

WILD CARGO

Original Screenplay

by

Anton Diether

WILD CARGO

FADE IN:

INT. LOUISIANA STATE PENITENTIARY - DAY

A man's predatory eyes, alert to every human movement. In b.g., the CLAMOR of prison, VOICES ECHOING.

EXT. BAYOU BRUSHLAND - DAY

The eyes of a stalking white male tiger, alert to the SOUNDS of SHRILLING MONKEYS and TROPICAL BIRDS.

INT. PENITENTIARY - DAY

The man's POV TRACKS DOWN a cell-tiered corridor through a milling mob of inmates. They steer clear, grey faces staring warily at us.

EXT. BRUSHLAND - DAY

The tiger's POV STREAKS THROUGH grassy thickets.

INTERCUT SCENES:

FARGO (30's), restless and virile, marches through the prison hall, his face like a fist, smoldering.

The white Bengal quickens its pace through the brush, lithe and beautiful, a natural-born killer.

Fargo spots his prey, moving faster...

A lead pipe slides out of his sleeve into his grip.

FARGO'S PREY

Three swarthy prisoners strut forward, led by a BALD-HEADED CONVICT, tattoos all over his scalp...

Home-made shivs slip down into their hands.

TIGER'S PREY

A young woman sits on a grassy expanse, her back turned.

In the prison, three knife blades flash toward Fargo.

On the grass, the tiger charges forward.

Fargo parries a three-man assault -- his pipe CRACKS against the tattooed Bald Convict's skull!

MIRANDA (20's) turns -- quickly raises a warning hand. The tiger, a three-foot cub, freezes. He rolls over onto his back. Miranda smiles and scratches his belly.

ALARMS BLARE. Prison guards rush toward the scene, Fargo nowhere in sight. Inmates stand around the rubble of three sprawled bodies, their split heads gushing crimson.

INT. FARGO'S CELL - MORNING

Fargo arouses to a WAKE-UP KLAXON, flush from the dream we just witnessed. He stares around his cell, listening to the UNENDING DIN OF PRISON VOICES. Smoke rises in b.g.

EXT. BRUSHLAND - DAY

Miranda strokes her tiger, listening serenely to EXOTIC ANIMAL SOUNDS. An earthy, attractive nature girl.

WE CRANE OVER her, HIGH ABOVE cypress treetops to VIEW:

A fenced, ten-acre wildlife preserve, engulfed by Louisiana wetlands. An oasis in a vast cypress swamp.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PENITENTIARY - DAY

Massive walls dwarf the steel entrance gate. It creaks open to release a lone figure...

Fargo steps out in an ill-fitted suit, knapsack over his shoulder. He squints from the bright sun, a cave dweller with too many years in darkness. Walks toward freedom.

The gate shuts behind him with a jarring CLANK. Fargo doesn't flinch, never looks back.

EXT. GREYHOUND BUS (MOVING) - NEW ORLEANS - DAY

Fargo gazes out from a bus window, drinking from a bagged beer. In the reflection, downtown New Orleans streaks past.

EXT. LOWER NINTH WARD - DAY

Fargo lugs his knapsack down a Katrina-ravaged ghetto sidewalk. He checks an address and stops before a windowless building: "MIDNIGHT MISSION."

INT. MISSION HOUSE - DAY

Fargo steps into a dim-lit dormitory and gazes around: rows of cots filled with homeless derelicts.

VOICE

Are you Fargo?

CALLAHAN, an impassive, gum-chewing parole agent, appears.

CALLAHAN

Callahan, Corrections Department.
I'm your parole officer.

FARGO

This ain't the halfway house.

CALLAHAN

It's full. Your release papers?

Fargo hands him a folded document, gazing over at a mad-eyed JUNKIE shivering on a cot. The officer peruses the form, sensing Fargo's tension.

CALLAHAN (CONT'D)

Have you been drinking?

FARGO

No sir. You expect me to sleep in
this shit hole?

CALLAHAN

Watch the attitude, Fargo. You
just did a nickel stretch, but I
can put you right back in.

FARGO

I can't stay here.

CALLAHAN

Huh? Are you talking back to me?

FARGO

Look, I don't want any trouble, I
just want my own space.

CALLAHAN

No, no, it don't work that way.
As long as you're assigned to me,
I got the power of God. You sleep
where I say, you shit where I say.
We understand each other?

Fargo stares evenly at him, then turns to walk out.

FARGO

I'll find a place and call you.

CALLAHAN

Hey! You don't hear too well.

Fargo keeps walking. Callahan catches up to him.

CALLAHAN (CONT'D)

You bunk here, boy, or I'll haul
your ass back to the slammer right
now. Now c'mon...

He grabs his arm. Fargo wrenches it away, losing control.

FARGO

Don't touch me.

CALLAHAN

Okay -- I'm taking you in.

He whips out handcuffs and reaches at him -- Fargo slams him
hard against a wall. Callahan struggles feebly, gasping.

CALLAHAN (CONT'D)

Are you outta your mind?! Do you
know who I am?!

FARGO

Yeah, you're God. And you're gonna
have to strike me dead -- because
I'm not goin' back into any cage.

CALLAHAN

You dumb-ass shit! You're goin'
down...

He grapples for his gun holster. Fargo catapults him into a
row of cots, scattering them. The officer lands at the feet
of the freaked-out Junkie.

JUNKIE

Whoa! Don't you steal mah shoes!

He frantically beats on his head. Fargo comes to his senses,
realizing his situation. He turns and hastens out.

EXT. THRIFT SHOP - DAY

Fargo emerges from a Salvation Army shop, wearing cut-off
jeans and tank top. He tosses his old suit into a trash can.

EXT. HIGHWAY 23 - DAY

Fargo hitchhikes south along the west bank of the Mississippi
River. An eighteen-wheeler pulls over.

INT. TRUCK (MOVING) - DAY

A RADIO PLAYS CAJUN MUSIC. Riding shotgun, Fargo tunes out from the talkative, good 'ol boy DRIVER.

DRIVER

Ya got kin around here? Whatchu say your name was?

(no response)

Don't matter. Ain't none of my business. Black Bay Road ain't far, but ya won't find nothin' there but gators and dope runners. Hell, maybe you're one of 'em too. Ain't none of my business.

EXT. HIGHWAY 23 - DAY

An open expanse of wetland and rube towns, the butt end of civilization.

INT. TRUCK (MOVING) - DAY

Fargo stares out obliviously, cradling his knapsack.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Down by the Gulf, every boonie boy and his granny is runnin' dope. Shrimpers, offshore oil drillers -- hell, everybody's doin' it. Ain't none of my business.

(glances at knapsack)

I wouldn't even be surprised if ya got a few kilos in that bag there. Wouldn't surprise me at all.

He brakes before a lonely, dirt byroad.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

This is it. Don't talk much, do ya?

(no response)

Hell. Ain't none of my--

FARGO

That's right. Keep it that way.

He slaps a crumpled bill on the seat and hops out.

EXT. BLACK BAY ROAD - DAY

The truck speeds off, leaving Fargo in the middle of nowhere. He hoists his knapsack and hikes down the muddy road.

EXT. FARTHER DOWN ROAD - DAY

Flat coastal wetland all around, thick with black mangroves. Fargo swats away mosquitoes. He stops dead to stare at:

A ten-foot alligator, sunning lazily across the road.

EXT. REGGIE'S DOCK - DAY

The road dead-ends at the edge of a Gulfside marsh. A ramshackled wood shack sits isolated by an airboat dock, with a painted sign: "REGGIE'S BAIT AND TACKLE."

Fargo ambles toward the shack. A grizzled face pops out.

REGGIE

Man alive! Is that you, bro?!

REGGIE (30's) hurries over. A puckish, fast-talking rogue, gold doubloon on his neck, a grin sparkling with larceny.

FARGO

Good to see ya, Reggie.

REGGIE

Good to see you, man...

He throws his arms around him in a bear hug. Fargo crushes him back. He smirks over Reggie's gold jewelry.

FARGO

What're you, a pirate now?

REGGIE

Bucks and fucks in paradise. You know me, Fargo -- life's just a big tire swing. Ya just get out?

FARGO

Yeah. Those extra six months was like six years.

REGGIE

I never thought I'd get out before you did. But, well...here we are.

Fargo nods, his smile tightening.

FARGO

Here we are.

REGGIE

C'mon, lemme buy you a beer.

INT. SHACK - DAY

He ushers him in and grabs two beers from an ice chest.
Fargo regards a dingy clutter of fishing gear and worm tanks.

FARGO

You done well for yourself.

REGGIE

Aw, don't let this rat hole fool
ya, it's just a cover. I'm doin'
real good now. We both are.

He hands him a brew and plunks into a hammock, swinging back
and forth nervously. Raises his beer in a toast.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

To old partners.

Fargo sets his beer aside, growing impatient.

FARGO

It's been five years, Reg. Humor
me. Did you find the stash or not?

REGGIE

Yup. Right where we left it.

FARGO

You broke it down?

REGGIE

Hunnerd twenty grand for the gems.
Throwing in inflation, I'd say we
did pretty goddamn righteous.

FARGO

Sixty G's apiece. That works for
me. So where's my cut?

REGGIE

Don't you worry about that, bro.

FARGO

I didn't hear you.

REGGIE

All in good time--

Fargo stops Reggie's swinging, a fearfully intense look.

FARGO

Now is a good time. "Bro."

REGGIE

Man alive. You always were the impatient one.

EXT. DOCK LANDING - DAY

A fantailed airboat rests at the end of a gnarled dock. Reggie hurries to it, Fargo behind him.

FARGO

Where we goin'? To the money?

REGGIE

Gotta boat it from here. No roads.

They jump into the airboat. Reggie REVS UP, the giant fan WHIRRING. The boat glides out.

EXT. COASTAL WETLANDS - AERIAL VIEW - DAY

The airboat inches across green felt and snaking waterways along the Gulf of Mexico.

EXT. AIRBOAT (MOVING) - DAY

It bears down on the docks of a puny fishing town. Reggie nods toward a slip of boats, at their destination: a sleek, spanking new 30-foot sailing ketch.

REGGIE

Thar she blows!

The airboat slows through the slip and docks beside it.

EXT. KETCH - DAY

They climb aboard. Reggie waves around the deck.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Hot off the boatyard. Lookit this.

He shows him the cockpit, patting a GPS with a radarscope.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

State-of-art fuzzbuster. Nothin' gets past this baby.

Fargo looks around, unimpressed.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Moves like the wind, too. C'mon, I'll take you for a spin.

He MOTORS UP and hurries aft to toss off a mooring line.

FARGO

I don't give a shit about boats.

REGGIE

I swear, Fargo, with a craft like this, we're gonna be livin' large.

FARGO

Yeah, you said that five years ago with that '67 Mustang. The perfect getaway car, untraceable. I got two minutes to get the gems out -- and the fuckin' car won't start. A car you stole from your brother.

REGGIE

Hey -- I didn't think he'd squeal.

FARGO

Don't gimme your sorry excuses, Reg. Just give me my sixty grand.

REGGIE

Patience, bro. We're almost there.

EXT. LOUISIANA COAST - DAY

The ketch glides along uninhabited Gulf coastline.

EXT. KETCH (MOVING) - DAY

Reggie works the foresail. Fargo lingers in the stern.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Sometimes I'm out here all alone, and it's like this boat is alive. I can feel her heart beatin' with all this rare possibility.

He steers inland toward a string of remote barrier islands.

FARGO

What the hell we doin' out here?

REGGIE

Got us a date with destiny.

FARGO

Fuck that. Where's my share?

Reggie steels himself, turns and forces a grand smile.

REGGIE

You're standin' on it.

Fargo looks down, perplexed. His face darkens. Reggie grabs a paper certificate from the cockpit and hurries over.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Look at the registration -- total co-ownership. Check out the names.

Fargo stares at the certificate, his anger rising to a full boil. He seizes Reggie by the throat.

FARGO

You bought this bucket with my money?

REGGIE

Half, man -- fifty fifty.

FARGO

You slimy little turd! You li'l... I'm gonna dump you over...

He drags him to the starboard side. Reggie panics.

REGGIE

Hey, c'mon...cool it...you don't know how to sail. Fargo, listen to me -- this baby's a gold mine!

Fargo pushes him away, seething to himself.

FARGO

I don't fuckin' believe this. Five years I waited. All I wanted to do was retire from all this shit.

REGGIE

We're ex-cons, bro. Nobody's gonna let us retire. Not the cops, not the parole boys...

FARGO

I already broke parole.

REGGIE

You *did*? Well, there you go.

FARGO

You don't get it, do you? I don't need you, I don't need nobody -- I just wanna be free and clear.

REGGIE
Freedom ain't exactly free.

He takes the helm and steers to an isolated barrier island.

FARGO
I ain't runnin' dope for you, fool.

REGGIE
No, no, this is a sweet deal. I mean, it's foolproof--

FARGO
I don't wanna hear about it...

REGGIE
Spider monkeys.

Fargo frowns at him. Reggie quickly dumps the sheets and steers into the island's shallows.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
Right there, man. Six thousand bucks worth of live cargo.

He points ahead: an ancient bamboo warehouse on the shore.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
Exotic animals, dude. You buy one cockatoo for a grand -- you sell it for twelve. Y'know how much for an Amazon cat? Eighty big ones.

FARGO
I don't need another felony rap.

REGGIE
It ain't jewelry or drugs, Fargo -- it's *wildlife*. That's the beauty of it. It's just a misdemeanor. Nobody gives a shit.

He switches on the diesel and aims for a pontoon dock between three moored Corsa speedboats.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
Hoist the anchor there, partner.

Fargo shoots him a dagger glare and cranks the anchor winch.

FARGO
I'll stick around 'til we break even, then I'm cuttin' you loose.

EXT. BARRIER ISLAND SHORE - DAY

The ketch docks, Reggie securing the mooring lines.

Grimy, unwashed, sullen-eyed MESTIZOS approach the dock, some armed with machine pistols. Others tend to animal crates and cages lining the front of the bamboo warehouse.

The two climb onto the pontoon, Fargo eying the gunmen.

FARGO (CONT'D)

What's the deal here?

REGGIE

Twenty monkeys at one-fifty a pop.
I got a trader in town -- he'll
take the whole lot for six G's.

He steps forward and SPEAKS SPANISH to a mestizo, who leads them ashore toward the warehouse.

JUAREZ (30's), a scruffy, sour-faced smuggler in skipper attire, observes them from the crates. He trades looks with:

ORLANDO ROBLES (50's) beside him, a distinguished-looking Colombian in a clean, white suit. He disappears into the warehouse, as Juarez steps forward to meet the two.

Fargo leans into Reggie as they walk.

FARGO

Who's the guy in white?

REGGIE

Orlando Robles. He runs the animal
trade down south.

He greets Juarez with his big, larcenous grin.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Hey, Capitan! Que pasa!

Juarez nods distastefully, then leads them toward a stack of bamboo cages. Fargo notices piles of exotic animal skins, distracted by SOUNDS from inside the warehouse:

The pathetic CRIES, WAILS and WHIMPERS of CATS and APES.

They reach the stack of cages, listless spider monkeys in each one. Reggie produces a roll of hundred-dollar bills.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Three thousand for the lot.

JUAREZ
Two hundred a head.

REGGIE
Nah, nah. One-fifty, tops.

Juarez shakes his head. Fargo peers in at a skinny monkey. It stares back with lethargic eyes, its ribs showing.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
C'mon, Juarez, don't stonewall me.
I know the going price.

JUAREZ
We don't need your business.

He starts to walk away. Fargo turns to Reggie.

FARGO
These pendejos are tryin' to sell
us a bill of goods.

Juarez stops and glowers back.

FARGO (CONT'D)
Look at 'em, they're half-dead.
Why take the risk? We don't need
their business either.

He struts off toward the dock. Juarez glares after him.

JUAREZ
Que burro. Okay, one-fifty, then.

REGGIE
Done!

He slaps the roll of bills into his hand. Hard looks between Juarez and Fargo. Instant animosity.

JUAREZ
Chinga tu madre, cabron.

FARGO
Same to you, amigo.

PONTOON DOCK - LATER

Fargo, Reggie and mestizos haul the last of the monkey cages onto the ketch's aft deck. Twenty cages piled around them. Reggie reels in the mooring lines. Fargo glances toward:

Juarez on the dock, his permanent scowl.

EXT. KETCH (MOVING) - DAY

They cast off, and Reggie motors away. Fargo sees Orlando Robles in his white suit, watching them from the warehouse.

EXT. GULF COAST - DAY

The ketch sails back toward the remnants of civilization.

EXT. KETCH (MOVING) - DAY

Fargo scoops a cup of food pellets out of a feed bag and approaches a cage. He dumps the pellets through the bars. The monkey inside paces, ignoring the food.

REGGIE

Ya think they're gonna die on us?

FARGO

How should I know? I was just trying to lower the price.

REGGIE

You're a sly one, partner.

FARGO

I'm not your partner.

He goes to the cockpit and rummages through the galley. Finds a sliver of coconut. Returns to the cage and prods it through the bars. The monkey shies away from it.

REGGIE

Horizon's our destiny, man.
Parrots to pythons. No more doin'
time, just livin' in prime time--

FARGO

Shut the fuck up.

EXT. FISHING TOWN DOCK - DAY

The ketch settles into its slip beside Reggie's airboat.

EXT. FISHING TOWN - LATER

A spit of a sportsman's town, isolated from the world by vast wetlands. The two amble toward a dumpy oyster bar.

INT. OYSTER BAR - DAY

Grungy and dark. Reggie leads Fargo to a fat, sweaty TRADER eating in a far booth. They sit opposite him.

REGGIE
Hey, bro. This here's my partner.

FARGO
No names.

A foxy WAITRESS approaches them, her T-shirt boasting "*ONLY SAILORS GET BLOWN OFFSHORE.*"

WAITRESS
Can I get you anything?

REGGIE
Sure thing, honey. I'm a sailor.

TRADER
Get 'em a coupla beers.

She goes off. Fargo's eyes follow her rear action. Reggie chuckles, aside to the Trader:

REGGIE
My friend ain't seen any poontang
in a long while.

Fargo shoots him a warning look. The Trader nods smugly.

TRADER
Another ex-con. And to what do I
owe this pleasure?

REGGIE
We got the goods.

TRADER
Refresh my memory.

REGGIE
Twenty spider monkeys. Fresh from
Costa Rica.

TRADER
Not interested.

Quick looks between Reggie and Fargo, Reggie in shock.

REGGIE
What d'you mean? That's not what
you said last week.

TRADER
Nobody's buying right now. Pet
trade got hit by an epidemic.

REGGIE
But we made a deal.

TRADER
Sorry. You got any exotic cats?

REGGIE
No, we don't got no fuckin' cats.
We paid top dollar for those
chimps -- on your promise.

TRADER
Sorry, I can't help you.

REGGIE
Well shit, man. What're we gonna
do with 'em now?

TRADER
Well, I suppose you could take 'em
to the Sanctuary people.

FARGO
Sanctuary? What's that?

TRADER
A wildlife refuge out in the bayou.
They love monkeys.

REGGIE
What do they pay?

TRADER
No idea. Their place is kinda hard
to find. I'll draw you a map.

He scribbles on a napkin. Fargo rises wearily to leave.

FARGO
I'm gonna go buy some bananas.

EXT. BAYOU - DAY

The ketch forges through a twisting maze of marshes.

EXT. KETCH (MOVING) - DAY

At the stern, Fargo prods a peeled banana at a caged monkey.

FARGO (CONT'D)
C'mon, Cheetah. Eat it!

The monkey cringes against the far side. Fargo gives up.

EXT. SANCTUARY SWAMP - DAY

The ketch winds deeper into an uncharted cypress swamp. Tree islands loom on each side like ghostly oases.

EXT. KETCH (MOVING) - DAY

Reggie slows his craft before a large island on high ground, surrounded by cypress trees draped in Spanish moss.

EXT. SANCTUARY ISLAND - DOCK - DAY

The ketch putters to a storm-battered dock with an anchored motor boat. Monkeys roam free along the shore.

EXT. SANCTUARY HOUSE - DAY

A ranch-styled house stands above a waterside clearing. It looks more like a kennel, surrounded by cages, corrals, feed shack, infirmary shack and an aviary.

JESSE (18), a rough-hewn Creole, fixes a hurricane screen on the porch. He eyes the docking ketch suspiciously.

EXT. DOCK - DAY

Fargo disembarks and scans the grounds. Reggie ties in.

REGGIE

Good place for monkey business.

Chimpanzees spill onto the dock. Spooked by them, Reggie edges back. The chimps surround Fargo. He stands frozen -- as they run, careen, JABBER and YOWL around him. Jesse ambles down the dock toward them.

JESSE

Can I help you?

FARGO

Do these things bite?

JESSE

Only if they like you.

A baby chimp jumps up into Fargo's arms. He stiffens, not moving a muscle. The chimp HOOTS adoringly at him.

FARGO

We, uh, got some spider monkeys.

JESSE

Ya gotta see the boss about that.

EXT. SHORESIDE CLEARING - DAY

The three head upshore through rows of cages, toward a large training cage. Reggie strays too close to its fence...

Miranda's *white tiger* pounces -- savages the wire mesh.

REGGIE
Christ on a crutch!!

He turns heels and runs. Fargo freezes with Jesse, still holding the baby chimp. The cub GROWLS, ears flattened back.

MIRANDA (O.S.)
Misha! Macumba berada!

Miranda, inside the cage, points to the ground.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
Bad boy, Misha! Macumba!

The cub crouches low in submission. Fargo watches in awe.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
Jesse, I told you -- no one comes
near this cage during training.

She steps up to the cage wire, assessing Fargo.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
Who're you?

FARGO
You're the boss here?

Miranda nods. Fargo cracks a smile, cradling the baby chimp.

FARGO (CONT'D)
You probably got enough monkeys on
your back here, but I got twenty
more on our boat.

The chimp nuzzles into his shirt and tries to suckle on his nipple. Fargo squirms, drawing a smile from Miranda.

MIRANDA
Twenty monkeys, huh? Well, we're
pretty overcrowded, but I guess we
can make room for a few more.

EXT. DOCK - DAY

A jittery Reggie waits on the ketch with a flare gun.

Fargo appears dockside with Miranda and Jesse.

FARGO

This here's the owner...

MIRANDA

Miranda.

Reggie extends a hand with a used-car salesman's grin.

REGGIE

Hey, how ya doin'!...

Miranda bypasses his hand and jumps aboard, more interested in the monkey cages. She inspects one closely. Fargo watches her, the baby chimp suckling on his shirt. Reggie gives him a look.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Did you talk about the money?

Miranda turns with a frown.

MIRANDA

What money?

REGGIE

You wanna buy 'em, don't ya?

MIRANDA

"Buy" them? This is a refuge. Animals are donated to us. What're you guys -- dealers?

FARGO

You got a problem with that?

MIRANDA

Yeah, I got a problem with that...

She climbs off the boat and grabs the chimp from Fargo.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Get the hell off my island.

REGGIE

Look, lady, we're just tryin' to sell the damn things.

MIRANDA

They're not "things", asshole.

She turns away. Fargo detains her.

FARGO

They're worth six grand for the lot. You can have 'em for three.

MIRANDA

Move that boat out of here or I'll have you arrested.

FARGO

Okay, one grand.

MIRANDA

I don't deal with smugglers.

A dead heat between them. Reggie goes for the mooring line.

REGGIE

Screw this shit. Let's just go. We'll take 'em to a zoo...

MIRANDA

They'll be dead by tomorrow.

FARGO

What d'you mean?

MIRANDA

They're starving to death.

FARGO

I've been trying to feed 'em.

MIRANDA

It's a coccidium, a parasite. It infects the digestive tract.

REGGIE

Mierda! So those spics *did* sell us a bill of goods.

He picks up a cage, looking disgustedly at its occupant.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Let's just dump 'em overboard.

MIRANDA

Why don't you just give them to us?

FARGO

Why, if they're dead already?

MIRANDA

Because we *care*, okay?

Reggie hauls a cage toward the bulwark. Miranda locks eyes with Fargo, who senses her desperation.

FARGO

Five hundred then. You wanna save them, I gotta recoup our losses.

MIRANDA

Jesse? How much petty cash we got?

JESSE

Coupla hundred.

She raises two fingers to Fargo. He sighs wearily and nods.

REGGIE

What? Fargo, that's bullshit!

Fargo shoots him a shut-up glare. Miranda notes the name.

MIRANDA

"Fargo", huh? Y'know, back there, I almost thought you liked animals.

FARGO

I don't like people, why should I give a shit about animals?

REGGIE

This ain't no handout. I'd rather dump the fuckers...

He lifts up the cage, ready to heave it over the side.

MIRANDA

Be careful there. That monkey's got a transmissible disease.

REGGIE

Say what?

MIRANDA

You know, like contagious?

Reacting, Reggie drops the cage hard on the deck.

EXT. KETCH (MOVING) - AFTERNOON

Outward bound through the swamp, her deck empty. From the stern, Fargo gazes toward the receding Sanctuary island:

Monkey cages are piled up on the distant dock, the figures of Miranda and Jesse carrying them upshore.

At the helm, Reggie counts out a handful of twenties.

REGGIE

Not even enough cash for gas. It's
like fuckin' an empty bed.

Fargo ignores him, staring out in deep thought.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Man, did you see that tiger? Gotta
be a white Bengal. You know how
much a cat like that is worth?

FARGO

You told me. Turn the boat around.

He scans the Sanctuary island's shoreline and points.

FARGO (CONT'D)

Head over there, around that bend.

REGGIE

Are we gonna steal the tiger?

FARGO

I dunno, maybe. But I think we got
skunked on those monkeys.

EXT. SANCTUARY SHORE - AFTERNOON

Reggie maneuvers his ketch beside a bank of cypress roots.

REGGIE

What're you gonna do?

FARGO

Go check things out.

REGGIE

What am I supposed to do?

FARGO

What you do best -- nothin'.

He hops onto a catwalk of roots and climbs to dry land.

REGGIE

How are you gonna get back?

FARGO

Go back to town and wait for me.

He disappears into the thickets.

EXT. SANCTUARY FOREST - AFTERNOON

Fargo treks through the cypress trees. A piercing SHRILL startles him from above. He looks up into the treetops:

Panamanian howler monkeys perch high in the trees, EMITTING BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAMS.

EXT. SANCTUARY GROUNDS - AFTERNOON

Fargo skirts a grassy expanse behind the Sanctuary house. He peers out from the thickets:

Miranda, Jesse and TWO CREOLE TEENS mend a distant border fence between the grounds and a deep forest.

EXT. CAGE AREA - AFTERNOON

Fargo steals toward Misha's cage. Inside, the white tiger sleeps in the shade. Fargo scopes out the padlocked door. APISH HOOTS distract him from behind:

In a monkey cage, a tribe of baboons huddle over a dug-out hole under the rear wire. They squeeze one by one through the hole and flee into the bushes.

Fargo steps closer to watch their Great Escape. The baboon leader, a huge male with a full mane, SNARLS at him. He bluffs an attack, BARKING at him with sharp canine teeth. Fargo edges back. He skulks off toward the house.

INT. SANCTUARY HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Fargo ventures into a deserted plantation-styled living room, avoiding monkey droppings all over the floor. Above him, a boa constrictor sleeps, coiled around the rafter beams.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

A mosquito-netted bed. Messy piles of Miranda's clothes. Framed photos on a wall. Fargo scans African images:

An 8-year-old Miranda posing with Elui tribesmen...teenage Miranda holding a cheetah cub...adult Miranda posing outside a plantation in the African bush.

Fargo senses someone in the room. He quickly turns to--

His reflection in a mirror. Above it, a Bronx Zoo poster: "YOU ARE LOOKING AT THE MOST DANGEROUS PREDATOR ON EARTH." He hears DISTANT MONKEY CHATTER and looks out a window:

The infirmary shack across the grounds.

INT. INFIRMARY - AFTERNOON

A tiny, makeshift vet hospital. The spider monkeys jump around in their cages. SUZY (19), a cute-looking teen volunteer, leans into a cage and squirts a feeding syringe into a monkey's mouth.

Fargo watches from the doorway. Suzy turns, startled...

SUZY

Oh! Hi. Are you new here?

FARGO

Yeah. How are they doin'?

SUZY

Real good. They just need protein.

She extends a piece of mealworm to the monkey, who snatches it and devours it ravenously.

FARGO

You mean they're not sick?

SUZY

Oh no, they're just hungry.

A SOUND behind Fargo. He spins around and zip-flicks open a butterfly knife with lightning speed, pointing it at--

BOBBY (18) in the doorway, a hyperstrung geek of a teenager. He freaks and bolts out.

BOBBY

Oh shit! Joey! Joey!

EXT. SANCTUARY GROUNDS - AFTERNOON

Fargo steps outside with Suzy, pocketing his street knife.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

FBI! The feds are here!

JOEY (18), a frizzy-haired, overly nervous nerd, dashes over.

JOEY

OMG!...whadda we gonna do?!

He points a breath-mint spray at Fargo.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Freeze -- or I'll mace ya!

BOBBY

Watch out, Joey, he's got a knife.

JOEY

Hello? Feds don't carry knives.

SUZY

Don't be so lame. He works here.

BOBBY

Since when? No way -- he's gotta be an undercover agent.

Miranda hurries over with Jesse and the Creoles, not too happy to see Fargo.

MIRANDA

What the hell are you doing here?

FARGO

I missed my monkeys. Got worried about their *health*.

MIRANDA

Jesse, go radio Wildlife Service. Tell D'Antoni we got a trespasser.

FARGO

Yeah, you do that, Jesse. Don't forget to mention the illegal monkeys she just bought from me.

MIRANDA

I don't want any trouble.

FARGO

I'm not lookin' for any.

(feigns a smile)

"Miranda", right? Look, I'm not a smuggler. I just got into a raw deal. I'm an innocent bystander.

BOBBY

Oh yeah, Mr. Bystander? Sneaking around here with a *knife*?

Miranda reacts to that. Fargo shrugs innocently.

FARGO

Hey, we're in a jungle here.

MIRANDA

I'll show you the way out.

EXT. FRONT GROUNDS - AFTERNOON

Miranda leads the way, the teens eying Fargo guardedly. She stops to see the dock empty, only her Sanctuary boat.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
Where's your boat? Where's your friend?

FARGO
Probably pissin' away your petty cash.

MIRANDA
We'll take you back to the coast.

FARGO
I'm in no hurry. How d'you feed all these animals?

MIRANDA
Contributions. Like the money you stole from us.

Fargo starts to say something. Jesse rushes over.

JESSE
The baboons got out! They're gone!

MIRANDA
Christ, not again. We better move before it gets dark.

The teens run to the docked boat. Miranda turns to Fargo.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
Your ride's gonna have to wait.

FARGO
I'll just stick around here.

MIRANDA
I don't think so.

EXT. SANCTUARY BOAT (MOVING) - LATE DAY

The boat motors along the island shoreline. Fargo leans casually over the stern. The teens watch him, Jesse at the tiller. Miranda talks on a radiophone.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
They'll head south 'til they run out of land. Catch ya later, Phil.

She switches off the mike and notices Fargo, idly running his hand through the swamp water.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
Better keep your hands inside.

She nods at a gator floating nearby. Fargo removes his hand.

FARGO
This is a big island. How are you gonna find those chimps?

MIRANDA
Baboons. We have to. They can get dangerous when they're on the loose. They don't like people.

FARGO
I know the feeling. Where did you get 'em?

MIRANDA
A Malaysian airport hangar. Abused and abandoned by traffickers. People like you.

FARGO
I said I'm not--

MIRANDA
Then what are you doing here?

FARGO
I'm just broke. Lookin' for work.

MIRANDA
We're volunteers here, for animals. But you don't like animals.

FARGO
I would if I had room and board.

Suzy gives him a flirting look. The geeks frown at him.

BOBBY
I think he's a spy for someone.

JOEY
Yeah, probably one of those global corps that foul up the Gulf.

SUZY
Nah, he's cool. For a homo sapien.

EXT. ISLAND SHORE - LATE DAY

The boat banks close to shore. Miranda jumps onto prop roots to reach land, the rest following.

EXT. CYPRESS FOREST - LATE DAY

They trailblaze through the thickets along a marsh clearing. Fargo listens to MONKEY CALLS, the same JARRING SHRILLS.

FARGO

Is that your baboons?

MIRANDA

Howler monkeys from Panama. We let them roam free. Hear that shrill sound? They're talking to us.

She moves on, keeping her eyes on the trees. Fargo follows her stare, veering off the track -- Jesse yanks him back. He points down at a *steel leghold trap*, hidden among seedlings. Miranda fumes over it.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Damned poachers.

Jesse presses a tree twig on the trap's pan. Its jaws SNAP closed, severing it in half. Miranda glances upward.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Hold on. I see them.

High in a tree, the *baboon tribe* perches lazily on branches.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

We'll never get 'em down from there.

Fargo turns to the trunk of the tree, looking for a foothold.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Don't even think about it, Fargo. They'll tear you apart.

Ignoring that, Fargo hoists himself up the trunk and climbs.

TREE BRANCH

He shimmies up and straddles a branch. The baboons' leader SNORTS ferociously at him. Fargo reconsiders. Suddenly--

MAN'S VOICE

Sumbitch!

Down below, a surly-looking POACHER leaps out of the brush toward Miranda's group, armed with a Winchester.

1ST POACHER
Whatchu people doin' here?

2ND POACHER
Hey, Willard! Lookit this...

Another POACHER tramps over, holding up the disarmed trap.

2ND POACHER (CONT'D)
Somebody fucked with it.

The other one glares at the group. Miranda confronts him.

MIRANDA
You're on private property, mister,
and that trap's illegal.

1ST POACHER
We're Rangers. Population control.

MIRANDA
Bullshit. You're trespassing.

The Poacher hovers menacingly over her. Miranda stiffens.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
We got more people coming.

1ST POACHER
Whaddya, a bunch of tree huggers?

On the branch above, Fargo stares down, hunched and tense.

Jesse steps forward. The Poacher prods his rifle at him.

JESSE
Hey. Let's just keep it civil.

The 2nd Poacher shoves the dangling trap into Jesse's face.

2ND POACHER
You tryin' to steal our game, boy?

The other Poacher CRACKS his rifle butt across Jesse's head -- he goes down. Miranda and the teens back off, scared.

FWUMP! Fargo lands hard on top of him, the two tumbling down into the marsh.

The 2nd Poacher spins around with his rifle--

Jesse yanks at his feet from the ground. The man falls, losing his rifle -- it flies against the tree and FIRES WILD.

Instant chaos from the treetop. The baboons leap across the branches, HOWLING and HOOTING. They scatter into the wilds.

The 2nd Poacher dashes off into the woods. Fargo overpowers the 1st Poacher. He shoves his face into swamp mud, whipping out his butterfly knife, zip-flipping it open...

MIRANDA

Fargo, don't!

Fargo stops to her voice. The gasping Poacher powers a fist into his face -- Fargo flies back. The Poacher jumps up and splashes away into the thickets. Fargo plows after him.

THROUGH MARSH

Running boots. The Poacher, a hunted animal flushed into flight. Fargo in pursuit, street knife in hand.

The Poacher looks back -- a blue-tufted dart ZINGS into the back of his neck. He yelps and yanks it out. Then teeters dizzily and falls on dry ground. Unconscious.

Fargo looks around and fixes on a face in the tall brush:

PHILIP D'ANTONI (30's), a ruggedly handsome, tough-spirited swamp man. He points a dart rifle at him.

D'ANTONI

Don't move.

They lock eyes. A DISTANT VOICE distracts them.

2ND POACHER (O.S.)

Hey, Jake! Where are ya?!

Fargo and D'Antoni trade looks, their voices low.

FARGO

I'm with the Sanctuary.

D'ANTONI

Hell you say.

Not arguing the point, Fargo disappears into the thickets.

WITH 2ND POACHER

Rushing through the swamp. Fargo blocks his path, wielding his blade. The Poacher backs up against a wall of brush...

A ketchall noose encircles his throat. D'Antoni jabs a dart into his neck and squeezes the syringe. The Poacher shrieks, then slumps unconscious. Fargo stares at D'Antoni.

FARGO

You a cop?

D'ANTONI

Wildlife Service. You don't look like Sanctuary to me.

FARGO

What's in the dart?

D'ANTONI

Cyclidine, an animal tranquilizer. Good for hick-skulled crackers too.

He turns the Poacher over and roughly handcuffs him.

EXT. MARSH BANK - EVENING

A cargo airboat is docked in the twilight. Fargo watches D'Antoni cram the drugged Poachers into a wire animal cage.

D'ANTONI (CONT'D)

Tomorrow they'll just pay a fine and go free. This is my justice.

Fargo notices a stockpile of weapons piled in the airboat stern: shotguns, grenades, bear traps, a flame thrower.

FARGO

Some arsenal you got there.

D'ANTONI

Not mine. Poachers'. Get in, I'll give you a lift.

EXT. CYPRESS CLEARING - DUSK

Miranda nurses Jesse's head, the teens huddled with her. Everyone turns to a SPUTTER...the airboat's headlight floods over them. D'Antoni docks and hops out with Fargo.

MIRANDA

Fargo! Are you okay?

D'ANTONI

Hey, remember me? Am I okay?

MIRANDA

You always are, Phil. Thanks.

She hugs D'Antoni, a quick kiss. He kisses her back more aggressively. Miranda shies off and turns to Fargo.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
This is Philip D'Antoni. I don't
know what we'd do without him.

D'ANTONI
You'd be an endangered species.

Miranda reacts to the Poachers contorted inside the cages.

MIRANDA
Jesus, Phil.

D'ANTONI
Aw, don't be such a bleeding heart.

MIRANDA
It's just as cruel as what they do.

D'ANTONI
Yeah? Worse than a trapped animal
chewing off its own foot?

MIRANDA
They're still human beings.

D'ANTONI
This way they'll remember me.
(to Fargo)
These are amateurs. The pros come
in at night. I've dealt with the
worst scum on earth. And they're
all right here in my swamp.

EXT. SANCTUARY DOCK - NIGHT

The boat docks, the airboat beside it. Jesse and the teens tie up lines, Miranda and D'Antoni with flashlights. They turn their beams on Fargo: dead asleep on the stern deck.

MIRANDA
Might as well let him sleep.

D'ANTONI
Who *is* this guy?

MIRANDA
He sold us some monkeys.

D'ANTONI
"Sold" you some monkeys?

MIRANDA
Can you take him back tomorrow?

D'ANTONI
Sooner the better.

They all head off. A long beat...

Fargo sleeps, his face twitching. PRISON NOISE in his head, MEN'S VOICES ECHOING OFF WALLS, A WAKE-UP KLAXON...

INT. PRISON CELL (FLASHBACK) - MORNING

The earlier scene, Fargo waking up on his cell cot. He sees the smoke -- his mattress on fire from a tossed lit flare. He tries to snuff it out with a blanket, but the flames spread out of control.

Rushing to the cell bars, he pounds on them from inside, hollering for help, the fire rising behind him.

Across the corridor, the tattooed Bald Convict cackles at him from his cell. IN B.G., AN AFRICAN DRUMBEAT...

Smoke billows behind Fargo, as he screams and screams...

EXT. SANCTUARY BOAT (PRESENT) - NIGHT

Fargo jerks awake, disoriented, flickering firelight on his face. DISTANT DRUM MUSIC. He stares around the deserted dock, then focuses on:

A blazing campfire on the shore. Sanctuary people party to SHAKA ZULU MUSIC on a boom box, teens BEATING on drums.

Fargo climbs out of the boat. He creeps down the dock, away from the campfire people, heading upshore to...

EXT. MISHA'S CAGE - NIGHT

Fargo notices the door padlock...a key still in it. He looks inside at the pacing white Bengal. Misha GROWLS LOW at him. Fargo edges to the wire-mesh door and stands very still.

FARGO
What's the matter, pussy? You
don't like me?

The tiger crouches back. Fargo very slowly reaches for the padlock key...

FARGO (CONT'D)
Easy, boy, easy...

Misha suddenly springs forward -- Fargo scoots out of range. The cat thrashes the fence with a LOUD SNARL.

EXT. SANCTUARY SHORE - NIGHT

Miranda reacts, alerted. D'Antoni and the volunteers turn.

EXT. MISHA'S CAGE - NIGHT

Misha HISSES and SNARLS non-stop. Fargo looks around, disconcerted. Miranda and the others hasten over.

MIRANDA

Misha! Misha...mikanga tiki.

Misha settles to her voice. D'Antoni gets in Fargo's face.

D'ANTONI

What the fuck are you doing here?

FARGO

Nothin'. Just talking to him.

MIRANDA

It's okay, Misha. Cunda.

FARGO

I was just curious, that's all. I felt sorry for him being in a cage. Been there myself.

D'ANTONI

An ex-con. I should've known.

Hard looks between them. Miranda moves closer to the wire. The cub bares his fangs, ready to strike.

MIRANDA

Cunda, Misha...it's Momma. Cunda.

She gazes into the cat's eyes, HUMMING A SOFT, LOW MELODY. For a beat, her voice soothes Misha. She draws closer...

The tiger suddenly attacks the wire. Miranda jerks back.

D'ANTONI

He's gone wild again.

FARGO

What's all that humming about?

MIRANDA

Animal-speak.

FARGO

You talk to animals?

MIRANDA

Easier than talking to some people.
Just stay away from him, okay?

BOBBY

Randi rescued him from Animal
Control, they were gonna put him
down. Some jerk kept him as a pet.

JOEY

Yeah, 'til he forgot to feed him.
Misha ate his arm off.

FARGO

"Cunda"...what's that mean?

MIRANDA

It's Swahili. "Don't be afraid."

D'ANTONI

Let's go, we're just spookin' him.

MIRANDA

Y'all go on ahead. I need some
more time with him.

The others return to the campfire. D'Antoni stops to eye
Fargo, who lingers behind to watch Miranda. WHISPERING
SWAHILI to the tiger, she unlocks the padlock.

Fargo watches her pocket the key in her shorts.

She opens the cage door, inches inside and squats passively.
Catching her scent, Misha crawls over like a playful kitten.
Completely tame again.

Fargo stares, transfixed by them. D'Antoni nudges him away.

EXT. SANCTUARY SHORE - LATER

Campfire flames lick the darkness. Suzy and Joey dance to
the AFRICAN MUSIC. Creoles BEAT drum barrels. D'Antoni and
Bobby sit on fireside logs over beer and soda.

Fargo loiters around, feeling like a stranger, out of place.
Jesse steps over and hands him a brew.

JESSE

There's a hammock on the porch.
You can sleep there.

FARGO
How can you stand living out here?

JESSE
Most of us are better off here.

He gestures toward Bobby and Joey.

JESSE (CONT'D)
Those two are wanted by the FBI,
for setting fire to an animal lab.
They can't go back.

FARGO
What about you?

JESSE
My tribe's gone. We've all been...
enculturated. I got nowhere else.
This place is our refuge, too.

Fargo nods, understanding. He regards Bobby puzzledly.

FARGO
So you guys burned down a lab?

BOBBY
For the Animal Liberation Front,
anarchy commandos. We used jellied
gasoline. Arson is a form of art.

FARGO
You guys ever get busted, you won't
last a day in prison.

BOBBY
We're straight now, thanks to
Miranda.

Fargo glances at the cat cage, Miranda still with her tiger.
He senses D'Antoni's eyes on him like a bad itch.

D'ANTONI
Where'd you get those monkeys?

FARGO
I dunno. It wasn't my deal.

D'ANTONI
Ever met a guy named Robles?

FARGO
Not that I recall.

D'ANTONI

The FBI's got their ten most wanted list. In the Wildlife Service, we just got one: Orlando Robles.

FARGO

Uh-huh. Never heard of him.

D'ANTONI

Why are you hangin' around here?

FARGO

Long story. I don't normally hang out with cops.

D'ANTONI

You got a problem with cops?

FARGO

Yeah. The first one I ever met handcuffed me to a hot radiator and kicked my ribs in. I was ten.

D'ANTONI

Where was that? Juvie hall? I'll bet you got a long rap sheet.

Fargo ignores that and heads off toward the house.

D'ANTONI (CONT'D)

Yeah, you got that smell on you.
The smell of a felon.

Fargo stops and turns to face him, a slow burn.

FARGO

Everybody's had a crack at me.
Cops, truant officers, my ol' man.
Maybe you'd like to take a shot.

D'ANTONI

(smiles at that)

Get some sleep. You'll be gone in the morning.

EXT. SANCTUARY HOUSE PORCH - LATE NIGHT

A moonlit night, the swamp alive with CICADAS. Fargo sleeps fitfully in a porch hammock, haunted by a PRISON DIN.

A HUMAN SCREAM pierces the night -- jolts Fargo out of the hammock. He instinctively flips out his street knife. Sneaks around a house corner, drawn to...

SIDE OF HOUSE

Across the yard, two peacocks dance a mating ritual with splayed plumage, taking turns with HUMANLIKE SCREAMS.

Fargo pockets his knife. He peers into an open window:

MIRANDA'S BEDROOM

Miranda and D'Antoni, sleeping and sprawled on her bed under the mosquito-net canopy. From the window, Fargo notices Miranda's shorts atop her clothes. Only two feet away.

EXT. MISHA'S CAGE - LATER

The tiger sleeps. Fargo mulls over...*Miranda's* key in his hand, pondering the padlock on the wire door. Confused by conflicting emotions, he slumps to the ground by the fence, staring at the precious Bengal.

FARGO

Cunda, Misha. Cunda.

The cub raises his head, eyes glowing in the dark. He sniffs Fargo's scent, getting used to it. Curls back to sleep.

Fargo gazes up into the moonlight, his mind quarreling with himself. He listens to the hypnotic SOUNDS of the swamp.

EXT. SANCTUARY ISLAND - DAWN

Tranquil. The CHATTER of coons and spoonbills mingle with the EXOTIC SCREECHES of howler monkeys. Wake-up calls.

EXT. HOUSE CLEARING - DAWN

Fargo shuffles haggardly downshore. He perches on a rock to take in the dawn-flecked wilds. Herons flock overhead. He senses a presence behind him and tenses. Miranda appears in her shorts, carrying a birdseed sack.

MIRANDA

Morning.

The rock beneath Fargo moves -- a giant tortoise. He jumps off, as his seat crawls away. Miranda chuckles at him. She pushes the birdseed sack into his arms.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Here. Work for your breakfast.

She digs into her shorts, finding Misha's padlock key where it belongs, then pulls out a bird-cage key.

AVIARY

Miranda opens the gate to a tall cage filled with exotic birds. She gestures Fargo inside. He hesitates.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
C'mon. They don't bite.

Fargo steps in with her. Miranda CLANKS the gate shut -- birds take sudden flight around them, a blizzard of colors. Whirling red, green, blue. Fargo gapes about, awestruck. The birds settle back into their places.

Miranda takes a handful of seeds from the sack and scatters it around.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
I hate keeping them in cages.

FARGO
Yeah. It's tough when you have to sleep where you shit.

Miranda slips on a protective glove and gingerly collects a wing-injured bird from its perch.

MIRANDA
Got a broken wing here. C'mon, I need a nurse.

INT. INFIRMARY - LATER

Miranda hovers over the drugged bird, its fractured wing tied in place. She disinfects the break. Fargo watches.

FARGO
Are you a real vet?

MIRANDA
Nope. I mean, who's gonna sue me?

She fetches a bird quill and inserts it into the marrow cavity of its wing bone. Fargo studies her.

FARGO
So, you lived in Africa?

MIRANDA
After my mom died. My dad was in the diplomatic corps in Kenya.

FARGO
Sounds pretty cool.

MIRANDA

Not exactly. At least not with Jack.

FARGO

Jack? Is that your dad's name?

MIRANDA

I never called him Dad. He wanted a boy, not a girl. Tried to make me his surrogate son. I had to run away from it all. Ended up in a zoo, shoveling shit. Phil brought me here and helped me start this place with one monkey and a parrot.

FARGO

So uh, you and Phil are pretty tight?

Miranda gives him a look and finishes her surgery. Fargo watches her work, edging closer, distracting her.

MIRANDA

What? More questions?

Fargo shakes his head. Miranda stitches up the wound.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

You got a first name, Fargo?

FARGO

You don't need to know.

MIRANDA

What were you in prison for?

FARGO

Burglary. Aggravated assault.

MIRANDA

You assaulted someone?

FARGO

I was aggravated. Any more questions?

MIRANDA

Hand me that bottle.

He hands her an alcohol bottle. She soaks a cotton ball and cleans the wing. Watching her, Fargo deliberates.

FARGO

There was this psycho in prison, he really had it out for me. Fucked me up bad. I wanted to waste him but...I could never get up the nerve to do it. He bribed a guard to put me in the Hole. I didn't see daylight for six months.

(shakes his head)

I don't know why I'm tellin' you this. I'm no killer, that's all. I just wanna be left alone.

Miranda ponders him. She moves the drugged bird to an empty cage, extending it to Fargo. Taken off guard, Fargo holds the bird while she opens the cage. He lays it gently inside.

MIRANDA

You got a home somewhere, Fargo?

FARGO

I don't even have a place to sleep.

MIRANDA

Look. I'd take you on here, but...

FARGO

I'm not big on the outdoors anyway.

MIRANDA

Don't be too sure about that. The Bayou changes people.

EXT. SANCTUARY DOCK - MORNING

Fargo waits on the dock. D'Antoni loads supplies onto the airboat. Fargo glances back toward Misha's cage. His POV:

IN SLOW MOTION, the jungle queen and her white cub taunt and tackle each other, rolling together on the ground like children at play. A natural love between them.

Fargo watches them. An indelible image in his eyes.

EXT. SANCTUARY SWAMP - MORNING

The airboat motors through a lush, surreal cypress marsh.

EXT. AIRBOAT (MOVING) - MORNING

D'Antoni steers, watching Fargo gaze pensively out at the preternatural swampscape. Their eyes meet. Hard looks.

FARGO

You got some beef with me?

D'ANTONI

Not yet. We got a lot in common,
you and me. Both loners, don't
trust nobody. Except for Miranda,
I don't care much for people.

Fargo says nothing, eying him keenly.

D'ANTONI (CONT'D)

Take my advice. Stay out of these
parts. Especially the Sanctuary.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FISHING TOWN - RECREATION CENTER - DAY

On a bandstand stage, a water hose splashes a row of buxom
girls in clinging tops. An M.C. AD-LIBS a wet T-shirt
contest to a rowdy, cheering crowd.

Fargo cruises through the mob, watching a body-double contest
onstage. Couples pose together, showing off their hard
bodies. The M.C. beckons volunteers from the audience.

Reggie jumps onstage, flabby and funky. He poses with a
thong-bikini'd beauty, undulating his beer belly.

Fargo smirks at Reggie's antics. Nearby, the Waitress from
the oyster bar gives him a flirting look. A new T-shirt on
her, "DIVERS DO IT DEEPER." Fargo sidles over.

FARGO

Hot today. Wanna get wet?

WAITRESS

No way. I'm not *that* hot.

FARGO

Couldn't tell by me.

Smiles between them. Fargo's smile fades as he looks off:

Reggie has spotted him, heading over from the stage. Fargo
eases away, stuck in the mob. Reggie catches up to him.

REGGIE

Hey, bro! Where ya been?

FARGO

Hey, Reg.

REGGIE
What did ya find out?

FARGO
About what?

REGGIE
About our *monkeys*. Those Sanctuary people, did they rip us off?

FARGO
It's those mestizos who ripped us off, dude. Ripped you off.

REGGIE
So we'll recoup our losses. Robles wants to do business.

FARGO
Who?

REGGIE
Robles -- the Big Honcho himself.

Fargo moves on, disgusted. Reggie sticks to him like glue.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
He distributes animals from that island warehouse -- to pet dealers, labs, zoos, at a thousand percent profit. Twenty billion a year. I'm tellin' ya, it's a Disney World of opportunity. We can't lose.

FARGO
You got fucked once, Reg, you gonna bend over again? Count me out.

REGGIE
Not even for a hunnerd big ones?

Fargo stops, letting that sink in.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
Juarez is here. He wants to talk.

FARGO
Good, go talk. Go suck ass.

REGGIE
C'mon bro, just trust me on this.

FARGO

Trust you? You stole my money.

REGGIE

And you're gonna get it all back,
plus more. This is for real, man.
C'mon. Five minutes.

EXT. CABANA BAR PATIO - DAY

Fargo follows Reggie to Juarez at an outdoor table, sucking on a Havana, fanning himself with a pamphlet. He gives Fargo a sour look. Reggie sits. Fargo remains standing.

JUAREZ

I hate this stinkin' Bayou. I like
zoos, though. You like zoos? I
like them big cats.

FARGO

You don't like *monkeys* much, do ya?

JUAREZ

Nah, nah, I don't like monkeys. I
like big cats.

He lays open the pamphlet on the table: a zoo brochure, full of color photos of exotic felines.

JUAREZ (CONT'D)

Robles likes *this* one very much.

His grimy finger points to a shot of a Bengal white tiger.

JUAREZ (CONT'D)

You ever seen one o' these?

Fargo looks away, ambivalent, then his face turns to stone.

FARGO

No.

REGGIE

On the Sanctuary island, Fargo --
that white tiger.

FARGO

Didn't see nothin' like that.

Reggie stares, utterly baffled. Juarez studies Fargo.

JUAREZ

Where *is* this Sanctuary?

FARGO
I dunno. It's a big swamp.

REGGIE
I know where it is. That Bengal is there too, I saw it.
(to Fargo)
C'mon bro, tell him. That cat's worth a fuckin' fortune.

FARGO
All I saw was some sick monkeys.

He leans over the table toward Juarez.

FARGO (CONT'D)
Your monkeys, that ain't worth shit. Except for our three grand sittin' in your greasy pocket.

JUAREZ
Okay. You don't wanna do business? I understand...

He rises up close to Fargo. Blows smoke in his face.

JUAREZ (CONT'D)
Get the fuck outta my sight.

Fargo snatches the cigar from his mouth -- flicks it at him.

FARGO
With pleasure.

The cigar bounces off Juarez's shirt, scattering sparks. He wipes off the burning ash with SPANISH CURSES. Fargo turns and marches out. Reggie hurries after him.

EXT. BAR ENTRANCE - DAY

Fargo heads down a walled path, Reggie on his heels.

REGGIE
Jeezus, man, whaddya doin'? Why'd you go belly up on me?

FARGO
Go find some other sucker.

REGGIE
I don't get you. They'll pay top dollar for that tiger. All we gotta do is go get it.

Fargo turns -- shoves him hard against the patio wall.

FARGO

You go peddle some more monkeys,
go sell that fuckin' boat -- but
you forget about that cat.

REGGIE

What kinda shit are you on? Hey,
you're crushin' me...

Fargo lets go, a powderkeg. Reggie stares queerly at him.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

What's with you, man? You would've
never passed up a score like this.

FARGO

Just stay outta my life, okay?

REGGIE

Yeah, whatever. I don't know where
you're comin' from anymore. Don't
you even care about the money?

Fargo walks away. Reggie frowns after him, then turns toward
a break in the patio wall. Just beyond, Juarez watches.

EXT. RECREATION CENTER - DAY

Fargo filters back into the crowd, smoldering. He spots the
Waitress, milling around. Zeros in on her.

FARGO

Hi.

She nods hello. He reads her T-shirt, with a smile.

FARGO (CONT'D)

So how do divers do it?

The girl smiles back.

EXT. FISHING TOWN DOCK - NIGHT

A houseboat, a small Donzi cruiser docked beside it. FEMALE
MOANS from its interior. PASSIONATE OUTCRIES MIXED WITH
PROTESTS OF PAIN, in the throes of violent sex.

INT. HOUSEBOAT CABIN - MORNING

Dressed for work, the Waitress touches up in a galley mirror.
Fargo lies on a berth, deep in his own thoughts.

WAITRESS

You oughta come into town more often.

She collects her purse. Fargo finally notices her.

FARGO

Listen, uh...

WAITRESS

Darlene.

FARGO

Thanks for, y'know...it was good.

WAITRESS

Honey, you been in stir too long. I'll be at work if you wanna see me again. Don't steal nothin'.

Fargo lies there, barely registering her exit. His eyes scan the cabin, stopping on:

Boat keys on a table. A refrigerator in b.g.

EXT. DONZI CRUISER - DAY

Fargo plunks down three plastic-wrapped slabs of steak on the Donzi's deck. He FIRES UP the engine, shifts gears. The boat bumps forward against the dock. He reshifts. It backs awkwardly out, Fargo navigating like a student driver.

EXT. DOCK'S END - DAY

THROUGH BINOCULARS: Reggie's docked ketch. No one on board.

Fargo lowers the binoculars from the Donzi idling at the far end of the boat slips. He looks again through the glasses:

Reggie and Juarez appear on the ketch, casting off lines.

EXT. SANCTUARY SWAMP - DAY

An AERIAL VIEW, two specks crawling through the wetlands, a mile apart: Reggie's ketch and Fargo's stolen Donzi.

EXT. DONZI (MOVING) - DAY

Fargo steers, camouflaged behind a curving swamp shore.

Farther ahead, Reggie's ketch. Beyond, the Sanctuary island comes into view. Fargo peers around the next bend:

Reggie's boat slows some distance before the island, as if observing it. Then it speeds off into the swamp.

EXT. SANCTUARY DOCK - DAY

Fargo's Donzi drifts quietly toward the dock. The Sanctuary boat is gone, the place empty of people.

EXT. SANCTUARY HOUSE - DAY

Fargo emerges from the house. He peers around toward the grassy expanse:

The far border fence, Jesse and the Creoles working on the wire. Chimps cavort around them.

EXT. CAGE AREA - LATER

Deserted. Fargo hefts an empty transport cage onto a loading dolly, working fast. He finds and picks up a crowbar.

MISHA'S CAGE

The white tiger lies dormant in the shade. He perks up to a CRACK of a breaking padlock. The wire door creaks open, the crowbar in Fargo's hand. He calls out in a soothing voice:

FARGO (O.S.)
Cunda, Misha. Come and get it.

Misha picks up a scent. He bolts toward a slab of steak inside the opened transport cage blocking the doorway. Streaks right into it and attacks the meat.

Fargo's hands slam down the transport cage slot -- latches it tight. He heaves the cage onto the dolly, pacifying the cat.

FARGO (CONT'D)
Cunda. Easy, boy. Cunda.

EXT. SHORE GROUNDS - DAY

Fargo rolls the dolly fast toward the dock. He HUMS a Doors tune to the skittish tiger, "*Riders On The Storm.*"

EXT. DOCKED DONZI - DAY

The transport cage plunks down on the stern. Fargo motors up, shifts and roars off. The caged prize close by.

EXT. SANCTUARY SWAMP - DAY

AERIAL OVER: the Donzi is a speck in a maze of waterways.

EXT. DONZI (MOVING) - DAY

Fargo tacks around islands, bewildered by the endless twists and turns. He checks the cage:

Misha pants in the heat, dehydrated. Fargo idles the boat, finds a pot in the galley and grabs a water jug.

FARGO (CONT'D)

Sorry, guy. I'm kinda new at this.

He fills the pot with water and unwraps another steak. Then cracks open the cage slot, tosses in the meat.

FARGO (CONT'D)

There ya go, snack time. Have another bloodsuckle.

Misha consumes it, while Fargo slides in the water pot. He mans the helm and motors on, singing his own animal speak...

FARGO (CONT'D)

"Riders on the storm...into this world we're thrown...killers on the roam..."

He scans the horizon, no familiar landmarks, getting lost.

A tiny swamp island distracts him off the starboard: a tree house perched on high ground. Prop roots line the shore.

Fargo squints forward at it -- his port side BANGS against a stump. He turns the wheel away, too close to the shore...

The Donzi SCRAPES OVER something and yaws to starboard. Fargo spins the wheel back, too late. The boat runs aground, level against the roots. He shuts down and peers over the side: swamp roots choke the propeller. He's stuck.

FARGO (CONT'D)

Sonuvabitch!

He trades looks with Misha, the tiger cub stressed out inside the cage. Fargo listens forlornly to the eerie silence... then hears a DISTANT SPUTTER OF AN AIRBOAT.

EXT. TREE-HOUSE ISLAND - DAY

Fargo hauls the cage toward a big cypress under the tree house. Misha slides around inside, spilling the water pot. Fargo drags him to a hidden, shady nook behind the tree.

The AIRBOAT SPUTTER RISES, DRAWING CLOSER.

Fargo notices the empty water pot in the cage.

FARGO (CONT'D)
Shit...shit...

He dashes to the boat, grabs the water jug and the last steak. Races back on land, ripping off the meat wrapper. Opens the slot, throws in the slab and dumps water into the pot, listening to the SPUTTER. APPROACHING FAST.

FARGO (CONT'D)
Stay put, Misha...no cat noises.

The tiger obliviously devours the steak. Fargo races back to the Donzi and leaps in, just as...

D'Antoni's airboat barrels around the shore's bend. D'Antoni slows beside the grounded cruiser. Fargo glances back:

The steak wrapper lies in plain view on the ground.

D'ANTONI
Christ. You again. You just can't stay in your own turf, can ya?

Fargo says nothing, looking properly helpless.

D'ANTONI (CONT'D)
I should leave you here to rot, but I don't want you around my house.

Fargo notes the tree house with surprise. D'Antoni eyes him suspiciously, not noticing the wrapper. Fargo talks fast.

FARGO
We gotta go to the Sanctuary. Your friends could be in trouble.

D'ANTONI
What kinda trouble?

FARGO
Smuggler trouble. That guy Robles you told me about? He's here.

D'Antoni's face tightens.

FARGO (CONT'D)
I was tracking 'em. I got stuck.

D'ANTONI
This your boat?

FARGO

Look, they know about that place.
It could be a real fuckin' problem.

D'ANTONI

Seems to me you're the problem.

FARGO

Hey, I'm just tryin' to help.

D'ANTONI

Don't bullshit me, Fargo. What's
your angle in all this?

Fargo looks away, torn between his lies and the truth.

FARGO

I don't have one. Maybe I care.

D'ANTONI

About what?

FARGO

Miranda.

D'Antoni regards him dubiously, then:

D'ANTONI

Get in.

EXT. SANCTUARY ISLAND - DAY

Miranda and her teen volunteers walk upshore, the Sanctuary
boat docked. Jesse and the Creoles greet them.

JESSE

No baboons, huh?

MIRANDA

We'll search the west side mañana.
Let's get something to eat.

Everyone heads for the house. Miranda lingers behind, eying:

The chimps scrambling about with frantic HOOTS, spooked by
something. She frowns at them. Then turns toward the...

CAGE AREA

The spider monkeys, now in the baboon cage, dashing helter
skelter in panic. Miranda hastens over, then sees:

Misha's empty cage. A broken padlock. The wire door ajar.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Misha?!

She spins around, scanning the area.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

MISHA!

EXT. REAR OF HOUSE - DAY

Miranda dashes over the grassland, searching, calling out, "Misha! Misha!" Dead silence.

The aviary explodes with frightened, scattering birds. She turns and looks through the blizzard of red and green:

A scowling face on the other side. Juarez.

EXT. AIRBOAT - DAY

Fargo stakes out the Sanctuary island from an opposite shore. D'Antoni focuses binoculars on the dock:

Reggie's ketch is moored in, armed mestizos carrying empty crates down to the dock.

D'ANTONI

They friends of yours?

FARGO

No. Let's lure 'em out. You got enough here to take down an army.

He nods to the arsenal in the airboat. D'Antoni shakes his head and grabs a pair of oars, tossing one to Fargo.

D'ANTONI

Start rowing.

INT. SANCTUARY HOUSE - DAY

Hostages sit around the living room. Jesse, Bobby, Joey, Suzy, the Creole teens, everyone scared. They're surrounded by mestizos cradling machine pistols.

Miranda is dragged in by Juarez, struggling vehemently.

MIRANDA

Get offa me...asshole!

Juarez shoves her to the others. He notices a shortwave radio by the kitchen and goes to it -- rips out wires from its open casing.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
Hey, what're you doing?!

A match flares. Orlando Robles, the white-suited Colombian, lights a cigar by the front door.

Reggie clamors in, reacting to the boa constrictor above. Robles turns to him.

ROBLES
Where is the *tigre*?

REGGIE
It's not in the cage. It's gotta be around here someplace.

JUAREZ
What about the monkeys?

ROBLES
Take them all.

He scrapes monkey droppings from his alligator boots. Turns to Miranda, an air of civility.

ROBLES (CONT'D)
Señora. We don't want your monkeys. Just the white Bengal.

MIRANDA
I don't have any white Bengal.

ROBLES
Señora, we are just businessmen. You give us the *tigre*, you keep the monkeys, we go on our way.

Miranda glares back, defiant. Robles sighs.

ROBLES (CONT'D)
It is just an *animale*--

MIRANDA
Go fuck yourself.

JUAREZ
Where is the cat, puta?!

MIRANDA
We don't keep cats -- this is a *monkey* sanctuary.

Robles and Juarez turn questioning eyes on Reggie.

REGGIE

She's lyin'. I swear -- it's here.

ROBLES

Let's hope so for your sake.

REGGIE

Someone must've tipped her off. I
tell ya, she's hiding it somewhere.

Juarez whips out a 9mm Luger and plants it against Miranda's temple. Robles shoves the gun aside.

ROBLES

Basta! Que estúpido.

Juarez glowers at him. Robles power-glares back.

ROBLES (CONT'D)

Search the island.

EXT. DOWNSHORE - DAY

A strong breeze. Deep in swamp water, D'Antoni and Fargo pull the airboat into a hidden recess. D'Antoni grabs animal traps and a shotgun. They climb onto dry land.

FARGO

I need a weapon, too.

D'ANTONI

Stay away from my boat.

FARGO

You still don't trust me?

D'ANTONI

You really wanna help? Go disable
that cargo boat of theirs.

(indicates traps)

Stay off any trails. And don't
fuck with me or I'll hunt you down.

He disappears into the thickets.

EXT. SANCTUARY GROUNDS - DAY

Winds blow. Mestizos swarm the grounds, chasing chimpanzees with nets. Juarez SHOUTS SPANISH ORDERS, as his men round up netted chimps into the crates. Robles inspects the crates. Pummeled by wind, he gazes out:

Dark thunderheads over the swamp, approaching fast.

INT. SANCTUARY HOUSE - DAY

Miranda squirms on the couch, Jesse, Bobby and Joey flanking her. Across the room, a young, armed GUARD eye-flirts with Suzy. Jesse leans into Miranda, keeping his voice low.

JESSE

What the hell happened to Misha?

MIRANDA

I don't know. He got out somehow.
We've gotta do something.

BOBBY

I could fix that radio.

MIRANDA

Too risky. Unless we had some kind
of distraction.

JOEY

Yeah. Eco-defensive action.

BOBBY

Lighter fluid.

JOEY

Radical.

Bobby suddenly starts to shake convulsively, as if vilely ill. He jumps up and lurches for the bathroom. The Guard follows suspiciously, Joey in his path.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Excuse me -- my friend, he's very
sick. He's a diabetic.

Not understanding English, the Guard looks in on Bobby: he's on his knees over the toilet, making retching noises.

JOEY (CONT'D)

He's gotta have his insulin shot.

Suzy TRANSLATES IN RUSTY SPANISH. The mestizo shrugs.

JOEY (CONT'D)

I'll just get his medicine, si?

INT. KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Joey hurries in and digs into a medical drawer. He pulls out a veterinary syringe with a four-inch needle...then sneaks a can of lighter fluid into his pocket. Rushes back out.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Miranda and Jesse watch nervously from the couch. The Guard gawks at Joey's huge syringe as he heads for the bathroom.

JOEY (CONT'D)
Gracias, Señor, gracias, we'll just
be a minute...

The Guard peers curiously in, as Bobby pretends to puke over the toilet. Joey closes the door on the Guard's face.

EXT. SANCTUARY DOCK - DAY

Juarez and Robles lead men to the cage area. Storm winds gust about, the dock deserted.

DOCK WATER

Fargo surfaces, sucking in air. He steals onto the ketch.

KETCH

He creeps into the engine bay and finds a fuel line. Flicks open his butterfly knife and cuts it -- gasoline gushes out. He steps clear, as it floods across the deck.

A DISTANT SPANISH JABBER distracts him. He ducks back into the bay and peers out:

Juarez marches down the dock with two armed mestizos. They stop before the Sanctuary boat.

Fargo glances toward the ketch's fuel line: spewing like an open vein, gas streaming into the scuppers.

Only a few feet away, Juarez BARKS AN ORDER. The mestizos let loose their machine pistols on the Sanctuary boat's waterline -- BULLETS PEPPER the hull.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The prisoners turn to hear the GUNFIRE. Miranda jumps up.

MIRANDA
Oh Christ -- now what?!

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Arsonists at work. Bobby holds a bathroom lightbulb. Joey injects lighter fluid into the socket end with the vet syringe. Bobby reacts to the DISTANT GUNFIRE.

JOEY
Keep it steady!

EXT. SANCTUARY DOCK - DAY

The Sanctuary boat stern sags, sinking. Juarez and his men strut away.

Fargo's shadowy figure watches from the ketch.

INT. SANCTUARY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Guard BANGS on the bathroom door, SHOUTING SPANISH.

INT. BATHROOM - SAME TIME

Joey screws the loaded lightbulb back into a string-operated light fixture over the sink. Waiting by the door, Bobby finally opens it. He rubs his arm with feigned relief.

BOBBY
Thanks, I feel much better now.

He goes out. The Guard stares at Joey, as he trashes the giant syringe and leaves.

EXT. SANCTUARY DOCK - WATER LEVEL - DAY

Diesel fuel trickles out the ketch's scuppers, leaking steadily into the water. Fargo wades away into the cover of prop roots.

EXT. REAR GROUNDS - DAY

Reggie scans the fence area with two mestizos carrying Ketchall nooses. They open a gate and search the forest. Reggie eyes a dense clump of trees ahead.

REGGIE
Go look over there.

The two men move off. Reggie scans the woods, jittery, listening to RUSTLING trees. A beat...

A hand clamps on his shoulder. Reggie jumps. Turns to--

REGGIE (CONT'D)
Fargo! Sweet Jeezus -- whaddya doin' here?

FARGO
Changed my mind. I ain't shakin' you loose 'til I get my money back.

Reggie stares at his swamp-soaked state.

REGGIE

Man alive. You look like somethin'
outta the Black Lagoon.

FARGO

We're still partners, right?

REGGIE

I dunno, man.

FARGO

You got the tiger?

REGGIE

Shit no! It's gone. They're gonna
kill me if I don't find it.

FARGO

Must've gotten loose. He could be
anywhere. Could be stalkin' us
right now.

Reggie glances around, getting the willies. Fargo throws an
arm around him and leads him back to the fence.

FARGO (CONT'D)

Relax, let's go see Mr. Big Honcho.

EXT. ISLAND WILDS - DAY

Beyond the Sanctuary, a trail snakes deep through foliage.
D'Antoni sets a wire-noose snare on the trail, leghold jaws
piled up beside him. Man traps.

EXT. CAGE AREA - DAY

Chaos in the baboon cage. High on the wire walls, the spider
monkeys dart out of reach of frustrated mestizos.

Juarez jabs an electric prod at a suspended monkey. Jolted
by the shock, the critter falls into a man's net.

Outside, Robles watches. Reggie approaches him with Fargo.

REGGIE

This is Fargo, my partner. He's
gonna help us find that Bengal.

Robles regards Fargo indifferently. Juarez steps out with a
murderous scowl, his eyes burning holes through him.

JUAREZ
This gringo is trouble.

REGGIE
I'll vouch for him.

Juarez spits on Fargo's ground and goes back inside the cage to harass the monkeys. Unfazed, Fargo faces Robles.

FARGO
If that cat's here, I'll find it.
But I get a full share.

ROBLES
Work it out with your partner.

FARGO
Full share or nothin'.

ROBLES
Such confidence. You must have
this tigre tucked in your pocket.

DISTANT THUNDER distracts them, a tropical squall picking up.

ROBLES (CONT'D)
Too late for a search now. We'll
have to wait out this storm.

He turns toward the house. Reggie and Fargo follow. Juarez steps out from the cage, blocking their way.

JUAREZ
Where is Pepe and Marcos?

REGGIE
Still searchin'. I sent 'em to the
other side of that fence there.

INT. SANCTUARY HOUSE - DAY

Robles enters the windy doorway. He addresses Miranda.

ROBLES
It seems we will be your guests for
a while longer. You have anything
to drink?

Miranda sees Fargo walk in, Reggie behind him. Shocked.

MIRANDA
We don't keep liquor here.

ROBLES

Could you make some coffee, then?

MIRANDA

Make it yourself.

FARGO

I'll do it.

He turns for the kitchen, all the prisoners' eyes on him, Miranda's eyes like knives. Bobby smirks at him.

BOBBY

Thought you didn't like poachers,
Mr. Innocent Bystander.

Robles reacts. Fargo darts an eye signal toward Miranda and disappears into the kitchen. Bobby eyes their captors.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Anybody need to use the bathroom?

Ignoring him, Robles turns to Reggie.

ROBLES

Your partner knows these people?

REGGIE

We dealt with them before. He's
been staking 'em out.

Mestizos hurry in from the storm, crowding the living room. Robles gazes out a window. His eyes flit back to:

Miranda, who rises and heads into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Fargo puzzles over a coffeemaker, fiddling with a filter. Miranda snatches it away. He watches her do it right, her angry movements. A tense beat between them.

FARGO

Sorry about this.

MIRANDA

Whose side are you on?

FARGO

I'm just trying to help--

MIRANDA

You're lying. You stole my tiger.

Fargo gropes for an answer, but she sees right through him.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Yeah. You've got him.

FARGO

He's safe, you don't have to worry.

MIRANDA

Why did you do it?

FARGO

I knew they were comin' for him.

MIRANDA

I trusted you.

FARGO

Hey, if it weren't for me--

MIRANDA

Where is he?!

Fargo gestures quiet, sensing Robles' eyes on them.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

An animal like that is vulnerable.
Dehydration, stress, he could die.

FARGO

I don't want him to get hurt any
more than you do.

MIRANDA

You got a funny way of showing it.

She pours water into the coffeemaker. They watch it drip,
Fargo struggling for words.

FARGO

I had a dog once, when I was a kid.
The only friend I ever had. But he
yapped a lot. My ol' man shot him.
(turns to her)
I'm not like these assholes.

MIRANDA

I wish I could believe you.

FARGO

You got no choice.

MIRANDA

Then help me. Get me to Misha.

FARGO

I wish I could, but...

MIRANDA

But what?

FARGO

I don't risk my ass for anyone.

EXT. REAR GROUNDS - DAY

A tropical gale. Juarez searches through the woods beyond the fence, SHOUTING "Pepe! Marcos!" No answer, only the HOWL OF WIND. He unholsters his Luger and keeps going.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Deep in the thickets, two lynched bodies dangle in the wind. Pepe and Marcos, hanging from a limb by their own Ketchall nooses. Their necks broken.

Juarez stares at them, taut with fury. He spins a circular scan of the trees with his Luger. No one there.

INT. SANCTUARY HOUSE - DAY

WIND BUFFETS the house, all the mestizos restless. Miranda serves coffee mugs.

Fargo brings one to Robles by the window, the two alone.

ROBLES

Your amigo has been talking about you, senor. He owes you money, si?

FARGO

That's my business.

ROBLES

Your business is my business now.

He pulls a money clip from his pocket and discreetly peels out thousand-dollar bills.

ROBLES (CONT'D)

Diez mil dolares. Bring the Bengal to me now, and there's another ten thousand on delivery.

Fargo stares at the money, a sobering beat.

FARGO

That cat's worth a hundred grand.

ROBLES

Take it or leave it.

FARGO

When I find it, I'll let you know.

ROBLES

But you have found it. I am not stupid. You have a record, for burglary. You are a *thief*...and I'm the buyer. Take the money.

He extends the cash. Fargo is sorely tempted. Then his eyes fall on: Miranda across the room, watching him.

FARGO

I said I'll let you know.

Robles repockets the money clip with a weary nod.

ROBLES

You do that. But not too long, eh?

The door bursts open -- a sudden gust. Juarez stands framed against the outside tempest with a psychotic look.

JUAREZ

Who else is on this island?!

Everyone stares back, confused. He zeros in on Miranda.

JUAREZ (CONT'D)

Someone killed two of my men -- I want to know who.

MIRANDA

How the hell should I know--

Juarez smacks her viciously across the face. Fargo plows blindly toward him -- the mestizos stop him.

ROBLES

Basta!

He storms over to Juarez. They ARGUE IN SPANISH, Juarez defiant, over the top. He seizes Miranda and drags her out the doorway. Robles goes after him.

Fargo advances on them. CARLOS, the beefy lead guard, jabs him back with a machine pistol, kicking the door shut.

EXT. SANCTUARY HOUSE - DAY

Juarez tugs a struggling Miranda across the yard, Robles SHOUTING SPANISH PROTESTS. He drags Miranda to the monkey-filled crates. Whips out his 9mm and FIRES a SHOT at the top of a crate -- wood splinters. Chimps SCREECH inside.

JUAREZ

Talk! Or I kill them all!

INT. SANCTUARY HOUSE - DAY

Fargo bears down on Carlos at the door. Carlos tightens his grip on the machine gun. Reggie panics.

REGGIE

Man alive, Fargo, whaddya doin'?!

Fargo edges closer to Carlos, undaunted. Reacting to the fearsome look in his eyes, Carlos edges back.

CARLOS

Alto!

Fargo dead-eyes him. The door blows open from a spurt of wind. Carlos spins his gun around, then wheels back -- Fargo right next to him, the muzzle against his gut, determined.

Weakening, Carlos eases aside. Fargo storms out. Reggie and the mestizos pile out after him.

EXT. SANCTUARY GROUNDS - DAY

Juarez seizes Miranda by her hair. She screams in pain.

JUAREZ

Who killed my men?!...

MIRANDA

Fuck you!...

She fights back, fingernails ripping across his face. Juarez throws her to the ground. He touches the scratches on his cheek and tastes blood.

JUAREZ

Conio carajo, puta.

He aims his pistol point blank at the chimps in the crate.

JUAREZ (CONT'D)

You want them to live, tell me now!

LIGHTNING JOLTS the dark sky -- illuminating Fargo's lethal stare. He stands over Miranda, eyes fixed on Juarez.

FARGO

You wanna bitch-slap me, cabron?

Mestizos surround him, weapons poised. Reggie hurries over.

REGGIE

Jeezus, man, take it easy.

Fargo shoves him aside, his fiery eyes fixed on Juarez.

FARGO

You touch her again, I'll cut your eyeballs out and fuck your sockets.

Juarez shoves his Luger furiously into Fargo's face, ready to blow him to hell...

VOICE

DROP IT!

D'Antoni stands behind them -- Robles armlocked in front of him like a shield. Both barrels of his shotgun pressed tight against Robles' throat.

Juarez freezes, his pistol still on Fargo.

D'ANTONI

You're all under arrest!

ROBLES

Don't be foolish...you won't kill me, not for some stupid animales.

D'Antoni pushes the shotgun muzzle deeper into his jowls.

D'ANTONI

Try me.

Juarez doesn't budge. Fargo waits. D'Antoni nods to Juarez.

D'ANTONI (CONT'D)

You want him to die, pendejo?
Huh?! His Colombians back home,
they won't like that.

Miranda struggles to her feet.

MIRANDA

Philip, please, stop this...

D'ANTONI
Too late now.

Juarez lowers the pistol, a seething look toward D'Antoni.

JUAREZ
You killed my men.

D'ANTONI
Drop your firearm.

JUAREZ
Hijo de puta!...

His Luger flashes up in his hand -- a SUDDEN GUNSHOT!

Robles slumps out of D'Antoni's grasp...blood spreads across his white jacket. D'Antoni wields around the shotgun--

ANOTHER PISTOL BLAST -- D'Antoni's chest explodes! He flies back off his feet. Miranda runs to him.

MIRANDA
PHIL!

A frozen tableau. Wind whips against desperate faces...

Fargo stares at fallen D'Antoni. Juarez frowns nervously at the body of Robles. Reggie and the mestizos look between Juarez and the dead Colombian.

REGGIE
Oh shit...shit...

JUAREZ
Silencio!

He belts his pistol, trying to think. Then bends down and extracts the money clip from Robles' pocket.

Fargo and Miranda kneel over D'Antoni, who wheezes from a punctured lung.

FARGO
Let's get him inside.

He grabs a hold of D'Antoni's shoulders. Miranda lifts his legs. They haul him toward the house.

Juarez SHOUTS A SPANISH ORDER, pointing to the crates. Carlos and the men stand frozen, wary eyes on him. Juarez aims his gun around at them, a more threatening COMMAND.

Reluctantly, they lift crates together and carry them to the wind-swept dock. Reggie turns to Juarez.

REGGIE

This ain't gonna work, Capitan. I made a deal with Robles...

JUAREZ

You work for me now. We find that Bengal, we go.

REGGIE

In this gale? What about all these people? They're all witnesses.

No reply. Juarez's look says it all. Reggie reacts aghast.

JUAREZ

Go guard them.

REGGIE

Me?? What the hell for?

Juarez takes a machine gun and shoves it at him. Reggie stares at it. Juarez brandishes his Luger. Reggie takes it.

INT. SANCTUARY HOUSE - DAY

By the kitchen, Bobby rewires the shortwave radio. Joey holds vigil. Watching out the windows, Jesse, Suzy and the Creoles rush to open the front door.

Fargo and Miranda carry unconscious D'Antoni inside.

MIRANDA

First-aid kit! Quickly!

Joey jumps to it. Jesse helps them carry D'Antoni into the bedroom. Miranda sees Bobby at the radio.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Can you fix it?

BOBBY

It's done.

He switches it on, turning the volume off. Suzy spins around from the window.

SUZY

Someone's coming!

Reggie enters, awkwardly cradling his machine pistol.

The others ignore him and crowd around the bedroom doorway.

EXT. SANCTUARY DOCK - DAY

Mestizos haul monkey crates and pile them on the dock.
Juarez QUARRELS IN SPANISH with Carlos, who gestures at the stormy weather.

INT. SANCTUARY HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

D'Antoni is sprawled on the bed, covered in blood, fighting for breath. Fargo administers a compress over the chest wound. Miranda applies gauze strips, stifling sobs.

MIRANDA

Oh God...God, Philip...

The teens watch from the doorway. Reggie pokes his head in.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Get out. All of you.

Everyone leaves. Fargo checks D'Antoni's pulse.

FARGO

We're losing him.

MIRANDA

I need fresh water.

She hands him a pan of bloodied water.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Reggie watches Fargo go into the kitchen with the pan. He plunks down on the couch, right on a lump of animal stool. Jumps up with a curse.

The boa constrictor drops down in his face, uncoiling from the rafters. Reggie rears back, flustered.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Fargo empties the pan and fills more water at the sink. Reggie enters, fidgeting with the machine gun.

REGGIE

Man, I ain't got no ticker for this kinda drama.

FARGO

If the cop dies, we're both gonna be accessories to murder...partner.

REGGIE

Why don't we just blow this scene?

Fargo ignores him and lifts the pan.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Listen. You saw that money he took from Robles. We could jump 'im and get it -- make a run for it.

FARGO

You haven't got the guts.

REGGIE

No, but you do. Either way, I'm goin' with the winning pony.

FARGO

Juarez doesn't need you anymore.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Fargo returns with the water pan. Miranda soaks a sponge and recleans the wound. D'Antoni's breath grows shallower.

FARGO (CONT'D)

I gotta hand it to him, he's got some balls. For a cop.

MIRANDA

We have to do something. We can't just sit here.

FARGO

I'd rather stay alive.

A hand suddenly grips his arm. D'Antoni yanks him close to him. Gasping for breath...

D'ANTONI

You...know how to kill a snake?...

MIRANDA

Phil!

D'Antoni pulls Fargo closer, their faces an inch apart.

D'ANTONI

Cut off the head...

MIRANDA

Philip, lie still.

D'ANTONI

Kill them, Fargo...kill 'em all!...

He falls back...a death mask. Fargo stares down at him, shaken to the core. Miranda weeps.

MIRANDA

Oh, Phil...oh my God...

FARGO

He shouldn't have tried to be such a hero...

MIRANDA

He was my friend -- he cared. Not a coward like you. You should have just taken the money and ran.

Stricken by her words, Fargo turns away.

FARGO

Maybe I should have.

EXT. SANCTUARY DOCK - DAY

The mestizos wait, Juarez and Carlos still QUARRELING.

One of the men tries to light a cigarette. The wind blows out his match. He boards the ketch and lights up in the shelter of the engine bay. Tosses the match...

PHOOM! The leaking gas ignites -- enveloping him in flames. Shrieking, he dives off the boat into the water. The fire spreads across the deck, into the water, consuming the burning mestizo. Juarez and the mestizos stare aghast.

INT. SANCTUARY HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Reggie steps into the dark bathroom. He starts to reach for the lightbulb string...until a flickering light draws him to the window. He peers out:

His prized ketch -- in flames.

REGGIE

Holy shit!

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Fargo and Miranda stare out at the fire. The teens join them at the window. Their POV:

Reggie dashes maniacally toward the fiery-lit dock.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
My boat! My boat!

Juarez ORDERS the young Guard back to the house.

At the window, Jesse sees the crates on the dock, too close to the fire.

JESSE
The monkeys -- we gotta get out there.

He and the Creoles dash out. Miranda and the teens start to follow -- Fargo detains them.

FARGO
Whoa, wait a minute. Nobody's here. Let's just go.

They glance back out: the gun-toting Guard approaches the house. Quick looks between Miranda, Bobby and Joey. Thinking fast, Suzy runs out of the bedroom.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The young Guard hurries inside. He glances around, no one in the living room. Then sees:

Suzy, waiting in the bathroom doorway, trying hard to look seductive. She peels off her T-shirt to her bra, then disappears inside. The young Guard follows her.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Darkness, no sign of Suzy. Groping around, the Guard yanks on the light string -- the lightbulb EXPLODES! He falls with a gnarled CRY, clutching his bloody, smoking face.

Hiding in the shower, Suzy cringes from his SCREAMS.

EXT. SANCTUARY DOCK - DAY

Creoles help mestizos drag monkey crates clear of the boat fire. Juarez turns to the DISTANT SCREAM. He BARKS over two of his men in SPANISH. The three run toward the house.

EXT. SANCTUARY HOUSE - REAR SIDE - DAY

Bobby and Joey bolt out the back door and dash off into the woods. Fargo and Miranda follow after them. He stops her.

FARGO (CONT'D)
No, wait -- this way.

He leads her in another direction around the grassy expanse.

INT. SANCTUARY HOUSE - DAY

Juarez stares at the burned Guard writhing on the bathroom floor. His men drag a scared Suzy from the shower. Juarez glances around the empty house. He heads for the rear exit.

JUAREZ
Vente! Pronto!

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAY

Fargo and Miranda scamper through foliage into the clearing. Miranda stops aghast -- before the two hanging corpses.

MIRANDA
Oh God, Phil...why?

Agonizing to herself. Fargo listens behind them...CLUMPING FOOTFALLS, RUSTLING THICKETS, JUAREZ' VOICE.

FARGO
Head toward the shore, the boat's there. Stay off the paths.

MIRANDA
Nobody had to die...

FARGO
G'won! Wait for me there.

He pushes her in the right direction. Miranda disappears into the woods. Fargo turns toward the FOOTFALLS, his eyes narrowing to slits.

EXT. FOREST PATH - DAY

The two armed mestizos scurry down the path on a search, Juarez running behind them.

CLOSE ON FARGO'S EYES

Stalking predator eyes, fixed dead ahead.

HIS POV - JUAREZ

TRACKING FAST TOWARD his back, ten feet away.

BACK TO SCENE

A spring trap's wire loop WHIPS AROUND a mestizo's ankle -- wrenches him skyward.

Juarez and the other guard gawk up at him, dangling upside down from a branch...

FARGO'S POV - JUAREZ

WE STREAK TOWARD his back -- a street blade SLASHES Juarez' cheek -- then WE'RE OFF INTO the thickets in a blur.

Juarez shrieks, gripping his face, blood gushing from cheek to eye. The mestizo STRAFES the bushes with a HAIL of FIRE -- BULLETS CHOP foliage into salad.

EXT. ISLAND SHORE - DAY

Waiting in the airboat, Miranda perks to the GUNFIRE. A beat, then CRUNCHING FOOTFALLS...

Fargo races over and jumps into the boat with a wild-eyed look. Miranda cringes back, scared of him.

FARGO (CONT'D)
Start rowing!

He hands her an oar and rows madly out. Miranda rows hard.

EXT. SANCTUARY SHORE - DAY

Reggie's ketch burns out of control. Carlos and his men leave the monkey crates and corral the Creoles back to the house. Reggie stares forlornly at his boat.

INT. SANCTUARY HOUSE - DAY

Juarez paces, holding a bloody towel to his cheek. His men nurse the trap-wounded mestizo and the face-burned Guard. Sullen eyes turn on Suzy, whimpering in a corner.

Guardsmen and their Creole prisoners file in, Reggie on their heels. He storms over to Juarez.

REGGIE
My boat, man! We're fucked five ways from Fuddrucker's -- we can't get off this sandspit now. Can't even call for help, because you busted the only radio--

JUAREZ
Silencio!

REGGIE
Yeah, I'll "silencio" all right. Just tell me the plan, Stan.

Juarez checks his cheek cut for bleeding. A deep red scar makes him uglier than he already is.

JUAREZ

I will *kill* that gringo.

REGGIE

(scoffing at that)

Oh, that's a great plan. So how we get outta here? Who're we gonna do business with, the Colombians?

JUAREZ

Si. I don't need Robles. We find that tigre, they will deal with me.

REGGIE

Oh yeah? Is that before or after they cut your dick off?

Juarez spins around, his gun muzzle against Reggie's jugular.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Right. "Silencio."

Juarez holsters his Luger with a macho glare. He notices the distrustful looks of his men. Outside, a CRACK OF THUNDER. They jump, their nerves on edge. Juarez sneers at them.

JUAREZ

No cojones. Am I the only man on this island?

INT. AIRBOAT (MOVING) - DAY

Drifting across the swamp. Fargo and Miranda row through blistering wind, Fargo's face bedeviled by ghosts...the CLAMOR OF PRISON VOICES. Miranda glances over.

MIRANDA

Are you all right?

No reply. THUNDER RUMBLES, jerking Fargo back to reality.

FARGO

I'll take you to your tiger. But that's as far as I go.

MIRANDA

I need your help, Fargo.

FARGO

I'm out of it.

MIRANDA
Just like that, huh?

Fargo rows in silence.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
You really don't care about anyone,
do you? You're not even a man.
You're nothing.

FARGO
Yeah, I'm nothin'. Just a thief.

EXT. TREE HOUSE - LATE DAY

A downpour of rain, the airboat docked. The two huddle in the dry nook of the cypress. Miranda refills Misha's pot, HUMMING, calming the white cub with animal speak.

Then Fargo covers the cage with a tarp. They climb a rope ladder and take shelter high in the tree house.

INT. TREE HOUSE - LATE DAY

A spartan, log-built cubbyhole with a canvas door, barely enough room for camping gear and a sleeping bag.

RAIN HAMMERS the roof. Wind blows in through the canvas. The two seal it with a barricade of supply cartons.

MIRANDA
I'm worried about those kids.

FARGO
You wanted to save your tiger, you
made your choice.

MIRANDA
That doesn't exactly make me feel
any better.

She plops down on a carton, exhausted. Fargo sits opposite her, noticing a pile of exotic-animal skins in a corner.

FARGO
I've seen skins like that before.
Did Phil get them off smugglers?

MIRANDA
Yeah. When animals die in transit,
they always skin them. I've grown
up with exotic skins all my life.
Jack's trophies.

FARGO

Y'mean, your rich daddy?

(no reply)

Sorry. The only name I ever had
for my ol' man was "sonuvabitch".

MIRANDA

Mine wasn't around enough to call
him anything. Too busy going out
on his safaris.

Her face darkens, Fargo observing her closely.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

The first hunt he dragged me on, we
chased a pregnant elephant. Jack
only had his .22, so he pumped
bullets into her rectum, shot up
her intestines. Big fucking hero.

FARGO

D'you hate him for it?

MIRANDA

Not anymore. The anger's gone now.

FARGO

It's better to stay angry. Let it
nurture.

MIRANDA

Is it?

FARGO

It's kept me alive for years.

Their eyes connect, a strange chemistry between them.

EXT. SANCTUARY ISLAND GROUNDS - EVENING

Sheets of rain douse the ketch fire, its ruined deck smoking
in the dusk. Jesse and the Creoles blanket tarps over the
monkey crates, guarded by mestizos.

INT. TREE HOUSE - EVENING

Miranda lights a Coleman lamp. Fargo sits restlessly, his
eyes ablaze...that PRISON DIN again, tormenting him. He
clamps his hands over his ears.

FARGO (CONT'D)

Gawd! I can't take it anymore!...

MIRANDA

What, the storm?

FARGO

Prison noise, in my head. Day and night. It never stops. Maybe if you talked to me, it'll go away.

Miranda sits close to him. She listens to the pelting rain, HUMMING her ANIMAL-SPEAK MELODY, soothing Fargo's nerves.

MIRANDA

I'm scared.

FARGO

Don't get scared, get even. Get mad.

MIRANDA

I am mad. I'd like to kill those bastards. But I can't do that.

(looks at him)

Don't be like them, Fargo. Men killing men is no better than men killing animals.

FARGO

You can't fight human nature. We used to kill to live, now we live to kill.

MIRANDA

Don't say that. It's not true.

FARGO

It's a biological fact: we're all animals. You can't change that.

MIRANDA

You really don't have much faith in people, do you?

FARGO

It's easier that way.

Miranda regards him with profound sadness. She leans in.

MIRANDA

But I still do. You can't change that either.

A grim, silent beat between them. RAIN POUNDS ABOVE.

EXT. SANCTUARY HOUSE - NIGHT

Torrents of rain batter the rooftop. Its corrugated sheets buckle in the wind.

INT. SANCTUARY HOUSE - NIGHT

A DRUMMING DIN ABOVE. Everyone sits around, cooped up, their nerves on edge. Suzy, Jesse and the Creoles watch Carlos slap a fresh clip into his machine gun.

Scar-faced Juarez reloads his Luger, snorting from a vial, rocking to a salsa beat in his head. Reggie drains a tequila bottle, nervously eying Juarez. The DRUMMING never ceases.

EXT. TREE-HOUSE ISLAND - DAWN

A sudden quiet. The rain has stopped. A tangerine sunrise peeks through the receding storm clouds.

INT. TREE HOUSE - DAWN

Miranda yanks open the canvas door to sunlight, gazing out with new urgency.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

Get up, Fargo. We gotta go back.

Fargo rises behind her and stares out groggily.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

We have to talk to those smugglers, make some kind of deal...

FARGO

You don't negotiate with scum.

MIRANDA

Those kids' lives are at stake.

Fargo turns her to face him.

FARGO

Miranda, listen to me. We can get away from here -- you, me and Misha. Free and clear.

MIRANDA

Go on, then. Leave. I'm taking Misha back.

FARGO

What?

MIRANDA

I'll make them a trade: my cat for
my people.

EXT. SANCTUARY ISLAND - DAWN

Shafts of sunlight brighten the shore. WE PAN ACROSS a rain-soaked war zone: the gutted ketch...the sunken motor boat...a floating corpse by the dock...the stranded monkey crates...a white-suited dead man in the mud.

On the porch, a sleepless, coked-up Juarez stares at Robles' corpse. At the swamp beyond. Marooned.

INT. SANCTUARY HOUSE - DAWN

Slumbering bodies around the living room. Reggie arouses, badly hung over. He listens to the dead calm.

INT. KITCHEN - DAWN

Reggie scrounges through animal medicines on a kitchen shelf, reading a prescription bottle label:

REGGIE

"Chimpanzee migraines. Three drops
daily in fruit mash."

He opens the bottle and gulps it down. Then squints at the radio set nearby...its switch indicator fully lit.

EXT. TREE-HOUSE ISLAND - MORNING

Miranda climbs down and throws the tarp off the cage.

MIRANDA

Cunda, Misha...it's all right,
baby.

Fargo jumps down. He watches her drag the cumbersome cage across the ground. Warring inside.

FARGO

Miranda. Don't do this. They'll
take the cat and kill you anyway.

MIRANDA

No, they won't. You'll have him.
When my people go free, you can
turn him over.

Fargo looks between her and the cage, torn with conflict.

FARGO
It won't work.

MIRANDA
It has to.

She pulls the cage toward the airboat with difficulty, her progress slow.

Exasperated, Fargo goes to help her. They drag the cage together to the boat.

EXT. SANCTUARY ISLAND GROUNDS - MORNING

In the baboon cage, soaked and hungry spider monkeys pick through silt for scraps of leaves.

EXT. SANCTUARY HOUSE - MORNING

Reggie hurries out onto the porch, startling Juarez.

REGGIE
The radio's working! I got through
to the animal camp.

JUAREZ
Bueno! When do they come?

REGGIE
I gave 'em our coordinates, but it
might take a while. We gotta find
that tiger.

EXT. DOWNSHORE - DAY

The Sanctuary island hideout. Miranda jumps off the airboat onto the shore, leaving Fargo with the tiger cage.

MIRANDA
Keep a lookout. Watch out for my
signal. Fargo?

Fargo stares at her, saying nothing.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
Wait for me. Please? Do that for
me at least.

She turns away. Fargo watches her vanish into the woods. Then he gazes across the swamp:

The seaward horizon, free and clear. He grabs an oar and rows. Away from the island.

EXT. SANCTUARY HOUSE - DAY

Juarez, Carlos and Reggie organize a search party. They react to RUSTLING from the downshore thickets. Mestizos turn their machine pistols toward...

Miranda, marching toward Juarez with forced calm.

MIRANDA

Let's talk.

Amazed looks all around. Juarez grins at her.

JUAREZ

Si, chiquita. Let's talk.

EXT. AIRBOAT (MOVING) - DAY

Fargo rows far from the Sanctuary, halfway across the swamp. He glances back, agonizing to himself. A long beat...

Then, with a muttered curse, he starts to row back.

EXT. SANCTUARY DOCK - FAR END - DAY

Miranda lies atop an empty crate, lashed down with rope. Spreadeagled like a crucifixion. Mestizos tie her wrists and ankles. Juarez leers at her, toying with her top.

JUAREZ

Go ahead. Talk.

MIRANDA

If you let my friends go--

JUAREZ

No, no. Don't talk to me. Talk to that gringo pig. Call him out.

MIRANDA

He won't come.

Juarez nods at that -- then rips open her top. He tears at the cloth, arranging it to look like she's been violated.

JUAREZ

Oh, I think he will.

EXT. DOWNSHORE - DAY

Fargo rows back into the hideout.

BOBBY (O.S.)
Mr. Fargo!

Bobby and Joey wave excitedly from the shore bushes.

JOEY
Over here!

Fargo shh's them, tying a line to a prop root. The two nerds climb into the airboat, looking like soggy hell.

BOBBY
Where's Miranda?

FARGO
Just shut up and stay put. Watch
the cat 'til I get back.

He grabs a sawed-off shotgun and jumps out. The boys gape at the poachers' arsenal in the cargo bay.

EXT. FOREST PATH - DAY

A search party of mestizos fan out off the trail, plowing through the thickets. Bypassing...

Fargo, creeping low through underbrush toward the forest edge. He peers at the Sanctuary grounds. His PANNING POV:

Jesse, Suzy and the Creoles unloading chow bags from a feed shed, Reggie guarding them...Juarez pacing on the dock...a ravaged-looking Miranda, "crucified" on the crate.

Fargo's face darkens with fury.

EXT. DOWNSHORE - DAY

Waiting by the tiger cage, Joey rummages through the boat's weaponry. He picks up a grenade, muttering "Wow!" Bobby brandishes a flame thrower, its nozzle pointed ashore.

BOBBY
Awesome! You think it works?

He fiddles with the trigger guard -- WHOOSH! A jet of liquid fire streaks out, igniting a tree.

JOEY
You idiot! Let's get outta here...

He goes to the controls and starts the ignition -- the fan REVS UP LOUDLY, fanning the burning tree, smoke everywhere. He fumbles the gears. The airboat turns in aimless circles.

EXT. FOREST EDGE - DAY

Fargo reacts to the boat's DISTANT ROAR. Then sees:
Mestizos scrambling downshore, toward the billow of smoke.

EXT. SANCTUARY DOCK - DAY

Juarez hears the SOUND and scans the thickets, shouting out:

JUAREZ
Hey, gringo! Come out, por favor!
Or I will have to kill the chica!

EXT. FOREST EDGE - DAY

Fargo watches from hiding, tense with rage. He stashes the shotgun behind his back and creeps forward.

EXT. SANCTUARY DOCK - DAY

JUAREZ (CONT'D)
Gringo! Are you man enough to save
your bitch?!

He rams his Luger into the soft flesh of Miranda's throat.
A shuddery beat, everyone watching.

Fargo emerges from the woods, moving steadily forward.

JUAREZ (CONT'D)
Drop your weapon -- or she dies.

Fargo keeps coming.

Juarez buries the muzzle deeper into Miranda's throat.

Fargo stops. He pulls around the shotgun and tosses it.

JUAREZ (CONT'D)
Lie down flat.

Fargo slowly complies. Mestizos swarm over him. They secure his hands behind him, taking the knife from his pocket.

JUAREZ (CONT'D)
So. What did you say you would do
to me? Eh? If I touched her?

He swings the Luger butt around -- cracks it across Miranda's skull. Her head lolls back. She's out cold.

Fargo struggles on the ground, seething.

Jesse and Suzy watch in horror, Reggie looks away in disgust.

Juarez storms over from the dock. He towers over Fargo and scowls down. Points at his scar.

JUAREZ (CONT'D)

Look what you did to my face! I'm not pretty anymore.

He BARKS A SPANISH ORDER. The men turn Fargo over, holding him down firm to the ground. Juarez kneels down and braces Fargo's face. He flicks open a switchblade...

JUAREZ (CONT'D)

Which is it, I forget? "An eye for an eye" or "turn the other cheek?"

He runs a neat *slit* down the length of Fargo's cheek. Fargo bucks violently, IN B.G. A THUNDER OF PRISON VOICES...

INT. SOLITARY CONFINEMENT (FLASHBACK) - DAY

A naked Fargo cuffed to a prison toilet -- the Bald Convict sadistically slashes a razor blade across his back.

EXT. SANCTUARY GROUNDS (PRESENT) - DAY

An erupting volcano, Fargo screams from sheer fury.

Reggie grimaces from Fargo's screams, staring at dead Robles in the mud. He can't take it anymore.

REGGIE

Hey! Hey, Capitan...

Juarez rises from his surgery. Reggie hastens over.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Hey listen, I got an idea. We got Robles' body, right? We take him to the Colombians...

(gestures at Fargo)

Then we hand *him* over. Make him the fall guy. Robles' hit man. Then we can do business with 'em.

Juarez considers that, wiping the switchblade clean.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Comprende? I mean, it's perfect. So...maybe we should keep him alive for a while, y'know?

They're both distracted by a surprising sight:

The search party returns, carrying the cat cage between them. A downtrodden Bobby and Joey follow under guard.

The cage is set down. Juarez hurries over and peers in at the coveted white tiger, pacing in distress.

JUAREZ

Mucho bueno, muchachos!

He jabs his switchblade into the top wood, cackling away. Reggie joins him and looks in at the cub with glee.

Jesse approaches them with a feedbag, eying the knife atop the cage. Juarez turns.

JUAREZ (CONT'D)

What d'you want? Feed the monkeys.

JESSE

We can't feed 'em in these crates. They won't eat. They'll die.

REGGIE

Whaddya want us to do about it?

JESSE

They gotta be taken out to be fed.

JUAREZ

You want us to put them *back* in their cages?

REGGIE

What the hell, Capitan. We can't sell 'em if they're dead.

JUAREZ

What do I care. I got what I want.
(to Jesse)

You. Why d'you keep these animales here, eh? To make them free? They belong to Man. God gave them to us for our needs -- for our pleasures.

JESSE

Can I take them out or not?

JUAREZ

Make sure they go back into the crates.

EXT. BABOON CAGE - DAY

Fargo is shoved inside the cage and sent sprawling into the midst of SHRIEKING spider monkeys. Carlos locks the gate.

Juarez grins at Fargo through the chain-link mesh, then marches off.

Fargo sits up painfully in the mud, his face blotched with blood, the scar running from his temple to his throat.

The monkeys swarm clear, frightened of him. Fargo glares out through the mesh at Juarez. On his face, a silent rage that thunders. He looks toward:

Miranda, lying lifelessly on the dock crate.

EXT. CAGE AREA - DAY

The volunteers carry chimps from the open crates into the cages. Jesse empties feedbags into each cage.

EXT. BABOON CAGE - DAY

Fargo sits crosslegged inside, dripping sweat, staring out. Not quite human, his predator's eyes fixed on Juarez. PRISON VOICES ECHOING...

INT. PENITENTIARY (FLASHBACK) - DAY

A DISTORTED POV of two gleeful inmates, holding us down in a shower room. A third unzips his pants, grinning down at us. The tattooed Bald Convict.

EXT. BABOON CAGE (PRESENT) - DAY

Reggie blocks Fargo's view, looking in. The VOICES STOP.

REGGIE

Sorry, bro. Did the best I could.

Fargo glares back. Unnerved by him, Reggie moves on.

Jesse stops at the cage and opens a feedbag. Spider monkeys dash hungrily to the wire. Juarez pushes Jesse away.

JUAREZ

Don't feed that bunch. Why waste food on worthless monkeys.

(sneers at Fargo)

Eh, gringo?

He walks away. Jesse reties the feedbag...

Then he surreptitiously tosses the *switchblade* through the cage mesh. It lands in the mud before Fargo.

EXT. SANCTUARY GROUNDS - DAY

Mestizos drag the tiger cage toward the shore.

REGGIE

Hey! They're coming!

Beyond, three dots on the swamp horizon. Speedboats. Juarez and Reggie rush downshore to wait for them, joined by the cheering mestizos.

EXT. CAGE AREA - DAY

Jesse and the teens watch them, then hurry over to Miranda.

EXT. BABOON CAGE - DAY

Fargo paces among the spider monkeys, back and forth like a caged panther. He fixes on the cage across the way:

Chimpanzees, devouring feed pellets. He looks back at the spider monkeys around him. All of them starving.

EXT. SANCTUARY DOCK - DAY

Bound on the crate, Miranda recovers consciousness. She gazes dazedly around and sees:

Three single-manned Corsa speedboats, slowing before the shoreline. Reggie, Juarez and the crew greet THREE PILOTS. Mestizos lift the tiger cage into one of the boats.

Jesse unties Miranda's ropes to free her. Suzy offers her a water jug. Miranda gulps thirstily from it.

JESSE

What're we gonna do, Randi?

MIRANDA

Where's Fargo?

EXT. BABOON CAGE - DAY

Fargo's switchblade scrapes vigorously against the thin cage wire, cutting a chain link. Then another.

EXT. SANCTUARY SHORE - DAY

Juarez turns to Carlos with a SPANISH ORDER, nodding at the prisoners on the dock. Carlos shakes his head vehemently.

EXT. SANCTUARY DOCK - DAY

Guardsmen beckon Miranda and her teens over, waving firearms. Miranda watches Juarez and Carlos:

A SPATE OF SPANISH between them. Juarez slaps Carlos and CURSES him. Mestizos gather around them. Juarez grabs a machine gun and levels it at Carlos, a final warning...

Suddenly in f.g., spider monkeys flit past them. Men turn, reacting -- monkeys scatter wild across the grounds.

EXT. CAGE AREA - DAY

Fargo races through, throwing open cage doors. Chimps spill out in a HOOTING mass exodus.

EXT. SANCTUARY GROUNDS - DAY

Pandemonium. Juarez SCREAMS ORDERS. Mestizos race upshore, chasing futilely after the escaping apes.

The chimps flee off the grounds, vanishing in all directions.

Juarez spots Fargo, running downshore.

FOREST EDGE

Fargo turns at the treeline and sees Miranda, conscious and alive. He glares back at Juarez with a challenging pose. Then dashes away into the trees.

SHORE

ON Juarez' face. A vile, twisted grimace.

JUAREZ
That fucking *gringo*!

He storms to the Corsa loaded with the tiger crate, signaling Reggie over.

JUAREZ (CONT'D)
You! Come with me.

REGGIE
Nah, nah, I'm goin' with the guys.

Juarez turns his gun on him, nodding at the prisoners.

JUAREZ
You want to go with *them*?

Resigned to it, Reggie follows him into the boat.

UPSHORE

Mestizos corral the Sanctuary people together under a tree, the teens panicked and terrified. Miranda, Jesse and the Creoles remain calm and stoic.

Juarez and Reggie's Corsa roars away downshore, leaving behind two boats and three Pilots.

Carlos turns to face Miranda, grim-faced. His machine gun tight in his grip. The teens gather close around her. A long, unbearable beat...

One of the mestizos MUTTERS A PROTESTING OATH to Carlos. Others QUIBBLE ANGRILY amongst themselves.

CARLOS

Basta!

He steps forward before the prisoners. Aims his weapon...

All the teens cringe, shutting their eyes...

Miranda stares straight at Carlos, HUMMING animal speak.

EXT. JUAREZ'S CORSA (MOVING) - DAY

Cruising downshore with the tiger crate. Reggie reacts to the DISTANT CHATTER OF GUNFIRE behind them. Juarez steers forward, not looking back.

The airboat catches his eye. Adrift in the shore hideout.

EXT. SANCTUARY GROUNDS - DAY

Machine-gunned leaves and branches fall down over the teens. They open their eyes, stunned. Still alive.

Downshore, all the mestizos hightail it to the Corsas. They pile in, two of the Pilots REVVING UP.

Carlos turns back toward Miranda. A brief farewell nod. Then he jumps in. The boats speed off.

Miranda takes her first deep breath. She turns to Jesse.

MIRANDA

Call the Coast Guard.

Jesse bolts to the house. Miranda gazes downshore with deep concern, past the island fringe.

EXT. DOWNSHORE - DAY

The Corsa idles beside the deserted airboat. Juarez switches off the motor and scans the shore thickets. A tense quiet, he and Reggie listening keenly.

RUSTLING SOUNDS beyond a trail...FEET RUNNING OVER FOLIAGE.

Juarez' face tightens. He grabs two machine pistols, hands one to Reggie and motions him out. Reggie resists.

REGGIE

Someone should guard the tiger--

JUAREZ

Andalé!

He shoves him hard. Both leap into the shallows and scramble ashore.

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - DAY

TRACKING BEFORE Juarez on the trail, deep into wilderness, stalking his prey at a relentless gait...

Behind him, Reggie lags behind. Suddenly--

A FIREBALL JETS ACROSS THE PATH between them! Reggie drops his weapons and dives back, gawking up at:

A shadowy figure on a tree branch with a flame thrower.

Juarez spins around and FIRES -- BLASTING the tree.

Reggie crawls away for his life, out of sight.

Silence, Juarez alone. No one in the tree, just falling debris and burning shrubs. Juarez hunkers low, his machine pistol scanning the woods. A crazy, senseless tension.

JUAREZ (CONT'D)

Fucking animale!

Fargo flies out of nowhere -- and pounces on Juarez with a catlike leap. Juarez tumbles, his weapon thrown astray.

A savage struggle on the ground. Juarez kicks Fargo off, whipping out his Luger. He tries to aim...

Fargo seizes his gun arm. They grapple over the pistol...

Fargo wrenches off one of Juarez' ear piercings, ripping the lobe. Juarez screams, squeezing off a wild SHOT...

The bullet grazes Fargo's side -- he flinches back.

Juarez slams a fist into him, knocking him down. He breaks away and flees into the woods. Fargo bolts up in pursuit.

WITH FARGO

The predator. Racing after Juarez, staying off the path...

WITH JUAREZ

The prey. Pumping hard on the trail, pistol in hand...

WE TRACK BEHIND running Juarez, as he glances back...

INT. PENITENTIARY (FANTASY) - DAY

TRACKING DOWN a long cell block, men screaming from the tiers above, urging us on, "Get 'im! Get 'im!" Ahead of us, the fleeing Bald Convict. Gaping back, terrified.

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - DAY

Juarez gapes back -- something trips him -- he tumbles down into a snare trap. WHFFT! A wire noose whips around his neck in a chokehold.

Paralyzed on the ground, he raises his Luger to fire -- a foot crunches down on his gun wrist.

Fargo kicks away the pistol. He towers over him for a beat.

FARGO

I told you not to touch her.

Juarez grimaces in pain, the snare cutting his flesh. He digs out Robles' money clip. Tosses it across the ground.

JUAREZ

Take it! Okay? We talk.

Fargo glances down at the money, then ignores it.

FARGO

No. We don't talk.

He pulls out the switchblade and flicks it open.

Juarez scowls up at him.

JUAREZ

Do it then. Be quick about it.

Fargo hovers closer with the knife, the hunter poised over his kill...

Suddenly from above, a HIGH-PITCHED HOWL. Fargo looks up toward AWESOME SHRILLS from treetops all around him:

Howler monkeys -- CHATTERING, SHRIEKING, CRYING OUT to him!

Fargo slowly lowers the knife. All his anger dissipates. The cries of the wild ceases. Silence.

JUAREZ (CONT'D)

Do it, you fucking coward. What're you waiting for? Be a man!

Fargo gazes at his loathsome figure, trapped in D'Antoni's snare. His bloodlust gone. He turns and walks away.

JUAREZ (CONT'D)

Gringo! What're you doing? Don't leave me here!

He gapes after him, alone for a beat. Then...

A SNARLING HOOT, somewhere high above him.

Juarez can't move, but he can see it:

A huge baboon, the maned leader of the escaped baboon tribe, looming over him from a branch.

Juarez strains frantically against the wire, calling out.

JUAREZ (CONT'D)

Come back, gringo! Come back -- you fucking pendejo!

The leader jumps down, baring lethal fangs. More baboons drop down. A whole army of them, surrounding Juarez.

DOWN THE TRAIL

Fargo keeps walking. Far behind him, SPANISH CURSES -- cut short by the BARKS AND RAVAGINGS OF BABOONS. Then--

A MAN'S BLOOD-CHILLING SHRIEK!

EXT. SHORE - DAY

Reggie staggers aimlessly along the swamp shore, totally lost. He stumbles and falls into the water. Three yards away, an alligator surfaces. Gaping at it, Reggie scrambles back up the embankment.

REGGIE

Aw, fuck me!...

He bolts inland, a dead run through tropical hell. Blind terror. He looks back -- then stupidly slams into a tree.

Stunned on his back, he gawks up at a man's figure.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Awwwww...fuck!

Fargo stands there ominously, a bloody, scar-faced swamp man, his flame thrower in hand.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Fargo, don't...please!...

Fargo leans down toward him. Reggie cringes back.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

I saved your ass back there!

FARGO

I'll keep that in mind.

He hoists Reggie to his feet. Ushers him back toward shore.

FARGO (CONT'D)

C'mon, let's move. You still owe me sixty grand.

REGGIE

No sweat. I'll make it up to ya--

FARGO

Shut up. You'll do it right now. Take me back to Robles' island.

REGGIE

Say what?

FARGO

You know where it is. I don't.

REGGIE

Jeezus, bro...who d'ya think you are, fuckin' Rambo?

EXT. GULF COAST - DAY

AERIAL VIEW, two tiny specks wend through a jigsaw puzzle of barrier islands.

EXT. BARRIER ISLAND - DAY

The old bamboo warehouse looks deserted, not a soul in sight. Reggie pilots the Corsa toward the pontoon dock. Fargo's airboat tags behind, the tiger cage in its cargo bay.

ISLAND SHORE - LATER

Fargo and Reggie stand on the shore, facing the warehouse. Crates and cages still line its facade. Empty now.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
Nothin' here, man, everyone's gone.

Fargo drinks from a canteen, cradling his flame thrower.

FARGO
You can go.

REGGIE
Are you crazy? Nobody's here!

Fargo stares back. He looks crazy. Reggie shakes his head.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
Man, I'm through with a life of crime. I'd rather sell bait and tackle.

FARGO
That'll be the day.

REGGIE
Look, I'm sorry things got so outta hand. I mean that.

FARGO
You're always sorry. G'won, then. Get outta here.

Reggie turns to the Corsa, glancing back. Fargo nods bye.

FARGO (CONT'D)
See ya around. Partner.

REGGIE
Yeah. In another life.

EXT. SANCTUARY ISLAND - DAY

Coast Guard, police and local boats crowd the dock around the burnt-out ketch and sunken Sanctuary boat.

Upshore, COPS and RANGERS cover five corpses in body bags.

Downshore, Sanctuary teens lead a search party, accompanied by CREOLE and CAJUN NEIGHBORS.

Jesse spots a chimp and whistles. The ape comes running and flies into his arms.

Suzy beckons another one with a banana. It doesn't take much.

EXT. CAGE AREA - DAY

In bathing pens, Miranda, Bobby and Joey lather chimps in soap, scrubbing them clean.

The COUNTY SHERIFF, a laconic type, ambles over.

SHERIFF

We found the smugglers' leader.
Not a pretty sight. That makes six
dead.

MIRANDA

You didn't find the tiger?

The Sheriff shakes his head. Miranda nods resignedly.

SHERIFF

And you say Phil D'Antoni was the
one who killed all these men?

MIRANDA

That's right.

The Sheriff ponders that, not very convinced. He looks between her and the two nerds.

SHERIFF

There are a lot of dead people
around here. You sure he did this
all by himself?

Miranda nods. Bobby and Joey nod, corroborating.

BOBBY

Yes sir. A one-man Terminator.

Miranda gazes toward the swamp, betraying a hint of sadness.

MIRANDA

He saved our lives.

EXT. BARRIER ISLAND - WAREHOUSE - DAY

Fargo marches to the bamboo warehouse's entrance, his flame thrower in hand. He opens a creaky door...

Stops dead, staring into darkness. Horrified. Then he spots something. He disappears inside. A beat...

Fargo emerges with a scrawny *female panther* in his arms, panting from dehydration. He lifts her over his shoulders, the limp cat too weak to resist.

He turns to the doorway, aims the flame thrower inside and spews a JET OF FIRE into the warehouse. A quick glimpse--

Corpses of abandoned exotic cats and apes litter the dirt floor. The flames engulf them.

Fargo torches the whole damned place.

EXT. CAMP SHORE - DAY

Fargo walks away, the warehouse blazing behind him.

He sets down the panther on the pontoon, kneels close and dribbles canteen water into her mouth. Then looks outward with animal eyes, wild and untamed. No longer human.

WE PULL BACK FROM man and cat, the two framed against mushrooming smoke and flames.

EXT. HELICOPTER (AIRBORNE) - DAY

A Coast Guard chopper flies toward a column of smoke rising from the remote barrier island. It hovers low over the burning warehouse, the pontoon dock...

Deserted, the airboat gone.

EXT. SANCTUARY - CAGE AREA - DAY

The mended baboon cage is full, the original tenants. Jesse and locals watch the baboons run the perimeter, scrounging for a way out. Their man-killing Great Escapees.

EXT. REAR GROUNDS - DAY

A row of monkey cages line the grassy expanse. Bobby, Joey and Suzy stand over them.

Miranda inspects the last cage. She nods the go-ahead.

In unison, the cage lids are swung open, freeing Fargo's spider monkeys.

They race across the grass, leaping gracefully between trees. It's a beautiful sight. A visual homage to wildlife.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SANCTUARY HOUSE - EVENING

A celebration barbecue on the front grounds. Teens plunge pell mell into the water from roped tires.

Bobby barbecues shrimp on a grill, Joey cooks over a vat of crawfish. The boom box BLARES ZYDECO. Animal lovers dance.

EXT. SANCTUARY SHORE - EVENING

Alone to herself, Miranda surveys her domain. She gazes out into the moonlit wilderness. Something catches her eye:

The airboat, moored to a prop root downshore. In its cargo bay, a familiar cat cage. A crate beside it.

DOWNSHORE

Miranda climbs into the airboat. She glances around. No one in sight. Then kneels down beside the cage.

Inside, the white tiger cub.

MIRANDA

Misha! Misha, kungala...

Tears of joy. Recognizing her, the Bengal gently paws the wire. Miranda caresses his fur through the mesh.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

My poor Misha. You're okay now...
you're home now.

A HISS from the crate behind her. She peers through its wood cracks: the panther from the barrier island.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

And who are you?

The cat GROWLS, sickly but alive. Miranda rises, puzzled.

Atop the crate sits Robles' money clip. She picks it up in amazement. Thumbs through its soiled thousand-dollar bills.

A FAINT RUSTLE in the trees. Someone's watching her.

Miranda jumps onto the shore, her eyes fixed on the woods.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
Fargo? Is that you?

Not a sound. Peering into the dark cypress trees, she glimpses a figure deep in the shadows. She draws closer.

The figure recedes. The glimmer of wild eyes in the dusk.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
Fargo!

Silence. She strains to see.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
Why won't you come out?

A beat. Then, a RASPY VOICE:

FARGO (O.S.)
Don't want to.

MIRANDA
The police are gone, Fargo, it's all right now. Please come out.

FARGO (O.S.)
Don't want you to see me.

MIRANDA
Are you hurt? There's a place for you here. You're welcome to stay.

FARGO (O.S.)
No.

MIRANDA
This is your home.

FARGO (O.S.)
I prefer the tree house.

MIRANDA
Fargo...nobody knows a thing. You don't have to worry.

Dead silence. Miranda sighs. She holds up the money clip.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)
What am I supposed to do with this?

FARGO (O.S.)
Feed my spider monkeys.

MIRANDA
How did you come by it?

FARGO (O.S.)
Once a thief, always a thief.

Miranda shakes her head sorrowfully.

MIRANDA
Oh, Fargo. What am I ever gonna do with you?

FARGO (O.S.)
Jack. The name's Jack.

MIRANDA
Jack? That's my dad's--

FARGO (O.S.)
Yeah, I know. Sorry about that.

Miranda peers deeper, desperate to reach him.

MIRANDA
I wish you'd come out, Jack.
C'mon, Jack. Show me a little faith. Jack? Jack?
(no answer)
Jack!

He's gone. Only the CICADAS and NIGHT CRIES of the swamp.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CYPRESS SWAMP - DAY

Miranda steers a new motor boat toward the tree-house island, isolated amidst the wetlands.

EXT. TREE-HOUSE ISLAND - DAY

Miranda stands under D'Antoni's old refuge. She touches the rope ladder, gazing upward, nursing a memory. She doesn't climb it. She just waits, as if expecting someone.

THRASHING in the surrounding brush.

Startled, Miranda turns. A smile creeps across her face.

EXT. ISLAND CLEARING - DAY

WE TRACK WITH Miranda, running through tall grass, darting her head back, tense and excited.

Some vague figure stalks her.

Miranda runs faster, a deer flushed into flight.

TIGHT ON predatory eyes, fixed on her...

A man's bare feet charge forward...

Miranda leaps gazelle-like through the grass...

The man's legs streak faster toward her...

A naked, bearded wildman leaps across with feline swiftness -- pounces on his prey. IN ARRESTED MOTION...

Fargo and Miranda wrestle wildly in the tall grass. Like young tigers at play.

WE CRANE ABOVE them...

HIGHER OVER the tree house and its tiny green patch...

FAR ACROSS the vast cypress swamps of the Bayou.

FADE OUT.