISCO

Don Miguel, where do the women have their bath?

Both Leroy and Miguel burst out laughing.

MIGUEL

Hoping to see some naked ladies?

LEROY

Think he's hoping to see a naked Carmen.

FRANCISCO

Was just wondering...

LEROY

Don't blame ya for wantin' a peek under those clothes. Carmen's a beautiful girl.

MIGUEL

Francisco, Carmen's a sister to you. You should not be having such thoughts for your sister.

FRANCISCO

She's my cousin. A distant cousin... Not the same thing.

MIGUEL

She's not that distant.

LEROY

You crowd her too much, Francisco. Not good to be too desperate. Women smell that real quick.

FRANCISCO

I am not desperate.

Francisco jumps out of the tub, wraps himself in his towel and scoots off to the change room. The two older men eye each other.

MIGUEL

Francisco has always been sensitive and hot headed. He'll settle down on his own. Don't feel bad. You only spoke the simple truth.

LEROY

Speakin' the truth never makes one popular.

MIGUEL

Another reason why I don't hang out in bars.

LEROY

You're a pretty sharp guy, Miguel. What's the story on this sauna?

MIGUEL

Now you're talking... Should be stoked up this time of day. Let's go check it out.

LEROY

Sounds good to me.

Both ease themselves out of their tubs, pull the plug, then grab their towels. Miguel directs Leroy to a hallway in the back.

DEWALT WOODLOT - BATH HOUSE - SAUNA

Leroy follows Miguel into a small dark cedar and stone walled room, where benches on different levels wrap around two of the walls adjacent a large cast iron stove with good-size river stones stacked around it. Miguel directs Leroy to a higher bench, as he grabs a bucket and sloshes water on the hot rocks. Billows of steam fill the room and Leroy gasps at the searing heat, while Miguel moves to a place beside Leroy.

MIGUEL

This your first time?

LEROY

Yipper...

MIGUEL

You'll adjust quickly. Find it overwhelming, just move down to a lower bench. If it's still too hot, put a wet towel over your head.

LEROY

Feels really good. Hard to breathe though.

MIGUEL

Breathe slow...

Miguel gets up, grabs the bucket and throws more water on the rocks. Another cloud of steam billows up and Leroy groans with pleasure.

MIGUEL

A little at a time...

LEROY

That was good.

MIGUEL

Have to leave you to your own devices. Esmeralda's expecting me. Don't stay in too long, first time and all.

LEROY

Feels great... Think I'll stay a bit longer.

MIGUEL

Have a good time in town. Tell me tomorrow what you think of the hotel.

LEROY

Will do... Have a good night. All
my best to the missus.

Miguel sets down the bucket, as he heads out the door. After savouring the heat for a bit, Leroy gets up to throw on more water. Unexpectedly, the door opens and Carmen walks in, barely covered with a towel.

CARMEN

Señor Leroy... Did not expect
company. Everyone else has left.

LEROY

Guess that puts us in the same
boat.

CARMEN

Maybe would make you less
uncomfortable, if I take off my
towel.

Carmen unwraps herself, bends over as she lays out her towel on the upper bench, then turns and sits down, smiling sweetly at the flustered man. Leroy bends over to grab the water bucket, providing Carmen a good look at his hairy butt, then gives the rocks a slosh before returning to his towel. As a cloud of steam billows into the room, Carmen moans with pleasure.

CARMEN

That's wonderful.

LEROY

It is, indeed. Not your first time
in a sauna?

CARMEN

Oh no! They have a sweat bath where
I was, at the Augustinian Nunnery
near Ripollès, Catalonia.

LEROY

Hard to imagine you in a nunnery.

CARMEN

Found it hard to imagine, myself.

They both burst out laughing.

LEROY

So, what happened?

CARMEN

You mean, what did I do to get the boot?

LEROY

Yeah...

Carmen looks at Leroy in a very knowing way.

CARMEN

Might be easier to show you, than explain.

Leroy is aroused by this intimate situation. Carmen begins to crawl towards him.

LEROY

Paint me a picture.

BELKNAP - MAIN STREET

Arty lashes his pair of horses down main street with Francisco and Leroy chatting in the back. Carmen, dressed to the nines, sits beside him up front. With a flourish, Arty pulls up at the newly renovated Hotel Stapleton.

HOTEL STAPLETON - BARROOM

Arty sweeps into the bar with his entourage.

ARTY DEWALT

Round for the house, Sam...

This flamboyance and generosity is greeted with great enthusiasm by the regulars, while a thirsty GHOST OF MICKEY "THE WEAZL" GALLAGHER, haunting one end of the bar, is intrigued to see his old pal, Leroy Cord. SAM SLOAN (28), the bartender, and DARLA MACKENZIE (23), the only bar maid, laugh with approval at Arty's arrival and set to work filling jugs and glasses for the crowded room of soaks. JACK STAPLETON (35), approaches Arty's party smiling, directing them to a large table in the back.

ARTY

Good to see you, Jack. How goes it tonight?

JACK

Same old, same old, Arty. All the usual suspects, you can imagine.

ARTY

That I can... Some new folk joined my crew today. Let me introduce you.

A smooth operator, Jack scans the group and immediately focuses on Carmen, the Spanish knockout.

JACK

By all means...

ARTY

This here's Miguel's nephew, Francisco Rodriguez. Just rode in from Victoria.

JACK

Francisco, a pleasure...

ARTY

On his left, his charming cousin, Carmen del Malaga, and their friend, Leroy Cord.

Nodding at Francisco, Jack smiles across the table at Carmen, ignoring Leroy.

JACK

Such a vision of loveliness in this barren wasteland.

CARMEN

You do me great honour, señor.

JACK

Suppose you're busy helping out industrious Esmeralda in the DeWalt Woodlot cookhouse.

CARMEN

Si, señor. Very true.

JACK

Could I interest you in helping us, here at the hotel? On busy nights like tonight, Sam and Darla could always use a hand. Also need another hostess in the restaurant during the day.

CARMEN

Don't have to think long about it, Señor Stapleton. I'd be delighted.

JACK

Señor Stapleton... Like the sound of that. When could you start?

CARMEN

Don't mind helping a little right now, if you like.

JACK

Sam and Darla will be pleased as punch. Come, let me introduce you. Sorry to steal away your charming company, Arty.

Jack Stapleton, always the gentlemen, holds out his arm for Carmen, as she rises from her chair, while Francisco and Arty are dumbfounded by the sudden abduction of Carmen. Leroy knows a slick hustler, when he sees one and calmly nurses his drink. Jack and Carmen chat happily, winding their way through the tables to the bar, as Jack beckons Sam and Darla.

HOTEL STAPLETON - MEN'S WASHROOM

Newly renovated with a row of cubicles, a place to wash up along one wall and a large urinal along the other, Leroy chooses the urinal. While he's pissing like a race horse, someone enters and sidles up beside him.

SHERIFF CHARLES "CHUCK" MAYNARD (O.S.)

Haven't seen you in these parts before?

LEROY

Just arrived this mornin'. Workin' out at the DeWalt place.

SHERIFF CHUCK (O.S.)

Ah, one of the DeWalt gang, hee hee. Don't get me wrong. Arty DeWalt's been a blessin' to this shit hole, pardon my French.

Both men laugh good naturedly and button up their pants. The Sheriff turns to Leroy and gestures to shake hands, but Leroy points at the wash basin.

SHERIFF CHUCK

Good idea... Am Sheriff of this petrified cow flop on a cattle trail. Charles Maynard, but you can call me, Chuck.

They wash their hands at the sink, drying them off with clean hand towels. Both men look each other in the eye, then firmly shake hands.

LEROY

Robert Leroy Cord, but you can call me, Leroy... Used to be captain in the Texas Rangers. Now, a hired hand in a lumber yard.

SHERIFF CHUCK

Heard tell 'bout the outfit being disbanded. Big mistake, if you ask me. This place used to be a camp town, before the Second Cavalry pulled out.

BELKNAP - MAIN STREET

A view of Belknap's desolate main street.

SHERIFF CHUCK (V.O.)

Jack Stapleton won the old "Belknap Hotel" in a poker game in Austin, but when he checked on his winnings was horrified to find the place a ghost town. Back in Austin, got talkin' with bigtime construction contractor, Artemus DeWalt. Since DeWalt and Stapleton started rebuildin', folk begun to have high hopes for this place.

HOTEL STAPLETON - MEN'S WASHROOM

SHERIFF CHUCK

Lot worse things to do with your time, than givin' this shit-hole a new lease on life.

LEROY

Quite the story... Much excitement these days, for a sheriff?

SHERIFF CHUCK

Usually not much. Did have an incident yesterday, though.

LEROY

Oh, really?

SHERIFF CHUCK

Yep... Some thievin' bushwhackers took a crack at robbing the local bank.

LEROY

Anybody get hurt?

SHERIFF CHUCK

Thanks for askin'. The teller got shot, but first, she did manage to kill one of the bastards and wound another. The manager of the bank got a bullet for his trouble, as did one of the patrons.

LEROY

How sad...

SHERIFF CHUCK

Nothin' bad, couldn't be worse. Fortunately, they're all recovering. However, one of the patrons got so upset, had an epileptic fit. Couldn't get the Doc for him, though.

LEROY

Oh?

SHERIFF CHUCK

Cause, it was the Doc, hee, hee. Got shifts of men out combin' the prairie and foothills for those miserable rat-fuckers. They oughta be shot and pissed on and not necessarily in that order.

Leroy cracks a smile.

Brings me long way round to what I've been drivin' at.

LEROY

Well, Chuck, if I can be helpful, let me know. Just clear it with Mister DeWalt. Be happy to do some shifts with your men.

SHERIFF CHUCK

You read my mind.

Both men shake hands again. As they start to head back to the bar, Sheriff Chuck pauses at the door.

SHERIFF CHUCK
 Appreciate your attitude, Leroy.
 Always use for a man can handle a
 gun in a tight spot. Not just as
 deputy, as I'll be out to pasture
 soon with the Mayor and council
 lookin' for my eventual
 replacement.

LEROY
 Had my share of tight spots. Enjoy
 keepin' things simple, time bein'.
 If you get my meanin'?

SHERIFF CHUCK
 Read you loud and clear. You'll be
 hearin' from me soon 'bout posse
 duty. Have a good 'un.

LEROY
 You, too.

Both men carry on back to the bar.

HOTEL STAPLETON - BARROOM

As Carmen proves to be a natural bar maid, Arty and Francisco sullenly knock back their beer, while Leroy happily sips his Bourbon. Despite being half cut, Arty decides to regale his fans with a tune and rises to his feet.

ARTY
 Hey Sambo, bring me my guitar.

HOTEL STAPLETON - BAR

Sam Sloan grimaces at the insult, but grabs the guitar case Arty stores behind the bar and pulls out his vintage Hudson Street Martin six string. He carefully brings it over to Arty. Jack is thrilled and clambers up on the bar to get the attention of the unruly crowd.

JACK
 Ladies and Gentlemen...

When, politeness doesn't make a dent in the noisy bar room chatter, Jack steps it up a tad.
 Hey, shut the fuck up!

The general hubbub tones down a notch and Jack carries on.

JACK

Hotel Stapleton is proud to present our good friend, Arty DeWalt. Back to grace us with a country classic on his lovely guitar. Let's hear it now, for Good Time Arty.

HOTEL STAPLETON - STAGE

The crowd cheers, as Arty steps up onto a small stage in the back corner. The room quiets down, as he settles onto a bar stool, tunes his guitar, then begins a memorable rendition of the old country standard, "Yellow Rose of Texas". The crowd rises for a heartfelt standing ovation, whistling and calling out for more.

ARTY

Thank you, thank you very much.
Will have to be another time. Too drunk to push my luck tonight, but thanks for the thought.

The crowd laughs, a few half-heartedly complain, then settle back. With a satisfied smile, ARTY retires to his drink, gesturing for Sam to get his guitar. Carmen, realizing Sam's swamped at the bar, rushes to Arty's side to take the precious Martin.

CARMEN

Señor Arty, that was magnificent!

Carmen gives Arty an enthusiastic smooch on the cheek, before taking the guitar and returning to the bar.

HOTEL STAPLETON - BAR

Jack climbs back up on the bar.

JACK

Wasn't that great? Let's hear you put your hands together for Arty DeWalt.

There's another wave of applause and as it gradually dies down, Jack continues.

Some of you may not know, Hotel Stapleton's excellent bartender, Sam Sloan, is also a fine singer. Let's have a little encouragement to get him up to croon something for us. Come on, Sam...

Sam waves off Jack.
 Not to worry, Sam. I'll cover for
 you at the bar.

Initially, there's a tepid response to Jack's introduction
 of Sam.

SAM
 You sure about this?

JACK
 Of course! Come on, just one...

CARMEN
 Make us proud, Sam. You can do it.

SAM
 OK, if you insist.

HOTEL STAPLETON - BARROOM

Encouraged by Carmen's support, Sam makes his way through
 the now sullen crowd to the stage.

HOTEL STAPLETON - BAR

Jack is determined to support his black employee.

JACK
 Come on, you rude sons-a-bitches.
 Let's hear it for Sam. Cut the crap
 and show some respect.

Carmen and Darla's enthusiastic applause and Jack's
 badgering, finally rouse the crowd to a reasonable level of
 appreciation.

HOTEL STAPLETON - STAGE

Sam steps up on the tiny stage and settles himself on the
 stool. The room hushes and the reluctant Sam ponders what to
 sing.

SAM
 Hello, everybody... When I was just
 a child and cranky, my momma would
 comfort me with some wonderful old
 tunes. One comes to mind, called
 "Cotton Fields".

The tension gradually dissipates, as a soulful baritone resonates from deep within Sam.

HOTEL STAPLETON - BAR

As the last phrase reverberates out into the large space, Carmen, knowing Sam's performing to a hard crowd, applauds energetically. Sam prepares to vacate the hot seat, but Jack is thrilled by Sam's performance and wants more.

JACK

Am I shining you on, or was that not fantastic... What do you think, Sam? How 'bout just one more?

SAM

Guess the first one is always the hardest. If, you folks can stomach one more, I'll give it a shot.

DARLA

Go on and sing another, honey. Don't worry so much 'bout what other folk think.

SAM

Well, all right! That's just what I'll do, if you come up and sing with me.

Darla is horrified at the notion.

JACK

Sounds like a great idea. You folks are in for a real treat. We've got talent galore tonight.

Jack hops down and firmly nudges Darla in the direction of the stage. In a daze, she moves through the crowd and steps up beside Sam.

HOTEL STAPLETON - STAGE

DARLA

What the hell are we going to sing?

SAM

Remember that old ballad I sang you the other day?

DARLA
I can fake it.

Sam belts out a popular tune, "Good Night Irene", as Darla chimes in with lovely harmony. This time, the audience warms up quickly to Sam and Darla's up-tempo duet of this great country blues classic.

HOTEL STAPLETON - BARROOM

The duo are greeted by a standing ovation. Darla and Sam leave the stage and wade through the appreciative crowd back to the bar.

HOTEL STAPLETON - BAR

Jack smacks Sam enthusiastically on the back, while Sam hugs Darla.

SAM
Thanks for the moral support. I was terrified up there.

DARLA
You did good, Sam.

SAM
We did good. Some day, I'm going to learn to play guitar. Then, I'll smoke that racist sumbitch, Artemus DeWalt, right off the stage.

DARLA
You can do anything you set your mind to, honey.

SAM
I've set me mind on you.

Sam kisses Darla firmly on the lips.

HOTEL STAPLETON - BARROOM

Observing Carmen so impressed with the performers, Francisco is inspired to contribute to the entertainment.

FRANCISCO
Mister Arty, mind if I play a tune on your fine Spanish guitar?

ARTY
Sure, give it a go.

HOTEL STAPLETON - BAR

Francisco approaches Jack at the bar.

FRANCISCO
Mister Arty's agreed to let me play
his guitar, with your permission?

JACK
That's wonderful. Let me introduce
you. Sam, get Arty's guitar for
Señor Rodriguez.

Jack's delighted to find another performer in the crowd and
climbs back up on the bar.

JACK
Okay, you bunch of drunk weasels,
that wasn't so painful. Seems we're
in luck, as new arrival, Francisco
Rodriguez, is willing to share some
culture from south of the border.
Let's hear it for Señor Francisco.

HOTEL STAPLETON - STAGE

Francisco's sudden presence on stage defuses any tension
still in the room from a black man performing. He charges
into the popular Mexican folk song, "La Cucaracha", to roars
of approval and spontaneous applause.

HOTEL STAPLETON - BARROOM

Humbly bowing, Francisco quickly leaves the stage and
returns to the table. Carmen runs to give him a passionate
hug and relieves him of Arty's precious Martin guitar. Jack
follows Carmen over to Arty's table.

JACK
Gentlemen, both your performances
were truly inspirational. Be happy
to put both of you on the payroll,
if you'd consider performing here
on a regular basis. Give it some
thought.

Francisco and Arty beam with delight, pleased with the
compliments and attention, as Jack returns to the bar.

COMANCHE FAMILY TRAVELING CAMP

As White Buffalo Woman nurses her little darling, her mother and sisters coo over the lovely boy.

COYOTE WOMAN

Decide yet on a name for your boy?

WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN

Have a few ideas, but nothing that sings to me.

COYOTE WOMAN

He has been so good, riding quietly through this endless scrub desert. As his father was "Water Horse", why not call him "Desert Horse"?

WHITE BUFFALO WOMAN

I like that. Desert Horse it is.

The Comanche women laugh with appreciation.

HOTEL STAPLETON - UPSTAIRS ROOM

Jack opens the door to let Carmen enter one of the upstairs private rooms. It is decorated with Spanish Colonial oak furniture and tasteful landscapes on the walls.

JACK

Have a look. Spared no expense for our customers' comfort.

Carmen crosses the room to the bed and sits down.

CARMEN

Si, Señor Stapleton. Very comfortable...

Carmen smiles with a twinkle in her eye.

JACK

Pleased to hear that, Carmen. Am feeling very comfortable, too.

CARMEN

Come sit. Let's share some of that comfort.

Jack turns the key in the lock.

GOALPAH RIVER BANK

Chief Buffalo Heart gestures silence to Harry/Maliseet, as a whitetail doe approaches the water. Despite taking careful aim with the dependable Sharps Model 1853 single shot carbine, renowned for its long range and accuracy, Maliseet misses. In a blink, the Chief expertly plants an arrow in the neck of the critter, a half-step before the startled animal can think to move.

COMANCHE FAMILY TRAVELING CAMP

Maliseet carefully observes the Chief's strategy of preparation for the hunt. After deeply meditating, the Chief rouses himself to energetically dance round the fire, chanting a long repetitive song in a deep low voice.

ELLIS COUNTY SAVINGS & LOAN - HALL

Carmen steps into the bank hall, temporarily empty of other patrons. She presents herself at Miss Josephine Stewart's wicket, impressed to see her working with one arm in a sling. Miss Josephine looks up from her ledger and smiles at the pretty Spanish lady before her.

JOSEPHINE STEWART

Can I be of assistance?

CARMEN DEL MALAGA

Would like to open an account, but this is my first time in a bank.

JOSEPHINE STEWART

It's not so complicated. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

CARMEN DEL MALAGA

Well, if it's not too personal, what are you doing back at work? Didn't some bank robber shoot you, recently?

JOSEPHINE STEWART

Both Mgr. Fergus Campbell and I were shot, as well as one of our patrons, Deke Gustafson. Thank God, we're all healing fine. Mgr. Campbell and I were both anxious to return to work.

CARMEN DEL MALAGA
 Bless you both. What's the old
 saying? "After a fall, good to get
 back in the saddle".

Josephine chuckles modestly.

JOSEPHINE STEWART
 Wise old saw...

Three chatty old friends and regular customers, enter the
 bank hall: Gladys Holt, Mirabelle Gaudin and Louisa Davis.
 Don't mean to cut this short, but
 it never stays quiet for long.
 Better have Mgr. Campbell fill out
 the forms. He's a fine gentleman
 and am sure you'd enjoy chatting
 with him.

CARMEN DEL MALAGA
 So glad to meet you. Have such
 respect for you standing up to
 those robbers.

JOSEPHINE STEWART
 Thank you, but you'll have to
 excuse me.

Josephine attracts the attention of Mgr. Fergus Campbell.
 Mister Campbell...

Fergus Campbell pokes his head out the door of his office.

MGR. FERGUS CAMPBELL
 Yes, Miss Stewart?

JOSEPHINE STEWART
 There's a young lady here. Miss...

Josephine turns to Carmen.
 I didn't catch your name?

CARMEN DEL MALAGA
 Carmen del Malaga...

JOSEPHINE STEWART
 Señorita del Malaga, would like to
 open an account.

Fergus beams at the notion.

MGR. FERGUS CAMPBELL
Come this way. Step into my office.

CARMEN DEL MALAGA
Gracias, señor...

Carmen parts company with Miss Stewart. As she steps through the gate towards the manager's office, she briefly touches Josephine's shoulder.

Great pleasure to have had this
chat.

Both the ladies smile warmly, as Carmen moves on to Mgr. Campbell's office. Josephine turns her attention to the next customer.

JOSEPHINE STEWART
Ladies... Who can I help first?

PRAIRIE - BUTTE

Chief Buffalo Heart and Maliseet on horseback work their way around a large butte, where they spot a mature pronghorn antelope buck within range. Maliseet once again fires to no affect, but the critter does not even react to the loud report. Observing Maliseet's dismay, Chief Buffalo Heart senses something intriguing, as an internal voice speaks to Harry.

THE VOICE
Am going to sing and you must
listen.

PRAIRIE - MALISEET'S VISION

Maliseet visualizes the location of a special herb and a unique nearby stone, within the imagery of a captivating song.

PRAIRIE - BUTTE

After the Voice stops, Maliseet looks around, realizing the antelope has disappeared. The Chief claps him on the back, startling him.

CHIEF BUFFALO HEART
Now return to camp.

Maliseet understands the Chief's gesture, though it's still early in the day. Reluctantly, Maliseet follows the Chief.

PRAIRIE - SCRUBLAND

On their way back, Maliseet yells out, recognizing the spot from his vision. Jumping from his horse, he's amazed to find the obscure plant. The Chief laughs in delight at the dumbfounded look of amazement on Maliseet's face and a silent understanding passes between them.

COMANCHE FAMILY TRAVELING CAMP

The Comanche women stop their labours and approach the returning hunters.

BUFFALO HEART

Maliseet made great breakthrough.
Received vision from antelope power
animal and found power plant.

Blue Sky Woman approaches and gestures for Maliseet to give her the herb.

BLUE SKY WOMAN

Come, Maliseet, sit by fire.

Blue Sky Woman prepares a small clay cup of tea.

BLUE SKY WOMAN (CONT'D)

Drink, Maliseet. Drink slowly. No
food tonight.

Maliseet relaxes by the fire and sips his tea. Blue Sky Woman sits quietly beside him.

PRAIRIE - MALISEET'S VISION

Strange images of the antelope appear in Maliseet's mind, as Buffalo Heart chants one of his many songs. Eventually, the chanting stops, but the world keeps resonating in Maliseet's mind.

COMANCHE CAMP FIRE

Chief Buffalo Heart gestures to Maliseet to sing the song from his vision. Maliseet struggles at first, but gradually the song takes on a life of its own, rising and falling in a hypnotic dynamic. When the Chief puts a hand on his shoulder and points to Maliseet's buffalo sleeping robe, he is startled to observe everyone else asleep.

PRAIRIE - BUTTE

The following morning, Chief Buffalo Heart and Maliseet return to the butte, where they spot another antelope, or possibly the same one. Maliseet leaves his horse with the Chief and stealthily climbs the butte.

BUTTE

The antelope springs onto a large flat bolder and appears to take one last long look at the vista below. Maliseet cleanly shoots the glorious animal dead, who disappears off the rock to the prairie below. Tears well up in Maliseet's eyes, as he looks around at the sound of repetitive whoops of joy, realizing the whoops are coming from him.

PRAIRIE - BUTTE

The Chief gallops towards the fallen antelope and he too begins to holler in celebration of Maliseet's triumph. Maliseet makes his way back down to the Chief and the fallen creature. After rolling the antelope over to reveal Maliseet's perfect shot through its neck, Buffalo Heart sprinkles herbs from a pouch at his waist on the carcass and begins to pray.

CHIEF BUFFALO HEART

Hear me, four quarters of the
world, give us strength to walk the
soft earth with eyes to see and
strength to understand, that we may
be like you. With your power only
can we face the wind and walk the
good road to the day of quiet.
Antelope, my relative, we are sorry
to have hurt you and beg
forgiveness, as the people are
hungry and have need of you.

Jumping to his feet, Buffalo Heart surprises Maliseet with his quickness and strength. The old hunter swings the heavy carcass over Maliseet's horse, then tightly ties it down with a piece of braided leather rope. Whipping out a large hunting knife, Buffalo Heart expertly bleeds the large animal.

BELKNAP FEED & STABLE

Arty DeWalt sits in the driver's seat of his farm wagon, while two young employees of the feed store load his purchases. Sullen and resentful, Arty mutters to himself, unaware of the looks from the young men.

ARTY DEWALT

That slimey limey bastard... Had enough, takin' a back seat. Those days are over.

The lads finish the job and spread a tarp over the load. Arty hands the boys each a coin and they touch their caps in gratitude. Arty flicks the reins and moves onto Belknaps's main thoroughfare.

COMANCHE FAMILY TRAVELING CAMP

Chief Buffalo Heart and Maliseet ride into camp together on the Chief's horse, with the large antelope stag stretched over the back of Maliseet's horse. The women gather round and coo over Maliseet's accomplishment.

BUFFALO HEART

The Broken Talker has come of age. We must now call him, QUAHADI, for spirit of this fine antelope.

Smiling and laughing in agreement, Blue Sky Woman tries to explain to Harry, pointing at the Antelope, then pointing at him.

BLUE SKY WOMAN

Quahadi, Quahadi...

Sunset Spider Woman and White Buffalo Woman spread out a work skin on the ground and Coyote Woman unpacks a bundle of tools. Deftly, the strong women transfer the heavy carcass to the skin and begin the laborious process of removing the antelope hide and butchering the meat.

COMANCHE CAMP FIRE

Chief Buffalo Heart beckons Harry/Quahadi to sit with him by the fire, where the Chief produces a pipe he fills with a smoking mixture. Snatching a small coal from the fire with his bare fingers, Buffalo Heart pops it into the bowl of the pipe, puffing furiously on the burning herb. When Quahadi breathes in the smoke, a new understanding comes to him, as the Chief's various hand signals now make perfect sense and Quahadi finds himself responding with appropriate gestures.

DEWALT WOODLOT - SAW MILL

Miguel, Leroy and Francisco, covered with grease, wrestle off a large flywheel from the innards of the Beast. Leroy skins a knuckle and curses. While Miguel and Francisco assess the damaged flywheel, Leroy pauses to untie his neckerchief from around his forehead and wrap it around his hand.

MIGUEL

Mother of God, just what I feared.
Flywheel's cracked.

FRANCISCO

Can you fix it?

MIGUEL

Could be welded. Would cause more damage if it broke under power. No, we'll have to forge a new one.

LEROY

Can you do that here?

MIGUEL

When parts break, we make new ones, so I need you to wrestle this to the metal shop. Then, I'll walk you through the process. Once we've poured the mold, you guys are finished for the day.

FRANCISCO

Excellent... Past time I visited Carmen at the hotel. Up for a trip to town, Leroy?

LEROY

Thanks for the thought, Francisco. However, I'm up for a long nap.

MIGUEL

Leroy, if you're not going to town this even, come by the bungalow later. You're welcome to share a bite with Esmeralda and me.

LEROY

Sounds wonderful, Miguel.

HOTEL STAPLETON - STREET FRONT

While Arty sits on the front seat of his Studebaker farm wagon, Sheriff Chuck Maynard ambles by.

SHERIFF CHUCK
Well, hello, Arty.

Arty startles, then smiles at the affable old geezer.

ARTY DEWALT
Hello, Sheriff. How ya doin'?

SHERIFF CHUCK
Not bad, can't complain.

ARTY
I've been thinkin' 'bout what this town really needs.

SHERIFF CHUCK
Don't say? What would that be, exactly?

ARTY
A Farmers' Market...

SHERIFF CHUCK
Would be nice. 'Cept, we don't have a lot of folk farmin' much 'round these parts.

ARTY
That's my point, there's nowhere folk can sell their crops and such. Seems only place to gather in Belknap is in the bar. That's no place for families with kids, or folk who don't drink.

SHERIFF CHUCK
You're right 'bout that, Arty. Yes, indeedy...

ARTY
Goin' to chat with mayor Jack, 'bout the idea. Could build the Farmer's Market on my empty lot down the street. Figure we could have a town party at the site, where people could discuss the idea.

SHERIFF CHUCK

You are a wonder. That's brilliant!
You go for it, Arty.

ARTY

Well, thank you.

SHERIFF CHUCK

You're really somethin'. Always
thinkin' 'bout what you can do for
the good folk of Belknap.

ARTY

Thanks again, Sheriff. Have a good
day.

SHERIFF CHUCK

You, too...

Sheriff Chuck tips his hat and moves on up the boardwalk towards his office, as Arty steps off the wagon, wraps the reins 'round the tether rail and crosses into the Hotel Stapleton. The Ghost Of Mickey "The Weazl" Gallagher steps out of the shadows in front of a stunned Sheriff Chuck. The Weazl stares menacingly, chewing an unlit cheroot in the corner of his mouth.

GHOST OF THE WEAZL

Sheriff, trouble you for a light?

Sheriff Chuck peers at the spectre standing in the shadows.

HOTEL STAPLETON - LOBBY

Arty walks into the high-ceilinged hotel lobby, just in time to see Carmen exit one of the upstairs rooms and disappear down a back corridor. A moment later, Jack Stapleton exits the same room and pauses for a moment, to finish adjusting his suit and tie.

ARTY DEWALT

Jack...

Jack smoothly waves a hand at Arty and moves down the grand staircase towards him.

JACK STAPLETON

Like a cup of coffee in the
restaurant?

ARTY
That'd be great.

The men stroll to the back of the lobby towards the hotel restaurant.

HOTEL STAPLETON - RESTAURANT

Arty and Jack walk in through the open glass doors. Jack signals Darla Mackenzie, the hostess on duty. When Darla grabs two menus, Jack cuts her short.

JACK
We're not eating, Darla. Just coffee for two.

Darla reaches behind her for a carafe of fresh hot coffee. As the restaurant's empty, the two men walk to a central table, pull out chairs and sit opposite each other.

ARTY
Thought Carmen would be workin' today?

JACK
She is. Could be in the kitchen, or up to something in housekeeping.

Darla discreetly approaches the table. She fills their coffee cups.

JACK
Thanks, Darla. That's great.

Darla does a mock curtsy and returns to her station.

ARTY
Seems you two been settin' up housekeepin', all right.

JACK
Something I can do for you, Arty?

ARTY
Just lookin' out for a family member of Miguel Deon.

JACK
Nothing to do with your own feelings about Carmen?

This gives Arty pause.

ARTY

Don't rightly know where this conversation is goin'. Actually, I come to chat 'bout another matter altogether.

JACK

What would that be?

Jack takes a sip of his coffee, while Arty ignores his.

ARTY

Got the notion to bankroll a Farmers' Market. I've got that empty lot down the street, I use to store building materials. Thought a market would help attract more settlers to the area.

JACK

That's a great idea, Arty.

ARTY

Glad, you think so. Would be nice to have a town party at the site to float the idea. I'll have Miguel get a crew to clean it up.

JACK

Woud be delighted to contribute.

ARTY

Was hoping you could donate some catering. Have the ladies serve drinks, snacks and such.

Jack sets down his coffee cup.

JACK

I'm all over that, Arty. People will love it. How soon you want to do this?

ARTY

No rush, really... Sometime next month?

JACK

I'd need to put it on the next council meeting agenda. Make a poster and get the word out. Schedule some staff and make a budget for the food and drink order.

ARTY

I've never done this kind of thing before.

JACK

No problem, I'll get right on it. Say, you haven't forgotten about tonight?

ARTY

What's happening tonight?

JACK

Arty, have you been hiding under a rock? Tonight's the "Renovation Celebration", honouring you and the men who did such a wonderful job transforming the hotel. So, everyone in town should be in the bar tonight and it's a full moon to boot.

ARTY

I'm sorry. Got distracted and totally forgot.

JACK

Ordered a brand new piano from Boston for the new stage and it finally arrived last week. Doc Clement Cody is treating us to a performance tonight. You're the guest of honour, so don't be late.

ARTY

Had no idea you were going to this much trouble.

JACK

Once we put to bed your work on this hotel, your brilliant Farmers Market idea will be the next big thing. How about two to four o'clock, week Sunday afternoon? We'll have the girls set out sandwiches, watermelon, lemonade, with peanut brittle and liquorice for the kids.

ARTY

Sounds good...

JACK
Anything else?

ARTY
Uh, no.

JACK
Okay, then... Have to get moving.
Got a busy day ahead of me.

ARTY
Yeah... Me too.

JACK
Arty, now don't you worry about
Carmen.

ARTY
Expect she's in good hands.

JACK
That's right.

Both men stand up and Jack shakes Arty's hand, though Arty lacks enthusiasm. Jack spins around and heads for the door, while Arty trails behind, mulling over their conversation.

DEWALT WOODLOT - BUNKHOUSE

Leroy walks over to his bunk and pulls off his boots. Heaving himself onto the upper, he lays back with a sigh of relief. As he closes his eyes and begins to drift off, the Ghost Of J.B. appears.

GHOST OF J.B.
Leroy, old pal... Didn't I tell ya
not to get comfortable?

Startled, Leroy's eyes blink open, staring up at the ceiling.

LEROY
Jean Baptiste?

GHOST OF J.B.
Now don't t'ink 'bout openin' yer
yap wit any lame excuses, cause I
know all 'bout yer stashin' the
gold. Where I'm standin', gold's
not much use to me, so here's a
word to the wise. Hell's fury gonna
break out in town tonight.

LEROY

What the Hell are you raving about?

GHOST OF J.B.

After havin' your nice supper and chat with yer new Mexican pals, I'd be seriously t'inkin' 'bout packin' up. Best ride out, grab the loot and skedaddle yer ass outa here, likitty-split.

The Ghost Of J.B., having said his piece, fades away. Leroy sits up and looks around, not sure if he just imagined it. Then, he lies back down and passes out.

HOTEL STAPLETON - LOBBY

Fatigued after his little chat with Jack Stapleton, Artemus DeWalt sits down on one of the lobby sofas. A few moments after Jack disappears, Carmen arrives, dressed in her ruffled hostess finery. Arty jumps up to flag her down.

ARTY

Carmen, could you spare a moment?

CARMEN

Señor DeWalt, what can I do for you?

ARTY

Not so formal, please call me Arty. Need your help on a caterin' project.

CARMEN

You should discuss hotel business with Senor Stapleton.

ARTY

Just finished doin' that.

CARMEN

All right...

ARTY

Have a seat.

Arty gestures to the sofa beside him.

CARMEN

Si, Señor Arty.

Carmen sets herself down on the sofa and Arty sits back down beside her. Arty nervously fidgets with his hat in his hands, exhilarated to be so close to this beautiful creature.

ARTY

Been thinkin' 'bout buildin' a Farmers Market, as I have a large empty lot just down the street. Just discussin' with Mayor Jack, 'bout havin' a town party to get folk thinkin' 'bout the idea. Would be a week Sunday afternoon, two to four o'clock.

CARMEN

That's wonderful, Señor Arty.

Carmen smiles radiantly at Arty, who's greatly relieved to have broken the ice. Before he can press on, Francisco steps into the lobby. He's shocked, to see Carmen in intimate conversation with Artemus DeWalt.

FRANCISCO

Carmen, what are you doing?

Carmen immediately jumps to her feet.

CARMEN

Gaspar, I'm having a conversation with Mister DeWalt.

FRANCISCO

I can see that.

ARTY

That's all right, Carmen. We can discuss this later.

CARMEN

Si, señor. Whenever it's convenient.

While Arty heads for the front door, Francisco grabs Carmen and pulls her down with him on the sofa.

FRANCISCO

Carmen is it? Whenever it's convenient?

CARMEN

Gaspar, you're embarrassing me.
This is not the place for this.

FRANCISCO

Don't you "Gaspar" me... Let's go
upstairs. Am sure you know which
rooms are empty.

Not used to seeing Francisco so worked up, Carmen is turned on. She stands up and leads him upstairs.

CARMEN

Follow me.

HOTEL STAPLETON - MEZZANINE

Part way down the corridor, Carmen fishes out a key, then unlocks a door. She smiles at Francisco, while scanning for anyone who might take notice. Francisco pushes her into the room, closing the door behind them.

CROW CANYON - CLIFF DWELLING

On a sunny day, the Comanche family arrive at the sparkling Crow Creek and follow it into a deeper canyon, where hundreds of inter-connected and multi-storied sandstone and adobe structures were built by the ancient Anasazi into a massive cliff palace. The delighted women jump off their ponies to begin unpacking and making camp. Chief Buffalo Heart playfully smacks Harry/Quahadi on the back and points at the ancient adobe ruin.

CHIEF BUFFALO HEART

Anasazi pueblo... (ancient ones
adobe community)

As the Chief confirms his meaning with gestures of "Plains Indian Sign Language", Quahadi smiles, pointing at the pueblo cliff dwelling.

QUAHADI

Ancient ones built this?

The Chief nods, pleased at Quahadi's understanding.

BELKNAP - ZERELDA'S BAKERY

A bell on the bakery door tinkles, as Jack Stapleton steps inside. Zerelda is in the midst of wrapping a package for Blind Annie Blake. Jack pauses a moment to savour the intoxicating aroma of fresh baking.

BLIND ANNIE BLAKE

Love coming into your shop,
Zerelda. Don't see much more than
flickering shadow, but I smell in
vivid colour.

Zerelda and Jack both chuckle at Annie's heartfelt comment.

ZERELDA MCCOY

You're one of my favourite people
in this God forsaken ghost town.
Always so chipper, despite your
disability. Hard to imagine you
running a rooming house.

BLIND ANNIE BLAKE

Folk go on 'bout this still being a
ghost town. Guess that makes us all
haunts, who haven't figured out
we're dead yet? Would explain how I
get around so well.

ZERELDA MCCOY

Believe you're right about that,
Annie. You have a good day.

Annie puts her canes together in one hand, gets a grip on the package with the other, then slides it into a carrying bag slung over her shoulder.

BLIND ANNIE BLAKE

Oh, forgot to thank you for Deke
Gustafson. He's delighted as a pig
in poop, with that batch of "Lefse"
you conjured up last week. Those
simple buttered, sugared and rolled
potato pancakes make him soggy with
nostalgia for Norway.

ZERELDA MCCOY

Glad to hear it.

BLIND ANNIE BLAKE

Nice to see you, Mister Stapleton.

Before Jack can respond, the door bell tinkles and Annie Blake is gone.

JACK STAPLETON
Annie is quite the class act.

Zerelda eyeballs the good looking Mayor Jack Stapleton.

ZERELDA MCCOY
Mister Stapleton, don't usually see
you rubbing shoulders with us
common folk.

JACK STAPLETON
Don't mean I'm not a big fan of
your wonderful baking, Mother
McCoy.

ZERELDA MCCOY
I seem to be stacking up the
compliments today. What can I do
for you? Interested in a fresh
croissant?

Zerelda gestures towards a tray on the countertop.
Jack reaches out and helps himself.

JACK STAPLETON
Maybe on a regular basis. Mmmm,
mmmm... Melts in the mouth.

ZERELDA MCCOY
Excuse me, are you hinting at a
long term business agreement,
Mister owner of the only hotel and
restaurant in town?

JACK STAPLETON
Please, call me Jack. You are the
smart cookie, being such a sharp
and good-looking business woman.
Must say, am surprised there's no
Mister McCoy in the picture.

ZERELDA MCCOY
Is this flirting part of your
hustle to get me into a lifetime of
indentured servitude?

Jack bursts out laughing highly enjoying the wit of this
wonderful woman.

JACK STAPLETON
Could be just a moment of weakness
inhaling the wonderful aroma of
this shop. Believe I'd be willing

JACK STAPLETON
to sell my soul for the joy of
sampling your handywork for the
rest of my life.

ZERELDA MCCOY
Sounds more like a proposal of
marriage, than a business contract.

JACK STAPLETON
Some say not a lot of difference
twixt the two.

ZERELDA MCCOY
Would be a feather in my bonnet to
provide your hotel's baking needs.
Am sure we'll eventually come to an
agreement on a reasonable sum for
my services. However, there is a
deal breaker.

JACK STAPLETON
What would that be?

ZERELDA MCCOY
My two teenage sons, Jesse and
Frank.

JACK STAPLETON
Can't be easy, raising two boys on
your own.

ZERELDA MCCOY
The boys spend far too much time on
their own. I'd be agreeable to
providing for your baking needs, if
you'd hire them. They're honest and
hard working, though high-spirited.

JACK STAPLETON
Am sure I could keep them busy.
They could be useful as bus boys or
dish washers. Who knows what else?

Right on cue, Jesse and Frank come pounding down the stairs,
from the upstairs apartment. Both ignore the adults, focused
on swiping fresh croissants. Just about to charge out the
front door, Zerelda reels them in.

ZERELDA MCCOY
Stop right there, you two.

JESSE MCCOY

Mum, we got important stuff to do.

ZERELDA MCCOY

I've something important to do,
too: introducing you hooligans to
your new boss.

Zerelda turns a ravishing smile on the disarmed Jack, who admits defeat at the hands of this determined woman.

JACK STAPLETON

I want you rapsCALLIONS to go by
the Hotel Stapleton this evening at
six o'clock. Present yourselves to
the bar manager, Sam Sloan.

Zerelda nods in agreement.

ZERELDA MCCOY

Mister Stapleton and I are about to
put together a contract, to have me
regularly supply baked goods to the
Hotel Stapleton. Now you boys go
enjoy your freedom, while it lasts.

JESSE MCCOY

I'm Jesse. Yes, sir! We'll be
there.

ZERELDA MCCOY

You two be back early. Don't want
to be beatin' the bushes for you.

FRANK MCCOY

Hi, I'm Frank. Don't worry, Mum.
We'll be starved by then.

The two boys charge out the door and can be heard laughing together outside. Zerelda finds some paper and a pen and Jack puts the agreement in writing, making a copy for each of them. Both sign the papers, shake on their new deal, and Jack pulls out his cheque book and writes Zerelda a generous advance.

JACK STAPLETON

Could be the beginning of a
beautiful friendship.

Zerelda's eyes bulge slightly, as she looks at the numbers on the cheque.

ZERELEDA MCCOY
 Might just take the money and run.

Both burst out laughing.

BELKNAP - MAIN STREET

While making the turn onto main street, Artemus DeWalt notices Jack Stapleton leaving the bakery. Without a second thought, Arty seizes the moment.

ARTY DEWALT
 Hey, Jack...

JACK STAPLETON
 Arty... What's up?

ARTY
 I'm headin' by the hotel. Like a lift?

JACK
 Why not?

ARTY'S STUDEBAKER FARM WAGON

As Arty reaches out with his right hand to help Jack up, he slips his Bowie knife from its sheath with his left. Arty wraps one arm around Jack's neck, covering his mouth with one hand and plunges the knife into his guts with the other. After Jack's struggling subsides, Arty wipes the blood off the blade on Jack's suit and returns the weapon to its sheath, then whips back the tarp and flips Jack's body onto the wagon bed.

BELKNAP - MAIN STREET BOARDWALK - BELOW

Jesse and Frank stare in wide-eyed amazement, as Arty replaces the tarp, covering the evidence of his dirty deed. They watch entranced, as Mister DeWalt flicks the reins and leisurely rumbles off down the street.

JESSE MCCOY
 Won't nobody believe this.

Frank nods in agreement.

FRANK MCCOY
 Imagine what Mum would say.

Both boys snicker, shaking their heads in wild wonder.

CROW CANYON - CLIFF DWELLING

The Comanche family settle their horses, choose a camp site and organize their belongings. After Chief Buffalo Heart and Coyote Woman lash together a long sturdy ladder, the family move to the top floor of a high square sandstone tower. Quahadi helps Chief Buffalo Heart construct an assortment of drying racks, while the women collect plants and weave baskets.

CROW CANYON - RIVER BANK

The Chief and Quahadi patiently fish the creek. Coyote Woman and Sunset Spider Woman fill baskets with clay and fine sand from the creek bank and haul them back to the site of a new pottery workshop. White Buffalo Woman, Desert Horse and Blue Sky Woman gather dry grass for straw and large piles of dead wood for fuel.

CROW CANYON - CLIFF DWELLING - POTTERY KILN

In a sunny corner of an existing adobe structure, Coyote Woman and Sunset Spider Woman begin assembling a pottery kiln, while Desert Horse plays with pieces of quartz. Quahadi is intrigued, learning to mix the right amount of clay, sand, straw and water for the building material. White Buffalo Woman and Blue Sky Woman happily sing, as they roll the mixture back and forth on a hide stretched between them.

DEWALT WOODLOT - CASA DEON - BACK DOOR

Responding to his knock, Esmeralda and Miguel welcome Leroy into their comfortable kitchen, through the back entrance.

ESMERALDA

Welcome to our happy home.

LEROY

Your husband made sure I've come with a good appetite.

ESMERALDA

At the cookhouse, the men get the basic American fare they prefer. In our home, it's authentic Mexican cuisine.

Esmeralda and Miguel introduce Leroy to a young Mexican lady, MARIA SANCHEZ, busy making magic at a massive cast iron wood stove.

ESMERALDA

Leroy, this is Señorita Maria Sanchez. Maria, this is our guest of honour tonight, Señor Leroy Cord.

Maria blushes furiously.

Maria is my right hand at the cookhouse and has been a great help tonight. She's very shy and has not much English.

LEROY

Would she understand, "You're a beautiful lady and I'm charmed to meet you?"

Maria covers her face with her hands.

ESMERALDA

I think Maria got the idea.

The congenial hosts chuckle, as they lead Leroy into the larger dining area.

CASA DEON - DINING ROOM

The Deons direct Leroy to one of four place settings and all take a seat at a large Spanish Colonial oak dining table. Esmeralda, Maria and Miguel bow their heads for grace and Leroy respectfully follows suit.

MIGUEL

God grant us a simple life, well lived.

LEROY

Short and sweet... An excellent grace.

MIGUEL

Esmeralda taught me that. I may be a partner with Arty and the ramrod of this outfit, but here at home, Esmeralda's the boss. She's very knowledgeable about many things and happy to talk your ear off.

Esmeralda picks up a fresh jalapeno chili from one of the bowls and throws it at Miguel.

ESMERALDA
You should talk...

Miguel deftly snags it mid-air and pops it in his mouth.

LEROY
My Dad taught me never to pretend
knowledge. Best to shut up and
listen if one wants to learn
anything. People stop sharing, if
you're a know-it-all.

ESMERELDA
Your poppa is a wise man.

LEROY
Thank you. You and Maria have
really outdone yourselves. This
table is a feast for the eyes.

ESMERALDA
Explore and see what appeals to
you.

Maria rises to grab a water jug and circles the table
filling everyone's cup. Miguel gestures to Leroy to dig in,
as he starts filling his own plate.

MIGUEL
Thank you, Maria.

Leroy is touched by Maria's warm smile, before she returns
to her chair.

LEROY
You folks amaze me. How do you find
time for yourselves, with
everything you do?

Miguel and Esmeralda smile modestly at Leroy. Esmeralda
makes sure Leroy has a little of everything.

ESMERALDA
Hearth and home are sacred. The
meals we share are the foundation
of our marriage.

MIGUEL
That and other things...

Miguel winks roguishly at Esmeralda.

ESMERALDA

Miguel...

MIGUEL

Esmeralda is part Indios Mexicanos. She reminds me of "Precious Flower", the Aztec Goddess of love and maize.

LEROY

Worse things to be than a Corn Goddess.

A deep flush works up Esmeralda's neck.

ESMERALDA

Miguel, you've got us all sidetracked with Indios Mexicanos. We're trying to eat dinner here. I had no idea what you might enjoy, Leroy, so I confess to getting carried away.

Esmeralda and Miguel's eyes both twinkle merrily.

MIGUEL

Enjoy yourself.

LEROY

This is all so amazing. How would you say, "connoisseur", in Spanish?

MIGUEL

Conocedor...

LEROY

Co-no-ce-dor. My new word for the day.

ESMERALDA

So Leroy, how are you settling in?

LEROY

For many years, I worked as an officer with the Texas Rangers. Was a shock, when this great institution was recently disbanded. Since then, I've been adrift on a prairie sea.

Esmeralda and Miguel cast a brief glance at each other.

ESMERALDA

You're the first employee Miguel has invited to dinner. Even Artemus is content to eat in the cookhouse and has no interest in Mexican food. We hope you enjoy your time here and consider this your new home.

Each happily continue savouring the culinary delights on their plates. After having removed their polished dishes, Maria returns with desert.

You probably are convinced you haven't room for another bite. Please give this "Pastel de Tres Leches" a try. It is a light and tasty sponge cake, soaked in a mixture of three kinds of milk, topped with whipped cream and strawberries.

Maria returns with a steaming carafe of coffee to complete the delicious meal.

MIGUEL

Café de Veracruz, the perfect end for an intimate dinner party.

LEROY

Muchas gracias, mis amigos.

Esmeralda and Miguel applaud Leroy's heartfelt effort at Spanish.

ESMERALDA

Am off to help Maria with the dishes. You two go sit by the fire.

Esmeralda picks up their empty coffee cups before heading for the kitchen. The two men drag themselves out of their chairs.

CASA DEON - LIVING ROOM

Leroy and Miguel stagger into the tastefully appointed living room and collapse into well-worn chairs. Between them is a table well-stocked with Miguel's favourite after-dinner indulgences.

MIGUEL

Have some excellent "Brazilian cigarrilhas" in my humidor and some

MIGUEL
lovely imported "Brandy de Jerez"
from Andalusia.

LEROY
Happy to oblige...

The two men relax, enjoying the warmth from the fireplace.
They savour the lovely imported brandy and waft fragrant
smoke through their sinuses.

CASA DEON - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Esmeralda pops in.

ESMERALDA
Most pleasurable having you here
with us, Leroy. Now, I'm off to
bed, to leave you to digest your
meal.

LEROY
Can't thank you enough. You're a
remarkable woman, Esmeralda. How
did Miguel ever track down a gem
like you?

Both Esmeralda and Miguel laugh heartily.

MIGUEL
A question I ask everyday of my
life, Leroy.

ESMERALDA
Am married to a modest and hard
working man. I am the lucky one.

LEROY
An inspiration spending time with
you both. Nice to meet a couple,
who are such a blessing for each
other.

ESMERALDA
What a lovely thing to say. Buenas
noches.

MIGUEL
Sleep well, my love. I won't be
long.

ESMERALDA
Good night, Leroy.

LEROY
Buenas noches...

Esmeralda smiles sweetly at Leroy, then smooches Miguel on the lips. After she closes the bedroom door behind her, the men continue enjoying the friendly crackle of the fire and the comfortable ambience of the room.

LEROY
That's an interestin' old battle
saber.

Miguel gestures to the artifacts which have pride of place over the fireplace mantelpiece.

MIGUEL
As the last male descendent of my
paternal grandfather, Don Martin
Deon, I am the proud custodian of
his revered sword and spurs.

LEROY
Very impressive...

MIGUEL
After I returned from studying
architecture in London, I
collaborated with Arty on many
construction projects in Austin.
When Jack Stapleton hired him to
rebuild Belknap, Arty invited us to
partner with him on the operation.
But, there's a more pressing tale,
I'd like to share.

Leroy's attention wanders, lulled into a reverie by the Deon hospitality.

LEROY'S DAY DREAM - RANGER CAMPFIRE

Leroy relives a conversation with Harry around a campfire, the night of the Comanche massacre at Little Robe Creek.

HARRY
Remember back at the orphanage in
Waterford, that night Mannix Flynn
made a break for it?

LEROY

Why would you bring that up? You know, I'll never forget the screams from that poor kid, when the Christian Brothers dragged him in.

HARRY

Bad enough to humiliate him, stripping him naked and shaving his head. The Brothers had to take turns beating the shit out of the tyke with that heavy leather strap.

LEROY

So what gives? You waxing nostalgic for the old "Home Sweet Home"?

HARRY

This morning after the attack, when we watched those blood-thirsty Kowtona bastards rip the flesh off Comanche women and children...

LEROY

Yeah?

HARRY

They had the same gleam in their eye as the Christian Brothers.

CASA DEON - LIVING ROOM

Leroy snaps out of his reverie and struggles to regain the thread of Miguel's story.

LEROY

That's incredible.

Miguel takes a sip from his antique brandy snifter.

MIGUEL

Doña Francisca, a devout Catholic, horrified at the notion this sordid tale should become public knowledge, shipped Carmen off to a nunnery in Spain to keep her away from Antonio. The recent embarrassment of Carmen being forced to leave the monastery is now added to the grim martyrdom of a bloodless marriage to a worthless pervert. My poor sister begged me

MIGUEL
and Esmeralda to take in Carmen on
her return to Texas. But, there's
another wrinkle.

LEROY
Oh?

MIGUEL
Since a young boy, Francisco has
been obsessed with Carmen, thinking
of her as a marriageable distant
cousin. We've all been reluctant to
explain to either of them, their
true blood relationship. You seem
like a good friend to Francisco, so
I thought you might benefit from
understanding what's going on here.

Leroy butts out his cheroot in an ash tray. Quaffing the
last of his excellent brandy, he struggles to rise from the
easy chair.

LEROY
This is a lot to take in right now.
Thank you so much for your
hospitality. I've had a long day
and I'm dead on my feet.

Ever the gracious host, Miguel rises to walk Leroy to the
front door.

CASA DEON - FRONT PORCH

MIGUEL
Rude of me to open the door on our
family skeletons. Forgive my
preoccupation with our troubles.

LEROY
Fascinatin' story, which I will
keep to myself. Just need a good
night's sleep.

MIGUEL
I understand. Have a good rest. See
you in the morning.

LEROY
Thanks again, for everything.
Buenas noches.

MIGUEL
Buenas noches, mi amigo.

Exhausted and slightly bewildered, Leroy steps out the door.

CAPOTE UTE VILLAGE - CAMPFIRE

A small group of CAPOTE SOUTHERN UTE WARRIORS relax around a fire. The returning LEAD SCOUT KANIACHE approaches CAPOTE CHIEF TEMUCHE.

LEAD SCOUT KANIACHE
Chief, saw women at nearby Anasazi cliff dwelling. Have made camp there. Maybe, with renegade Muache Chief, Cany Attle's band.

CHIEF TEMUCHE
Been expecting Cany Attle to show up. Claims this part of Capote ancestral territory, belong to Muache Southern Ute. Maybe now, stop arguing and have people move in.

LEAD SCOUT KANIACHE
This very bad. We must attack tonight. Strangers die in sleep.

CHIEF TEMUCHE
We need to know more. Must observe and see if Chief Cany Attle with them? Maybe scouting party, or maybe just hunting.

LEAD SCOUT KANIACHE
Will observe. For now...

HOTEL STAPLETON - UPSTAIRS ROOM

Carmen kicks off her clothes revealing lovely lace lingerie. She approaches Francisco and smiling, slips one hand around his waist and gently rubs his crotch with her other. Deeply offended, Francisco pushes her away, while laughing, Carmen jumps on the bed.

FRANCISCO
You disgust me, Carmen.

CARMEN

Come on, my little treasure. You know you want me. You've wanted to take me for a long time.

Francisco moves towards Carmen and sits beside her on the bed.

FRANCISCO

Not like this...

CARMEN

How do you think sex happens? With the birds and the bees...

FRANCISCO

With true love... Like I've loved you, since a little boy.

CARMEN

You are still such a little boy.

Angry, Francisco jumps on the bed, climbing on top of Carmen.

FRANCISCO

Not like Señor DeWalt?

CARMEN

Mmmm, Señor Arty. Very macho...

FRANCISCO

Ahah! I thought so.

CARMEN

You don't know anything.

FRANCISCO

Know I've had enough of your bullshit, Carmen.

Francisco wraps his hands around Carmen's neck. She caresses his face and ruffles his hair with her fingers.

CARMEN

You always treat me like such a fragile porcelain doll. I'm much tougher than you think.

Francisco begins to tighten his grip.

FRANCISCO
Maybe, not so tough.

CARMEN
Quit talking shit and fuck me.

FRANCISCO
Don't worry, Carmen. You're going
to get exactly what you deserve.

CARMEN
Promises, promises...

Francisco bears down on Carmen and she begins to choke.
No! Enough...

FRANCISCO
Not nearly enough...

Carmen's eyes bulge and she begins to thrash around, taking
all of Francisco's strength to subdue her. Her eyes glaze
over and she passes into the beyond, as Francisco stares,
with growing awareness at what he's done. Overwhelmed, he
climbs off her dead body and bursts into tears.

All Señor Arty's fault. That
bastard must pay...

CROW CANYON - CLIFF DWELLING - TOWER

The Comanche family relax around the hearth, where Chief
Buffalo Heart puts finishing touches to a new pipe, Coyote
Woman sews elaborate beadwork on a wedding dress and Sunset
Spider Woman examines a few pieces of Anasazi pottery. White
Buffalo Woman plays with her young son, Desert Horse, while
Blue Sky Woman focuses on stitching a pair of new moccasins
for Quahadi. Chief Buffalo Heart crosses to the hearth,
throws another log on the fire, then plucks a small burning
coal to light his pipe.

CHIEF BUFFALO HEART
Care to try new pipe?

Coyote Woman nods and beckons for him to sit beside her.

COYOTE WOMAN
Pray Quahadi has good hunting. Find
wedding gift for Blue Sky.

The Chief affectionately settles in beside his wife.

CHIEF BUFFALO HEART

White stranger come long way,
to now join family as initiated
hunter. Finally, Quahadi learn to
keep ancient agreement with the
wild, to feed beautifully in word
and deed the holy in nature. Pray
thanks to Wakan Tanka, for blessing
of abundance from our offering.

COYOTE WOMAN

Feel deep gratitude, my
husband, for this joy of
homecoming.

HOTEL STAPLETON - BAR

After the early rush subsides of bar regulars out in force
for the Renovation Celebration, Sam and Darla pause for a
breather.

SAM

Timing was perfect to have Jesse
and Frank's help. Boys are hard
workers.

DARLA

Jesse saved me a ton of work.

SAM

Frank seems happy in the kitchen.
Jesse and his brother are a good
team.

An impatient Doc Cody approaches the bar.

DOC CODY

Sam, where's our Director of
Ceremonies for the evening's
festivities? Not to mention, our
guest of honour...

Doc pulls out his pocket watch.
Sixteen after ten. The show must go
on.

SAM

Doc, I'm so sorry. Have no idea
where Jack is, let alone, Arty.
Just go do whatever it is you're
going to do.

DOC CODY

Right! As they say: "I'm a man, who needs no introduction."

Doc spins on his heel and stomps off to the new stage. Darla leans over to Sam.

DARLA

Sam, that's really unprofessional. Somebody needs to represent the hotel and say something of introduction for Doc.

SAM

You're right as rain, Darla.

Sam imitates Jack's stunt and climbs up on the bar.
Ladies and Gentlemen... Could I have your attention, please?

When, that has minimal affect, Sam takes another page out of Jack's book.

Alright, as Jack would say, Shut the fuck up!

The crowd is startled into relative silence by Sam's unexpected outburst.

You should all know by now, we have a new stage and a wonderful new piano.

The crowd, which has been impatiently waiting for them to get on with it, bursts into thunderous applause.

Tonight, we celebrate the completion of DeWalt General Contracting's excellent renovation of the Hotel Stapleton. Our own Doctor Clement Cody is here to initiate our brand new "McPhail Victorian Upright Grand Piano". Take it away, Doc.

Sam theatrically cues Doc, then climbs down to get back to pouring drinks.

HOTEL STAPLETON - STAGE

Though no singer, Doc is an experienced and accomplished pianist. As he sits down on the piano stool, Clement Cody calmly basks in the warm glow of the gaslight illumination, reflecting off the high gloss cherry lacquer finish of the beautiful new piano. Raising his hands over the keys, Doc

charges into an extended improvisation of a simple but snappy eight to the bar rolling bass line.

DOC CODY

This is a riff I picked up from Pete Johnson, a talented railroad conductor buddy of mine from Marshall, East Texas. Had a stint there as a doctor with the Texas Western Railroad Company a few years back. Pete calls this riff, "booga-wooga", West African Mandingo slang for "to beat as a drum", inspired by the rhythm of railway locomotion.

The lively and repetitive rhythm is infectious and many in the crowd clap their hands, tap their toes and dance about. All are entranced, as Doc improvises on that simple walking bass line.

HOTEL STAPLETON - BAR

After Doc's final chord resonates through the room, he stands and bows briefly, weathering a heartfelt ovation. Ignoring the calls for an encore, Doctor Cody steps down from the stage and proceeds to walk directly out of the bar. After Darla and Sam share a look, with a shrug Sam climbs back up on the bar.

SAM

Doc did not let us down. Let's hear another round of applause for our illustrious, our one and only, and our now missing-in-action, Doctor Clement Cody.

There's another longer flurry of applause, before things finally calm down and return to business as usual. Sam clambers down from the bar and Darla gives him a big hug.

Thanks, Darla. You're a peach.

Darla gives him a warm smile and winks.

HOTEL STAPLETON - STREET FRONT

Arty DeWalt drives his farm wagon down main street with Jack Stapleton's dead body hidden in the back. Insane with rage after strangling Carmen, Francisco Rodriguez steps out on the boardwalk from the Hotel Stapleton front door, just as Sheriff Chuck and his new buddy, Ghost Of The Weazl,

approach the hotel. Francisco spots Arty driving towards him.

FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ
Señor DeWalt...

Arty notices Francisco, pulls on the reins and brings his wagon to a stop in the middle of the street.

ARTY DEWALT
Francisco, what's up?

Not interested in a long conversation, Francisco whips his Le Mat Cavalry revolver out of its holster.

FRANCISCO RODROGUEZ
Son-of-a bitch...

Francisco pulls the trigger and the blast blows Arty off the far side of his wagon. Though, badly wounded in the neck, Arty pulls out his state of the art Remington New Model 1858 revolver. Now shielded by the wagon and with a clear view of Francisco, Arty shoots him in the gut.

ARTY DEWALT
Wasn't me. Was Jack!

The dying Francisco drops to his knees and sprays a number of bullets in Arty's direction, which spook Arty's horses, who ride away with the wagon. One of Francisco's bullets then hits Arty in the forehead, while Arty gets off one last shot, hitting Francisco in the throat. Both men fall down dead in the street.

HOTEL STAPLETON - BOARDWALK

The Ghost Of The Weazl decides watching all this killing is thirsty work. Emboldened by the bloody display, the ghost jumps into the body of the affable Sheriff Chuck. The Sheriff twitches, as the transformation causes an unexpected spasm.

HOTEL STAPLETON - LOBBY

Ignoring the bodies in the street, Sheriff Chuck/Ghost Of The Weazl steps inside the lobby on his way to the bar, jostling Doc Cody, on his way out.

HOTEL STAPLETON - STREET FRONT

Doc Cody steps out on the boardwalk. Horrified at the sight of two bodies, he rushes to check the pulse of the closest, Francisco Rodriguez. The GHOST OF ARTY DEWALT rises up and intrigued by what the Ghost Of The Weazl has done, follows him into the hotel.

HOTEL STAPLETON - BAR

Sheriff Chuck/Ghost Of Mickey Gallagher pushes through the crowd to a spot at the bar and gestures for a drink. Sam fills a large mug with a premium lager beer and sets it down in front of him. The Sheriff smacks a coin down on the bar.

SHERIFF CHUCK/GHOST OF THE WEAZL

You are a scholar and a gentleman,
Sam Sloan. Been lookin' forward to
this for a dog's age.

Sam grabs the coin.

SAM SLOAN

Thanks for the generous tip,
Sheriff Chuck. Nice to see you take
such pleasure from the little
things in life.

SHERIFF CHUCK/GHOST OF THE WEAZL

This award winnin' premium "Lemp
Lager Beer" is the real deal. God
bless Jack, for goin' to the
trouble of importin' this from St.
Louis. So, how goes the big
celebration?

SAM

You just missed Doc Cody tear the
house down.

SHERIFF CHUCK/GHOST OF THE WEAZL

Actually, bumped into Doc on his
way out. Hate to be a bearer of bad
news, but just afore comin' in,
witnessed Arty DeWalt and his new
employee, Miguel's nephew, have a
shoot out. Killed each other dead.

SAM

That's terrible! Are the bodies
still lyin' out there in the
street?

SHERIFF CHUCK/GHOST OF THE WEAZL

Ah, yep...

Sheriff Chuck/Ghost Of The Weazl savours another long satisfying taste of fine beer.

SAM

Shouldn't you be takin' care of havin' them moved to the Doc's office? Maybe, more to the point, to the "Mauldin Brothers Mortuary"?

SHERIFF CHUCK/GHOST OF THE WEAZL

Those bodies ain't goin' anywhere. Figured, Mauldin Brothers prolly here.

SAM

Sorry, for tryin' to second-guess you. Your logic's impeccable. There they are, over at the front corner table.

SHERIFF CHUCK/GHOST OF THE WEAZL

Thanks, Sam. Guess I'll mosey on over. Let 'em know what's what.

SAM

Good idea. What a shock! Was hopin' to get Mister DeWalt to show me some chords on his guitar.

Sheriff Chuck/Ghost Of The Weazl salutes Sam, then picks up his traveler for another slurp, as he heads over to have words with the Mauldin brothers. The redneck Ghost Of Arty DeWalt takes that moment to slip into the body of Sam Sloan, causing a spasm to ripple through the distracted bartender.

HOTEL STAPLETON - ROOFTOP

The GHOST OF CARMEN DEL MALAGA gravitates through the roof of the hotel and spots Josephine Stewart, walking home from a long day at the bank. Carmen's Ghost descends upon her unsuspecting hero and Miss Josephine/Ghost Of Carmen stops in mid-stride, twitching suddenly. Completely out of character, she decides to check out the celebration in the Hotel Stapleton.

ARTY'S STUDEBAKER FARM WAGON

Arty DeWalt's terrified team of horses, with its wagon load of surprise, gallop down the road. The GHOST OF JACK STAPLETON rises up from his body in the back of Arty DeWalt's vibrating buckboard. He drifts off into the night back towards his hotel.

HOTEL STAPLETON - BARROOM

The Ghost Of Jack Stapleton, settles into the body of Darla Mackenzie, as she charms her regular customers. Now, inhabited by the Ghost Of Jack, Darla recognizes the Ghost Of Arty in Sam, who returns the evil eye.

HOTEL STAPLETON MAIN STREET

The GHOST OF FRANCISCO rises up into the night from his dead body in the street and observes a man trying to resuscitate Arty. Farther up the boardwalk, he zeroes in on Deke Gustafson, standing a few stores down from the hotel, preoccupied with locking up his Furniture Shop for the evening. As Deke returns his ring of keys to a jacket pocket, the Ghost of Francisco slips into his weary body, inspiring Deke to turn on his heel and stride up the boardwalk towards the hotel.

DEWALT WOODLOT - BUNKHOUSE

From a sound sleep on his bunk, Leroy jolts awake. He jumps down from his bunk and pulls on his boots. Leroy begins packing up his belongings.

DEWALT WOODLOT - STABLE

Leroy Cord saddles up his good horse, Sally. While strapping on his bedroll and gear, Leroy and Sally are startled by the arrival of Arty's prized horses hauling his buckboard with no driver. After calming the lathered horses, Leroy whips off the tarp in the back of the wagon revealing the dead body of Jack Stapleton.

CAPOTE UTE VILLAGE - CHIEF TEMUCHE'S LODGE

The Chief's Lead Scout, Kaniache, lifts up the hide door flap and enters the lodge. Chief Temuche sits by the hearth, calmly puffing on a pipe.

CHIEF TEMUCHE

Well?

LEAD SCOUT KANIACHE

Mostly women. One grandmother, three younger women, one grandfather, one younger man. One young woman has son, still learning to walk.

CHIEF TEMUCHE

Not war party?

LEAD SCOUT KANIACHE

No.

CHIEF TEMUCHE

Are they hunting?

LEAD SCOUT KANIACHE

Men hunt, fish. Women make baskets, pots, tools. Settling in. Making home.

CHIEF TEMUCHE

Don't like it. Could be first family of many. We go in tonight. Send strong message to Muache Chief, Cany Attle. This Capote Territory. Spread the word.

Kaniache curtly nods and takes his leave.

HOTEL STAPLETON - BAR

Deke Gustafson/Ghost Of Francisco enters the barroom from the lobby. He pauses by the bar, where Sam Sloan spots him.

SAM/GHOST OF ARTY

Deke, don't usually see you in here. If, you're lookin' for the Mauldin Brothers, they're over at the front corner table, talkin' with Sheriff Chuck.

DEKE/GHOST OF FRANCISCO

Thanks, Sam. Bring me a draft, will you?

SAM/GHOST OF ARTY

Sure, Deke. No problem.

Darla/Ghost of Jack Stapleton slides in behind Sam/Ghost of Arty DeWalt.

SAM/GHOST OF ARTY (CONT'D)

Go figure, Deke ordered a beer.
Want to take him this, when you got
a moment?

DARLA/GHOST OF JACK

Take it yourself, asshole!

Sam turns to look at her, as Darla picks up a paring knife.

SAM/GHOST OF ARTY

Okay, honey. Got it covered.

DARLA/GHOST OF JACK

Don't you "honey" me, you murdering
son-of-a-bitch!

Sam/Ghost Of Arty wipes his hands on his apron and grabs the beer mug, leaving his bar station at top speed.

HOTEL STAPLETON - BARROOM

Meanwhile, Deke/Ghost Of Francisco approaches the front corner table, where Lamar and Wilbur Mauldin, are having a chat with Sheriff Chuck/Ghost Of The Weazl. Deke is ignored, as he sits down in the empty fourth chair.

WILBUR MAULDIN

Sheriff, thanks for lettin' us know
about the shootout. We'll get right
on it. Won't we, Lamar?

LAMAR MAULDIN

I'm not the one who lounges in my
office sipping "Bourbon County
Whiskey". Think I don't know about
the empty bottles stashed in the
attic and the case in the back
closet?

WILBUR MAULDIN

I'm entitled to have my guilty
pleasure. Think I don't know about
your locked humidior of Cuban
cigars, that you never share?
Puffin' away to your heart's
content in your basement office,
when you think I'm sound asleep.

An exasperated Lamar turns to Sheriff Chuck and Deke for hopeful support.

LAMAR MAUDIN

See what I have to put up with?
Constant aggravation... Enough of
this, there's work to be done.

WILBUR MAUDIN

I'm happy to deal with the public
and the livin'. Lamar prefers to
deal with the embalmin' and
preparation of the dead.

Wilbur finishes his last swallow of beer and pushes back his chair from the table. Both brothers rise together, but Lamar's not ready to let it go.

LAMAR MAUDIN

Truth is, I'd feel better about you
being in charge of the business
end, if you had the least notion of
the developing technologies of
embalming and photography.

As the brothers move towards the exit, the continuing rant becomes indistinct. Sheriff Chuck focuses on Deke.

SHERIFF CHUCK/GHOST OF THE WEAZL

Deke, how are you? What's on your
mind?

DEKE/GHOST OF FRANCISCO

Well, Sheriff, don't rightly know.
Was lockin' up my store a moment
ago and a strange notion come over
me to walk over here.

SHERIFF CHUCK/GHOST OF THE WEAZL

It is a full moon. Good night for
strange notions.

Sam shows up with Deke's beer.

SAM/GHOST OF ARTY

Consider this complements of the
house. Tonight, we're celebratin'
official completion of the hotel's
renovation. Must express my
admiration for the wonderful work
you did here in the bar.

DEKE/GHOST OF FRANCISCO
 Thanks for the thoughtful comment,
 Sam. Not to mention the generosity
 of the house. Speaking of which,
 where's Señor Jack?

SAM/GHOST OF ARTY
 That's a good question, 'bout
 "Señor" Jack. Guess that Spanish
 princess is havin' her influence on
 us all. Not like him to miss an
 opportunity, to climb up on the bar
 and hold forth every chance he can.

Miss Josephine/Ghost Of Carmen steps through the barroom door, still wearing a sling to support her wounded wing, a convenient place to conceal her Colt Pocket Navy hand gun. Scanning the room, she spots Deke/Ghost Of Francisco chatting with the Sheriff/Ghost Of The Weazl at the front corner table. When she arrives at their table, she pauses, not saying a word.

DEKE/GHOST OF FRANCISCO
 How are you, cousin?

Miss Josephine/Ghost Of Carmen immediately fires her hidden hand gun at Deke/Ghost Of Francisco, killing him instantly with a bullet between the eyes. Sheriff Chuck draws his .44 Colt Model 1848 Dragoon handgun and drops to one knee, as Miss Josephine/Ghost Of Carmen shoots the affable old Sheriff Chuck/Ghost Of The Weazl putting a bullet in his shoulder. Women scream and men express outrage, causing immediate pandemonium.

HOTEL STAPLETON - BAR

Darla/Ghost Of Jack pulls out the loaded sawed-off Westley Richards 12 Gauge shotgun kept behind the bar, just as Sam/Ghost of Arty returns to his work station. A moment after Miss Josephine fires her second shot, Sam spots Darla cocking the shotgun and looking daggers at him. He dives over the counter as she empties both barrels in his general direction, which amps up the room's general unease into mass hysteria.

HOTEL STAPLETON - KITCHEN

Jesse returns to the kitchen, with a full tray for Frank.

JESSE MCCOY
Did you hear that?

FRANK MCCOY
Pretty hard to miss. Sounds like
someone's shootin' at somebody.

After the first few tentative shots ring out, the volume of
gunfire rapidly escalates.

JESSE MCCOY
Sounds like a lot of someones,
shootin' at a bunch of somebodies.

The two lads look at each other.

FRANK MCCOY
Thinkin' what I'm thinkin'?

JESSE MCCOY
Let's get the Hell outta here.

FRANK MCCOY
Figure we pulled our weight, first
night on the job?

JESSE MCCOY
Expectin' a job reference?

Frank and Jesse undo their aprons and fling them into the
dirty laundry hamper. Then, helter skelter out the back
door.

MAIN STREET - HOTEL STAPLETON

Leroy steps down from Sally in front of the hotel, as Frank
and Jesse come running down the adjacent alley.

JESSE MCCOY
Hey mister, better not go in there
right now.

Jesse and Frank cautiously approach Leroy.

LEROY CORD
Why's that?

More gunfire erupts from inside the bar.

FRANK MCCOY
Should figure that out for
yourself.

LEROY CORD

Kind of late for you young fellas
to be hangin' 'round the hotel.

JESSE MCCOY

We was workin' in the kitchen, when
all Hell broke loose.

LEROY CORD

Thanks for the tip, as it may not
be the best time ta stick my nose
into other folks business. My
name's Leroy Cord. Which direction
you fellas headin'?

The boys point down the street.

FRANK MCCOY

Our mum owns the bakery in town.
She's going to be worried sick, if
we don't get home real soon.

LEROY CORD

Maybe I'll join ya. Make sure
nobody gives you any grief.

JESSE MCCOY

For sure, Leroy. I'm Jesse. This is
my brother, Frank.

LEROY CORD

This fine appaloosa is my best
friend, Sally.

The boys let Sally smell their hands and rub her nose. Leroy
takes her by the reins and leisurely accompanies the lads
down Main Street in the direction of Zerelda's Bakery.

CROW CANYON - CLIFF DWELLING

Capote Southern Ute Chief Temuche's SQUAD OF WARRIORS make
their way through the maze of the Anasazi cliff dwelling.
They sneak silently through hidden tunnels and corridors,
then carefully set up a ladder to enter the square sandstone
tower.

CROW CANYON - CLIFF DWELLING - TOWER

The Capote raiding party swarm into the tower, but are shocked to find the place empty, except for various desiccated skeletons. The coals of a fire still burn in the hearth and evidence of a family's recent domestic activity are everywhere. Chief Temuche turns to his lead scout.

CHIEF TEMUCHE

Can you explain this?

LEAD SCOUT KANIACHE

No! Watched squatters settle in for the night and pull up ladder.

The Lead Scout kneels by the fire pit and picks up a carving tool.

LEAD SCOUT KANIACHE (CONT'D)

Feels like someone here moments ago. Their spirits may still be.

The roomful of superstitious warriors all turn to stare at the Scout in horror.

LEAD SCOUT KANIACHE (CONT'D)

Strange, none of these bodies are lying down. All sitting by fire. Like just decide to give up the ghost.

CHIEF TEMUCHE

Don't touch anything. Let's get out of here.

Group consensus is immediate and the raiding party swiftly departs.

CROW CANYON - CLIFF DWELLING

Quahadi wearily walks his horse, heavily loaded with a fine mule deer. Exhausted, he trudges slowly back to camp.

HOTEL STAPLETON - BAR

Darla/Ghost Of Jack fills her apron with shotgun shells and reloads, while all those in the bar with a gun let loose. Cautiously standing up to peak over the bar, she/he spots Miss Josephine/Ghost Of Carmen still standing by the front corner table.

DARLA/GHOST OF JACK
Carmen, behind the bar. Now!

HOTEL STAPLETON - BARROOM

Miss Josephine/Ghost Of Carmen comes out of her daze and turns toward the bar, where she spots Darla/Ghost Of Jack waving at her. Overjoyed to see Jack, the Ghost Of Carmen propels Miss Josephine's body towards him, through the thick haze of gun smoke and flying bullets.

JOSEPHINE/GHOST OF CARMEN
Señor Jack...

HOTEL STAPLETON - BAR

Miss Josephine just reaches the end of the bar, when Sheriff Chuck/Ghost Of The Weazl, struggling to raise his handgun, gently squeezes the trigger and shoots her in the back of the head. Darla/Ghost Of Jack, thrilled to see Carmen, moves towards Miss Josephine just as the top of her head explodes, drenching her/him in blood.

DARLA/GHOST OF JACK
No...

Darla/Ghost Of Jack levels the shotgun at Sheriff Chuck/Ghost Of The Weazl and gives him both barrels.

HOTEL STAPLETON - BARROOM

Darla blows him away before the Sheriff can get off another shot. As the rage of these various, once again, discarnate spirits becomes assuaged, the group hysteria abates and the gunfire peters out. Survivors, like Sam and Darla, look around at the mayhem, trying to get a grip on what just happened.

DARLA
Sam, you're alive! Am so sorry.
Have no idea what came over me.

They rush together, crying and hugging each other tight.

LITTLE ROBE CREEK CANYON - CLIFF LEDGE

The Ghost Of J.B., impatiently awaits the arrival of Leroy.
The Spirit Of Chief Iron Jacket appears beside him.

SPIRIT OF CHIEF IRON JACKET

Gift-giver, where is the curious
White man?

As, the Ghost Of J.B. does not respond to the Comanche spirit, the old Chief tries gesturing with the Plains Standard Sign Language, but still gets no response.

GHOST OF J.B.

What are you on about, you crazy
Injun spook? When Leroy shows up,
you just sick your mountain
screamer on that rat-bastard. My
God, if you're not flapping your
gums, you're wiggling your fingers.

In disgust, the Ghost Of J.B. tunes out the old Injun Spook and returns to his meditation.

CROW CANYON - CLIFF DWELLING - TOWER

Quahadi, the proud hunter, returns to find a ladder in place and all dark and quiet. Exhausted, he unloads his horse and begins climbing the ladder.

CROW CANYON - CLIFF DWELLING - TOWER

Quahadi creeps toward the glowing fire pit, where he throws kindling on the coals and gently resurrects the fire. As, the flames illuminate the room, Quahadi peers around at the strange and horrifying sight. Numbed with shock, he falls into a trance, as he stares into the fire and sings his antelope song.

CROW CANYON - HARRY'S TRANSFORMATION

Harry/Quahadi transforms into a glowing pronghorn antelope buck and charges off into the night.

BELKNAP - SAVINGS & LOAN - BANK ALLEY

The shimmering antelope transforms back to the human form of Harry Hartman, at the bank alley's intersection with Main Street. Harry watches Leroy secure his horse to the hitching post in front of Zerelda's Bakery and step up on the boardwalk with two young boys.

MAIN STREET - ZERELDA'S BAKERY

Harry crosses main street in front of the bakery and calls out.

HARRY HARTMAN

Leroy...

Leroy and the two boys startle, as they turn towards the stranger coming out of the dark.

LEROY CORD

Is that you, Harry?

Harry steps up on the boardwalk and raises his hand in greeting. Leroy rushes towards Harry and gives him an enthusiastic hug.

HARRY HARTMAN

In the flesh...

LEROY CORD

I thought you were dead.

HARRY HARTMAN

So did I...

LEROY CORD

where are my manners? Let me introduce you to my new young friends, Jesse and Frank.

The boys, encouraged by Leroy's friendliness to the stranger, step forward to introduce themselves.

JESSE MCCOY

Good evening, sir. I'm Jesse McCoy.

FRANK MCCOY

Hello there. I'm Frank McCoy.

Harry turns to the lads and firmly shakes both their hands.

HARRY HARTMAN

Leroy and I both met as young lads in an orphanage in Ireland. When we got older, we escaped and crossed the ocean together. After ending up in Texas...

LEROY CORD

We spent years together in the Texas Rangers. Until they were disbanded...

JESSE MCCOY

Wow!

FRANK MCCOY

That's amazing.

LEROY CORD

We have a lot to talk about, Harry. Since we parted company, I got a job working for a construction company here in town. Even been offered a job as sheriff.

HARRY HARTMAN

You've done well for yourself, Leroy.

The front door opens and Zerelda peeks out.

ZERELDA MCCOY

It's late. Time you boys were in bed.

JESSE MCCOY

Mum, this is Leroy and his old pal, Harry. There was a shoot out at the hotel. Leroy and his appaloosa, Sally, walked us home.

FRANK MCCOY

Leroy and Harry were Texas Rangers.

ZERELDA MCCOY

Hi, I'm Zerelda McCoy. Am deeply grateful you gentlemen looked out for my boys. Would you like a snack before you head on your way?

Leroy and Harry share a look.

LEROY CORD

That's very generous, mam. Don't
know about Harry, but I'd be
delighted.

HARRY HARTMAN

Would be a treat. Very kind of you.

Zerelda holds the door open, as the boys enthusiastically
file into the bakery.

FADE TO BLACK