

SIX REASONS WHY

By

The Campagna Brothers

2006 Campagna Brothers
Independent Pictures

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PRESENT DAY SHOWDOWN, EXT. DESERT BADLANDS AFTERNOON

An enormous 9-inch civil war-era pistol is pointed to the temple of a mangy, flea-bitten white horse.

In the blinding sun of the desert, the Horse's enormous black eye darts back and forth.

The hand that belongs to the gun is steady, but the man who belongs to the hand is yet to be seen.

A bearded man, THE CRIMINAL(28), winces with the strong sun in his eyes.

The bandanna on his head is the only reason his brow sweat isn't salting his vision.

His eyes dart frantically about as he pays wildly unfocused attention to his surroundings.

With an offensive SQUIRT, he spits a juicy wad of tobacco to the ground.

A second man, THE NOMAD(33), stares intently with eyes that burn with a quiet rage.

His tattered and bent hat, grimy stubble and worn leather necklace make him look like he may not even remember what a bathtub looks like.

The tensions between the two men is palpable.

A third man, THE ENTREPRENEUR(24), is much more calm in the situation.

Despite a clearly broken nose, his dark eyes and skin matches his austere black wide-brimmed hat and well tailored suit.

Behind The Entrepreneur stands a smaller man, THE SHERPA (37), whose freshly bloodshot eye seems out of place amid his concerned expression.

His faded black shirt buttoned up to his throat and worn out cotton jacket betray his meager means.

A wider view reveals that it's the Criminal whose gun is pointed at the unsaddled horse.

Out of the parched desert ground, a ten foot tall tree managed to grow before dying in the scorching sun of the badlands.

(CONTINUED)

Its brittle wooden branches creak as ravens perch on them, watching the stand-off.

The Criminal stares the Nomad down and cocks his gun.

The Nomad is shaking with rage and it seems ready to boil over.

FLASH TO WHITE

FLASHBACK EXT. ROCKY OUTCROPPING, MID AFTERNOON

An old, worn out boot THUDS to the ground, SMASHING the skeletal remains of a small animal.

The wearer's toes are exposed and bloodied.

The Nomad continues to walk through the bones as if they were nothing but another sand dune.

His pace is steady until he comes upon a footprint in the mud.

Hunching down to examine the print, he feels out the shape and size of it.

He gets to his feet and continues his pace.

Reaching the crest of a rocky ridgeline, he removes an unusual brass device from his duster's inside pocket

With a POP, he unfolds it into an antique set of binoculars.

A man, MILTON (30), is in the distance, walking in the Nomad's direction.

Milton's straw hat and tweed jacket are of no interest to the Nomad.

But Milton's shiny black boots are.

FADE TO BLACK

FLASHBACK EXT. DESERT BADLANDS, LATE AFTERNOON

Milton walks with his head down, plodding along dutifully when he is startled by a firm and gravelly voice.

(CONTINUED)

NOMAD

Who in the hell are you?

The Nomad has not only taken Milton by surprise, but the very image of him has terrified Milton.

MILTON

P-pardon me?

NOMAD

I said, what's your name, stranger.

Milton looks behind him, as if there might be another man that the Nomad is addressing.

MILTON

Uh, Milton... Milton Joyce.

The Nomad stands in silence for a moment.

Milton looks around, unsure about what to do next.

NOMAD

Those are some fine looking boots,
Milton.

Milton quickly glances down at his footwear, before returning his frantic attention to the Nomad.

NOMAD

So where are you heading?

Milton's concern seems to be lessening.

MILTON

Looking to get some place, past the
desert--

As if he anticipated Milton's words before he said them, the Nomad cuts him off.

NOMAD

Milton you are wasting your time.
There ain't nothin' past this
desert.

Milton unconvinced, shaking his head with a smile and a sparkle in his eye.

MILTON

See, the way I hear it, there IS
something past the desert... and
it's worth the trip. It's like a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MILTON (cont'd)
dream, a place with no whores, no
crime, no gambling. A place a man
can raise a family in peace--

BLAM!!

In one quick motion, the Nomad has drawn his pistol and
gunned Milton down in cold blood.

A perfect shot right to the heart.

Milton's body slumps to the ground in a motionless heap.

CROSS DISSOLVE

OPENING TITLES

"SIX REASONS WHY"

Main titles play over silhouetted images of gunslingers
firing on each other, as if a James Bond title sequence was
in a Sergio Leone Spaghetti Western.

The music is the familiar call-and-answer style of Ennio
Morricone.

FADE TO BLACK

FLASHBACK INT. CAVE EARLY EVENING

The Nomad is carving the name "Milton Joyce" into the wall
of a dimly lit rockface.

The light pouring in from the mouth of the cave is barely
enough to illuminate his handywork.

As he puts the finishing touches on, it's clear that
Milton's is not the only name in the cave.

The walls are lined with engravings on both sides, the first
and last names of wandering folk that have met the same fate
as Milton.

NOMAD
Like I said Milton, ain't nothing
past this desert.

The Nomad leaves the cave and is joined by his white,
flea-bitten horse as ravens circle overhead.

FADE TO BLACK

FLASHBACK EXT. FIREPIT NIGHT

The Nomad is cleaning his gun, stripping the muzzle with grease and peering through the barrel into the fire.

NOMAD

We've been out here twelve years
now, and I still do not get what
you bring to this partnership.

He grabs for the chamber of his revolver, spinning it back into place.

NOMAD

It's not often we get a wealthy
dandy like that come our way.

The Nomad admires the fine engraving of his pistol, running his fingers down the barrel before holstering the gun.

NOMAD

Ah, well. He was looking for
something that wasn't supposed to
be found, wasn't he?

Admiring the shiny new black boots on his feet, he takes them off and polishes them.

NOMAD

To his credit though, he had fine
taste when it came to footwear.

Staring into the fire, the Nomad seems to be lost in thought.

NOMAD

(listlessly)

You know, almost as good as the old
Preacher's was.

He tucks in for sleep, looking over to his horse as if anticipating a response from it.

NOMAD

You know, I think I'm gonna dream
about a fine young lady tonight,
how about you?

The horse is still staring off in the distance, as if the Nomad were not even there.

NOMAD

(sarcastically)

No, no, don't tell me, we can talk
about it over coffee in the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NOMAD (cont'd)
morning. Goodnight you gruesome
four-legged pain in the ass.

Putting his hat over his eyes, he begins to doze into a dream.

FLASH TO WHITE

DREAM SEQUENCE EXT. GRAND GREEK TEMPLE

A child's point of view darts in and out of a field of tall grass, emerging at an alien looking, eroded land form.

Rocks and sand spiral up impossibly toward the sky, well above the height of the child.

Beyond the columns of an ancient Greek gateway in the distance, a curiously riderless horse gallops hard and fast through the desert.

It kicks up a sandstorm in its wake.

The wild power of the animal transfixes the child.

A hand reaches for his shoulder, snapping him out of the trance.

Standing over him is the PREACHER (55), a tall, wizened man, a priest's white collar around his neck, and a gunslinger's gunbelt around his waist.

He is calm, proud, and smiling into the distant horizon.

PREACHER
(poetically)
Son, when the sea is calm, each
sailer appears as skilled as the
next. But when the sea becomes
angry, only the finest sailer can
guide his ship through treacherous
waters.

The child's attention is distracted by the sounds of a sobbing woman.

He turns to see a proudly composed man in his forties forcing a smile while a woman wails with anguish, reaching out toward the boy.

Tears run down her face.

(CONTINUED)

The couple are flanked on either side by female gunslingers with chiseled, emotionless expressions.

The Preacher's hand on his shoulder brings the boy's attention back.

Kneeling now to look the child in the eye, the Preacher's tone loses its listless calm in favor of a more focused tone.

PREACHER

(sternly)

You've proven to our city that you
are our finest. You've been chosen,
like many before you to protect us.
Your responsibility is now our
city.

Slowly, the Preacher gets to his feet, looks to his right and nods.

PREACHER

To keep us pure, to keep us safe.
Congratulations son, your time has
come.

The Preacher is handed a ceremonial ark draped in a red satin cloth.

PREACHER

You've worked long and hard for
this.

Removing the cloth, the Preacher reveals an intricately crafted sixshooter, its polished rosewood handle bears a single glistening chrome star.

PREACHER

You're ready to enter the badlands
now son, with this noble steed as
your companion.

The child's point of view changes to the horse, whose black bowlingball eye returns his gaze before plodding off into the desert.

PREACHER (VO)

Just look after the horse. As long
as you draw breath, he will not
leave your side.

FLASH TO WHITE

FLASHBACK EXT. FIREPIT EARLY MORNING

The Nomad's eyes dart open.

The fire has turned smoking embers and the horse stands over him, awake and unblinking.

The horse steps back a few feet to rummage through a bag of oats.

Looking over at the horse, the Nomad's expression of surprise turns to one of deep concern.

NOMAD
(whispering)
Sonofabitch.

The Nomad pulls his collar up over his face, peering just over the top at the horse.

He does not return to sleep.

FADE TO BLACK

FLASHBACK EXT. DRIED UP RIVERBED, EARLY MORNING

The Nomad shuffles through his patrol of the parched dusty desert landscape, passing the occasional animal skull and tumbleweed

The horse keeps pace at his side.

The Nomad fidgets with his gun in a regular, percussive beat.

Tapping the handle, now drawing it from his gunbelt.

Pulling back the hammer, now spinning the chamber.

Holstering the gun, now tapping the handle again.

NOMAD
(gritting his teeth)
You know, I always thought we was
on the level. A team. I always -- I
always thought that sooner or later
you were going to take me home.

The Nomad's usual low, rumbling voice cracks for the first time with anguish.

(CONTINUED)

NOMAD
(angry)
Back to my family!

He holsters his gun and calms himself.

NOMAD
But that ain't what you do, is it?
No... you wander around out here
just waiting for the dumb son of a
bitch you're with to die so you can
go back and get a fresh one.

His boot SLAMPS to the desert floor onto the skull of a small animal.

The sunbleached bones shatter, landing with muted thumps in the sand as he stands, shaking, staring at the horse.

The horse's attention is elsewhere. It looks off into the distance, seemingly ignoring the Nomad.

NOMAD
(furious)
Isn't that right?!

The Nomad sighs at the horse's complete non-reaction. He regains his composure.

NOMAD
So tell me something, friend. How
are you really going to know when
I'm dead? You're just a horse, you
ain't no doctor. You're just a
horse...

In a moment of revelation, the Nomad stops in his tracks with a smile on his face that looks as if it might be his first in his life.

He slowly looks over at the horse.

NOMAD
(whispering)
Just a horse.

FADE TO BLACK

FLASHBACK EXT. ROCKY OUTCROPPING LATE MORNING

Through binoculars, a lone man can be seen in the distance hiking up a hillside, his snakeskin boots slipping on the rough terrain.

The man's dusty black poncho and faded jeans look to be years older than the elegant black cowboy hat on his head.

NOMAD
(frustrated)
Ah, shit. Just when I was onto
something clever...

The man in the distance takes a moment to catch his breath.

NOMAD
Another dead man strolls into my
desert.

Taking off his pristine black hat, The Criminal reveals his face.

The Nomad looks over his shoulder at the horse.

NOMAD
(sarcastically)
Like you care.

He gazes back down the hillside at the approaching man.

FADE TO BLACK

FLASHBACK EXT. DESERT HOODOOS MID-MORNING

The Nomad sits quietly in the shadow of alien-looking stalagmites of rock and sand.

The Hoodoos.

He is polishing bullets from his holster and loading them into his gun.

At the precise moment he loads the final bullet and closes the cylinder the Criminal rounds the corner,

The Criminal finds himself directly in the sights of a gun as the Nomad draws back the hammer.

The Criminal's hands flinch toward his guns.

The Nomad looks his target up and down, before cracking a small grin.

(CONTINUED)

NOMAD
Your fly is down.

CRIMINAL
I like the breeze.

The Criminal spits chewing tobacco, punctuating his statement.

The Nomad's unsaddled horse whinnies in the background.

CRIMINAL
Peculiar horse you got there. You ride bareback?

NOMAD
Nope.

The Nomad points his gun away from the Criminal and slowly releases the hammer.

CROSS DISSOLVE

FLASHBACK EXT. DESERT BADLANDS MORNING

A timelapse of the barren badlands follows the arc of the morning sun as it creeps up across the sky, scorching the parched desert as it reaches its zenith.

CROSS DISSOLVE

FLASHBACK EXT. DESERT HOODOOS LATE MORNING

Having holstered their guns and taken some boulders as seats, the Criminal and the Nomad seem to be staring one another down.

The Nomad spits in his hand, offering it to the Criminal to shake in agreement.

CRIMINAL
Well I've taken stranger jobs,
but... I really can't remember
when.

Looking at his outstretched hand, the Nomad awaits a firmer agreement than that.

NOMAD
Well?

(CONTINUED)

With a juicy tobacco filled spit, the Criminal returns the gesture.

The Criminal's hand is dripping with brown saliva.

Suddenly, an echoed voice cuts the silence like a knife.

VOICE(VO)

(echoed)

A little dynamite goes a long way

Simultaneously, both gunmen's reflexes kick in as they drop to the ground, and crawl to the lip of a nearby rocky cliff.

The Nomad opens his antique binoculars with a POP.

The Criminal draws open a telescope of his own.

The two peer down the cliffside.

The Nomad's point of view reveals two small figures in the distance heading toward them.

The Nomad tucks away his binoculars.

NOMAD

Our business will have to wait. I
need to go palaver with those gents
down there. You'll want to be on
your way, I expect.

The Criminal closes up his telescope.

CRIMINAL

Yeah, that would be for the best.

NOMAD

I'll need at least tonight. No,
no... give me two days.

CRIMINAL

Yeah, You know the old Cheyenne
Coal Mine?

NOMAD

Yep.

CRIMINAL

It'll go down there.

The gunslingers both crawl away, disappearing back behind the cliffside.

FADE TO BLACK

FLASHBACK EXT. DRIED UP RIVER BED, HIGH NOON

The Nomad stands with his horse beside him, blocking the path of the two approaching men.

With a careful eye on the stranger standing in front of them the Entrepreneur and Sherpa both come to a halt.

Looking the two men up and down, the Nomad throws back his duster, revealing his six-shooter. He places his hand on the handle, drawing the gaze of both men toward it.

NOMAD

Long way from home, boys?

ENTREPRENEUR

Hello! Sir?! We're sorry if we've infringed on any territories but we were led to believe this land was unclaimed.

NOMAD

That's true enough. I've never met a man alive who would lay claim to a stretch of hell like this.

The Sherpa fidgets under the weight of his backpack, his attention split between his boss and the mysterious stranger.

NOMAD (CONT'D)

What is your business out here?

ENTREPRENEUR

We're tracking a man in black, headed west across the Badlands.

NOMAD

That so? Might be I've seen fresh tracks headed west. Might also be I could show you...

The Entrepreneur looks over at the Sherpa eagerly.

NOMAD (CONT'D)

...if you got something to offer.

ENTREPRENEUR

I've got a bit of money.

SHERPA

(under his breath)
And some silver.

(CONTINUED)

ENTREPRENEUR

And some silver!

NOMAD

If I can't eat it, and I can't
drink it, what good is it to me?

The Nomad begins to saunter toward the Entrepreneur. The Sherpa looks nervously at his boss, who gestures to the rucksack.

In a flash, the Sherpa is frantically emptying the contents of the bag on to the desert floor one by one.

Money, then twine, then a wanted poster.

The Nomad is getting closer.

Then a newspaper, then a canteen, then a coin purse.

The Nomad is only a few paces away.

The Sherpa finally turns the bag upside down, spilling everything out of the bag in a pile.

The Nomad stops close enough to breathe on the Entrepreneur.

He bends down, looking at the scattered belongings, sifting through them. He reaches for two silver cylinders.

Two AA Batteries.

NOMAD

Hmm... this'll do it boys.

The two companions amazed expressions, before the Nomad promptly turns away to climb the dried up river bank.

NOMAD

Let's go.

The Entrepreneur follows immediately, giving the Sherpa silent instructions to pack everything back up.

CROSS DISSOLVE

FLASHBACK EXT. BADLANDS AFTERNOON

Over sand dunes, under rocky ridgelines and across more dried up rivers, streams and ponds, the three men hike along with the horse as the sun creeps across the sky.

(CONTINUED)

The Nomad and horse weather the terrain and heat with ease, forcing the staggering and parched Entrepreneur to struggle just to keep up.

Climbing to the summit of another steep hill, he pauses to catch his breath. His hand reaches into the small sachel at his side, pulling out a bloodied newspaper.

The Sherpa catches up with the Entrepreneur in time to share a solemn look with his boss.

With a nod, the Entrepreneur tucks the paper back into his bag, marching forward with a reinvigorated stride.

CROSS DISSOLVE

FLASHBACK EXT. BADLANDS MID AFTERNOON

The three men continue to walk the desert, when something catches the Sherpa's eye.

After a double-take he drops his rucksack and sprints off away from the others.

SHERPA
(yelling)
Water! I can't believe there's
water out here!

The Entrepreneur's eyes follow the Sherpa, and he spots the very same thing.

A tropical marsh surrounded on three sides by rolling hills. An oasis in the badlands.

He breaks into a run to catch up with his servant.

In no kind of hurry, the Nomad begrudgingly saunters toward the two celebrating travelers who are busily filling their canteens with marshwater.

NOMAD
I wouldn't drink that if I were
you.

The Nomad nonchalantly grabs the Entrepreneur's canteen from him just before he takes his first sip, draining it back into the marsh.

ENTREPRENEUR
What are you doing!?

(CONTINUED)

NOMAD

That ain't no water. A least no no more.

ENTREPRENEUR

What?

NOMAD

See those? Up There?

On the hillside that landlocks the marsh, an ancient wooden oil rig sits atop the highest peak.

ENTREPRENEUR

What are those?

NOMAD

They used to pump the E-85 to the old machines. They broke down, just like everything else in this place.

The Sherpa shares a suspicious glance with his boss. Neither man knows what to make of the Nomad's story.

NOMAD (CONT'D)

When that happened, it drained down the hillside into the valley. There's more death in here than water.

The Nomad hands the canteen back to the Entrepreneur, who snaps it back angrily, looking into its empty shell.

NOMAD (CONT'D)

What you don't believe me? Fine. Go ahead. Take your chances and try it for yourself. But I guarantee you'll be vulture pickin's in two days.

The Nomad strolls back from the shore of the water toward his horse.

Frustrated and thirsty, the Entrepreneur hurls his poisoned canteen in to the marsh with a desperate scream.

The Sherpa looks down, hiding his eyes from the disappointed glare of his boss.

CROSS DISSOLVE

FLASHBACK EXT. BADLANDS LATE AFTERNOON

In the golden light of the setting sun, the Entrepreneur struggles to stay on his feet. His trusty Sherpa offers to help him stand but is rejected by his proud employer.

The Nomad's pace comes to a sudden halt. He twists the toe of his boot into the sand and cracks a smile as he looks down.

Drawing his gun, he turns to face his two guests. The Entrepreneur and the Sherpa look down in terror at his six shooter.

He pulls the hammer back.

BANG!

The Nomad has fired a round into the parched desert floor and a spring of water exploded from the ground, gushing clear, clean water.

NOMAD

Drink up ladies, it's supper time.

The Nomad walks off to set camp as the Entrepreneur falls to the ground, lapping the water from the dirty ground like a thirsty dog.

FADE TO BLACK

FLASHBACK EXT. FIREPIT NIGHT

The Nomad's horse noses into a saddlebag on the ground and comes out chewing a mouthful of thick grass as he watches the Nomad and his companions.

The three men sit around a large crackling fire, eating in an awkward silence.

The Nomad focuses contentedly on his usual meal of stew while sizing up the other two.

The Entrepreneur wolfs his meal down noisily until his eye is caught by the Sherpa's.

ENTREPRENEUR

We uh... we can't thank you enough for this. It's delicious.

(CONTINUED)

NOMAD

You boys shoulda packed a little
bit more for this trip, don't you
think?

SHERPA

We didn't think the journey would
be so hard. There's nothing to eat
out here at all.

NOMAD

Right. I can see how the name
Badlands might have thrown you.

The Entrepreneur takes the off-hand remark in-stride, and
looking for another way to lighten the mood, reaches into
his bag for a bottle.

ENTREPRENEUR

You care for some?

NOMAD:

Bad idea. You'll be dry enough from
the desert; no need for drinking
that.

The Nomad catches a whiff of the liquor and is curious, just
the same.

NOMAD (CONT'D)

But What is it?

ENTREPRENEUR

First Malt sarsaparilla. It's
almost as old as I am. My father
had it bottled the day I was born.
I was saving it for a special
occasion.

NOMAD

What makes today so auspicious?

ENTREPRENEUR

Just thanking God that we found
you.

The Nomad winces as if in pain at the sound of the word
"God".

NOMAD

God huh? Lemme tell you something.
That son of a bitch ain't got no
place at my fire.

(CONTINUED)

The Entrepreneur tries to play off the comment, by quoting his father with a hint of sarcasm.

ENTREPRENEUR

My father used to say Atheism was
the devil's religion.

The Nomad's deadpan expression is unchanged.

SHERPA

My father used to say that calling
Atheism a religion is like calling
bald a hair colour...

With a hearty laugh, the Nomad cracks a smile and reaches for the Entrepreneur's bottle.

NOMAD

I'll drink to that...

NOMAD (CONT'D)

that's good stuff.

The Entrepreneur winks at his employee and offers him a sip from the bottle.

SHERPA

Ahhh... Thanks.

The Nomad reaches into his own saddlebag to pull out a strange small chrome box. Sliding open a compartment on the side, he fishes in his pocket for the two AA batteries that slip perfectly inside.

ENTREPRENEUR

What's that?

NOMAD

It's my tunebox.
Listen.

Placing the box on the ground as if it were made of the most delicate crytsal, the Nomad touches a single button and closes his eyes.

SHERPA

I've never seen a tunebox like that
before.

The Nomad's eyes dart open, offended that someone is interrupting his enjoyment of the music.

(CONTINUED)

NOMAD

Well now you have.
Listen.

After a moment of holding back his urge to speak, the Sherpa can't resist any longer.

SHERPA

Can I ask you where you got that?

The Nomad's eyes open with frustration again.

NOMAD

No.

ENTREPRENEUR

What kind of music is this?

Opening his eyes slowly and calmly, he reaches for the Entrepreneur's bottle.

NOMAD

It's drinking music. Not talking
music.

The men carouse at the campfire.

They enjoy the music and the sarsaparilla, getting more and more drunk until the Sherpa breaks into dancing to entertain his two fire mates.

The lyrics to the song are sung by a gruff voiced bluesman with pain in his every word.

SONG: COLD WIND

*Well the fire's been burning slowly
since the cold wind bit my soul.
I can feel it in my bones.
And the sun is bearing down on me
with more than I can take.
And it's tearing me awake.
Oh yes it is.
I wake up everyday the same as it
was yesterday.
And I know I'll wake up tomorrow
next to my sorrows.
It's a lonely road,
when you walk it alone.
Yes it is.
And all you're really trying to do
is make it home.
Make it home.*

FADE TO BLACK

FLASHBACK EXT. FIREPIT, LATER THAT NIGHT

In the dying firelight, the Sherpa sits gazing drunkenly into the red embers.

The Nomad is laying down on the opposite side of the fire, his hat over his face as his horse watches from a few feet away.

Closer to the dim firelight, the Entrepreneur stares at an ivory-handled sixshooter as he wipes a handkerchief at its bloodstained handle.

ENTREPRENEUR

Hey, uh, stranger. You ever kill someone?

NOMAD

(groggily)

I've been known to end a man's life from time to time.

ENTREPRENEUR

I killed a man yesterday, I think. With this gun right here.

The Nomad lifts his hat from his face, looking over to the Entrepreneur's Sherpa.

NOMAD

What about you. You ever kill a man?

SHERPA

Ahhhh... I was never one for killing men. And besides, it's not how many you kill... but why you started killing in the first place.

NOMAD:

Seems to me that if you're pulling the trigger, you gotta have a reason for doing so.

With that, the Nomad places his hat back over his face to doze off.

FLASH TO WHITE

DREAM SEQUENCE EXT. GRAND GREEK TEMPLE

A child's point of view sees a sobbing woman dragged away by two female gunslingers.

The man gripping her hand is pulled away with tears running down his bearded face as he looks back at the child, reaching for him.

The Preacher's clear voice rings out, capturing the child's attention.

PREACHER

Listen to me carefully, son. You're
younger than all the others before
you, and your training is not
complete.

Bending onto one knee, the Preacher grabs the child by the shoulder.

PREACHER

But your spirit and your courage
give me hope. And we cannot wait
any longer.

The Preacher reaches for the amulet he wears around his neck, a two-inch spiral seashell hanging by a leather strap.

PREACHER

Now you see this? This pattern?
Remember to watch for it. Watch for
the burn of the exiles. The
banished ones are few, but they are
dangerous.

The child's point of view is drawn to the horse beside him. Watching it pass between the Greek columns and into the desert, the Preacher's words ring in his ears.

PREACHER

Just look after the horse. So long
as you draw breath, he'll be by
your side.

FLASH TO WHITE

FLASHBACK EXT. FIREPIT, EARLY MORNING

The Nomad wakes up, looking around with a dull expression.

Too much sarsaparilla.

He calmly, quietly rises to his feet, grabbing his shotgun as he does.

Walking over to the Sherpa, he rifle whips the sleeping man with a THUD.

Startled by the noise, the Entrepreneur leaps to his feet.

With the CRACK of a home-run, the Nomad backhands the rifle butt across his face, knocking the Entrepreneur out and breaking his nose.

The Entrepreneur lands in a limp heap on top of the Sherpa.

CUT TO BLACK.

FLASHBACK EXT. FIREPIT MORNING

Across from the Nomad, the Entrepreneur is slumped up against a boulder, tied up and unconscious.

Beside him the Sherpa lays facedown in a pool of blood.

The Entrepreneur begins to groggily lift his head.

NOMAD

I got two questions for you. The
answer to one will get you killed.
The answer to the second will keep
you breathing.

When the Entrepreneur starts to lose consciousness, the Nomad storms over and wakes him back up with a loud SLAP!

NOMAD

(angrily))

Now you listen to me gutless piece
of shit!

Kicking the rock right beside the Entrepreneur's head, the Nomad leans in to speak quietly but intensely.

NOMAD

I don't know what kind of ruckus
you're trying to bring down on me,
but if you don't tell me where my

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NOMAD (cont'd)
goddam horse is, I will kick you so
hard you'll be wearing your ass as
a hat.

Coughing up blood and weazing, he struggles to answer the question.

ENTREPRENEUR
I dunno-- I dunno where your horse
is.

NOMAD
One more time, nice and slow...

Leaning in even closer to the Entrepreneur, speaking slowly and methodically.

NOMAD
where... is... my horse.

Once again, the Entrepreneur blacks out.

NOMAD
Shit.

FADE TO BLACK

FLASHBACK EXT. BADLANDS HIGH NOON

The Nomad investigates a patch of dusty cracked ground, running his fingers along the contours of an imprint.

NOMAD
Yep

The Nomad gets to his feet, confidently and looks off into the distance.

The Entrepreneur and Sherpa stand behind him, their bloody and battered faces following the direction of his gaze.

NOMAD
These are his tracks alright. That
thieving bastard is heading back
east... toward the coal mine.

Looking over his shoulder, he's reminded of his companions.

NOMAD
(quietly)
Sorry...

(CONTINUED)

Clearing his voice, to make for a more sincere apology.

NOMAD

Sorry about the rifle whippings
boys. I've always been more of a
trouble shooter myself.

With a wince, the Entrepreneur opens his mouth to speak

ENTREPRENEUR

No trouble. No trouble at all.

Despite one bloodied eye swollen closed, the Sherpa chimes
in with agreement.

SHERPA

Nope. No trouble.

The Nomad tracks the prints over a nearby hillside, and
crouches into a crawl.

Peering over the edge with his binoculars, his point of view
catches the Criminal peering right back at him with his
telescope.

NOMAD

Son of a bitch

FLASH TO WHITE

PRESENT DAY SHOWDOWN, EXT. DESERT BADLANDS AFTERNOON

Birds of prey can be heard cawing as they soar over the
stand-off, as if waiting for a meal.

The four men, still locked in their stand-off, continue to
stare each other down.

Tonging a wad of chewing tobacco, the Criminal calls the
Nomad's bluff, and is about to spit it on his horse.

His rage about to boil over, the Nomad cocks back the hammer
of his gun aimed the man who is threatening to kill his
horse.

Eyes wide, and the Nomad's threat heard loud and clear, the
Criminal swallows his tobacco with a hard gulp.

The Criminal winces in the glare of the afternoon sun, and
slowly reaches behind his head for the hat the hangs there.

(CONTINUED)

With a slow and steady movement he pulls the hat up and onto his head, blocking the sun from his eyes. His stare is darts from the Nomad to the Entrepreneur, who is now trembling with rage.

Their eyes meet and the two recognize one another.

Tears being to well up in the Entrepreneur's eyes as he stares at the Eagle crest on the brim of the Criminal's classy, well-kept hat.

FLASH TO WHITE

FLASHBACK EXT. BRIDGE OVERLOOKING A RUSHING RIVER, SUNSET

The Entrepreneur stands beside his Father (52) who is dressed in a fine suit with a black hat bearing an eagle crest.

The vista before them is breathtaking. A river rushes beneath their feet as they look on to see a monorail train gliding across an enormous spanbridge.

FATHER

Isn't that a thing of beauty?

Putting his arm around his son, the Entrepreneur's father speaks about his life's work as if he were describing a work of art.

FATHER

I've been the engineer making the train go wherever I wanted it to go. And here we are, all the way to New Gibraltar, and before those damn zeppelins have a place to put down, too.

ENTREPRENEUR

They're not far behind, are they, now?

FATHER

Not at all. But that's not a problem for my lifetime, son. You and your brother's going to be the engineers. You'll press on, beyond new Gibraltar.

ENTREPRENEUR

Into the badlands....

(CONTINUED)

The Entrepreneur's sublime expression melts off his face as dread takes a hold of him.

ENTREPRENEUR

is it true what they say? What's out there? Just wild, forgotten things?

FATHER

Pah, that's superstition and myth. Men like us have shone the light of civilization in the dark corners of the world. And the badlands will one day be no different.

A second train passes overhead, its silhouette is all that can be seen in the crimson clouds of the setting sun.

FADE TO BLACK

FLASHBACK INT. BAR NIGHT

A frontier bar is packed with rough living pilgrims and hard working pioneers. The live music being played by a guitarman and his djambe player can barely be heard over the loud ruckus of drunken conversation.

A geisha brings noodles and sushi to a table occupied by a pair of arm-wrestling twins, while another sits on the lap of an old bearded man with one eye playing power with a cigar chomping woman.

The sheriff sits off in a corner, passed out with a whiskey bottle in his hand after pissing himself.

The bartender, OTTER (35) is uncapping a few stubby bottles of beer while having his ear talked off by YURI (40), a local patron wearing a bomber jacket with emblazoned with the words "H2 Zeppelins"

YURI

If you ask my opinion, that greedy railway bastard got exactly what was coming to him.

OTTER

Nobody asked your opinion, mate. Shut your gup, drink your juice.

YURI

Hard to do both things at once, don't you think, Otter? But I can't argue with the second part.

(CONTINUED)

Yuri slams back a double shot of god knows what and shudders hard, kicking the bar twice while he swallows it.

YURI

I've got a feeling there's going to be a lot of demand for my trade in this city.

OTTER

I don't get what's so big about them zeppelins anyway! They only fit six blokes at once!

YURI

It's SEVEN! If they're skinny like you, you limey weasel.

OTTER

I'll have you know, I'm the ideal body mass for me height!

The barkeep slides the serving tray of open beer bottles over the sushi chef beside him.

With a loud yell, the sushi chef calls over one of the geisha to pick up the order.

She is there in an instant to carry the rolls over to a table with two men seated at it and several empty sake bottles scattered across it.

The geisha sets the tray down on a bloodied newspaper and serves the men their food.

The Sherpa thanks the geisha, tipping her two coins, as the Entrepreneur stares blankly into the glass in his hand.

The geisha lifts the tray to leave, the headline on the newspaper:

"MONORAIL MOGUL TO OPEN STATION NUMBER SIX"

The Sherpa takes a shot of sake, before leaning across the table to speak.

SHERPA

(whispering)

How many people can you think of wanted your father killed before the station opened.

FLASH TO WHITE

FLASHBACK INT. HOTEL LOBBY MID-DAY

The Entrepreneur follows his father down the grand staircase of an opulent hotel, laughing and talking with his Sherpa behind him.

His father walks out the front door and immediately twelve gunshots are heard.

The Entrepreneur and Sherpa share a terrified look before racing down the stairs and out the door.

FLASHBACK RETURN TO INT. BAR NIGHT

Pouring a shot of sake, the Entrepreneur is distant and unfocused, drowning in sorrow and booze.

ENTREPRENEUR

(slurring)

There's no end to how many people
wanted him to fail. But murdered...
I don't know.

He slams back his shot of sake.

FLASHBACK EXT. HOTEL PORCH MID-DAY

By the time the Entrepreneur reaches his father, he's choking to death from a gunshot wound to the throat.

He looks up in the direction of the sun to see the silhouette of the killer steal his father's black hat.

The Sherpa makes it to the doorway just in time to see the killer make a run for it.

Drawing his six shooter from his gunbelt, The Sherpa races off after him.

BLAM.

BLAM.

BLAM.

BLAM.

BLAM.

BLAM.

(CONTINUED)

The Sherpa empties his gun of all six bullets, but the killer escapes.

FLASH TO WHITE

FLASHBACK RETURN TO INT. BAR NIGHT

The Sherpa is leaning across the table to speak in a low voice over the loud noise of the bar.

SHERPA

Think about it, There's the Mayor,
he's a had a problem your father
had for years. And there's those
sons of bitches at H2.

The Entrepreneur seems to be miles away, paying no attention to the Sherpa's line of questioning.

ENTREPRENEUR

(heartbroken)

I don't know why... why they let
him have it, you know. They just
gave it to him.

The Sherpa is about to take another sip of sake, but is taken by surprise.

SHERPA

(outraged)

What?

ENTREPRENEUR

The business, the company. They're
handing it over to Mojan...

The Sherpa slowly sinks back in his chair, stunned and speechless.

ENTREPRENEUR

you know that idiot couldn't even
get on a train, let alone decide
where it should go.

SHERPA

Right now you got to prove to the
board that you're the better heir.

ENTREPRENEUR

So, uh, what do you think I should
do?

(CONTINUED)

The Entrepreneur is half in the bag after the sake they've been drinking, and begins to lash out angrily at his friend.

ENTREPRENEUR
(sarcastically)
You think I should just pack my
bags, walk across the bridge,
stroll into the badlands and build
the next monorail station?!

The Sherpa likes what he's hearing, smiling and nodding.

Slowly, the Entrepreneur realizes that his friend is actually on board for what was meant as a joke.

The Entrepreneur's brow furrows angrily.

SHERPA
(defensively)
What? What? What? It's your idea.

The Sherpa is slowly becoming even more convinced.

SHERPA
And the gunman, he did head that way. Listen, there ain't nothing past town but the bridge. There ain't nothing past the bridge but the Badlands.

ENTREPRENEUR
And what's after the Badlands?

SHERPA
(thoughtfully)
I couldn't say. But there ain't no mono-stations. I mean, not yet.

The Entrepreneur looks listlessly at his friend while a newscast begins on Otter's bar room radio.

FEMALE NEWSCASTER
New Gibraltar's most famous
billionaire was shot dead on the
steps of the grand hotel this
afternoon, in what his family is
calling an assassination.
The monorail empire left in his
absence has been slated to fall to
his eldest son.
With this change of management, the
future of the monorail has been
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FEMALE NEWSCASTER (cont'd)

cast in doubt.

As a result, value projections for the monorail's chief rival corporation, H2 Zeppelin, have reached record highs.

The alleged killer remains at large and was last seen headed due west, into the Badlands.

A handsome reward has been offered by the family.

YURI

(drunkenly)

I'd like to propose a toast: to the son of a bitch that shot that greedy bastard in the throat.

Raising his drink in the air with a splash, he toasts the entire bar before drinking the entire glass.

YURI

Couldn't have done better myself!

The Entrepreneur downs his double shot of sake in a single gulp, and slamming the empty glass to the table, he gets up out of his chair.

SHERPA

Don't do anything stupid, now.

ENTREPRENEUR

Don't worry, this round is on me.

Walking across the bar with a drunken gait to his saunter, The Entrepreneur gets to the bar.

Without looking at him, the Entrepreneur addresses Yuri.

ENTREPRENEUR

You know... you're not fooling anyone.

Also refusing to make eye-contact, Yuri talks into his empty cup instead.

YURI

Do you have something to say, little man?

The barkeep has seen more than on brawl break out over less serious topics than murder, and so tries to defuse the situation.

(CONTINUED)

OTTER

Hey! Hey... Bring it down a note.
We're all mates here... No need to
get all squirrely.

As if Otter never even opened his mouth, Yuri and the Entrepreneur continue.

ENTREPRENEUR

You uh... you Zeppelin bastards,
you think this is how business is
done, huh? Just kill off your
competition.

YURI

If you have something to say, why
don't you just come out and say it?

Otter can tell the situation has gone from bad to worse.
Wringing a bar towel around his fists, he prepares for the
worst.

ENTREPRENEUR

Sound advice.

The Entrepreneur slams Yuri's face into the bar with a SNAP
and throws him to the ground.

Reaching for his gun and grabbing it by the barrel, he leaps
onto Yuri, pistol whipping him in the face over and over.

The cracking sounds give way to crunching that gives way to
wet thuds as all the bustle of the bar comes to a halt.

Bar room onlookers are transfixed. Some fascinated, some
horrified.

The Sherpa watches his friend intently while enjoying his
remaining sake.

With a burst of radio static, the radio reception returns.

FEMALE NEWSCASTER

This is the first tragedy to strike
the so-called Golden Family of New
Gibraltar.

This marks the third passing of the
business from father to son, dating
back to the original founder,
Roland Morton who died of natural
causes in aught-three.

In related news, two days prior to
the assassination, the monorail

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FEMALE NEWSCASTER (cont'd)
tycoon's personal safe had been
broken into and cleaned out.
The sheriff's office has declined
to comment on any connection
between the two events pending an
ongoing investigation.

Calmly gathering up his jacket and hat in no rush
whatsoever, the Sherpa gets up from his table.

The Entrepreneur's screams of violent rage have turned to
heartbroken cries.

Yuri lies dead on the ground, a bloodied mess is all that
remains of where his face had been.

Standing behind his sobbing boss, the Sherpa steadies his
own stance and pulls the Entrepreneur off the body of Yuri.

Struggling and protesting, the drunken Entrepreneur is no
match for the Sherpa's firm grip.

The Sherpa heaves him out the batwing doors of the bar.

FLASHBACK EXT. THE STREETS OF NEW GIBRALTAR, BEFORE DAWN

Lit by an arcane mix of gas lamps and halogen streetlights,
New Gibraltar's dusty main drag is deserted until the
Entrepreneur's body lands in the middle with a THUD.

In a flash, the Sherpa is by his side, trying to help him
stand.

He can't.

SHERPA
Bad timing, brother. bad timing.

With a grunt, the Entrepreneur falls to his knees in defeat.

ENTREPRENEUR
(furious)
Bastard! That trash talking mother
fucker had it coming! You heard
what he said.

SHERPA
(calmly)
The sheriff, his deputies, the
goddam mayor! They've been just
waiting, trust me, they've been
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SHERPA (cont'd)
waiting for something like this.
Now isn't the time to pick a fight
with the law.

ENTREPRENEUR
That son of a bitch.

The Entrepreneur's rage boils away as tears well up in his eyes.

ENTREPRENEUR (CONT'D)
(sobbing)
That son of a bitch doesn't deserve
it. He didn't earn it like Dad did.

SHERPA
(consoling)
I know, I know. Your father's been
so good to me. I don't want to see
it fall apart now, ok?

ENTREPRENEUR
(sniveling)
I have the drive, I have the will.

SHERPA
You always have, brother.

ENTREPRENEUR
(sternly)
I have the right.

SHERPA
So what's the next move? What's the
next move?!

Wiping away his tears, the Entrepreneur's glassy-eyed
expression has faded, replaced with a steely gaze.

ENTREPRENEUR
We have to take control of the
situation. There's only one way to
go. That's west.

The Entrepreneur gets to his feet as the Sherpa helps him
steady.

ENTREPRENEUR
We have a monorail station to
build... and an assassin to track
down.

(CONTINUED)

The Sherpa looks around at the dark and empty streets of New Gibraltar.

SHERPA

Right now?

ENTREPRENEUR

Right now. We can't go home, not after that. We'll go to your house. You have enough gear there right?

SHERPA

Yeah.

ENTREPRENEUR

Good. I want to be at Westpoint bridge by morning.

A rumble can be heard as the first light of day creeps over the horizon, illuminating the shadow of a passing monorail train heading east.

The pair walk off in the opposite direction down the main drag.

FADE TO BLACK

FLASHBACK EXT. WESTPOINT BRIDGE, DAWN

Passing a sign marked "New Gibraltar Town Limits", the Entrepreneur, still wearing his bloodied clothes from the night before, leads the Sherpa who is now weighed down with a large rucksack on his back.

The two cross a wooden suspension bridge that creaks and sways beneath their combined weight.

Reaching the westerly side of the bridge, the Entrepreneur sits down on a support pylon and removes his bloodied gun from its holster, silently wiping at the thick crimson stains.

The Sherpa hands him a canteen of water.

SHERPA

You know... what happened back there... you'll learn to live with it.

ENTREPRENEUR

Right, easy for you to say.

(CONTINUED)

Taking a deep breath and looking around him, the Sherpa's eyes go glassy as he stares his boss down.

SHERPA

Trust me I know. I killed a man once.

ENTREPRENEUR

(shocked)

You never told me that.

SHERPA

It was early one morning, with some time to spare I snuck into my brother's room and borrowed his rifle.

His attention rapt, the Entrepreneur sips at his water.

SHERPA (CONT'D)

It was an old soldiers rifle back from the civil war days. He'd gotten it for his birthday that year. My pop said I could have one when I turned sixteen. Anyhow, I took it behind the house and sat up on the hill.

His voice cracks, the Sherpa is deeply pained at the recounting of this tale.

The Entrepreneur offers the canteen to his Sherpa, nodding for him to continue.

SHERPA (CONT'D)

I'd just look down the sight, imagining I was some kind of war hero or something. After a while I spotted this lone rider, crossing through the fields. I drew a bead on him, you know, to practice my aim.

With a sip from the water, the Sherpa begins to tear up.

SHERPA (CONT'D)

(defensively)

I don't know how but the I felt my brother's rifle go off and a shot rang out, people said they could hear it form miles away. So the horse, he kept running, but the rider was dead.

(CONTINUED)

A tear falls from the Sherpa's eye, disappearing in his thick beard.

SHERPA (CONT'D)

I didn't know what to do, so I started running. I ended up ditching the rifle and just kept on going. I remember running faster once I left it behind. I guess I finally stopped at the river, cause that's where the sheriff found, with my head in my hands.

Looking down at his hands, the Sherpa is unaware that the Entrepreneur's eyes have begun to well up with tears.

SHERPA (CONT'D)

He asked me why I took off like I did. And that's when it hit me, just what I had done.

The Sherpa's quiet, solemn speaking changes on a dime, becoming loud and forceful.

SHERPA (CONT'D)

(angrily)

And all for nothing, no good reason, you know, just one piece of lead. The whole town came to the courthouse the next morning. I still remember seeing the judge up on his chair, looking down at me. He told me to explain myself.

As if still searching for an explanation, the Sherpa shrugs in defeat.

SHERPA (CONT'D)

But I had nothing to say. I just saw that lone rider in my head, and it was clear what I had done. I'd orphaned his children. I Widowed his wife!

The Entrepreneur wipes at his eyes, realizing for the first time what his actions last night could mean to Yuri's loved ones.

SHERPA (CONT'D)

I left town that day, and I tried my best to forget. But I still dream about him

(CONTINUED)

ENTREPRENEUR

And how's that supposed to make me
feel better?

Looking up to the Entrepreneur with a stern expression
earned by years of living with this guilt.

SHERPA

I never said you'll feel better. I
said you'll learn to live with it.

The Sherpa tucks the water into his rucksack and stands up,
ready to go onward.

Regaining his composure, the Entrepreneur reaches for the
Sherpa's hand, who helps his boss get to his feet to resume
the westerly trek

CROSS DISSOLVE

FLASHBACK EXT. FOOTHILLS OF THE BADLANDS, MORNING

The Entrepreneur and Sherpa hike through grasslands that
give way to rocky hillsides that give way to the dry and
dusty foothills of the desert badlands.

As the two trek along, the Entrepreneur constantly asks for
the water canteens from the rucksack; his hangover from the
night before is making him drink far more than his share of
their supply.

CROSS DISSOLVE

FLASHBACK EXT. FOOTHILLS OF THE BADLANDS, LATE MORNING

Dried up and dying plant life barely clings to the parched
soil of the hillside that the Entrepreneur and Sherpa try
desperately to scale.

SHERPA

You think this terrain might be a
problem for the track gangs? It's
steep. Getting steeper.

Doing his best to brush off the comment, the Entrepreneur
tries to make his effort seem less strained.

ENTREPRENEUR

My father saw the rail through more
challenging terrain than this going
into New Gibraltar. The gangs
shouldn't have a problem with it.

(CONTINUED)

SHERPA

There's no bedrock here. Nothing
solid to build on.

ENTREPRENEUR

A few bumps, didn't stop my father
it sure as hell won't stop me.

Reaching a natural plateau in the terrain, the Entrepreneur
takes a moment to catch his breath as the Sherpa presses on
up the hill.

ENTREPRENEUR

A little Dynamite goes a long way.

The Sherpa reaches the summit of the hill, and stops
abruptly in his tracks when he does.

SHERPA

(with concern)

Yeah? Well, That's gonna take a lot
of dynamite.

Alarmed by his friend's tone, the Entrepreneur scrambles
up to join the Sherpa.

The view from the top is breathtaking.

Enormous rolling hills of parched and dusty badlands stretch
out in all directions with no even terrain in sight.

The Entrepreneur's face goes blank as his heart sinks.

SHERPA

That's ok. I hear a little dynamite
goes a long way.

The Sherpa hands over a fresh water canteen and starts
hiking into the Badlands.

FADE TO BLACK

FLASHBACK EXT. BADLANDS HIGH NOON

A lone water droplet dangles off the spout of a canteen.

After what seems like forever, it finally drops, landing on
the Entrepreneur's parched, cracked lips.

He desperately shakes the canteen with no result.

(CONTINUED)

SHERPA

That's the last of the water.

Resigned to the truth, the Entrepreneur tosses the empty canteen back to the Sherpa.

ENTREPRENEUR

It seems that way.

The Sherpa tucks away the canteen and looking back up, something catches his eye.

SHERPA

What the Fuck is that?

In the distance, distorted by the waves of heat coming off the baking desert sand, a six-legged figure is coming into view.

After a moment, it becomes clear that a man in a sun-bleached overcoat is walking beside a white horse.

NOMAD

Long way from home, boys?

CUT TO BLACK

FLASHBACK EXT. FIREPIT MORNING

The Entrepreneur wakes up in a bloodied daze, tied up and leaning with his back against a boulder. His point of view of the Nomad sitting in front of him slowly comes into focus.

Behind the Nomad he can see the Sherpa laying face down in a pool of blood.

He's not moving.

NOMAD

I got two questions for you. The answer to one will get you killed. The answer to the second will keep you breathing.

When the Entrepreneur starts to lose consciousness, the Nomad storms over and wakes him back up with a loud SLAP!

NOMAD

(angrily)

Now you listen to me gutless piece of shit!

(CONTINUED)

Kicking the rock right beside the Entrepreneur's head, the Nomad leans in to speak quietly but intensely.

NOMAD

I don't know what kind of ruckus
you're trying to bring down on me,
but if you don't tell me where my
goddam horse is, I will kick you so
hard you'll be wearing your ass as
a hat.

Coughing up blood and wheezing, he struggles to answer the question.

ENTREPRENEUR

I dunno-- I dunno where your horse
is.

NOMAD

One more time, nice and slow...

Leaning in even closer to the Entrepreneur, speaking slowly and methodically.

NOMAD

where... is... my horse.

Once again, the Entrepreneur blacks out.

CUT TO BLACK

NOMAD

Shit.

FLASHBACK EXT. FIREPIT HIGH NOON

The Entrepreneur wakes up with nothing in his field of view except the Sherpa's bloodied face staring back at him with one swollen, bloodshot eye.

Struggling to get up, they realize they've been hog-tied to one another and unable to move.

NOMAD (VO)

I can tell that you boys don't
spend a lot of time in the desert.
So let me bring you up to speed on
a few things.

Suddenly the Nomad drops dozens of bullets into a pile between their two faces.

(CONTINUED)

NOMAD

Those bullets for one. Did you know
that with the heat of the desert
sun, some bullets can go off all by
themselves. No hammer, no trigger,
just --

The Nomad snaps his finger with a loud CRACK that echoes

NOMAD

Like that. And from that distance,
make you boys look like what my
horse pushes out after every meal.
But, if you keep your jaws
clenched, you just might save your
tongues.

The Sherpa looks at the Entrepreneur hopefully.

NOMAD

Or you just might end up blowing
your teeth through the back of your
throat.

The Sherpa's eyes are now wide with terror. His focus darts
between the pile of bullets and the Entrepreneur's calm
expression.

NOMAD

Now you remember I said some
bullets. You see there are only two
real bullet makers left nowadays.

The Entrepreneur rolls his eyes.

NOMAD

Out in East Guernsey they use white
powder for their bullets. 'Cause
its stable, it's moist and they're
clean, too.

The Sherpa furrows his brow.

NOMAD

However in Antrim they use black
power. 'Cause it's cheaper. But
when the weather's right, they blow
like a sun of a bitch. So the
question is, boys...

The Nomad leans in close to the Entrepreneur.

(CONTINUED)

NOMAD

Do you know where your bullets are made?

ENTREPRENEUR

Is that your first or your second?

Taken aback by the question, the Nomad leans back for a moment in confusion.

NOMAD

(puzzled)

First or second what?

ENTREPRENEUR

You said you had two questions.

NOMAD

(surprised)

Huh. So I did.

Counting on his fingers, the Nomad realizes it's beside the point.

NOMAD

Well, looks like we're up to three questions, and still no answers.

ENTREPRENEUR

Look, you can beat me all day and I still won't know where your horse is. And I only buy white powder.

The Nomad looks down the pile of bullets and smiles.

NOMAD

Really? And what about your friend here?

The Sherpa's expression of terrified guilt says it all.

ENTREPRENEUR

(frantic)

Ok, alright, what's your third question?

NOMAD

(angry)

Why are you in my badlands?!

Leaning in, the Nomad speaks his threats calmly and clearly.

(CONTINUED)

NOMAD

If you lie to me now I will know
and I will kill you. If you tell me
the truth, well I can't promise I
wont kill you later. But I do
promise to let you worthless turds
live long enough to help me find my
horse.

ENTREPRENEUR

(frustrated)

I told you! We're tracking a man in
black headed west!

With a deep breath the Entrepreneur centres himself.

ENTREPRENEUR

Look, my father was about to finish
his life's work and return to his
home and his family. And some
cold-blooded bastard shot him
through the throat in New
Gibraltar. We just want to see him
pay for what he's done.

The Nomad grunts, thumbing his revolver, unsure what to make
of the Entrepreneur's story.

ENTREPRENEUR

(desperate)

If you don't believe me, the proof
is in the pack. Look in there.

Making his way over to the Sherpa's rucksack, the Nomad
examines a wanted poster.

NOMAD

(defeated)

Son of a bitch.

The Nomad gets to his feet and walks off angrily,
absent-mindedly leaving the Entrepreneur and Sherpa
hog-tied.

NOMAD

Get your gear, we're moving on.

The Nomad throws the wanted poster to the ground.

It bears the likeness of the Criminal wearing a black hat
with an eagle crest on the front.

FLASH TO WHITE

PRESENT DAY SHOWDOWN, EXT. DESERT AFTERNOON

Recognizing the Criminal's hat, the Entrepreneur is trembling with rage as he stands staring at his father's assassin.

The Criminal's eyes dart to the Entrepreneur's hand, which slowly creeps from his side to his gun belt.

In the silence, the sound of the Entrepreneur cocking the hammer of his pistol is deafening.

The Nomad's shakes his head at the Entrepreneur, aiming his pistol at him instead of the Criminal.

The three-on-one shoot-out has quickly become blurred and the Criminal's eyes dart feverishly between the men in front of him.

FLASH TO WHITE

FLASHBACK INT. CHEYENNE COAL REFINERY, AFTERNOON

An abandoned coal mine protrudes from a grassy hillside like a knife in a wound. The blackened wood is rotting off the buildings, and the conveyor belts have long since cracked from decades baking in the sun.

The Criminal is perched in the refinery's dark crow's nest with his telescope.

Something has caught his watchful eye and he is carefully tracking an approaching figure dressed in black.

FLASHBACK INT. CHEYENNE COAL REFINERY, AFTERNOON

In the corner of a large concrete hall, the Criminal sleeps with his hat down over his eyes and his poncho around him.

Footsteps can be heard as they echo in the cavernous room.

They're getting closer.

A figure steps half way out of the shadow, clearing his throat with a cough.

CRIMINAL

What's your business friend?
There's only two reasons why
someone comes up here.

(CONTINUED)

Slowly, two gun barrels emerge from beneath the Criminal's poncho, both aimed at the intruder.

CRIMINAL

To shoot me. Or to pay me.

Spitting on the floor, the Criminal looks up at his guest with a grimy tobacco-brown smile.

CRIMINAL

What'll it be?

Without a word, the stranger tosses a newspaper to the ground.

The headline reads:

"MONORAIL MOGUL TO OPEN STATION NUMBER SIX"

Moments later, three stacks of cash land with a THUD on to the newspaper.

A large eagle crested band is wrapped around each stack of cash.

Twelve gun shots ring out.

MATCH CUT TO:

FLASHBACK EXT. HOTEL PORCH MID-DAY

An eagle crest on a black hat glistens in the sun until a grimy hand reaches down to pick it up.

The Criminal puts the hat on his head with a smile.

His satisfied grin falters when he sees the Entrepreneur dart out of the hotel door.

While the Entrepreneur is distracted by the maimed he body of his father, the Criminal turns to escape.

The Sherpa comes running out of the hotel, stopping in the doorway at the sight of the slaughter.

His eyes meet the Entrepreneur's. Tears are running down his face as he cradles his father's body.

The Sherpa's expression turns from surprise to rage as he looks around for the killer.

Seeing the Criminal getting away, the Sherpa takes off in pursuit without hesitation.

(CONTINUED)

Reaching the two storey drop at the end of the hotel porch, the Criminal leaps over the banister.

With a SNAP, he lands painfully on the next floor, breaking the thin wooden planks, before falling another storey to the ground.

Rolling back up onto his feet, he sprints away from the hotel.

The Sherpa reaches the end of the porch and fires all six of his bullets.

BLAM!

BLAM!

BLAM!

BLAM!

BLAM!

BLAM!

The Criminal weaves back and forth at the sound of the bullets as he escapes.

FADE TO BLACK

FLASHBACK EXT. BADLANDS LATE AFTERNOON

The refreshing sounds of a beverage being poured into a cup can be heard.

A glass mug sits uncharacteristically on a dusty sand dune as it's filled to the brim with an amber liquid.

The Criminal is pissing into the cup.

After the Criminal finishes up he sits down with a sigh, taking a much needed load off.

Admiring the vista of the Badlands, he reaches for the mug beside him and drinks deep.

He drinks from it so greedily that it pours over the side of the mug and down his beard.

The Criminal drinks the mug dry.

With a refreshed sigh, he gets to his feet.

(CONTINUED)

After stashing his mug beneath his poncho, he saunters off into the setting sun.

FADE TO BLACK

FLASHBACK EXT. DESERT HOODOOS MID-MORNING

Surrounded by outcroppings of rock and sand, the Nomad's gun is trained on the Criminal.

Dead-to-rights, the Criminal's fingers twitch inches from his own double-pistol gunbelt.

CRIMINAL
You ride bareback?

NOMAD:
Nope. So where you heading,
stranger.

CRIMINAL
Just taking the long way home. Who
you waiting for?

NOMAD
You.

With a wet spit of brown tobacco, the Criminal looks around. No one else is in sight.

CRIMINAL
Well, that's the waiting part done.

The Nomad's eyes are drawn to the Criminal's unusual gunbelt.

NOMAD
Two guns, twelve shots. What's the
matter? Don't trust your first six
to get the job done?

CRIMINAL
Sometimes six isn't enough to bring
a man down the way he ought to be
brought down.

NOMAD
I don't see the need for wasting
twelve bullets on a single man.

(CONTINUED)

CRIMINAL

You never shot a man that was worth
it before. You see...

With a tobacco spit and a deep breath, the Criminal's eyes
take on a maliciousness as he smiles.

In his mind, the Criminal can hear two gunshots fire.

BLAM.

BLAM.

CRIMINAL

The first two go in the hands. So
he can't shoot back.

Two more gunshots.

BLAM.

BLAM.

CRIMINAL

The next two in the feet. To bring
him to his knees so he knows how it
feels.

The Nomad's interest is instantly piqued by this stranger's
craftsmanship with a pistol.

He enjoys the Criminal's visceral reliving of a gunfight,
almost hearing the fifth gunshot himself.

BLAM.

CRIMINAL

The fifth takes his hat off. So he
can feel the heat of a hard days
work.

BLAM.

CRIMINAL

Number six goes in the stomach.

With baited breath, the Nomad wait for the Criminal's next
words.

CRIMINAL

'Cause it hurts like hell.

(CONTINUED)

CRIMINAL
Stopping here is unacceptable. The
Next four go in the spleen.

BLAM.

CRIMINAL
the liver

BLAM.

CRIMINAL
and both kidneys

BLAM.

BLAM.

CRIMINAL
So he's of no use to anyone after
he's dead. The 11th is the death
blow.

BLAM.

CRIMINAL
Right to the heart. And the
twelfth.

The Nomad is on the edge of his seat, waiting to hear this
sharp-shooter's final target.

CRIMINAL
Well the twelfth goes in the
throat.

BLAM.

CRIMINAL
So he can't speak at his own
judgement, and his soul shall be
damned in this life and the next.

With a smile, the Nomad leans in to the Criminal to speak in
a low voice.

NOMAD
I think I need you to shoot me.

CRIMINAL
How many times ?

(CONTINUED)

NOMAD

Just once.

The Criminal's smile gets broader.

CRIMINAL

Yeah I can make it fast too

NOMAD

I said shoot me, not kill me I need
to make someone think I'm dead.

The Nomad leans in even farther.

NOMAD

(whispering)

It's gotta convince the horse.

The Criminal looks over to the horse, terribly confused.

CROSS DISSOLVE

FLASHBACK EXT. DESERT BADLANDS

A timelapse of the barren badlands follows the arc of the morning sun as it creeps up across the sky, scorching the parched desert as it reaches its zenith.

VOICE(VO)

A little dynamite goes a long way

CUT TO

FLASHBACK EXT. DESERT HOODOOS LATE-MORNING

The Nomad's point of view reveals two small figures in the distance heading toward them.

The Criminal's larger telescope affords him a much more detailed view.

The Criminal sees the Entrepreneur's face clearly.

Dressed in a fine suit covered in blood, he walks proudly in front.

His Sherpa follows from behind, head bent down with the weight of his rucksack on his back, his wide brimmed hat hides his face.

(CONTINUED)

NOMAD (VO)

Our business will have to wait. I
need to go palaver with those gents
down there.

The Criminal tucks away his Telescope.

NOMAD

You'll want to be on your way, I
expect.

CRIMINAL

Yeah, that would be for the best.

NOMAD

I'll need at least tonight. No,
no... give me two days.

CRIMINAL

Yeah, You know the old Cheyenne
Coal Mine?

NOMAD

Yep.

CRIMINAL

It'll go down there.

The gunslingers both crawl away, disappearing back behind
the cliffside.

FADE TO BLACK

FLASHBACK EXT. FIREPIT, NIGHT

From behind a sand dune, the Criminal peers through his
telescope, surveying the Nomad's camp.

The Nomad drunkenly carouses with the Entrepreneur, sharing
a bottle of liquor as the Sherpa dances around the firepit.

CRIMINAL

You double-crossing rat bastard.
You sell me out to that son of a
whore, huh?

His attention is drawn to the Nomad's horse, quietly
standing behind the campsite, munching on oats from the
saddlebag.

(CONTINUED)

CRIMINAL
Well sir, I intend to get my
bloodmoney's worth.

Tucking away his telescope, the Criminal smiles a tobacco
-brown toothy grin and spits.

FADE TO BLACK

FLASHBACK EXT. FIREPIT, LATER THAT NIGHT

In the fading firelight, the Nomad snores a heavy, regular
rhythm.

A few feet away, the Entrepreneur and Sherpa lay motionless,
also sleeping off the sarsaparilla.

The horse stands tall behind them all, watching silently.

Without a sound, the Criminal crawls over a nearby sand dune
and creeps slowly toward the horse.

Patting it on the nose, he grabs the bit in the horse's
mouth with a metallic CLANK.

The Nomad tosses in his sleep with a loud grumble.

Eyes wide and holding his breath, the Criminal waits for the
Nomad to settle.

With a quiet sigh, the Criminal hears the Nomad's familiar
snore resume, even louder than before.

Leading the horse, the Criminal quietly tiptoes out of camp.

FADE TO BLACK

FLASHBACK EXT. DESERT, NEXT MORNING

With a loud CRUNCH the Criminal take a bite out of a bright
red apple.

He is sitting on a rock near rummaging through the horse's
saddle bags and taking the supplies for himself.

The horse whinnies a loud protest.

CRIMINAL
You ain't even a pretty horse.

With a snort, the horse seems to be offended.

(CONTINUED)

CRIMINAL

I just don't get why everyone wants
you.

Looking the flea-bitten, mangy horse up and down, the
Criminal sneers.

CRIMINAL

I mean, you're no good for
conversation. Do you dance? Do you
do tricks?

The horse looks away, as if insulted.

Satisfied that he's won an argument, even if it is with a
horse, the Criminal stands up to pull his telescope from
beneath his poncho.

CRIMINAL

Well, guess we'll find out, I got a
few questions for that... owner of
yours when he comes looking for
your ugly ass

He draws open his telescope with a loud pop and begins to
scan the horizon.

Barren sand dunes, dead trees, the skeleton of a small
mammal.

And then the Criminal spots the Nomad.

Through his binoculars, the Nomad stares back at the
Criminal. His lips mouth "Son of a bitch"

With a toothy grin, the Criminal lowers his telescope to
wait.

FLASH TO WHITE

PRESENT DAY SHOWDOWN, EXT. DESERT BADLANDS AFTERNOON

As the sun sinks in the sky, the ravens wheeling above the
four gunmen caw impatiently.

The Criminal stands with one gun aimed at the Nomad's horse,
his other hand rests on the butt of his second pistol.

The Nomad's six-shooter is aimed at the Entrepreneur, still
trembling with rage with his hand on his holstered gun.

His eyes darting between the Entrepreneur and the Nomad, the
Criminal finally makes a move:

(CONTINUED)

He draws his second gun and the sound of gunfire is deafening.

BLAM.

BLAM.

BLAM.

BLAM.

BLAM.

BLAM.

All four men fall motionless to the ground.

The horse stands, blinking his big bowling ball eye at the scene before him.

Disinterested, the horse walks off in the direction the mountains that the sun is setting into.

CROSS DISSOLVE

PRESENT DAY, EXT. DESERT BADLANDS, LATE AFTERNOON

The hot desert sun slowly creeps west, making its way behind the mountains as the ravens begin to pick at their fresh dinner.

CROSS DISSOLVE

PRESENT DAY, EXT. DESERT BADLANDS, DUSK

A man's eye opens.

Looking around and wincing in pain, he tries to sit up.

It's the Sherpa.

The bullet that ripped an enormous red stain into his left shoulder has rendered the arm limp.

He tucks his left forearm into his jacket, buttoning a make-shift sling out of his jacket with his right hand.

A deep moan of pain shudders through his body as he grabs his hat and takes a moment to look at the death all around him.

His bloodshot eye surveys the carnage.

(CONTINUED)

FLASH TO WHITE

FLASHBACK EXT. NEW GIBRALTER MAIN DRAG, MORNING

A geisha escorts a young man across the busy street, dodging two older men riding horses.

The Sherpa waves hello to a passing lawman who has just nailed a wanted poster to the blacksmith's door.

The poster bears the sneering likeness of the Criminal and reads:

"WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE FOR THE MURDER OF SHERIFF WHEDON"

Looking around him for witnesses, he snatches the poster off the door, folding it up and placing it in his breast pocket before walking off.

FLASHBACK EXT. CHEYENNE COAL REFINERY, AFTERNOON

The Sherpa walks past rusted out mining machinery, approaching the enormous abandoned structure.

With a glint, the sun reflects off a moving metallic object in the crows nest of the refinery.

The lens of a looking glass.

Now the Sherpa knows he is being watched.

He smiles, wraps his new black overcoat around his gunbelt, pulls down his black hat and walks onward into the mine.

FLASHBACK INT. CHEYENNE COAL REFINERY, AFTERNOON

In an enormous concrete room, the Criminal's two gun barrels peek out from beneath his poncho.

The hammers pull back, ready to fire.

CLICK. CLICK.

The Sherpa is unaffected by the threat, and tosses a newspaper to the ground.

The headline reads:

"MONORAIL MOGUL TO OPEN STATION NUMBER SIX"

(CONTINUED)

SHERPA

Kill him.

The Sherpa reaches into his jacket to remove three stacks of cash, each wrapped in a large eagle crested band.

They land with a THUD on to the newspaper.

SHERPA

And bring me proof.

The Criminal looks down in bewilderment at the cash on his floor.

SHERPA

And bring me an unsaddled horse.

CRIMINAL

You ride bareback?

SHERPA

Nope.

Having done this kind of work before, the Criminal knows better than to ask any more questions.

SHERPA

I'll meet you here in three days...
and I'll pay you the second half
then.

Even more money? The thought catches the Criminal off-guard.

CRIMINAL

(surprised)

Second half?

SHERPA

(satisfied)

Yes.

FADE TO BLACK

FLASHBACK EXT. HOTEL PORCH MID-DAY

By the time the Entrepreneur reaches his father, he's choking to death from a gunshot wound to the throat.

The Sherpa makes it to the doorway just in time to see the Criminal turn his back to him, making a run for it.

Drawing his six shooter from his gunbelt, The Sherpa races off after him.

(CONTINUED)

The Criminal leaps over the porch banister and the Sherpa reaches the end of the porch seconds later.

He takes careful aim at the Criminal with his pistol.

Looking over his shoulder and seeing no one watching, he aims his gun in the air.

BLAM!

BLAM!

BLAM!

BLAM!

BLAM!

BLAM!

He empties his pistol in the air as the Criminal darts madly back and forth, desperately dodging bullets that never even came close.

The Sherpa smiles a satisfied toothy grin.

MATCH CUT TO:

FLASHBACK TO SHOWDOWN, EXT. DESERT BADLANDS AFTERNOON

The Sherpa watches the Entrepreneur, Nomad and Criminal closely as each one of them sizes up the others.

The Nomad cocks his gun and the Criminal swallows his wad of tobacco.

The Criminal places the eagle crested black hat on his head.

With a trembling hand, the Entrepreneur reaches for his pistol, cocking back the hammer.

Shaking his head, the Nomad points his gun at the Entrepreneur.

Suddenly the Criminal reaches for his second gun.

The Entrepreneur reacts, drawing his gun.

The Nomad fires at the Entrepreneur.

BLAM!

(CONTINUED)

The Entrepreneur's chest bursts in a bloody explosion before he can take aim at the Criminal.

In a flash, the Sherpa draws his gun, shooting off two rounds of his own.

BLAM!

BLAM!

The Nomad takes aim at the Criminal, taking his shot a split second after the Sherpa's bullets hit their mark in both of the Criminal's wrists.

CRACK.

CRACK.

The Criminal's wrists shatter and his guns fall to the ground.

BLAM.

The Nomad's shot hits its mark, putting a bullet into the Criminal's throat.

CLICK.

The Sherpa has drawn back the hammer on his pistol.

With a wince, the Nomad realizes he's been played, slowly turning to the Sherpa who has him dead-to-right in his sight.

The Sherpa smiles at the Nomad and winks. He pulls the trigger.

Taking a desperate shot, the Nomad fires at the Sherpa.

BLAM!

BLAM!

Both men are hit.

The Nomad takes a shot to the chest, falling face down in a bloody heap.

The Sherpa's shoulder explodes in a shower of blood, spinning him around and onto his back.

FLASH TO WHITE

DREAM SEQUENCE EXT. GRAND GREEK TEMPLE

A different boy's point of view, taller and restrained by two female gunslingers, sees an unshaven and tired Preacher standing in front of the columns of the familiar Greek passageway.

PREACHER

(stern)

In the five hundred years that our
city since our city has been closed
off from the crumbling world
outside, there has only been one
act of violence among us.

Looking at the boy with accusing eyes, the Preacher's face turns to sneer.

PREACHER

(disgusted)

But now there have been two. And
for that, son, your punishment is
exile.

The Preacher is handed a red-hot poker from a smoldering coalfire.

PREACHER

(angry)

You have been condemned to wander
the badlands and, if you survive...

Sparing a glance at the seashell spiral at the smoking end of the poker, the Preacher looks back at the boy.

PREACHER

...to live out the rest of your
days among the ignorant savages of
the east.

The Preacher winces in empathetic pain as he jabs the poker into the boy's chest.

A grey smoke fills the boy's point of view.

FLASH TO WHITE

PRESENT DAY EXT. DESERT BADLANDS DUSK

The Sherpa reaches for his pistol.

Using it to hoist himself forward, gets to his feet in a painful effort before holstering it back in his gunbelt.

Staggering at first before gaining his balance, the Sherpa makes his way over the to body of the Criminal.

Ravens scatter from the body as he approaches.

The Sherpa reaches into his rucksack for three stacks of cash, bound in an eagle crested wrapper.

SHERPA
(sarcastically)
Here's your second half. I won't
need it where I'm going.

Rummaging through the Criminal's belongings, he finds the telescope.

Opening it up with a pop, he peers off into the mountains.

SHERPA
You know what? If I've learned one
thing from living in the god damned
cities, it's that if you're not
cheating, you're not trying hard
enough.

At last he spots the Nomad's white horse, walking into the west.

Closing up the Criminal's telescope and jamming it into his own pocket, The Sherpa gets back to his feet.

Looking down at the Criminal's motionless body, the Sherpa spits on him and smiles.

As the Sherpa saunters toward the Nomad, he hears the Entrepreneur gasping for air as he chokes on the blood in his lungs.

He walks right past his former employer without even sparing him a glance.

The Sherpa reaches the face-down body of the Nomad. With a kick, he rolls the man onto his back.

The Nomad still clutches his ornately designed gun in his right hand, its lonestar handle now resting on his wounded chest.

(CONTINUED)

The Sherpa polishes the handle of his own gun with the sleeve of his coat.

Slowly, he draws the gun and places it down on the Nomad's chest.

An engraved barrel.

A Rosewood handle.

A lone star.

The Sherpa has a gun identical to the Nomad's.

The spiral seashell around the Nomad's neck catches the Sherpa's attention.

As he wraps his fingers around it greedily, the Nomad gasps and grabs for the necklace, gripping the Sherpa's hand tightly.

The Nomad coughs up blood in an effort to speak.

He can only muster a meaningless gurgle as blood spatters out of his mouth.

The Sherpa lifts the Nomad up out of the dirt, and sitting forward, speaks into the Nomad's ear.

SHERPA

(whispering)

I told you I was never one for
killing men but I need your horse
to show me the way back home.

The Nomad's eyes burn with the last of the fire he has left as he reaches for the Sherpa's neck.

Ripping the Sherpa's collar open, the Nomad reveals a spiral scar just below his neck.

With a wheezing death rattle, the Nomad grip goes limp and he slumps back onto the ground as the leather of his necklace snaps.

SHERPA

And you need to be dead for that to
happen.

The Sherpa places the necklace around his own neck.

The spiral of the seashell rests perfectly over his scar.

(CONTINUED)

Walking off into the west, the Sherpa follows the Nomad's horse back home at last.

THE END.