

INDIAN LOVER

by

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EXT. CUSTER BATTLEFIELD, LITTLE BIG HORN, MONTANA - DAWN

Wind blows sagebrush against an iron grille surrounding tilting tombstones and a white granite monument.

A forlorn landscape extends to the horizon under a cloudless sky.

FAINT NOTES of the 7th Cavalry's tune, "Gary Owens" echo in the background.

BEYOND A STRETCH OF GRAZING LAND,

A two-lane highway cuts through the barren Montana prairie in the summer light.

FROM THE DISTANCE

Extends a process of trucks and vans led by a white SUV.

As they close, REAL HISTORY STUDIOS appears stenciled on the side of each vehicle,

MOVING PAST THE MILITARY CEMETERY and continuing toward a hilltop where a LARGE TEPEE appears beside a sign reading

SEE CUSTER'S LAST STAND. WILD WEST DAYS 25TH JUNE, FEDERMAN, MONTANA.

As the SUV crests the hill, A DEER BOUNDS across the highway, causing the driver to brake and honk his horn.

INT. TEPEE - SAME TIME

With the horn honk fading, RACHEL BUFFALO CLOUD, 17, a Lakota Sioux, her black hair falling to her waist, lies on a sleeping bag, peeking through the opening in the tepee and watching the caravan of vehicles head toward a stubble of buildings in the distance.

Scattered around her are clothes, crumpled beer cans, a portable radio and a candle stub in a Coke bottle

Turning on her side, she stares at WAYNE CUTLER, 17, fair-haired and slender, sleeping on his back. Rachel nudges him, but he doesn't wake.

Taking a blade of grass, Rachel tickles his nose.

His nose wrinkling, Wayne snatches the straw and opens his eyes.

WAYNE

What are you doing? Let me sleep.

RACHEL

Come on, the movie people are here. I've got to get dressed for graduation.

Wayne reaches out for her, but she pulls back.

WAYNE

What's the hurry? We've got till eleven. Besides, it was your idea to come up here last night.

Rachel pouts.

RACHEL

Wayne, I didn't go home. My father's gonna be worried. Come on, get dressed.

WAYNE

Not before you come here.

RACHEL

You *wasicus* always have to have your way, don't you?

He grins.

WAYNE

Just with you.

He reaches for her. She resists for a moment then yields to his touch.

They begin to caress, then merge together on the sleeping bag.

INT. FEDERMAN MAIN STREET - MINUTES LATER

The SUV passes store fronts with facades resembling buildings in 1876.

An arcade extends along the sidewalk, with numerous booths advertising Western memorabilia.

AT THE CORNER,

In a battered wheelchair, with a United States Marine Corps logo and SIOUX ME decal on back, is JOE BUFFALO CLOUD, 29, a wiry Sioux with braided black hair, waiting at the entrance of a LIQUOR STORE where the owner is opening for business.

BEHIND HIM, THE WHITE SUV leading the procession of vehicles, comes to a stop and the driver's window comes down.

HAINES, 36, a beefy production assistant, leans out.

HAINES

Hey, Chief, where's City Hall?

Joe rolls his wheelchair out in the street then brings it up to the driver's side.

JOE

Cost you five bucks to find out.

Glancing over at the liquor store, Haines hands him a five dollar bill through the window.

HAINES

Get ourself some fire water. Now where is it?

Taking the money, Joe points toward a brick building in the next block.

JOE

Right there.

Angry at being ripped off, Haines hits the gas and the SUV squeals away, followed by the row of star wagons and production trucks.

Joe stares disdainfully at the logo on the vehicles.

JOE (CONT'D)

Real history, my ass.

Gripping the money, Joe rolls his wheelchair back up on the sidewalk and heads toward the liquor store.

DOWN THE BLOCK, GERT SWARTZ, 54, husky, in sports shirt and slacks, is standing a life-sized wooden Indian chief in front of a gun shop.

Seeing Joe approach, he glances up.

SWARTZ

Heap big thirst, huh, Joe?

JOE

Fuck you, Swartz. One of these days I'm gonna set fire to that thing.

Swartz smiles menacingly.

SWARTZ

You do, you're body will be burning on it. Only good Indian is...

Seeing Joe's face darken, Swartz steps back inside the store as the Sioux veteran rolls up to the front window.

INSIDE THE DISPLAY WINDOW,

Swartz sets down a magnificent Sioux headdress.

Engraved at the base of the pedestal:

CRAZY HORSE'S AUTHENTIC WAR HEADDRESS

From where Joe is stopped in front of the window, the headdress rests ABOVE HIS HEAD IN THE REFLECTION.

For a moment, Joe stares sadly at the headdress -- then jolting back, he spins his wheelchair away and rolls up to the liquor store, swings open the door, and goes inside.

EXT./INT. WAYNE'S BEDROOM - LATER DAY

Sitting his radio and sleeping bag on the window sill, Wayne boosts himself up to climb into the house.

As he does, a shadow moves forward, thrusting a rifle barrel at his face.

HANK (O.S.)

If you were a burglar, you'd be dead.

Startled, Wayne recovers.

WAYNE
Knock it off, Hank. Take the radio
and sleeping bag.

Wayne hands the items to the shadowy figure then climbs into the darkened house.

INT. WAYNE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

As Wayne gets down from the sill, his brother HANK, 21, places a rifle on a gun rack and turns. The tall, muscular man is clad in boxer shorts, with his chest and arms tattooed.

On a table beside a computer screen with a floating screen saver is a bourbon bottle.

An open sea bag lies in the corner.

WAYNE
Where's dad?

HANK
After your ass. He's pissed you were out all night fuckin' that squaw.

WAYNE
Shut up, Hank. Don't talk shit about Rachel.

Hank shrugs an apology.

HANK
You're just askin' for trouble. Sioux don't like whites no better than we do them.

Going to the closet, Wayne takes out a white gown and mortar board.

Watching him, Hank takes a slug of the bourbon.

HANK (CONT'D)
Never got to wear one of them. I hated school.

Wayne lays the gown and mortar board on a dresser, then starts undressing to go take a shower.

HANK (CONT'D)
Now what?

WAYNE

Huh?

HANK

School's out. What are you gonna do?

HANK

Get a job. Dad said he'd help me.

HANK (CONT'D)

And end up here like him? Wayne, there's no future here. That's why I joined the Rangers. If you enlist, you can ask to be assigned to my battalion, and if you make it through training, shit, we could be killing *hajis* in Afghanistan together.

Finished unbuttoning his shirt, Wayne faces his brother, revealing the contrast between the slender, pale teenager and his tan, muscular older brother.

WAYNE

I don't want to kill anyone.

Leaning over the table, Hank hits the return bar on the computer keyboard.

THE SCREEN lights up with a virtual war game, suspended in the midst of a fire fight.

Hank hits a few keys.

FROM A PLAYER'S POV, a rifle fires, splattering an enemy soldier.

HANK glances back at Wayne.

HANK

Yeah, killing like this is easy, cause they don't shoot back.

WAYNE

How'd you get my password?

HANK

A no-brainer. Like most people, I figured you'd use your birthday...12,2,92.

Hank takes the bourbon bottle and starts out of the room.

HANK (CONT'D)
See you before I go, dude.

WAYNE
Don't you want to come to graduation? Dad's busy and mom's in Butte.

Hank turns around.

HANK
Hey, you think I'm spending my last day of leave watching my kid brother get a wad of toilet paper with his name on it? No way.

Wayne looks hurt.

Reading his look, Hank grabs him around the neck in a gesture that speaks more of aggression than tenderness.

HANK (CONT'D)
Come on, I was just toughing you up. Sure, stay here. Dad will get you any job you want. Shit, you could even manage a Star Bucks if you want.

Hank starts out of the room.

HANK (CONT'D)
Don't forget, get down to see dad as soon as you're done.

WAYNE
What are you gonna do today?

HANK
Kick back, cause in two days I'll be humping up mountains with little turbaned fucks trying to kill me.

EXT. LAKOTA SIOUX RESERVATION - LATER MORNING

A battered Honda makes its way down a dusty road past a row of dilapidated prefab houses.

Children in ragged clothes play beside an abandoned pickup truck.

Here and there, a few men moved languidly in the mottled sunlight. Everywhere, a sense of neglect and poverty.

As the Honda comes around the bend,

SEVERAL FULL-SIZE TEPEES APPEAR INCONGRUOUSLY IN A CLEARING.

Each is adorned with different tribal symbols.

In front of the nearest tepee, several Sioux are gesticulating angrily to a figure in a safari suit and baseball cap, clutching a clipboard.

Behind them, a worker in coveralls is painting yellow lightning bolts on one tepee...while another is finishing touches on a series of giant red hands.

THE HONDA brakes to a stop in front of the tepees. The engine dies and Rachel, her hair in a bun, gets out.

Pausing, she stares at the symbols on the tepees, then glances at A SQUAT SIOUX arguing with the man in the safari suit.

RACHEL

Wally, those aren't Sioux signs.

The squat Sioux nods.

SQUAT SIOUX

I told him. But he says it doesn't matter. The *waischus* won't know.

With a sympathetic nod, Rachel walks toward a nearby prefabricated building.

INT. SIOUX LODGE - MINUTES LATER

As Rachel enters the large main room, several older Sioux men are sitting in a circle, all but one engaged in an animated discussion.

Listening is CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD, 68, with a leathery complexion and typical round face of a Sioux. Wearing a buckskin shirt, his long gray hair hangs loose over his shoulders.

Seeing his daughter, the chief says nothing as Rachel walks down the hall.

Motioning to the others he will be right back, Chief Buffalo Cloud gets to his feet.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rachel is unzipping a garment bag in the closet when her father enters.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
(in Lakota Sioux)
You bring dishonor on me.

RACHEL
No, I didn't. I stayed at Linda
Randall's house last night.

He walks over to his daughter and takes the end of her chin, looking in her eyes.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
(in Sioux)
Do not lie to your father.

Rachel looks away. Her father sighs.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD (CONT'D)
(in Sioux)
Why is your mother not here to
guide you?

RACHEL
Quit talking Sioux, father. You
know I can't speak it. Mother's
gone. She always wanted me to be
free.

CHIEF BACK CLOUD
Not with a *wasichu*.

RACHEL
I hate that word. Call him by his
name, Wayne.

The chief shakes his head.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
Never. Why did you refuse Two
Hawks?

Rachel glances at her father.

RACHEL
You're a man. You wouldn't
understand.

VOICES BEGIN SHOUTING in the main room. The Chief looks torn between wanting to go back to the council meeting and staying with his daughter.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
What's going on, father?

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
The white men now want to make a movie of 'The Day,' but they don't want to pay more money. They say nothing is different than last year when we kill Yellow Hair and his men. I tell them movie cameras will take Sioux everywhere, and they must give us more money. I call all chiefs from all reservations...Cheyenne, Minneconjou, San Arcs, Ree. All say, we want more money.

Rachel looks troubled.

RACHEL
What did the white men say?

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
(sadly)
The movie chief say he doesn't need Sioux. He find other Indians.

Again, the voices erupt angrily.

The chief starts to leave.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
I must keep peace.

Rachel hugs her father.

RACHEL
I'll be back, father. I must go to the ceremony at school.

He leaves the room.

Pausing, Rachel listens to the arguing voices. Momentarily, the fall silent as the voice of her father begins speaking calmly.

INT. WAYNE'S CAR - LATER DAY

Approaching an intersection, Wayne sees several ranch hands moving a herd of horses through the outskirts of town.

As the horses pass, REESE, a young cowboy bringing up the rear, rides past the car.

WAYNE

Hey, Reese, where you taking all those horses?

REESE

Out to Custer's Ridge. Them movie people need him for the calvary.

WAYNE

How come? The only horses they needed before were for the Sioux.

REESE

Hey, this is one of them docudramas, my boss said. They're gonna make Custer's massacre like it really happened. Paying five thousand bucks to use the horses for the day. They got money to burn. Asked me if I wanted to play a scout for five hundred bucks.

He grins at Wayne.

REESE

Hell yes, I said, you can scalp me for that much. You gonna be in it, too?

WAYNE

No, thanks. I'll watch you get scalped when the movie comes out.

Laughing, Reese rides on to catch up with the horses.

EXT. LAKOTA SIOUX RESERVATION - SAME TIME

Carrying her mortar board and gown under her arm, Rachel walks toward her car.

A VERY PREGNANT SIOUX GIRL NAMED MARY STANDING ELK is coming down the road with a basket of laundry.

Seeing her, Rachel looks uncomfortable, but starts past the girl without speaking.

As she does, Mary turns.

MARY
Rachel, will you tell me what
graduation is like?

Rachel turns.

RACHEL
You can finish next year and go
then, Mary.

The girl shakes her head.

MARY
No, I will be a mother then. I will
not go back to school. Just come
tell me how everyone looks in
white.

Before Rachel can reply, the girl walks on.

Rachel gets into her car and turns on the engine. As she starts forward, she does a U-turn and pulls up beside the girl and lowers the side window.

RACHEL
I promised my father I'd let him
see me today.

She lifts an inexpensive camera from her purse.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
I'll make copies of the pictures
for you, too.

Rachel's gaze passes over the girl's swollen abdomen.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Did Richie write since he left for
Iraq?

Mary's silent stare is answer enough.

With an attempt at a smile, Rachel drives away.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - LATER MORNING

As the parking lot fills with arriving cars, parents proudly accompany their white gowned sons and daughters toward the auditorium.

A primer-gray Mustang pulls in and parks.

Getting out in Levis and T-shirt, Wayne takes his white gown and mortar board, then starts through the parking lot.

INT. BOY'S BATHROOM - SAME TIME

As Wayne enters the sink-lined room, with cubicles reflected in the wall mirror, A HEAD POKES OVER A CLOSED TOILET DOOR. Seeing Wayne, a boy leaps off the toilet seat and unlocks the door.

Sharow, 17, the massive school bully, emerges in his graduation gown, clutching a roach holder with the remnants of a joint.

SHAROW

Come on out, you pussies. It's clear.

Two other cubicles open and YATES and BLAIR, two lackeys of Sharow emerge in white gowns.

WAYNE

I could smell grass all the way down the hall.

Sharow turns to Yates.

SHAROW

Go watch out.

He holds out the roach holder to Wayne.

SHAROW

Want a hit?

WAYNE

No thanks.

Sharow lights the grass and takes a toke.

BLAIR

Soon as this shit's over, we're going down to get hired as extras. That movie company's playing big bucks. Who you gonna be?

WAYNE

Gonna be?

BLAIR

No know, in the battle, one of the soldiers? Sure as shit ain't gonna be no Indian, are you?

Without replying, Wayne goes into an empty cubicle, closes the door and starts to piss into the toilet

Sharow grins at his buddy: watch this.

SHAROW

Say, where's Pocahontas?

A thick silence.

Abruptly, the door swings open, and Wayne leans out.

WAYNE

I told you, Sharow. Leave Rachel out of it

Sharow looks quizzically at Blair and Yates.

SHAROW

Rachel, that ain't no Indian name. She should be called Running Coyote or Humping Dog.

The trio laugh.

Wayne tenses, ready to fight.

Sharow reads his stance.

SHAROW (CONT'D)

Come on, Cutler, take your best shot. I don't give a fuck if your old man's mayor, I'll kick your ass so bad they'll give you your diploma in the hospital.

Fischer whistles and races around the corner.

YATES

Dean's coming.

Sharow tosses the roach into the sink, and the three boys race out of the bathroom.

Wayne goes back into the cubicle, flushes the toilet and steps back out with his gown and mortar when DEAN VARUM, 51, chubby and florid-faced, enters, sniffing the air.

DEAN VARUM

I smell dope.

WAYNE

Not me, sir. I swear.

DEAN VARUM
Who was in here just now?

WAYNE
I don't know, sir. I was in the
toilet.

Peering into the sinks, the dean spots the roach and gingerly
picks it up.

DEAN VARUM
This isn't yours, then?

Wayne stares unblinkingly into the dean's eyes.

WAYNE
I told you it wasn't.

DEAN VARUM
If this weren't graduation, Mr.
Cutler, I'd keep you in my office
until you told me who's it was.
Cutler, get your gown on and get
into the auditorium.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - LATER DAY

With parents taking flash-bulb pictures, graduating students
wait in two lines along the walls, the boys on one side and
the girls on the other.

As the students file on stage, they approach the Vice
Principal who picks up the diploma and hands it to PRINCIPAL
MOYLAN, a corpulent man in a suit, who reads the student's
name over the microphone.

IN ONE LINE, RACHEL looks stunning, with her long black hair
framed in contrast to her white gown. She scans the line of
boys getting ready to go on stage -- then sees

WAYNE staring back with a wide smile.

SHAROW (O.S.)
Why don't you blow her a kiss,
Wayne.

Wayne snaps around, staring at Sharow and his cronies
watching from down the line.

WAYNE
Why don't you blow yourself, or
have one of your hommies do it?

Sharow bristles.

SHAROW
You callin' me a faggot?

Wayne grins.

WAYNE
Your words, not mine.

Reaching the stage, Wayne waits to go up the steps. He glances over at Rachel, waiting at the opposite side of the stage.

PRINCIPAL MOYLAN
Wayne Cutler.

With polite applause, Wayne walks on stage, the assistant principal hands his diploma to the principal, who turns to shake his hand.

PRINCIPAL MOYLAN (CONT'D)
Congratulations, Wayne. I didn't see your father here.

WAYNE
It's that movie, Mr. Abbot. He just can't get away, I guess.

PRINCIPAL MOYLAN
Yes, biggest thing that's ever happened to Federman. All the best, my boy.

As Wayne crosses the stage, the principal looks down at the next name.

PRINIPAL
Rachel Buffalo Cloud.

With a sprinkling of applause, Rachel starts across the stage....nearing Wayne. As they pass, he winks at her.

WAYNE
I'm parked behind the gym.

With a quick smile, she continues on to receive her diploma.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MINUTES LATER

Still in their gowns, Wayne and Rachel walk toward Wayne's car.

WAYNE

I'll take you to your car then I gotta get down to city hall. My dad's gonna kill me if I don't help him.

Rachel looks down at their shadows on the pavement.

RACHEL

Wayne, what are we gonna do?

WAYNE

I told you. Get out of Federman.

RACHEL

But how will we live?

WAYNE

Don't worry I'll find a job.

He glances over and sees she is frowning.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

We have to get away. My father will never let live here with you.

RACHEL

What about my father? You know how feels about whites.

SHAROW (O.S.)

(loudly)

Indian lover...

Wayne and Rachel look up, to see Blair and his two buddies leaning against Wayne's car.

SHAROW (CONT'D)

That's what they called them back in '76.

Seeing Wayne tense, Rachel grips his arm.

RACHEL

Pay no attention to them, Wayne, please.

Trying to keep his cool, Wayne goes to unlock the passenger door for Rachel...when Yates moves to block it.

WAYNE

Mind moving?

YATES

Say please.

SHAROW (O.S.)

And her, too.

Wayne turns around.

WAYNE

Leave us alone, Sharow. I know
you're pissed caused your dad
didn't get his lease renewed.

Sharow strides forth.

SHAROW

Shut up, squaw man.

Instantly, Wayne wades into Sharow, striking him with several
blows.

Stunned more than hurt, Sharow yanks off his white gown and
grabs Wayne in a headlock, battering him against the car
door.

Rachel runs to pull Sharow back -- as Yates and Blair shove
her aside, sending her sprawling to the ground.

Seeing Rachel on the ground, Wayne stops struggling.

WAYNE

Leave her alone!

Sharow releases Wayne.

As he steps forward to help Rachel,

SHAROW'S FIST comes around in a right cross and smashes
Wayne's nose.

Blood gushes out, staining his white gown.

Rachel screams as parents and students come running toward
the fracas.

Helping Rachel up, Wayne turns to face Yates and Blair.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Which of you knocked her down?

YATES

I did. Wanna make something of it?

Throwing off his gown, Wayne wipes the blood off his nose onto his pants and readies to fight Yates.

Rachel grabs his arm.

RACHEL
Don't fight him for me, Wayne,
please.

SHAROW
Yeah, take her back to the
reservation where she belongs.

A SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT SEDAN pulls up between the next line of cars.

Momentarily, DEPUTY LACEY, 54, hefts his pistol holster and approaches, motioning for the onlookers to move on.

DEPUTY LACEY
(to Wayne)
Your dad told me to find you, and
now look at you.

The deputy looks at Sharow and his two buddies.

DEPUTY LACEY (CONT'D)
Who hit you?

WAYNE
No one. I tripped on my gown.

Rachel starts to speak, when Wayne grips her hand.

The deputy stares at Wayne.

DEPUTY LACEY
Well, clean your face up before you
go down to city hall. There are
lots of movie people there, and I
know your dad doesn't want people
to think Federman's got
juv..en...ile de..lin...quents.

He jabs his index finger at Sharow and the other two boys.

DEPUTY LACEY
I find you three stooges causing
trouble again, you'll be wearing
orange jump suits instead of white.
Now get lost.

The three sullenly start across the parking lot.

Rachel steps forward to dab the edge of her gown against Wayne's bleeding nose.

He lowers her hand.

WAYNE

Don't. You're getting blood on your sleeve.

RACHEL

What is blood to a Sioux?

She hugs Wayne then steps back.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Go find your father, Wayne. I must be with mine, too. Remember, this is the day your people and mine....

WAYNE

That was then...

She looks down at the red stain on her sleeve.

RACHEL

Then? Now. How are they different?

Turning, she hurries through the parking lot.

DEPUTY LACEY

You better follow me.

WAYNE

You don't trust me?

DEPUTY LACEY

Not that, boy. Downtown's a zoo. Never seen so many people coming to see Custer's Last Stand.

Wayne walks around his car to get inside.

WAYNE

(under his breath)

Well, it's my last stand, too.

EXT. FEDERMAN MAIN STREET - LATER DAY

Amid tourists and townspeople in Western costumes and regular attire, Wayne comes up the busy sidewalk, pausing to glance at a row of stalls.

Seeing something of interest, he steps closer, staring at

A ROMANTICIZED LITHOGRAPH OF THE CUSTER MASSACRE, SHOWING CUSTER STANDING ALONE AMONG HIS FALLEN SOLDIERS, AS FIERCE INDIANS RUSH HIM IN A FINAL CHARGE.

FIRST PRINTING

SIGNED BY CHIEF WHITE SWAN HIMSELF

\$1,200

Wayne moves on the next booth.

AN AGED HIPPIE in buckskin shirt and trousers, wearing a peace symbol around his neck, is pointing out A TRAY OF ARROWHEADS to a tourist couple.

AGED HIPPIE

These were taken right off the battlefield the day after the attack.

He steps forward as though about to reveal a secret.

AGED HIPPIE (CONT'D)

Some were removed from soldiers' bodies....but don't worry, they've been sterilized. Only three hundred bucks each. A Crow medicine man said they bring good luck.

Wayne walks on toward the next booth.

INSIDE A GLASS CASE ARE A ROW OF WHAT RESEMBLE BRAIDS OF BLACK HAIR LABELED

COMANCHE SCALPS

Wayne glances at A HUSKY HISPANIC MAN combing out another scalp to put in the case.

WAYNE

Those real?

The man looks around, then steps over toward Wayne.

HISPANIC MAN

Not these, against the law.

He leans over to whisper in Wayne's ear.

HISPANIC MAN (CONT'D)

But I have one that is. Taken off a Comanche chief.

WAYNE
But Comanches didn't fight at the
Little Big Horn.

The man steps back, incensed.

HISPANIC MAN
How do you know? Were you there?

Shrugging off the question. Wayne walks on down the sidewalk,
passing

EDWARD CURTIS' AMERICAN INDIAN PORTRAITS,
BLACK HILLS GOLD MAPS,
CDS OF SIOUX INDIAN CHANTS.

AND A PHOTOGRAPHER TAKING A PICTURE OF TWO SMILING JAPANESE
TOURISTS INSIDE LIFE-SIZE HEADLESS CUTOUTS OF A SOLDIER BEING
SCALPED BY A INDIAN CLUTCHING A TOMAHAWK.

Reaching an intersection, Wayne stares back at the maze of
booths, people passing in 1876 attire and the old west store
fronts of the buildings.

With a bemused expression, he waits for a tour bus to pass
then darts across the street toward a two-story granite
building with CITY HALL etched above the entrance.

Real History Studios vans are parked along the sidewalk.

INT. CITY HALL - MOMENTS LATER

The lobby is teeming with a mixture of movie crew and
townspeople showing up to be extras.

To one side, a casting director walks down a line of people,
motioning a few to the side then curtly thanking the others
for coming, and moving on.

A UNIFORMED SECURITY GUARD blocks access to the offices and
auditorium to the rear.

Wayne steps past the swirl of bodies and starts toward the
back.

The security guard holds up his hand.

SECURITY GUARD
Where you think you're going?

WAYNE

See my dad. He's the mayor.

The security guard glances down at a roster.

SECURITY GUARD

Doesn't say anything here about
mayor's son.

Wayne glances at figures moving in and out of the corridor behind the guard. Spotting someone in an Union Army costume, he waves.

WAYNE

Mr. Amstead

Seeing him, PHIL AMSTEAD, 47, City Planner, 47, dressed as an Army general, replete with sword, approaches.

AMSTEAD

Hi ya doin', Wayne?

WAYNE

Fine, sir. My dad wants to see me,
but this guy won't let me by.

AMSTEAD

(to the guard)

It's okay. He's the mayor's boy.

The guard waves him on.

Nodding his thanks, Wayne glances over at Amstead's epaulets.

WAYNE

Who are you supposed to be, Mr.
Amstead?

Amstead's expression tightens.

AMSTEAD

Casting director said we're not to
supposed to be, but be. I'm General
Terry. I got to Custer's massacre
first.

He toys with the handle of his sword.

AMSTEAD

Course I don't get to be in the
battle. But the director said I'll
be in a scene after they find all
the bodies. Look like a general,
don't I?

Nodding, Wayne continues toward the line of offices at the rear of a building.

A SLENDER, DARK-HAIRED WOMAN dressed in a gingham dress emerges carrying an unfolded map.

WAYNE

Hey, Carol, where's my dad?

The woman points toward two open doors at the end of the hall.

CAROL

In the auditorium.

WAYNE

Who are you?

CAROL

Elizabeth Custer, the General's wife.

She approaches, looking flushed and nervous.

CAROL (CONT'D)

I never acted before, but the casting director said I'd be perfect. All I have to do is stand beside my husband when they leave to fight the Sioux.

She grins mischievously.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Wait till my folks see me as a general's wife. Gotta go.

She scurries down the hallway as Wayne walks into the auditorium.

INT. AUDIOTORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

Wayne passes several town business men dressed as 1876 merchants.

Nearby, a First Aid station has been set up, with uniformed nurses talking with local firefighters.

To one side, costume assistants are stacking period clothing, while behind them a row of men selected as Custer's civilian guides move forward to be fitted.

SHAROW, YATES, and BLAIR are goofing around in the line.

Seeing Wayne, Sharow flips him off.

Ignoring the gesture, Wayne walks toward the stage, where a long conference table has been set up.

ON THE WALL IS A LARGE MAP OF THE SITE OF THE LITTLE BIG HORN RIVER, COLOR CODED WITH BLUE WITH CUSTER'S MEN AND RED FOR THE INDIANS.

At the table, MAYOR CUTLER, 47, tall, with a full head of gray hair and dressed in a business suit, sits talking with two men in safari suits.

Glancing over the mayor sees Wayne. Getting up abruptly, he strides over to the side of the stage and stares sternly down.

MAYOR CUTLER

Where have you been, young man?

WAYNE

Graduation, dad.

MAYOR CUTLER

Well, school's out, buster. You're in the Army.

WAYNE

Huh?

The mayor breaks into a grin.

MAYOR CUTLER

Why do you think I wanted you down here right away?

Leaning over, he motions for Wayne to come closer.

MAYOR CUTLER (CONT'D)

I pulled a few strings with the director. Told him you'd done plays in high school.

WAYNE

But I never took drama, dad.

MAYOR CUTLER

Shh. He doesn't know that. You're going to play Captain Tom Custer, the general's brother.

WAYNE

But, dad, I can't act.

MAYOR CUTLER

Don't worry. You don't have any lines. You just have to stay near the general when they attack and get killed right near him.

WAYNE

Dad. I don't want to be in any movie.

The mayor bristles.

MAYOR CUTLER

Son, don't embarrass me. I went to a lot of trouble for you. Besides, you'll get \$1,500 just standing around shooting off blanks in the attack.

Wayne comes to life.

WAYNE

Fifteen hundred dollars?

The mayor smiles.

MAYOR CUTLER

Funny what money does for motivation.

He points across the room.

MAYOR CUTLER (CONT'D)

Go get fitted for your uniform then get over to the Morning Star.

Wayne looks confused.

WAYNE

Why?

MAYOR CUTLER

Custer's staying there tonight. Make sure he has everything he needs.

WAYNE

Why me, dad?

The mayor shakes his head.

MAYOR CUTLER

Because you're his kid brother.
And, Wayne, remember when you're
with General Custer, you're
representing Federman.

EXT. MORNING STAR MOTEL - LATER DAY

Wayne's pickup pulls into the courtyard of Federman's best motel, already filled with cars bearing out of state license plates. Taking up half the spaces is A REAL HISTORY STUDIOS STAR WAGON.

Parking, Wayne gets out dressed in the uniform of 1876 Union calvary captain and starts across the courtyard.

He almost trips over his sword then straightens it and continues over to the Star Wagon.

He peeks in the window at the opulent interior.

Glancing around to see no one is watching, he tries the door. It opens.

He steps inside.

INT. STAR WAGON - SAME TIME

In awe, Wayne walks through the posh living room and peers into the bedroom. Going over to the queen-sized bed, he sits down then falls backward, staring up at the ceiling.

WAYNE

Oh, Rachel....this is it.

He gets up and walks back through the trailer.

INT. MORNING START MOTEL - SAME TIME

Looking stressed, THE MOTEL MANAGER, 63, a lanky man in slacks and a white shirt is listening to a loud caller on the motel phone as Wayne enters.

He does a momentary double-take seeing Wayne in uniform, but returns his attention to the caller.

MOTEL MANAGER

I'm sorry sir, but we don't have any water beds. No, Mr. Lurie, Montana doesn't allow Triple-X movies in motels. Minors could see them. Hello? Hello.

He looks at the phone.

MOTEL MANAGER (CONT'D)

(to himself)

He hung up.

Wayne approaches the counter.

WAYNE

Mornin', Mr. Murphy. My dad said the actor playing General Custer would be showing up.

The manager frowns.

MOTEL MANAGER

Showing up, you mean taking over. That was him on the phone. He's in the Sunset Suite...and he said it's no better than a Motel Six.

To hide his grin, Wayne turns around in the lobby.

WAYNE

He must have been joking, What number room's he in?

MOTEL MANAGER

Twenty Seven. He's got some make up and costume people over there now. See they got you into this, too. Who you playing?

WAYNE

Tom Custer, General Custer's younger brother.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

I pity you.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Yeah, the casting guy said Sioux mutilated him after he got killed.

MR. MURPHY

No, I mean having to deal with that actor. Said he'd give me an autographed picture when he checked out. Hell, I don't even know who he is. I've never seen him in movies before.

WAYNE

He'll only be here one night, Mr. Murphy.

Nodding good-bye, Wayne leaves the office.

EXT./INT. MOTEL - LATER DAY

As Wayne approaches Room 27, a loud voice erupts.

MAN (O.S.)

I don't care how short it was that day. He wore it long the rest of the time, and that's how I want it! Now, hand me that wig!

Wayne knocks on the door.

WAYNE

Hello, I'm Wayne Cutler, the Mayor's son. My dad...

The door opens, and JOHN LURIE, 34, appears in buckskin jacket, riding breeches and jodphur boots.

With his long-blond hair wig, he is a spitting image of General George A. Custer.

He scans Wayne's uniform.

LURIE

The cavalry arrives.

WAYNE

Morning, Mr. Lurie.

LURIE

It's General Custer from now on. I'm in character, got me?

Wayne isn't sure what he means but nods.

LURIE (CONT'D)

The director told me he'd hired the mayor's kid to play my kid brother. I was worried some fat ass with pimples would show up, but you look just right. Come on in.

Wayne follows General Custer into the ornate motel room with landscape paintings and a large wet bar, fireplace, and king-sized bed.

To the side stands ANGIE, 40, a makeup artist, and MANNY, 37, a costume fitter. Both look frazzled.

CUSTER

Want a drink, kid?

WAYNE

No thank you, sir. Dad said I should stay with you and make sure you got everything you want.

Custer pats Wayne on the shoulder.

CUSTER

That's the style. The press agent just called. They want me to make an appearance at the history lecture downtown.

He looks over at the costume fitter.

CUSTER (CONT'D)

Anything else?

MANNY

Your pistol and sword are down at the property room. They'll have them ready when you get there.

CUSTER

Where the hell's my white hat?

Marsh snaps his fingers.

MARSH

I knew there was something.

CUSTER

Get with it, Manny. You've got to get Custer right down to the last detail.

As Marsh runs out to the Star Wagon, Custer walks over to Wayne, turning his back to the makeup girl so she can't hear him.

CUSTER (CONT'D)
Where's the action around here?

WAYNE
Action?

CUSTER
You know, where the girls hang out.

Wayne gives him a blank look.

WAYNE
I don't know about hanging out, but the seniors like to go to the bowling alley cafe.

With a look of dismay, Custer mumbles 'seniors, bowling alley.'

CUSTER
Listen, Tom.

WAYNE
It's Wayne, sir.

CUSTER
Right, but we're brothers in the movie.

WAYNE
I thought it was a docudrama.

Custer's face goes slack.

CUSTER
I don't want to hear that word again. It's a movie about a legend in American History. Got me?

WAYNE
Yes, sir.

Softening, Custer nudges Wayne in the ribs.

CUSTER
Come on, we're gonna have some fun today before...

He starts laughing.

CUSTER (CONT'D)
 ...get our asses filled with
 arrows.

Manny hurries back in with a large white hat with a flap on one side.

He hands it to Custer, who puts it on and admires himself in the mirror.

Abruptly, he holds out his index finger and walks closer to his reflection, staring intently as though seeing his soldiers lined up before him.

CUSTER (CONT'D)
 Men, charge the village and you
 will be supported by....

Tapping his forehead, Custer turns around.

CUSTER (CONT'D)
 What's the line?

Both assistants shake their heads.

CUSTER (CONT'D)
 Where the hell the's script girl?

MANNY
 Back at the production office.

CUSTER
 Well, find out the line.

MANNY
 But....

CUSTER
 Now what?

MANNY
 Sir, the director said you wouldn't
 have any lines. The voice-over
 would be narrating the battle.

Incensed, Custer walks over to the costume fitter.

CUSTER
 You know squat about acting. I
 still have to know what I'm staying
 even if no one but my men can hear
 me, got it?

A cowering nod from Manny.

Custer turns to the makeup girl.

CUSTER (CONT'D)
Get that limo out here. I'm ready
to ride.

As Angie makes a call on her cell phone. Custer back to
admire himself in the wall mirror.

Seeing Wayne reflected behind him, he turns.

CUSTER (CONT'D)
Buster doesn't count. He's a
civilian...came along for the ride
through the Bad Lands.

WAYNE
Buster?

CUSTER
Don't you know your own history,
boy? Your other brother. But I'm
glad you're gonna be up on that
ridge with me. Come on, let's get
down to Federman and bring history
to life.

INT. LIMO - MINUTES LATER

As the driver heads into town, Custer finishes talking on his
cell phone and turns to Wayne, sitting beside him.

CUSTER
Trouble.

WAYNE
What's wrong, sir?

CUSTER
Producer has to cut Reno's Charge.
Studio doesn't to spend the money
on second unit stuff. Now Reno's
agent is all pissed off.

Wayne doesn't understand what the actor is talking about.

CUSTER (CONT'D)
Hey, that's the breaks. History
remembers me, not Major Reno.

EXT. CITY HALL PLAZA - LATER DAY

A crowd of citizens is milling around as the limo pulls into view and stops in front of City Hall.

The chauffeur gets out and opens the back door for Custer and Wayne.

A hush from the crowd seeing the dashing young general emerges. As people press forward for autographs, he doffs his hat. Wayne is pushed aside, watching as townspeople and tourists crowd around Custer.

As Custer signs an autograph, he shifts closer toward Wayne.

CUSTER
(voice dropping)
Who's she?

WAYNE
Who's who?

The general doesn't stop signing autographs but nods at a VOLUPTUOUS BLONDE-HAIRED GIRL IN TIGHT SWEATER AND FORM-FITTING PANTS.

WAYNE (CONT'D)
I'm not sure, but I think she works
at the bank.

CUSTER
(under his breath)
Tell her I'd like to make a
deposit.

He laughs then glances over to see if Wayne is laughing at his joke. He isn't.

CUSTER (CONT'D)
Come on, lighten up, Tom. Go tell
her I want to meet her.

WAYNE
About what?

Custer glances at Tom to see if he is as naive as he seems.

CUSTER
Tell her she has something. I
learned how to spot it in acting
school. Tell her to stick around.

WAYNE
Really?

CUSTER
(grinning)
That's an order, Captain.

As Wayne goes to approach the girl, Custer continues signing autographs.

COMING DOWN THE STEPS OF CITY HALL IS TEDDY MARSH, 43, an assistant director in a beige safari suit and Lakers baseball cap.

He walks over to Custer.

MARSH
Could you finish up here? Avery needs to get set up. The soldiers left Bozeman a while ago. They'll be getting here soon.

Custer nods and signs another autograph, glancing back to see Wayne talking with the blonde girl.

Smiling, Custer pats the assistant director on the shoulder and starts inside city hall.

CUSTER
All we need now are the Indians.

EXT. SIOUX LODGE - SAME TIME

Two animated discussions are taking place near the tepees.

In the first group, Chief Buffalo Cloud and two chiefs from allied tribes, in clean but frayed clothing, are arguing with BABS, the crusty production coordinator.

Beside the tepees, a second group of chiefs is painting over false tribal symbols and replacing them with accurate Sioux designs: a sun with red rays, small buffalo running, and a blue hawk.

Watching is JASON, 30, a frustrated set designer, who is trying to persuade them to keep his designs, but the chiefs are ignoring him.

Jason strides over to Babs.

JASON
They refuse to listen.

BABS
No kidding.

The production coordinator turns back to Chief Buffalo Cloud.

BABS (CONT'D)

People all over the world will see this reenactment.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD

But out people won't, because they don't have cable television.

BABS

Look, we'll send everyone a DVD. Just go along with the program.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD

The white men in town get money from movie company, why not Sioux?

BABS

We've on a tight budget, chief. I don't know if you've heard, but there's a recession on in America.

Chief Buffalo Cloud points at the prefabricated houses on the reservation.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD

Our reservation is in depression.

CHIEF SPOTTED FOX, a Cherokee in his 70's, points his weathered finger at the production coordinator.

CHIEF STANDING ELK

Before no movie. Now movie. You pay more now.

BABS

That's your final word?

To a man, the chiefs nod.

Stepping back, Babs punches numbers into her cell phone and walks away a few paces.

INT. CITY HALL - SAME TIME

With several reporters taking notes, BRIAN AVERY 48, a lanky Australian director, stands on stage below the map, using a pointer to indicate the location of the Indian camps and Custer's position the day of the battle.

AVERY
 (noticeable accent)
 Call it destiny, but ever since I
 read about the battle as a kid, I
 knew one day I would have come here
 and see where Custer fell.

He pauses, trying to control his emotions.

 AVERY (CONT'D)
 And now, here I am, directing the
 reenactment of the greatest defeat
 ever suffered by the American
 people on their own soil.

A MALE REPORTER raises his hand.

 MALE REPORTER
 But what about Gettysburg?

The director gapes at the journalist.

 AVERY
 Gettsburg?

 MALE REPORTER
 You know, the last battle of the
 Civil War. Surely, that was the
 greatest defeat.

Avery looks at a loss for a second, then recovers.

 AVERY
 Right, but I meant defeated by
 Indians.

A WOMAN JOURNALIST raises her hand.

 AVERY (CONT'D)
 Yes?

 WOMAN JOURNALIST
 Do you think being Australian
 prevents you from understanding the
 conflict between the Indians and
 the whites, say, as an American
 director would?

Avery seems inspired by the question.

AVERY

I know what happened to the Aborigines in my own country. Besides, I've read a lot of American History. Custer's Last Stand is known the world over, like the stand of the 300 Spartans. A few against many, falling in death to defeat, but living on as example of courage against overwhelming odds.

A muttering among the press.

A BEARDED YOUNG MAN raises his hand.

Avery nods at him.

BEARDED YOUNG MAN

I'm not a real journalist. I just write for the University of Montana newspaper, but I wanted to ask which side are you going to take in the movie?

The director looks confused.

AVERY

Side? Sorry, I don't understand the question.

BEARDED YOUNG MAN

I meant, are you going to show Custer's Last Stand from the perspective of the Indians, whose camps he was about to attack and destroy, or from the point of a megalomaniac who died while carrying out America's imperialist policy?

Avery's eyes narrow.

AVERY

Neither. I'm only going to film the battle objectively, not what led up to it. My allegiance is to the accuracy of what happened on this day, a few hours from now.

The director's cell phone rings.

Looking down and seeing the caller ID code, the director excuses himself, then motions for an assistant take over as Avery walks off the stage.

Coming off the stage, Avery steps down a corridor and takes the call.

 AVERY (CONT'D)
So, where the fuck are we?

INT. CUT

EXT. TEPEES - DAY

Babs is standing several feet away from the chiefs grouped together.

 BABS
They're worse than SAG negotiators.
They refuse to let their braves
fight Custer unless we agree to pay
their new rate.

INT. AUDITORIUM - SAME TIME

Avery starts to punch his fist into the wall then thinks better of it.

 AVERY
 (voice dropping)
Jesus, my best shot to break out
into features and I have to deal
with these wankers.

EXT. TEPEE AREA - SAME TIME

Babs looks nervously around.

 BABS
Brian, we need to make a decision
quick. We've got to set up, or
we're in deep shit.

INT. AUDITORIUM - SAME TIME

Avery snaps up.

AVERY

I'm the director, Babs. Don't tell me my job. I know we have to do the whole thing in one take.

Stepping back down the hall, he peers around the corner.

THE PRESS CONFERENCE IS OVER. The reporters are wandering out the door.

At the back of the auditorium three CROW INDIANS, with their distinct hatchet faces, Roman noses and long braided hair, are talking with a production assistant.

The director stares intently at the Crow.

AVERY (CONT'D)

I got it! Fuck the Sioux. Call the other tribe, the ones we're using for Custer's scouts.

EXT. TEPEE AREA - SAME TIME

Babs glances over her shoulder at the Sioux chiefs.

FEMALE PRODUCTION COORDINATOR

(whispering)

The Crow? But aren't they the mortal enemy of the Sioux.

INT. AUDITORIUM - SAME TIME

Clutching the cell phone to his ear, the director strides up the aisle.

AVERY

Who cares? They're still Indians. I've got a movie to shoot. Get a hold of the Crow big cheese and make it happen. I want cameras rolling by three.

INT. CROW LODGE - MINUTES LATER

Sitting in front of a lap top computer, CHIEF NO SHADOW ROCK, 37, in business suit and tie, is talking with a Crow scout in buckskin pants, army tunic, braided hair, with one white feather in back, and yellow and red war paint across his cheeks.

CHIEF NO SHADOW ROCK
 Don't worry about what they say.
 They'll pay separate for your pony.

His cellphone rings and he answers.

CHIEF NO SHADOW ROCK (CONT'D)
 Yeah, who's this?

Hearing the speaker's name, the chief listens then makes a thumbs-up sign to the scout.

CHIEF NO SHADOW ROCK (CONT'D)
 Sure, sure, eighty? No problem.
 Same rate as for the guides? Okay,
 I'll have them all ready. We'll
 need headdresses for their chiefs.
 Loin cloths will work for the rest.
 That's what they wore back then.
 Count on us.

Hanging up, Chief No Shadow Rock gets up grinning and walks around his desk.

CHIEF NO SHADOW ROCK (CONT'D)
 This'll make the Sioux spit blood.

INT. CITY HALL - LATER DAY

A casting area has been set up in a downstairs office.

Behind the counter, HELEN, 48, an African-American casting director, is talking to an assistant when TWO TEENAGE GIRLS, ONE A SLENDER BRUNETTE AND THE OTHER A TALL RED-HEAD come in followed by a shy Rachel.

The two girls approach the desk.

BRUNETTE
 We were told you were looking for
 extras.

Helen studies the two girls.

HELEN
 Most of the casting's been done,
 girls. We were mainly looking for
 male extras to play Custer's
 scouts.

As the girls turn to go, the casting director sees Rachel and motions to her.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Are you Sioux?

Rachel nods.

HELEN (CONT'D)
You perfect. We need a princess.

Rachel blushes.

RACHEL
Sioux don't have princesses.

HELEN
I didn't mean a real one. I meant
the look. You're perfect for the
young maiden in the village when
the braves leave to fight. We've
got enough squaws.

Helen studies Rachel's figure.

HELEN (CONT'D)
I'll get you right over costume to
get fitted up.

RACHEL
I don't know...my father.

The other two girls nudge her.

RED HAired GIRL
Rachel, are you crazy? You're going
to be in a movie. Go for it.

The casting director sees Rachel hesitating.

HELEN
It pays five hundred dollars.

Rachel looks tempted.

RACHEL
What do I have to say?

HELEN
Nothing. It's a docudrama. Just
look the way you do, but dressed
like Indian girls were back then.

Rachel steps over to the counter.

INT. CITY HALL AUDIOTORIUM - LATER DAY

With scores of people listening in the audience, DR. PHILLIP TRYAN, 56, an American History professor, is standing in front of WALL-SIZED BLOWUP OF SLIDES showing different depictions of Custer's Last Stand, including oil prints, lithographs, even crude Indian stick figure depictions.

DR. TRYAN

For many, the Battle of the Little Big Horn remains America's Waterloo, a battle that could have been decided either way if only....Custer Had not divided his command, if only he had taken the Gatling guns offered him....if only...

Abruptly, people begin clapping as GENERAL CUSTER enters with a dramatic flourish and makes his way down the aisle to the podium.

Not knowing of the actor's visit, the professor is irritated at being interrupted.

Custer steps in front of the dais and doffs his hat.

CUSTER

Rumors of my death have been greatly exaggerated.

The audience laughs. Custer motions toward the back of the room.

CUSTER (CONT'D)

Say hello to my brother Tom.

People turn around in their seats, craning for a view of Wayne dressed as Captain Tom Custer.

Self-consciously, Wayne bows.

Custer turns and stares up at the INDIAN DRAWING OF THE RAGING BATTLE, WITH SOLDIERS LYING IN POOLS OF BLOOD.

With a grin, Custer turns back to the audience.

CUSTER (CONT'D)

Can't keep history waiting, can we?

He strides up the aisle, drawing more applause from the audience.

The professor tries not to show he is miffed by Custer's public relations appearance.

DR. TRYAN

It isn't often that a historian has the past literally appear before his eyes. I'm looking forward to seeing the docudrama, although, to be candid, I don't see how they will be able to condense all the battle into one movie, especially Reno's Charge.

JOE (O.S.)

You mean Reno's Retreat!

A stunned silence.

Reaching the exit where Wayne is waiting, Custer whirls around.

IN FRONT,

The startled professor tries to ignore the interruption.

DR. TRYAN

Ah, yes, the jury is still out on Reno's behavior that day. But there can be no question about the heroism of every soldier.

Joe Buffalo Clouds wheelchair from the shadows beside a fire exit.

JOE

(slightly slurred)

Bullshit! Some soldiers killed each other and more than a few blew their own brains out.

Rattled, the professor walks over to where Joe is glaring from his wheelchair.

DR. TRYAN

(smugly)

How do you know, sir, were you there?

Joe rolls closer to the professor, causing him to step back.

JOE

No, but my people were and they drew everything that happened on their calendar robes.

The professor gives Joe a patronizing nod then turns to his audience.

DR. TRYAN

With all due respect to the Sioux nation, a calender robe is not the most authentic form of historical evidence.

Joe rolls his wheel chair around to face the audience.

JOE

And what makes the white man's books any more truthful about what happened?

AT THE BACK OF THE CONFERENCE ROOM,

Custer and Wayne watch TWO SECURITY GUARDS come down the aisle and approach Joe.

CUSTER

Who's that wacko?

WAYNE

They gave a parade for him four years.

CUSTER

Parade, for what?

WAYNE

Being a hero in Iraq.

Shrugging, Custer motions for Tom to lean over.

CUSTER

(whispering)

Look, I'm going back to the motel to unwind a little before the shooting.

WAYNE

You want me to drive you?

CUSTER

No, I've got a ride. Come get me when they form up. And, Tom, you don't know where I am, okay?

Wayne nods and Custer leaves through a side exit.

EXT. MAIN STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Emerging from City Hall, Tom watches three private buses come down the main street and stop.

The doors hiss open. Momentarily, cores of men dressed as Union soldiers climb off.

Almost all are overweight. Some wear sun glasses. Others are clutching digital cameras and cell phones.

MAN (O.S.)

Oh, if my grand daddy was here, he would bust a gut. He was in the real cavalry against Villa. His men were thin as flattened aluminum.

Wayne turns to find OTTO HOLT, 89, a white haired man leaning on a cane, staring at the wanna-be soldiers milling in the street.

OTTO HOLT

Those soldiers don't look like they could mount a horse let alone ride one.

Wayne and the old man watch the soldiers goofing around posing for pictures.

One fat soldier's cap falls off and he has a hard time picking it up.

WAYNE

They wouldn't have stood a chance back then.

The old man chuckles.

OTTO HOLT

Neither did the real ones, Wayne. Who'd they rope you into being today?

WAYNE

Tom Custer.

Otto Holt shakes his head.

OTTO HOLT

Should have asked to be Major Keogh. Gone down fighting. Indians respected him, left his body alone. Not with Captain Custer, no siree, they hated him.

The old man pokes his cane into the sidewalk.

OTTO HOLT (CONT'D)
Squaws smashed his skull in and cut
him up real bad after he was dead.
No, you don't wanna-be him at all.

Turning, the old man starts limping down the porch.

INT. COSTUME ROOM - MINUTES LATER

As A HARRIED FEMALE COSTUME CLERK hands two middle-aged Sioux women moccasins and buckskin outfits to wear, Rachel waits to move up to the fitting table.

Hearing an Indian language not her own, she turns, staring in surprise as TWO CROW MEN in Levis and T-shirts follow a MALE PRODUCTION ASSISTANT into the room.

He walks up to the counter and motions to the woman costume clerk.

MALE PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Avery said to give these guys the
headdresses we brought.

FEMALE COSTUME CLERK
I thought the Sioux had their own.

MALE PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
We're not using Sioux any more.

FEMALE COSTUME CLERK
We've only got a few.

MALE PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
That's all they need for chiefs.
The Crow braves will just be
wearing loin clothes.

At the doorway, the two older Sioux women stand stunned, watching the Crows approach the fitting table.

Recognizing Rachel, they tense.

Rachel walks over to the costume clerk.

RACHEL
You can't let Crow be Sioux.

FEMALE COSTUME CLERK
Hey, I just follow orders.

Walking over a clothes rack, the costume clerk takes down a deer-skin dress and brings it back to the counter.

FEMALE COSTUME CLERK (CONT'D)
Here's your costume.

RACHEL
It's not a costume. It's what my
people wore.

The woman shrugs and motions to a row of changing booths across the room.

COSTUME CLERK
Right, non. Try it on over there
and see if it needs adjusting.

Rachel grips the clothes close to her.

RACHEL
Not with them here.

She stalks out, leaving the costume assistant glancing at the two Crows.

COSTUME ASSISTANT
What's with her? Are you guys still
enemies?

The Crows laugh at the question, but their eyes say otherwise.

INT. SALOON - SAME TIME

In an old fashioned saloon, complete with antique back bar large mirror, deer antlers, stuffed Grizzly Bear on its hind legs, and player piano in back, Union soldiers are lined along the bar, drinking and laughing it up.

On the wall is AN OVERSIZED REPLICA OF KUNSTER'S MELODRAMATIC PAINTING OF THE LAST MOMENTS ON CUSTER HILL.

Glancing up at the savage melee, A BEEFY MAN IN A SERGEANT'S UNIFORM hoists his shot glass to the painting.

SERGEANT
To the 7th!

Standing upright, all the soldiers lift their drinks.

SOLDIERS
(in unison)
To the 7th!

They knock down their drinks.

The sergeant stares at the corner of the painting, WHERE A BRAVE IS SCALPING A DEAD SOLDIER.

SERGEANT

Only good Indian is a dead one.

A beer bottle whirls from the rear of the bar and bounces off the sergeant's back.

Enraged, he whirls around, fists upraised, ready to fight.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)

Who the fuck did that!

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD

I did.

From the shadows, Joe rolls out in his wheelchair.

Sensing trouble, THE MIDDLE-AGED BARTENDER comes around the corner, heading over to stop Joe.

BARTENDER

Come on, Joe. I gave you a break.
You were 86's. Don't start trouble
again.

Pushing the bartender aside, Joe stares up at the sergeant.

The bartender hurries back around the bar to pick up the phone.

JOE

You got that all wrong, Sarge.

The sergeant glares down at him.

SERGEANT

Yea, how so?

Joe stares at the wanna-be soldiers.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD

Sheridan really said, the only good
Indian is a red one.

SERGEANT

The hell he did. He said, dead one.

Joe rolls his wheelchair closer to the sergeant.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD
How about we take it outside?

The sergeant scoffs and looks back at his buddies.

SERGEANT
I ain't fightin' no cripple.

With one thrust, Joe runs his wheelchair over the sergeant's feet, then head-butts him hard, dropping the sergeant groaning to the floor.

As two soldiers rush from the bar to attack Joe, he rolls his wheel chair up on the sergeant's throat, cutting off his air flow. The sergeant starts choking, gagging for air.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD
Anybody touch me I'll snap his
thorax.

The men stop. Joe rolls his wheelchair back then watches the sergeant catching his breath.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD (CONT'D)
You still want to go back inside,
I'm ready.

THE DOUBLE DOORS SWING OPEN, and SHERIFF JACK SANGLER, 41, in pressed beige slacks and shirt, Stetson hat and cowboy boots, with leather holster and silver-handled revolver, strides into the bar and heads straight for Joe.

JACK SANGLER
Should'a known it'd be you, Joe.

As men help the Sergeant to his feet, he jabs his finger at Joe.

SERGEANT
I want him arrested.

SHERIFF SANGLER
What's the charge?

SERGEANT
Assault, and I got all these
witnesses.

The Sergeant turns toward the other soldiers, who start mumbling their affirmation.

The Sheriff walks over to Joe.

SHERIFF SANGLER

Be this had something to do with
Indians, huh, Joe.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD

Always does, Chief. You know me,
I'd like a rattler. I don't go
looking to bite....until some big
fat hand comes reaching down...

He pauses, glaring at the sergeant.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD (CONT'D)

...poking me with what that no good
Sheridan said.

The Sheriff glances over at the bartender -- who nods.

Turning, the Sheriff studies the row of overweight, middle-
aged soldiers than glances down at Joe.

SHERIFF SANGLER

I guess if I heard someone said the
only good white man was a dead one,
I would get hot fast. Come on, Joe,
you've worn out your welcome here.

Nodding, Joe starts rolling toward the door when he swerves
over to the bar and grabs a full bottle of beer, then
continues toward the door.

THE SOLDIER whose beer he took gapes at the sheriff.

SERGEANT

You see that?

SHERIFF SANGLER

Let it go. I'll buy you another.

The sergeant strides up to the Sheriff.

SERGEANT

Why aren't you going to arrest him?

The Sheriff stares the sergeant down.

SHERIFF SANGLER

You all came here to play soldiers
and get massacred in fun. But Joe
there went over to Iraq and fought
in a real battle, where his buddies
got shot and they didn't get back
up.

The Sheriff falls silent to let his words sink in.

SHERIFF SANGLER (CONT'D)
And they gave here a Navy Cross and
full-disability for those legs he
ran the state championship with.

He glances over at Joe.

SHERIFF SANGLER (CONT'D)
Now, I'm sure as hell not going to
run him in for fighting...cause if
it had been me hearing you say what
you did, I would have taken one of
those beer bottles and shoved it up
your fat ass. So have yourselves
some fun, wanna-be soldiers, but I
don't want to hear another peep out
of you, or you'll be calling home
from jail.

Turning, he strides from the bar.

EXT. BAR - MOMENTS LATER

As the Sheriff comes out on the crowded sidewalk, he tries to find Joe, but he has already vanished into the crowd.

With a grudging smile, the Sheriff starts down the sidewalk.

EXT. PARKING LOT BEHIND CITY HALL - MOMENTS LATER

A group of Crow men, faces streaked with war paint and a single feather in their hair, Sioux style, emerge from the auditorium, in loin clothes and moccasins.

AT THE OTHER END OF THE PARKING LOT, the assistant director finishes issuing instructions to the Sioux women extras on what to do in the Sioux village when the soldiers attack,

Dressed in traditional costume, Rachel moves back through the group of Sioux woman.

ONE MIDDLE-AGED SIOUX WOMAN glances over.

RACHEL
Rachel, where you going?

Rachel points at the Crow extras.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
To tell my father. This must not
happen.

Turning, she hurries through the parking lot.

INT. CITY HALL - SAME TIME

On the steps, Wayne takes his place among the assembled 7th
Calvary soldiers as they prepare to pose for a group
photograph.

THE PHOTOGRAPHER glances around.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Where's Custer?

Everyone looks around. Wayne gets the photographer's
attention.

WAYNE
He needed to take care of
something. He'll be back for the
shooting.

A MIDDLE-AGED UNION MAJOR turns to the soldiers.

MIDDLE-AGED UNION MAJOR
He'd better be. We can't have
Custer's Last Stand without Custer.

As several soldiers laugh, Wayne spots RACHEL moving through
the crowd on the opposite side of the street.

He starts after her, pausing to wait as traffic passes, then
going after her.

EXT. SIDEWALK - MOMENTS LATER

Cutting through strolling tourists, Wayne hurries up behind
Rachel.

WAYNE
Rachel.

She turns, startled to see him in an officer's uniform.

RACHEL
What are you doing dressed like
that?

WAYNE

What about you? You said you would never take part in a reenactment.

As people shift around them, she steps closer.

RACHEL

They offered me so much money, Wayne. We can use it to get away.

He puts his arms around her.

WAYNE

I know. They're paying me fifteen hundred dollars just to stand up on Custer's Ridge.

RACHEL

Have you met Custer yet?

Wayne nods.

WAYNE

I'm his brother.

RACHEL

Is he as fat as the Custer last year?

WAYNE

No, they picked a real actor for the movie.

Glancing down the street, Rachel sees several Crow men heading toward the casting office.

She grips Wayne's arm and quickly kisses him.

RACHEL

I have to go.

WAYNE

Where?

RACHEL

Back to the reservation to tell my father Crows are being hired to play us.

Wayne looks startled.

WAYNE

Let me take you.

RACHEL
It's better I go alone.

WAYNE
Then meet me at the Morning Star
Motel when you're done.

She looks surprised.

RACHEL
What's there?

WAYNE
I gotta bring Custer back for the
shooting. But I wanna show you
something you won't believe.

They kiss goodbye.

Abruptly, A JAPANESE MAN holds up his expensive camera,
motioning for Rachel to pose beside Wayne.

Reluctantly, Wayne moves up beside her.

RACHEL
This is all so crazy.

WAYNE
I know, but it's over tonight then
we can leave.

For a moment, she looks frightened.

RACHEL
Will you tell your father I left
with you?

WAYNE
He'll know, Rachel. He'll know.

JAPANESE MAN (O.S.)
Please, you look here.

They turn, seeing him motioning for them not to move.

They smile as he takes the picture, and more tourists spot
their costumes and approach.

Rachel hurries away down the sidewalk as more tourists come
to take Wayne's picture.

A LITTLE BOY peers up at him.

LITTLE BOY
Where's your gun?

Seeing Rachel vanish down the sidewalk, Wayne looks down at the little boy.

WAYNE
I don't know. Guess I'd better go
get one, huh?

He crosses the street toward the soldiers beginning to form up in front of City Hall.

INT. RACHEL'S CAR - LATER DAY

As she is coming around the bend toward the reservation, a sleek motorcycle races alongside, its black helmeted driver motioning for her to pull over.

She shakes her head and picks up speed.

The driver cuts the motorcycle in front of her, forcing her to brake.

She pulls to the side of the road as the motorcycle stops and the driver climbs off, removing his helmet and letting his long black hair drop over his leather jacket.

JAY TWO HAWKS, 20, a lean, muscular Sioux strides toward Rachel's car.

RACHEL
Jay, it's over. I told you to leave
me alone.

He steps right next to the driver's window, glaring at Rachel.

JAY TWO HAWKS
Yeah, so you can date some *wasicus*.
I saw you two, with him all dressed
up like some fake blue legs.

RACHEL
That's none of your business, Jay.

He thrusts his index finger at her.

JAY TWO HAWKS
You watch and see.

Turning, he strides back to his motorcycle, climbs on, fires it up and tears away -- doing a wheelie, with the front wheel high in the air.

RACHEL

Jerk.

Putting the car into gear, she drives on toward the reservation.

EXT./INT PROPERTY TRAILER - SAME TIME

Stepping up to the open door, Wayne glances around at stacks of 1873 Winchester repeating rifles and boxes of blank shells.

To the side, an officer's sword tilts against the wall. AN ASIAN-AMERICAN PRODUCTION ASSISTANT glances over from where she is doing inventory.

WAYNE

I think I'm supposed to have a weapon for the movie.

She walks over and picks up a roster.

ASIAN-AMERICAN WOMAN

Name?

WAYNE

Wayne Cutler.

She grins.

ASIAN-AMERICAN WOMAN

No, in The Last Stand.

WAYNE

Oh, ah, Tom Custer.

She glances at the roster.

ASIAN-AMERICAN WOMAN

Colt pistol and sword. Sign here.

As she hands him the roster, she goes to get the lone sword in the corner then walks down a row of shelves, returning momentarily with a pistol in a holster. Putting them down on the counter, she pauses, thinking to herself.

ASIAN-AMERICAN WOMAN (CONT'D)

Oh yeah, and this.

She reaches under the counter and lifts up a zip-lock bag with six bullets.

WAYNE
Are those real?

ASIAN-AMERICAN WOMAN
Course not. Think we wanna kill somebody? You're not supposed to put them in until you get to the set.

Wayne takes the bullets and puts them in his pocket.

WAYNE
Am I supposed to shoot them or what?

She shrugs.

ASIAN-AMERICAN WOMAN
Don't ask me. They just want to make it look real, I guess. The AD will tell you what to do.

WAYNE
AD?

The girl smiles.

ASIAN-AMERICAN WOMAN
You must be a local. Assistant Director.

WAYNE
This is my first time to be in a movie.

She winks.

ASIAN-AMERICAN WOMAN
Then it good, hon. We got a nineteen-point eight audience rating for Antietam.

Nodding, he straps on his pistol holster then takes the sword and fastens it around his waist.

Taking the hilt, he tries to pull out the sword. Seeing it is stuck, he yanks it hard. It jerks free, the blade catching the edge of his hand holding the scabbard.

BLOOD FLOWS FROM THE SMALL CUT.

ASIAN-AMERICAN WOMAN (CONT'D)

Oh, you cut yourself. Here...

Hurrying through the trailer, the girl returns with a paper towel. Motioning for Wayne to hold out his hand, she dabs the cut.

WAYNE

It's nothing, just a little blood.

He takes the paper towel and presses it against his hand.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Guess I'd better practice getting it out of the scabbard.

ASIAN-AMERICAN WOMAN

Be careful.

WAYNE

(grinning)

Hey, this is nothing compared to what happens to me later.

EXT. TRAILER - SAME TIME

Wayne crosses the parking lot.

FROM THE SIDE, A GOLF CART speeds toward him. Sitting beside the driver is Marsh, the assistant director.

MARSH

What the hell are you doing here? You're supposed to be forming up with the regiment.

WAYNE

Sorry, I had get my pistol and stuff.

He gives Wayne a sorrowful look, then motions for the driver to move on.

MARSH

Well, get out in front with the rest of the soldiers.

As the cart drives off, Wayne clutches his scabbard to his side and jogs toward City Hall.

EXT. SIOUX LODGE - LATER DAY

Getting out of her car, Rachel glances around the tepees. The area is deserted.

She starts toward her father's house.

INT. SIOUX LODGE - MOMENTS LATER

Coming in, Rachel finds the main room empty.

RACHEL

Father?

Someone approaches from the back.

Chief Buffalo Cloud appears and stops in his tracks, staring at his daughter in traditional Sioux garb.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

For a moment, her father is too overcome to reply. Then he motions for her to wait.

Stepping out of sight, he returns holding a wooden framed photograph that he stops to wipe the dust off on his shirt sleeve, then holds up in front of his daughter.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD

Look.

IN A WEATHERED AND CRACKED SEPIA DAGUERREOTYPE, A SIOUX WOMAN WITH LONG BLACK HAIR, IN BEIGE CHAMOIS DRESS AND MOCCASINS, STANDS IN FRONT OF A TEPEE DECORATED WITH SIOUX SYMBOLS.

Rachel looks back at her father.

RACHEL

Is that grandmother when she was young?

He shakes his head.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD

No, that is your great grandmother.

He looks up at his daughter then back at his photograph.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD (CONT'D)
Like she stepped from this picture
when you came in. But you must take
those clothes back. We will not go
fight on the hill today.

RACHEL
Father, you have to.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
No, they must pay more. They will
make much money for their movie.
Without Sioux, no movie.

Biting her lip, she hesitates.

RACHEL
Father, they are hiring Crow to
play Sioux.

Stunned, her father drops the photograph onto the floor.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
What are you speaking of?

Rachel picks up the photograph and clutches it to her breast.

RACHEL
They are dressing Crow like Sioux
warriors for their movie.

The chief walks to the window, staring out at the tepees.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
First, they refuse to pay us more.
Now, they insult our ancestors by
using our enemy to be Sioux.

RACHEL
Father, what do you want me to do?
Should I go to the other
reservations and tell them?

He turns back to her.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
You are my daughter, but I know you
stand more in the white man's world
than you do in the Sioux's. The
other chiefs are like me, the old
way is the only way. I cannot send
my daughter in my place. Only my
son could go, and he....

The Chief falls silent.

Rachel knows what he can't say.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD (CONT'D)
I must go, but someone must wait
here to tell our people.

Rachel starts out of the lodge.

RACHEL
Father, you stay here.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
No, you can't go in my place.

RACHEL
I won't father. I'm going to get
Joe.

He looks started.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
It is too late for my son. He is
gone.

RACHEL
Then I will bring him back.

She leaves.

EXT. MAIN STREET - MINUTES LATER

Lining the sidewalks, excited tourists are taking pictures of the wanna-be soldiers noisily getting into formation.

Wayne stands with four other officers in the front rank, as the assistant director dramatically holds up both hands to signal for silence.

MARSH
Listen up! We can only do one take
of the battle sequence. We gotta
get it right. All wrist watches
better be off. No cell phones on.

He watches as several soldiers remove watches and pull out cell phones from their pockets to turn them off.

MARSH

And I'd better not see any chewing gum. No smiling and laughing. Remember, you're being killed by Indians.

A PAUNCHY SOLDIER RAISES HIS HAND.

MARSH (CONT'D)

What?

PAUNCHY SOLDIER

We're calvary. Where are our horses?

MARSH

The horses are out at the battle site. Every fourth man will be given four horses to hold by the reins, while the others fight. But no one will mount up. We want the horses to run off during the fighting, the way it really happened.

A SHORT SOLDIER in back peeks out of ranks.

SHORT SOLDIER

How they gonna get 'em back?

MARSH

Let the ranch hands handle that. You just do what the director says. And remember, this is history, for real.

With a somber expression, the assistant director scans the soldiers' faces.

MARSH (CONT'D)

You are all playing dead soldiers who fell on this day. Give it your best. You're free until three. We form up here and march out to the monument.

Several soldiers groan.

MAN (O.S.)

Walk. How come we can't go in the buses?

MARSH

You need to work up a sweat for the attack. We want you look real as you can. Dismissed.

As the formation breaks up, Wayne walks over to Marsh.

WAYNE

Custer wanted me to bring him back when it was time.

MARSH

Have him here by three.

Wayne starts across the street toward the crowded sidewalk, when HANK steps forward in his Army Ranger uniform. Weaving a little, he contemplates his brother.

HANK

What a joke. Looks more like the Gay Pride parade I saw on TV. What the fuck are you doin' with these dorks?

Wayne shrugs.

WAYNE

Earning enough money to get out of here, Hank.

HANK

Hey, change your clothes and come with me to Bozeman. They got a recruiting office. That'll get you out of town.

Wayne shakes his head.

WAYNE

Not that way. I'm not leaving Rachel.

Hank playfully feigns a punch into Wayne's stomach.

HANK

Always wanted to hit a officer. Listen, little brother, all bull shit aside. Something heavy did happen here to our soldiers long ago, and bad blood is still flowing. Deep down, those Sioux are still at war with us.

He starts away.

WAYNE

Trust me. Find yourself a white girl, bro. I'll send you an e-mail when I get to my fire base.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

You say good-bye to dad?

Hank waves off the question.

HANK

Tried, but "The Mayor" was meeting with reporters. Hey, this is the biggest day Federman every saw. I can't wait to see the movie and watch your sorry ass get scalped.

Hank turns and fades into the crowd.

For a second, Wayne seems about to run after him, then merely waves.

WAYNE

So long, Hank.

Wayne starts walking in the other direction.

DOWN THE SIDEWALK,

Clutching rifles and clad in the patchwork outfits of Custer's guides, Sharow, Yates and Blair, watch Wayne walk away.

YATES

How come he gets to be an officer?

SHAROW

Because his daddy is mayor, dummy.

Coming down the sidewalk in sports clothes is Gert Swartz. Seeing the three boys, the gun shop owner approaches.

SWARTZ

I gotta get right back to the store. It's busier than hell. Here, this is what you wanted.

Turning his back to passer-by, Gert holds out a box of rifle shells.

SHAROW

Cool. Now we'll have some real fun.

The boys began grabbing shells out of the box.

SWARTZ

Remember, they're wax tipped. You gotta be within twenty feet or so to have 'em work. They won't hurt anyone but they sting like hell.

SHAROW

How much we owe you, Mr. Swartz?

SWARTZ

Nothing. Just get a few of those fuckin' Sioux for me. Some of my ancestors got scalped in the Black Hills.

SHAROW

I'll get a chief for you, Mr. Swartz.

With a big grin, he walks away.

BLAIR

Oh man, we'll show them.

YATES

Too bad we don't have real bullets.

Sharow punches him on the shoulder.

SHAROW

Sure, and go to prison.

He looks down at the wax-tipped bullets.

SHAROW (CONT'D)

This'll let 'em know they would'a been dead in real life.

INT. RUNDOWN HOTEL - LATER DAY

Rachel comes up the steps and stops at the landing, where A BLEARY-EYED WOMAN MANAGER is watching Judge Judy on television behind the check-in desk.

RACHEL

Is Joe Buffalo Cloud in?

The manager glances over and is momentarily startled to see Rachel in Sioux maiden.

BLEARY-EYED MANAGER

You mean, Joe Don't Ray The Rent.
He's probably over with those other
losers at Benteen Park.

EXT. CITY PARK - MINUTES LATER

Rachel comes down the deserted walk, stops momentarily, then
hears LAUGHTER.

IN A GROVE OF TREES removed from view the street is Joe and
FRANK and PETE, two gaunt, poorly dressed white men in their
thirties. They are passing around a gallon jug of wine.

Steeling herself, Rachel walks toward the trio.

Hearing her, they look up.

Pete stands and holds out the jug to Rachel.

PETE

Wanna a drink, hon?

Joe stares harshly at his crony.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD

Shut up, Pete. It's my sister.

Pete steps back.

PETE

Sorry, Joe, I didn't know.

Joe leans back in his wheelchair, staring at his sister's
attire.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD

So, you're gonna be in that movie,
huh?

RACHEL

Joe, you gotta come help father.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD

Why?

RACHEL

They hired Crows to take our place.

It takes a second for Joe to react to the remark.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD
Huh, the Crows were with Custer,
always have been for all the re-
enactments since I was a kid.

RACHEL
Father wanted more money because
they're making a movie this time.

Joe shakes his head.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD
And they refused, huh?

She nods.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD (CONT'D)
Those movie people don't give a
shit about our culture. We're all
the same to them.

Pete holds out the jug to Joe.

TALLER MAN
Here, Joe, you need it.

He starts to take it then pauses, staring at Rachel.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD
What's he gonna do about it?

Rachel starts to break down then wills herself not to cry.

RACHEL
I've never seen father like this.
He just stood there when I told him
about the Crows.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD
He's got to get the other chiefs to
band together. Only way to stop the
Crows.

RACHEL
He wouldn't let me go tell them
because I'm...

Joe waves his hand: he knows the ways of the tribe.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD
Okay, I'd better go see him...if
he'll talk to me after swearing he
never wanted to see me again.

RACHEL

Do you blame him? You showed up at a council meeting drunk. You couldn't even stand up, Joe. But he's not angry. It's like he aged all of a sudden.

Joe turns to his friends.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD

Save me some or I'll kick both your asses.

RACHEL

Can one of your friends take you, Joe? I have to meet someone.

Rolling his wheelchair over to his sister, Joe stares up at her.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD

I bet it's that little *wasichu* I saw you coming out of the movie with. He's the mayor's son. That won't last. He'll just have his fun and dump you.

RACHEL

You're wrong. I love him, Joe, and he loves me.

Joe grimaces.

JOE

Ain't enough, sister, to wash away the differences between his people and ours. I know. Even in Iraq, my squad leader called me Geronimo. I told him ten times I wasn't Apache, but it didn't matter. We're just Injuns to them. Why do you think they're making that stupid movie? To keep the anger alive.

Rachel puts her hand on her brother's shoulder.

RACHEL

Joe, will you go help father? I wouldn't have come if I was his son and not his daughter.

Grabbing the jug to take a deep slug before handing it back to Pete, he motions toward Frank.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD
Think you're sober enough to get me
to the reservation in one piece?

Hearing his own question, Joe looks down at his crippled legs, then laughs.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD (CONT'D)
Well, a bit late for that. But can
you drive, Frank?

Frank gets to his feet, wavering back and forth. He tries to put his index finger on the tip of his nose but fails.

FRANK
Yes, Officer....A...B...C...D...

Joe swats him on the side.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD
Quit fuckin' around, Frank. This
isn't no sobriety test.

Seeing the man is drunk, Rachel motions for Joe to follow her.

RACHEL
Come on, Joe. I'll take you.

Joe pushes Frank forward.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD
The hell you will. I'm not coming
between young lovers. Come on,
Frank, get me to the reservation.

With his friend leading the way, Joe rolls his wheelchair behind him. Pausing, he glances back over his shoulder.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD (CONT'D)
Thanks for coming to get me,
Rachel.

Before she can respond, he continues on.

EXT. MORNING STAR MOTEL - LATER DAY

Pulling into the parking lot, Wayne gets out and starts toward Custer's room.

As he nears the room, he hears rap music interspersed with a woman moaning.

Coming up beside the window, he pauses, pretending to bend down to tie his shoe.

A BED BOARD is banging against the wall then there is a lull.

WOMAN (O.S.)
Stop! No, Mr. Lurie, I don't want
to do that.

CUSTER (O.S.)
You'll like it. It won't hurt.

WOMAN (O.S.)
But it hurts already.

CUSTER (O.S.)
Trust me, hon. I'll go real slow.

Rising up, Wayne looks at his watch then glances across the courtyard at the Star Wagon.

He walks over to the trailer and opens the side door. Glancing around to make sure he isn't seen, he steps inside.

INT. STAR WAGON - MOMENTS LATER

Wayne walks through the posh living room, stopping to try the wide-screen TV. When the screen lights up, he turns it off and moves through the trailer, glancing at all the liquor bottles in the wet bar, then moving into the bedroom.

BEYOND THE WINDOW, RACHEL'S BATTERED CAR PULLS INTO THE PARKING LOT.

As she gets out and starts walking toward the office, Wayne opens the side window.

WAYNE
Rachel, over here.

EXT. MOTEL COURTYARD - SAME TIME

Rachel turns, surprised to see Wayne waving from the window of the trailer.

RACHEL
What are you doing in there?

He motions to her.

WAYNE
I'll show you. Come on over.

She starts toward the trailer.

INT. TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

Rachel stands outside the open door as Wayne beckons her in.

WAYNE

What do you think of our new home?

RACHEL

Stop it, Wayne. Who's is it?

WAYNE

The movie company's, but it's for Custer, 'cept he's over in 127 with some girl.

She glances over her shoulder.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

I could hear them in bed.

RACHEL

Wayne, you listened in?

WAYNE

Just enough to know what was happening. Come on in and see what it's like to be a star.

Reluctantly, she steps inside and he closes the door. Instantly, she is dazzled by the opulence.

RACHEL

Wow.

WAYNE

I know. That's what I said. Imagine driving around living in this. We wouldn't have to worry about where to stay. We'd have our own home everywhere we went.

Rachel peers into the bathroom.

RACHEL

It's all tiled.

WAYNE

Nothing but the best. Come on and look at this.

He motions for her to follow him into the bedroom.

As he steps in, he sits down on the bed and holds out his hands.

She pauses.

RACHEL
Wayne, don't start.

WAYNE
I'm not going to do anything,
Rachel. I just want you to show you
something.

She gives him a uh-huh-stare.

RACHEL
I know your "want to show me
something."

He holds up his right hand.

WAYNE
I swear. Just sit down and I'll
show you.

She sits down.

RACHEL
Okay, now what?

He lies back and motions for her to do the same.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Wayne!

WAYNE
Just lie down next to me for a
second and if you don't think it's
amazing, I'll never ask you for
anything again.

She lies down beside him.

RACHEL
Okay, what's so special?

He reaches over and pushes a switch beside the bed.

WAYNE
Watch.

With a soft whirl -- the roof slides back, exposing the blue sky above them.

Amazed, Rachel stares up at the clouds drifting past.

RACHEL

Oh Wayne, it's beautiful. You can
just lie here and watch the clouds.

He tucks his arm around her.

WAYNE

I wanted you to see it. We could
have one like this, just the two of
us.

RACHEL

Really?

WAYNE

Really.

She closes her eyes and tucks her head against him. Rising
up, Wayne kisses her softly on the lips.

INT. CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD'S LODGE - LATER DAY

A pickup truck pulls away past the window. Moments later,
there is a knock on the door.

Silence.

Again, someone knocks.

From the back of the lodge, comes Chief Comes Back House,
holding a large open scrapbook in which FADED BLACK & WHITE
PHOTOGRAPHS CAN BE SEEN.

Reaching the door, he opens it.

In the doorway is Joe Buffalo Cloud in his wheelchair.

For a long moment, no one speaks.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD

Rachel told me what has happened,
father.

Chief Buffalo Cloud steps back to let his son roll the
wheelchair inside.

The chief walks over to the table and sits down, pushing the
photo album across the table toward his son.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
I have been talking to the
ancestors.

Joe glances down at the braves in the photographs then looks
back up at his father.

JOE
What are you going to do?

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
I don't know. If I do nothing the
Crows will shame our ancestors in
this movie.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD
But the *wasichus* won't know a Crow
from a Comanche, or Ogalla from a
Hunkpapa.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
The spirits will know. They will
know.

He stares at the open page:

SEVERAL SIOUX WARRIORS IN FULL REGALIA SIT PROUDLY ON THEIR
PONIES, STARING OUT FROM THE PHOTOGRAPH.

Reaching out to his father, JOE EXTENDS HIS ARM ACROSS THE
PHOTOGRAPH.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD
Father, I know I have lost your
trust, but believe me now, you must
tell the others to be in the movie.
More money is nothing, but more
shame would be worse.

Chief Buffalo Cloud stares at his son's extended hand.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
Why did you go away? Why did you
turn from your people?

Withdrawing his hand, Joe is unable to look his father in the
eyes.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD
I don't know, father. I couldn't
ride. I couldn't run. I couldn't do
anything with these metal legs. I
just gave up....

A flash of anger comes into his father's face.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
So you drank the white man's
poison.

Joe looks up.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD
I know.

Joe rolls around the table and comes up to his father.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD (CONT'D)
I need help, father, but now let me
help our people. You must be in the
movie. No one can be Sioux but
Sioux.

Chief Buffalo looks back down at the face of the braves
inside the photograph.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD (O.S.)
We must show them what we were.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD (O.S.)
And still are.

INT. BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIR'S OFFICE, FEDERMAN - SAME TIME

Dressed in slacks, white shirt and tie, RICHARD SAMUELS, 56,
the district BIA officer is preparing to leave his office
when the phone rings.

He crosses the room to take the call underneath a color-coded
map of the United States showing the distribution of Indian
Reservations.

INT. CUT - BIA DIRECTOR'S OFFICE, WASHINGTON D.C. - SAME TIME

In an office decorated with a Winchester bronze sculpture of
an Indian drawing a bow and an idealized painting of Navajo
children atop a mesa, CALEB HAYWOOD, 52, a fleshy man in suit
and tie, clutches a phone while gazing out his window at the
White House in the distance.

HAYWOOD
I got good news and bad news,
Richard.

INT. BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIR'S OFFICE, FEDERMAN - SAME TIME
Sensing trouble, Samuels tenses.

SAMUELS

There is no good news then, Mr.
Haywood. Let's hear the worst
first.

INT. BIA DIRECTOR'S OFFICE, WASHINGTON D.C. - SAME TIME

Hearing the door open behind him, the director turns to watch a winsome young secretary motion that she needs a document signed.

Beckoning her over, he takes a pen off his desk and motions to her.

HAYWOOD

I did all I could to stop them, but
they approved the oil exploration
for Areas Eleven to Nineteen.

INT. BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIR'S OFFICE, FEDERMAN - SAME TIME
Stunned, Samuels leans against the wall for support.

SAMUELS

But you said it would never get
passed. That grid goes all the way
across the Lakota Reservation.

INT. BIA DIRECTOR'S OFFICE, WASHINGTON D.C. - SAME TIME

Haywood signs the document then points at the clock on the wall and whispers "Seven-thirty."

Nodding, the secretary flashes the director a big smile then takes the documents and leaves the office.

HAYWOOD

It's the economy, plus the fear of
Iran closing down the Straits of
Hormuz. We need all the oil
reserves we can find.

INT. BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIR'S OFFICE, FEDERMAN - SAME TIMES

Now angry, Samuels picks up a letter opener off the desk and stares up at the reservation map.

He traces THE BLADE straight up to Montana and a small red patch with the word Lakota Sioux inside.

SAMUELS

The Sioux will never accept it, sir. This is their heartland. They won't be relocated again.

INT. BIA DIRECTOR'S OFFICE, WASHINGTON D.C. - SAME TIME

Impatient to end the conversation, the director begins checking his agenda.

HAYWOOD

I know, Haywood, that's why I also have good news. The Sioux won't have to relocate while they are exploring.

INT. BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIR'S OFFICE, FEDERMAN - SAME TIME

Samuels lowers the letter opener, trying to keep his temper.

SAMUELS

But, sir, we both know those derricks will infuriate them. It'd be like having bulldozers digging up your back yard.

INT. BIA DIRECTOR'S OFFICE, WASHINGTON D.C. - SAME TIME

Now irritated with Samuels, the director sits up.

HAYWOOD

Nonsense. It's just a few derricks. Course, if they drill oil, the Sioux will have to comply with relocation. Samuels, you still there? You hear me?

INT. BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIR'S OFFICE, FEDERMAN - SAME TIME

Samuels stares vacantly across the room.

SAMUELS

I hear you.

INT. BIA DIRECTOR'S OFFICE, WASHINGTON D.C. - SAME TIME

The director flips open a folder and stares down at a clipping of a Bureau of Indian Affairs newsletter -- whose headline reads LITTLE BIG HORN REENACTMENT TO BE FILMED BY HOLLYWOOD STUDIO.

HAYWOOD

I know it's a big day out there in Federman, so don't reveal the decision until after the movie company has left. I don't want any negative publicity. Got me? I'm sending you the decision by FAX, but hold onto it until I tell you to inform the Sioux.

He hangs up.

INT. BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIR'S OFFICE, FEDERMAN - SAME TIME

As Samuels places the phone down, a FAX machine across the room starts printing out a page.

Taking the letter opener, Samuels stabs it into the red grid on the map.

SAMUELS

(scoffing)

The Great White Fucker!

Yanking the page out of the FAX, Samuels storms out of the office, slamming the door behind him.

INT. STAR TRAILER BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

With the roof cover closed and the blinds drawn, Wayne and Rachel lie undressed, making love with the covers thrown back on the bed.

Pausing, she gazes at him, caressing his hair, as he looks down at her.

RACHEL

This is the first time we've ever been together in a real bed.

WAYNE

Don't worry. We'll have our own soon.

A WOMAN SCREAMS.

Wayne bolts up.

RACHEL
Who's that?

Leaning over, Wayne bends open the blinds and peeks out.

EXT. COURT YARD - SAME TIME

The door to Room 127 flings open, and the young woman seen in town stumbles out naked, pulling on her trousers, then hurriedly buttoning her blouse.

Clutching her bra, panties and shoes in her arms. She races across the courtyard and past the office.

AT THE WINDOW, THE MOTEL MANAGER stands awestruck watching her flee. Turning, he disappears from view.

Momentarily, Custer, bare-chested appears in the doorway of Room 127 with a sheet wrapped around his waist and clutching a wad of currency in his hand.

Not seeing the girl, he steps back inside the room and closes the door.

ACROSS THE COURTYARD, the trailer blinds drop back down.

INT. STAR WAGON - SAME TIME

Wayne hurriedly dresses in his uniform while Rachel watches him from the bed.

RACHEL
What's wrong?

WAYNE
Trouble. Some girl just ran naked out of Custer's room.

In an instant, Rachel slides from bed and starts dressing in her costume.

INT. MOTEL MANAGER'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

The manager angrily grips the phone while talking to the receptionist at City Hall.

MOTEL MANAGER

I don't care how busy he is. You tell the mayor that I'm five seconds from calling the sheriff about the actor he sent over. There is hell to pay.

The manager bends down to scan the courtyard then stands up straight when hearing someone come on the line.

MOTEL MANAGER (CONT'D)

Hello, Mr. Cutler, sorry to bother you, but it's an emergency. That Lurie fellow, yes, sir, the actor. Well, some girl just took half-naked out of his room. And I want him out of here right now. I won't stand for no nonsense. This here is a god-fearing motel. All right, I'll give him till three to get out of here then I'm calling the sheriff.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Fuming, the mayor hangs up and punches in another number.

INT. STAR WAGON - SAME TIME

Both dressed, Wayne and Rachel are making the bed when Wayne's cell phone rings.

He glances at the number.

WAYNE

Uh oh.

He answers.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Hi, dad.

INT. CUT

INT. CITY HALL AUDIOTORIUM - SAME TIME

Trying to keep his voice down from the people around him, the mayor walks to the far side of his auditorium.

MAYOR CUTLER

Where are you? I told you to stay with Custer. We got a crisis on our hands. Get out to the Morning Star and get Custer out of there. You tell the manager I'll take care of him soon as the movie people leave town.

INT. STAR WAGON - SAME TIME

Wayne peeks through the blinds, watching for sight of Custer.

WAYNE

Yeah, dad, I'll get right over there. I had to pick up my sword and pistol.

INT. CITY HALL - SAME TIME

The mayor angrily pushes a folding chair out of the way.

MAYOR CUTLER

Forget all that! Get Custer out of there before the manager calls the sheriff and the whole damned movie goes down the toilet.

INT. STAR WAGON - SAME TIME

Wayne holds the phone away from his ear as his father slams his own phone

Rachel stares at him.

RACHEL

I'm going, Wayne. I'll see you at the battle.

WAYNE

If they still have one. I gotta get Custer quick.

Stepping around the bed, he kisses her on the lips then starts out of the star wagon. Abruptly, he stops and looks back.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

Don't let the manager see you leaving. I don't want my dad to find out we were here.

RACHEL
 He won't. I'll see you on Custer's
 Ridge. We'll leave afterward, won't
 we, Wayne? You promise?

WAYNE
 We're history, Rachel.

He steps out of the trailer and closes the door.

Bending down, Rachel stares across the courtyard, watching
 the manager's office, then turning to see Wayne hurrying to
 Room 127.

Glancing around to make sure the bedroom is neat, Rachel
 leaves the trailer and closes the door.

BEYOND THE WINDOW, she hurries toward the rear of the motel,
 keeping the star wagon between her and the manager's office,

EXT. MOTEL PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

Wayne knocks on the door of Room 127.

CUSTER (O.S.)
 Who is it?

WAYNE
 Wayne Cutler.

CUSTER
 Who?

WAYNE
 You know, Tom Custer, your brother.

Momentarily, the door opens.

Standing in the shadows is Custer, still wearing the sheet
 around his waist, with a faint moustache of white powder
 below his nostrils.

The room is a shambles: the mattress halfway off the bed,
 a splotch of blood on the bottom sheet, and an overturned
 champagne bottle on the floor beside two glasses.

CUSTER
 Look, I know this looks bad.

Wayne stares at the white powder above Custer's lip.

WAYNE

My dad told me to get you of here right now. The sheriff's coming.

Custer steps back.

CUSTER

Hey, she told me she was 21. I didn't do anything she didn't want to.

WAYNE

You better get dressed and get that stuff off your nose.

CUSTER

What stuff?

He steps over to the mirror and sees the powder.

CUSTER (CONT'D)

Ah, yeah.

He wipes it off his face then starts dressing in his uniform.

CUSTER (CONT'D)

Look, you just keep quiet about this and I'll take good care of you. You want to be a production assistant on my next movie, you're in. A thousand a week.

Wayne glances at his watch.

WAYNE

Sir, I'm more worried about this movie if we're not out of here in five minutes.

Custer pulls on his pants.

Seeing Wayne staring down at the blood stain on the sheet, he kicks it aside with his foot.

CUSTER

Don't worry, I'll leave a few hundred to clean up the room.

EXT. LAKOTA SIOUX RESERVATION - MINUTES LATER

Parking his government issue sedan in front of the tepees, Mr. Samuels gets out clutching the FAX page and walks toward a group of truculent young Sioux males blocking his path.

Recognizing the BIA agent, the Indians refuse to move when he tries to reach the chief's lodge.

SAMUELS

Why aren't you all dressed for the re-enactment?

Not one brave replies.

Forced to step around them, he walks up to the front door and knocks. The door is opened by Joe.

SAMUELS (CONT'D)

Hello, Joe, I need to see your father.

Joe rolls back his wheelchair, pulling the door open.

In a circle in the middle of the room sit the elderly chiefs of the local tribes: Hunkapas, Ogallas, Cheyannes, Rees, Sans Arc and Minneconjou.

Startled to see a tribal council in session, Mr. Samuels hesitates.

SAMUELS (CONT'D)

Sorry for interrupting you....but

His words falter.

Rising, Chief BUFFALO CLOUD comes toward him.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD

You never hide your heart in your face, Mr. Samuels. Something bad brings you here.

The BIA agent nods.

SAMUELS

I was told not to come today, because of the movie...but I had to tell you.

The chiefs mumble, causing Mr. Samuels to look at them.

SAMUELS (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

Chief Buffalo Cloud notices the FAX sheet in the BIA agent's hand.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
We must decide on something, but
what is that?

He holds it out to the Sioux chef.

SAMUELS
I know I said they would never
drill on your land.

Chief Buffalo Cloud takes the FAX and reads the document.
With each word, his expression tightens. Where before was
sadness anger now appears.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
This cannot be!

Mr. Samuels holds up his hands in a gesture of powerlessness.

SAMUELS
I know. They promised.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
They promised. You promised. All of
you promised this would never
happen as it did before, every time
before.

Seeing his father's building anger, Joe rolls over and takes
the FAX. Reading it, he shakes his head in disbelief.

SAMUELS
It's only an exploration. If they
don't find anything, they'll leave.

JOE
Leave! They have no right to come
make their holes in our land and
look for their precious oil.

Hearing "oil," the other Chiefs rise up, speaking in
different dialects.

Mr. Samuels backs up.

SAMUELS
I'm sorry.

Chief Buffalo Cloud glares at the BIA agent.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
 Sorry? I have heard this word from
 white men since I was a boy; sorry
 after the white man killed the
 buffalo, sorry after they stole our
 land....sorry after they took our
 sons off to fight in their wars

He pauses to stare down at his son.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD (CONT'D)
 ...and send them back broken or in
 metal boxes. Tell me, Mr. Samuels,
 where is sorry before you do what
 you are sorry for?

The BIA agent can't answer. His lips start to form "sorry,"
 then catching himself, he opens the door and starts to leave.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD (CONT'D)
 Mr. Samuels, will you take a
 message?

SAMUELS
 To Washington, Chief?

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
 No, to the movie people. Tell them
 the Sioux will come today.

SAMUELS
 I didn't know there was a problem.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
 There was, for more money, but
 money does not matter now.

SAMUELS
 Why didn't you do like other tribes
 did and open a casino?

Chief Buffalo Cloud glances momentarily at his son.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
 My people do not need another white
 man's disease. Go, Mr. Samuels,
 tell them we will give them a movie
 they will not forget.

Samuels steps out and closes the door.

A HUSHED SILENCE.

Joe rolls the wheelchair across the room and hands the FAX to the nearest chief.

He takes it, reads and passes it to the next.

As though live electricity were being passed from man to man, they appear galvanized with rage.

Chief Buffalo Clouds walks silently from the room, drawing everyone's gaze.

Moments later, he returns dragging an old wooden trunk. Leaning over, he tries to pull open the hasp but can't.

Rolling up beside his father, Joe leans down, PLACING HIS HAND BESIDE HIS FATHER'S -- and together they open the trunk.

Reaching inside, Chief Buffalo Cloud removes a magnificent head dress.

Shaking the dust off, he holds it before him.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD (CONT'D)
My father's father's father wore
this, and now I will again.

He places it on his head then walks toward the other chiefs.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD (CONT'D)
(in Lakota Sioux)
Let us show them how when Yellow
Hair came to burn our villages and
kill our wives and children, we
went to meet him today.

Rising, the chiefs begin chanting.

INT. BIA AGENT'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Driving up the hill from the reservation, Samuels catches movement at the corner of his eye.

Looking down the slope, he sees scores of Sioux men running toward the row of shacks and houses.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MINUTES LATER

The movie trucks are getting ready to leave for Custer's Ridge as Samuel's sedan pulls up.

Getting out amid the movement of vans and trucks, he asks a production employee how to find the director.

The man points toward a white SUV idling by the side.

Walking over, Samuels sees Avery giving instructions to his
BEARDED CAMERAMAN

SAMUELS

Are you the director?

Avery looks over.

AVERY

Yeah, what is it? I'm busy.

SAMUELS

I'm with the Bureau of Indian
Affairs. I just left the Lakota
Reservation. Chief Buffalo Cloud
asked me to tell you the Sioux will
do the enactment for the movie.

The director grins at his BURLY CAMERAMAN.

AVERY

Hear that? I knew they'd come
around.

BURLY CAMERAMAN (O.S.)

But about the Crow? Marsh is down
there with them right now.

AVERY

Shit, the Crows.

The director taps his forehead, trying to come up with an
idea.

He looks at Mr. Samuels.

AVERY (CONT'D)

Who'd you say you're with?

SAMUELS

Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The director punches his fist into the air.

AVERY

That's it. I'll tell them you
people insist we use Sioux.

SAMUELS

But it's not our decision.

Avery waves aside the distinction.

EVERY

It doesn't matter. We just gotta tell the Crow we can't use them anymore.

The burly cameraman looks concerned.

BURLY CAMERAMAN

But Marsh is down there with the Crow right now.

EVERY

Then get him on the phone. If they get nasty, tell them they've got nothing on paper.

INT. MOTEL MANAGER'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Wayne hurries holding the money Custer was trying to give to the girl. He hands it to the manager behind the counter.

WAYNE

Here, sir. To keep care of the room.

MOTEL MANAGER

The room. What's wrong with the room?

WAYNE

It's a little messy. This will cover it.

The manager comes out from behind the counter.

MOTEL MANAGER

You tell your father I never want to have any of these movie people here again...and get that trailer out there off my property.

WAYNE

But what about my car?

MOTEL MANAGER

You can come back later and get it, but get that thing out of here or I'll have it towed by the sheriff.

Nodding, Wayne leaves.

EXT. COURTYARD - SAME TIME

Wayne sprints to Room 127. Opening the door, he finds General Custer dressed in his uniform.

WAYNE

The manager's really hot. He wants that trailer out of here.

CUSTER

I just paid him five hundred dollars.

WAYNE

He's still gonna call the sheriff if we don't leave now. You have the keys?

CUSTER

I think the PA left them in the ashtray.

EXT. MOTEL COURTYARD - SAME TIME

Two elderly ladies are pulling into the driveway to take a room when they see Wayne and Custer in Union Army uniforms, replete with pistols and swords, hurrying toward the trailer.

Frightened, the driver backs up and pulls away.

EXT. CROW RESERVATION - MINUTES LATER

Beside a corral filled with horses, Crow warriors clad in loin clothes and moccasins, faces streaked with war paint, and each with a lone feather jutting from his hair, stand listening to A GRIZZLED STUNT MAN explaining safety procedures while near him Marsh waits to speak.

Behind him, two production assistants prepare to hand out repeating rifles from a REAL HISTORY MOVIE VAN. Another assistant waits beside a long table stacked with rubber knives.

GRIZZLED STUNT MAN

You just ride in circles around Custer, firing your rifles. Each has six blanks. They'll tell you what to do up on the ridge. But don't ride into the soldiers.

Marsh steps forward.

MARSH

When the director yells "Cut," you dismount. Some of you will take the horses away while the rest of you attack Custer's men on foot.

GRIZZLED STUNT MAN

And don't get carried away swinging those rifles like clubs. Just shoot at the soldiers. Our camcorder crew will tell which braves to attack with knives for close ups.

Marsh's cellphone rings. He takes it from his pocket and listens.

His expression tensing, he walks away so one can overhear him. After a moment, he hangs up and motions to the Stunt Man.

MARSH

We got a big problem. Seems we could have trouble with the government if we don't use real Sioux.

The Stunt Man gapes at the assistant director, not sure what he means.

MARSH (CONT'D)

We gotta scrub the Crow for the shooting.

The stunt man glances at the milling Crow.

GRIZZLED STUNT MAN

Man, they're gonna be pissed.

The assistant director raises his hand.

MARSH

Hey, it's not my decision. It's politics. I gotta get right over to the Sioux reservation. You tell them.

GRIZZLED STUNT MAN

Me! Why me?

MARSH

Because I can't stay around. Tell them, we'll work out something to pay them for their trouble.

GRIZZLED STUNT MAN
What about all our props?

MARSH
Take 'em back to the production office. The Sioux are using bows and arrows from last time. Tell the Crow, Real History is real sorry about the mix-up, but it can't be helped.

Marsh strides toward an SUV standing nearby.

GRIZZLED STUNT MAN
Fuck this.

As the assistant director drives away, the grizzled stunt man walks over to the two locals standing by the table.

GRIZZLED STUNG MAN
Boys, load up all this stuff and put it in the property van, then get ready to move fast.

They get busy. The grizzled stunt man walks over to the Crow.

GRIZZLED STUNT MAN
Where's your Chief?

A TALL CROW WARRIOR IN HIS 30'S STEPS FROM THE GROUP.

TALL CROW WARRIOR
He went up to watch the movie.

GRIZZLED STUNT MAN
Well, they got a problem with one of the cameras. They can't shoot the movie till it's fixed.

The Crow goes livid.

TALL CROW WARRIOR
How long will it take?

GRIZZLED STUNT MAN
Your guess is as good as mine. I've been ordered back to the production office. My advice is go back to your homes and wait for the call. Someone from Real History will let you know.

As he starts back to the van to help the boys, the warrior goes to inform the other Crow.

INT. REAL HISTORY VAN - MINUTES LATER

With the grizzled stunt man at the wheel and the boys in the front seat beside him, he drives past the milling Crow warriors.

GRIZZLED STUNT MAN

Boys, I just saved our scalps.
Those Crows are gonna go on the
warpath when they find out they've
been dumped.

EXT. CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD'S LODGE - MINUTES LATER

In his back room, Chief Buffalo Cloud is dressing in full Sioux attire: head dress, fringed buckskin shirt, with red and yellow dyed porcupine quills, gauntlets with bead design, a necklace of bear claws, and a chest-plate of polished bone.

Walking to the table, he looks down at a tray of wooden bowls. Dipping his finger in one, he takes red dye and streaks his cheeks, then with the other hand, he takes blue dye and draws it across his forehead.

Done, he crosses the room and unfolds a chamois cover. Removing a bone-handled knife, he sticks it into his waist band.

Opening the closet, he reaches inside and withdraws an unstrung bow.

Taking a waxed cord from the shelf, he loops it over the top of the bow and all his might, strings the bow.

EXT. FEDERMAN ASSEMBLY AREA - MINUTES LATER

With the officer in front, the platoon of soldiers march in formation toward Custer's Ridge.

EXT. LAKOTA SIOUX RESERVATION - MINUTES LATER

In loin cloth and moccasins, braves from other reservations ride horses bareback toward others waiting beside the tepees.

A camera crew is set up, ready to shoot Custer's attack on the village.

Rachel and five other Sioux women in traditional costumes wait for instructions.

Horn honking, Marsh's white SUV comes down the dirt road, forcing Indians to move to the side.

The SUV stops and Marsh and his assistant get out, staring at the mass of warriors assembled on horseback.

MARSH

Man, look at them. They really got into it. Like the real thing.

The door of the chief's house opens, and Chief Buffalo Cloud emerges majestically attired.

The waiting braves stir, turning to watch the chief walk toward the assistant director, who appears humbled, seeing the apparition of the past approaching.

MARSH (CONT'D)

See you are all ready, Chief.

Chief Buffalo Cloud nods.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD

Yes, the Sioux are ready.

MARSH

You people have done how many enactments before?

The Chief quickly does a mental count.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD

Twenty-three.

MARSH

Good. Then you know the drill. For our movie, it's just a little different. You're going to ride up there and attack Custer's soldiers like before, but we'll have our people telling you when to stop and dismount, then where to go fire your arrows. Is that clear?

The Chief nods.

The assistant director notices the chief's coup stick.

MARSH (CONT'D)

What's that thing?

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD

To touch my enemy.

Marsh grins.

MARSH
No kidding.

The chief makes a razor-thin smile.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
No kidding.

Marsh scans the rows of braves, his eyes holding on the feathers jutting from their quivers.

MARSH
They all have rubber arrows, right?

The Chief nods, then motions for one of the braves to come over.

In war paint, loin cloth and moccasin, the young brave approaches.

Chief Buffalo Cloud says something and the brave pulls out an ARROW WITH A POINTED RUBBER TIP.

MARSH (CONT'D)
Good. You do like before, just shoot over their heads. I don't want anybody losing an eye.

ABRUPTLY,

A RIPPLE passes through all the braves, as they turn to watch Joe Buffalo Cloud emerge wearing war paint and traditional garb, pushing his wheel chair toward his father and the assistant director.

MARSH (CONT'D)
Who's this?

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD
My son.

Marsh glances at his aide then back at the chief.

MARSH
With all due respect, Chief, we can't use him. They didn't have wheel chairs back then.

Rolling up to the assistant director, Joe stares him in the eye.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD
I will not be in this when I come
up the hill. I will be on horse.

Marsh hesitates, wanting to ask him how but deciding not to
push it.

MARSH
Sure, sure, if you can ride a
horse, fine. What's your name?

Joe stares right through the assistant director.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD
Crazy Horse.

Marsh laughs then sees no one else is laughing.

MARSH
Suit yourself. Let me check the
braves and we're all set.

He walks down the lines of braves, glancing at the fierce
looking warriors.

Spotting something, he stops, moving closer to one Sioux, who
wears a unsheathed knife in his waist band.

MARSH (CONT'D)
Get rid of this. Only rubber
knives. Nothing dangerous up there,
hear me?

The brave nods and removes the knife. He hands it handle
first to the Assistant Director, who waves it off.

MARSH (CONT'D)
I don't want that. Just get rid of
it before you ride up there.

HIS CELL PHONE RINGS and he takes the call.

MARSH (CONT'D)
Yeah, all set. They look great.
We'll knock 'em dead.

Turning, he starts back toward his SUV.

MARSH (CONT'D)
Yeah, the squaws are ready, too.

He hangs up and turns around to the assembled Sioux.

MARSH (CONT'D)

Okay, I want the Chief and all braves into the teepees. Squaws, you be outside carrying kindling. As soon as the two soldiers ride through on their runaway horses, you scream and start running.

Stepping over to his vehicle, the assistant director steps up on the dashboard.

MARSH (CONT'D)

Braves, that's your signal. When the squaws scream, you come running out of the tepees like bees out of a hive. You all look up toward the ridge, then run for your horses and ride up there. How many of you have done re-enactments before?

Most braves raise their hand.

MARSH (CONT'D)

Good. Everything's the same, except for one thing. Whatever you do, don't look at the camera. Pretend it isn't there. It is June twenty-fifth, eighteen seventy six.

He starts to get into the SUV when he glances over at the Chief.

MARSH (CONT'D)

Once we wrap, we'll have someone bring your check.

The Chief nods.

The assistant director and his aide climb into the SUV with the Real History Studios logo.

As it starts to drive way, Marsh leans out the window.

MARSH (CONT'D)

Remember, don't look at the cameras. See you on the ridge.

As the SUV leaves the reservation and head up the road leading to the battleground, the braves turn toward Chief Comes Again Cloud.

A BONE WHISTLE begins playing, and the braves begin quietly chanting.

Chief Buffalo Cloud waves his coup stick. From behind the tepee, TWO HAWKS approaches, leading a pinto with blue streaks on its flanks and a red blanket.

Stopping beside Joe, hands the hackmore end to him.

With all his might, Joe grabs the horse's mane and starts to pull. He strains to lift himself up.

For a moment, it looks as though he won't make it. But neither his father nor the brave move to help him.

Finally, with a last thrust, he pulls himself up onto the pinto.

Proudly, he looks down at his father, who nods.

Reaching behind his shoulder, Joe holds the rubber arrows high in the air.

All as one, the other braves imitate him, removing their arrows in one hand and holding them up.

With one smooth gesture, Joe Buffalo Cloud snaps off the rubber ends and casts them to the ground.

Instantly, the other braves snap the ends off their arrows and fling the rubber tips away.

Thrusting the sharpened ends into the air, Joe releases chilling war cry.

CHIEF BUFFALO CLOUD holds both hands up to the sky.

BUFFALO CLOUD
Wakan tanka! Hok.ahey!

The braves repeat the cry in unison then hurry into the tepees, leaving Rachel and the squaws standing yards away from Chief Buffalo Cloud and Joe.

RACHEL stares unblinkingly at her father and brother. Sensing what they are about to do, she starts to walk toward the road.

Joe Buffalo Cloud rides over to block her path.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD
You cannot tell them.

RACHEL
But Wayne's up there.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD
He is a *wasicu*. We are your people.

RACHEL
Don't let him be hurt, please, Joe.
We're going away tonight.

Joe Buffalo Cloud stares down at his sister.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD
I went away, too.

RACHEL
I'm not going off to war like you,
Joe. I want to be with Wayne. But
you know we can't together here.
Please, whatever you do today,
don't let Wayne get hurt.

Saying nothing, Joe Buffalo Cloud trots his pony back to his father.

Rachel walks back to join the other Sioux squaws.

Chief Buffalo Cloud stays alongside his son's horse as they go behind the tepees, where other braves stand holding horses.

EXT. ROAD - MINUTES LATER

As the platoon of wanna-be soldiers crests the ridge, a cry goes up from a CROWD OF TOURISTS standing on the road below the monument.

Moving alongside the soldiers are Sharow, Yates and Blair attired as guides.

SHAROW
Dude, we are going to be in the movies.

YATES
Did any of the guides make it?

BLAIR
Didn't you ever read what happened here? Shit, everybody got wiped out except for Captain Keogh's horse, Comanche.

As they move down the hill, THE MONUMENT APPEARS TO THE LEFT, WITH CAMERA CREWS SET UP BELOW THE CEMETERY.

Twenty or more horses are being held by ranch hands.

SHAROW
Where the fuck are the Sioux?

BLAIR points AT A ROW OF WHITE TRIANGLES IN THE DISTANCE.

BLAIR
Down there. This is where Reno and his men charged them.

SHAROW
You heard that director. There ain't going to be no charge. Just us fighting up here.

He steps closer to his friends.

SHAROW (CONT'D)
You guys all loaded up?

They nod, patting their rifles.

YATES
Bet you I hit more of 'em then you.

SHAROW
No way, dude. I bet you a six pack

EXT. HILLSIDE - MOMENTS LATER

Avery stands with his camera crew watching the soldiers march off the road and start up the hill.

Behind them, lines of tourists press forward.

Seeing something that bothers him, he grabs his walky talkie and hits the button.

AVERY
Get those fuckin' tourists out of sight. That's all we need, some asshole with a Nikon in 1876.

Momentarily, a figure appears, waving the tourists back. As they move out of sight, the director walks up on the edge of the ridge.

He stares down at the tepees then over at the advancing soldiers.

AVERY (CONT'D)
 (to himself)
 I'll get an Emmy for this.

As the soldiers close, the director squints at the procession.

His face registers growing shock.

 AVERY (CONT'D)
 Where the fuck's Custer?

EXT. HIGHWAY- MINUTES LATER

The star wagon races down the two-lane highway.

INT. STAR WAGON - SAME TIME

Custer has the rear-view mirror turned on himself while Wayne drives.

 CUSTER
 How do I look?

Wayne glances over.

 WAYNE
 Ah, good.

 CUSTER
 I mean, like the way you see
 Custer?

Wayne shrugs.

 WAYNE
 Our history teacher told us that
 Custer had short hair when he got
 killed.

Custer straightens his wig.

 CUSTER
 Forget your teacher. Everyone
 imagines him with long hair. You
 can't mess with legends. Can you
 imagine Elvis bald?

Wayne doesn't how to answer the question. He drives on.

EXT. DIRECTOR'S SITE - MINUTES LATER

With the soldiers forming up on the hill, cowboys are leading horses over to every fourth soldier.

Avery is fuming, ranting into his walky talkie.

AVERY

How long ago did they leave? Jesus Christ, where are there?

He turns off the walky talkie and glances around at his camera crew.

AVERY (CONT'D)

The mayor's kid is bringing him. They better get here fast.

The director walks up to the lead cameraman.

AVERY (CONT'D)

Can we shoot around Custer if he's late for the attack?

The man's somber look is answer enough.

The director hurls his baseball cap to the ground.

AVERY (CONT'D)

Great. Custer's Last Stand without Custer.

EXT. ROAD BELOW BATTLE SITE - SAME TIME

In a carny atmosphere, with locals in open-bed trucks selling cotton candy, fake scalps, and T-shirts stenciled I WAS THERE! CUSTER'S LAST STAND, tourists mill around, waiting for the movie to begin.

Behind them in his business suit, the Crow chief is angrily talking on a cellphone.

CHIEF NO SHADOW ROCK

It's a breach of contract. I'm going all the way to the top. It's favoritism. Fuck the BIA! I'll take this to the Supreme Court.

EXT. SIOUX RESERVATION - SAME TIME

Rachel is pacing alone away from the other squaws.

INT. STAR WAGON - SAME TIME

Seeing the swarm of tourists formed up around the bend in the road, Wayne brakes.

WAYNE

Here we are.

Custer glances over at Wayne.

CUSTER

I don't want to see one word about that motel in the tabloids. Got me? I'll take care of you. You ask anyone in the industry who knows John Lurie. I keep my word.

Wayne pulls the star wagon to the side of the road and turns off the engine.

Custer opens his door and starts getting out.

CUSTER (CONT'D)

Let's go make history, Tom.

Shaking his head in dismay, Wayne gets out on the driver's side.

EXT. ROADSIDE - SAME TIME

Seeing General Custer coming, tourists begin applauding. Custer bows, smiling to the onlookers. Several people press forward, holding out autograph pads.

A PRODUCTION ASSISTANT keeping the tourists back sees Custer and Wayne.

He starts jabbering into his walky talky.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Tell Avery, Custer's here.

EXT. CUSTER'S RIDGE - SAME TIME

A FEMALE PRODUCTION ASSISTANT hurries up to Avery.

FEMALE PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Custer's here with his brother.

AVERY

About time. Get him up here quick. We're ready to roll.

EXT. ROAD SIDE - MOMENTS LATER

A GOLF CART pulls up on the hill over looking the road. INSIDE, the female production assistant waves at Custer, who is signing autographs.

FEMALE PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Mr. Lurie! Mr. Lurie!

He doesn't heed her voice, but Wayne sees her and nudges the actor.

WAYNE
General, on the hill!

Custer looks up and sees the girl waving.

Signing one last autograph, he starts up the hill, followed by Wayne.

Reaching the top of the rise, he turns and doffs his white hat to the onlookers below.

He gets into the golf cart and the girl starts away, leaving Wayne to jog up the hill behind them.

INT. GUN SHOP - SAME TIME

At the back counter, Swartz is selling two illegal Kalashnikovs with banana clips to a trio of heavy-duty Mexican nationals, who keep glancing over their shoulders.

SWARTZ
Don't sweat it. Everyone in town's out at the movie set.

A BELL RINGS as the front door opens and A BURLY GERMAN TOURIST steps in and sees Swartz.

GERMAN TOURIST
(thick accent)
That Indian hat in the window, how much?

SWARTZ
(scowling)
It's called a headdress and it's not for sale.

GERMAN TOURIST
Come on, how many dollars you want?

SWARTZ

(harsh)

Mister, I told you it's not for sale, and I'm busy.

The tourist steps back outside, closing the door.

Gert glances at the Mexicans.

SWARTZ (CONT'D)

Some things just don't have a price. Now how many boxes of shells you need?

EXT. HILLTOP - SAME TIME

Custer climbs out of the golf cart and walks over to the fuming director.

AVERY

Jesus Christ, where the hell you been?

Custer glances back at Wayne, coming up the hill on foot.

CUSTER

It's that kid's fault. Showed up half an hour later. I think he was stoned. That's the trouble using amateurs.

AVERY

All right, let's go.

The director turns on his walky talky.

AVERY (CONT'D)

Everybody ready?

VOICES respond in the affirmative over the phone.

Avery motions to the camera crew then turns to Marsh, standing beside the soldiers. Each fourth man is holding four horses.

AVERY (CONT'D)

Ready?

Marsh makes a thumbs-up.

Avery turns to Custer.

AVERY (CONT'D)
Get over by the guidon.

Avery motions to Marsh.

 AVERY (CONT'D)
Bring up Custer's horse.

The director turns to Custer.

 AVERY (CONT'D)
You let him go as soon as the Sioux
reach the ridge.

Reese, Wayne's young cowboy friend, brings a sleek looking stallion up and stops, waiting for Custer to take the reins.

 CUSTER
You want me to say his last
recorded words?

Avery shrugs.

 AVERY
Sure, if you want, but you know the
voice over's narrating everything
but the sound effects.

Looking disappointed, Custer starts down the hill toward his horse and the 7th Calvary banner fluttering in the breeze.

Taking the reins from the cowboy, Custer removes his pistol and dramatically turns around, staring at the waiting soldiers and movie crew, with all eyes on him.

 CUSTER
Custer's luck! The biggest Indian
Village on the Continent!"

Holding the walky talky up to his mouth, the director raises his hand and drops it.

 AVERY
Action!

From the far side of the hill, TWO UNION SOLDIERS ON HORSEBACK gallop toward the tepees at the bottom of the hill. One man raises a pistol and fires into the air.

EXT. SIOUX RESERVATION - SAME TIME

Hearing the pistol shot, Rachel and the Sioux women turn in fear, seeing the two soldiers pretend to be unable to stop their runaway horses galloping into the village.

As the horses race past the tepee, braves spew out, racing toward the men and pulling them from their saddles.

In shock, Rachel steps back, watching.

SUDDENLY

Rifle fire erupts on the hillside.

EXT. CUSTER'S RIDGE - SAME TIME

The director stands behind the camera man, filming the bottom of the hill as a dust cloud swirls past the tepees.

Below them, the assistant director is giving orders to the camcorder crew.

EXT. HILLSIDE - SAME TIME

With a thundering of hooves, Rachel and the other squaws leap back as the Sioux leap on their horses and gallop out of the reservation.

In front Chief Buffalo Cloud is waving his coup stick. Riding behind him is Joe.

As they break up the hill toward the ridge, Rachel looks over in the dust.

THE TWO SOLDIERS PULLED FROM THEIR HORSES lie motionless on the ground.

EXT. HILLTOP - SAME TIME

The director stands behind the camera man, filming the Sioux coming up the hill towards them.

 AVERY

 This is it!

EXT. RANKS OF SOLDIERS - SAME TIME

Trying to look scared, the wanna-be soldiers load their rifles and prepare to take aim at the approaching braves.

Standing behind the first rank, Wayne pulls out his pistol then glances over at the camcorder crew, waiting for the Indians to leap off their horses and engage the soldiers in hand-to-hand fighting.

EXT. HILLSIDE - SAME TIME

Using their legs to grip their horses, the braves notch arrows into their bows.

From the line of blue uniforms rifle fire starts, with puffs of smoke appearing.

Joe Buffalo Cloud glances over at his father, the feathers in his headdress fully ruffled in the wind.

EXT. ROAD - SAME TIME

The excited tourists take pictures of the Indians nearing the ridge.

EXT. CUSTER'S RIDGE - SAME TIME

As the braves race up to the line of soldiers, Custer starts firing his pistol.

CUSTER

Stand firm, men. Make every shot count.

THE CAM CORDER CREW RISES, READY TO FILM THE INDIANS LEAPING FROM THEIR HORSES AND ATTACKING THE SOLDIERS ON FOOT.

INSTEAD,

The Indians gallop into the line, knocking soldiers aside and trampling others.

IN AN INSTANT,

CHAOS.

Indians wheel their ponies about, firing arrows at the soldiers.

ONE ARROW SLICES INTO A SERGEANT'S CHEST.

Stunned, he staggers forward, trying to pull it out, then topples to the ground.

THE MOUSTACHED SOLDIER beside him stares down in horror.

He looks up just as a Sioux brave takes aim and fires an arrow into his throat.

Blood spurting from his neck, the soldier races up the hill toward Custer then collapses to the ground.

Panicked calvary horses break loose from their handlers and race away.

Seeing soldiers dying around him, Marsh turns to run when two arrows tear into his chest.

In shock, he stares down at the blood coming down his safari jacket, then falls forward on his face.

EXT. BOTTOM OF HILLSIDE - SAME TIME

Worried about Wayne, Rachel starts up the hillside, as the other Sioux woman gesture for her to come back.

With gunfire and smoke on the ridge above her, she continues on.

INT. TAXI CAB - SAME TIME

On the way to the Bozeman airport, Hank Cutler, in Ranger uniform, rolls down the back window, hearing the crack of gunfire in the distance.

HANK

Listen to them playing cowboys and Indians. They ought to try it with Taliban in real life.

EXT. CUSTER'S RIDGE - SAME TIME

CAUGHT IN THE OPEN,

The camcorder crew tries to run from the rearing, kicking horses, but are trampled to the ground.

FROZEN IN TERROR, YATES AND BLAIR stand cringing beside Sharow, who takes aim with his rifle and fires at a Sioux with headdress coming toward him.

THE WAX TIPPED BULLET hits Chief Buffalo Cloud's horse in the neck, causing the horse to rear up and topple backward on the chief, crushing him against the ground.

Seeing their chief fall, several braves leap off their horses to help him while other warriors gallop toward Sharow, Yates and Blair.

Seeing the enraged Sioux coming, Yates and Blair drop their rifles and start running down the hill.

A slew of arrows fly out, impaling both guides in the back. They topple forward...as Sharow lifts his rifle to use as a club against the Sioux converging on him.

NEARBY,

WAYNE sees Sharow trying to hold off three braves.

Wielding his sword, he hurries forward to help him

WHEN AN ARROW TEARS INTO Sharow'S ABDOMEN, THEN ANOTHER AND ANOTHER. Blood gushing from his mouth, Sharow drops his rifle and falls backward on the dirt.

Stunned, Wayne sees the mayhem and carnage around him.

Yards away, Reese is pulling a Sioux brave from his mount when another brave rides up, crushing the cowboy between two horses.

Wayne looks up at the crest of the ridge, where Custer is on his knees, sobbing, covering his hands with his eyes.

In horror, Wayne starts up the hill to help Custer,

WHEN A BRAVE RIDES HIS HORSE INTO WAYNE, KNOCKING HIM TO THE GROUND.

Leaping off his horse, Two Hawks pulls out a hunting knife and runs over to yank Wayne's hair from behind and scalp him.

A BOW POKES HIM IN THE CHEST.

He looks up angrily.

Staring down from his pinto is Joe Buffalo Cloud.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD

No! Leave him.

TWO HAWKS

No.

Joe aims his bow and arrow at Two Hawks.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD
Two Hawks. You want to kill for
yourself, not the Sioux. Go now!

Scowling, Two Hawks puts away his knife and goes to catch his mount.

Using his horse to block the sun from falling on Wayne's body, Joe Buffalo Cloud stares at the young man, with blood seeping down his temple.

Unable to get off the horse to help him, Joe Buffalo Cloud can only stand watch over Wayne until he awakes, all the while letting the fighting swirl around them.

ON THE HILLSIDE

Avery stares in shock, watching as arrows tear into the soldiers.

Screams rise into the air as Sioux break in and out of the line of soldiers, firing arrows and sending soldiers toppling to the ground.

Seeing men dropping around him, while others flee in panic, the director turns and starts running, leaving his cameraman still filming.

ONE BRAVE STOPS, notches his bow and fires an arrow into the cameraman's chest.

He slumps forward, as the Sioux rides his pinto forward, yanking the large camera to the ground.

EXT. ROAD - SAME TIME

The tourists press forward, trying to get a better view of the enactment. ONE ENGLISH TOURIST lowers his camera and turns to his WIFE who is covering her eyes.

ENGLISH TOURIST
Come on, Nan, look. It's only make
believe

She shakes her head.

ENGLISH TOURIST'S WIFE
I don't care. It looks so real.

EXT. HILLSIDE - SAME TIME

Alone among all the soldiers bodies, Custer stands trembling in front of SEVERAL BRAVES, holding notched bows.

CUSTER
Please let me go. I didn't see a
thing. I promise.

He glances over his shoulder, trying to estimate the distance to the road and the star wagon.

The braves move forward.

CUSTER (CONT'D)
(voice breaking)
I don't know what this is all
about, but it's not my fight. I'm
just an actor. Just let me go,
please.

Stepping backward over the bodies, he keeps his eye on the braves.

In an instant, he turns and starts running down the hill.

TWO BRAVES aim their bows and prepare to fire.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD (O.S.)
Stop! Let him run and tell them
what he saw here.

JOE Buffalo Cloud rides up and watches Custer stumble and fall, then get up and run on.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD (CONT'D)
(in Lakota Sioux)
But whites will come as before.

He rides down the slope to stop where several braves are standing beside the body of Chief Buffalo Cloud

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD (CONT'D)
Take him back. I will be there
soon. I must do one more thing for
our name.

COMING UP THE HILL IS RACHEL, with the other Sioux women behind her. Seeing her brother, she hurries ahead.

RACHEL
Where's Wayne?

Joe Buffalo Cloud motions toward the ridge.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD

Up there. He will be all right. But
father is gone.

Turning, she sees her father's body. Dropping her head, she
begins crying.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD (CONT'D)

Do not cry. Not in a nursing home
eating baby food or in a hospital
with tubes coming out of his body,
father died a death he could never
have dreamed of, a chief killed in
battle.

Wheeling his horse around, Joe rides down the hill.

EXT. ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Stumbling down the slope toward the road, Custer runs toward
the astonished tourists.

CUSTER

Get help! The Sioux slaughtered
everyone! Run for your lives!

The tourists back away from the frenzied actor.

Glancing over his shoulder, he sees Joe Buffalo Cloud riding
down the hill.

CUSTER (CONT'D)

Here they come!

In terror, he runs down the middle of the road and climbs
into the Star Wagon.

INT. STAR WAGON - SAME TIME

Trembling with fear, Custer searches for the key in the
ashtray, under the visor, then under the floor mat. Nothing.

CUSTER

That fuckin' kid!

Taking the emergency brake off, Custer grips the wheel as the
Star Wagon starts rolling down the road.

Custer watches as the star wagon picks up speed and drifts
off the road toward a gully.

He struggles to turn the steering wheel, but it is locked.

In horror, he watches the trailer crash through a fence and plunges into the gully.

EXT. GULLY - SAME TIME

The star wagon lies on its side, with flames curling from the engine compartment near the REAL HISTORY STUDIOS logo.

INT. FEDERMAN STREET - MINUTES LATER

Cantering up on horseback, Joe Buffalo Cloud rides up on the sidewalk and leans down to scoop up a trash can at the curb. Gripping it in one hand, he rides toward the gun shop.

INT. GUN SHOP - SAME TIME

In back, Gert Schwartz is counting money when there is a SMASHING OF GLASS. Grabbing a pistol from under the counter, he hurries toward the front door.

EXT. GUN SHOP - SAME TIME

With the garbage can lying inside the broken window, Joe Comes Behind Cloud strings an arrow in his bow as the front door opens and Swartz comes out with pistol in hand.

Seeing Joe BUFFALO CLOUD dressed in war paint on horseback, he is momentarily stunned.

SWARTZ

What the fuck are you doin', you
crazy redskin?

He points at the headdress in the window.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD

I come for that.

SWARTZ

Over my dead body.

As he raises his pistol to fire, Joe releases the arrow, which rips into Swartz's chest. Firing the pistol into the cement, he falls dead.

Joe rides over to the window and leaning far over, reaches into the store and....almost losing his balance, snatches the headdress off the stand.

Clutching it to his chest, he spins his horse around and gallops down the street, veers into a park and disappears from sight.

INT. BUS - SAME TIME

Tourists holding cameras press up against the windows, waiting for sight of Custer's Monument to come into view.

A SADDLED HORSE WITH NO RIDER clatters around the bend, cantering wildly up the middle of the road.

The driver slams on his brakes to avoid hitting the horse.

AS IT RUNS PAST THE WINDOWS, TOURISTS gape down at the clutch of arrows jutting from its saddle. ONE WOMAN turns to her seat mate.

WOMAN

Those aren't real arrows, are they?

EXT. HILLSIDE - MINUTES LATER

With Chief Buffalo Cloud's body on a horse-drawn travois led by two squaws, Wayne and Rachel walk alongside on the way to the Sioux village.

In the distance, an Indian on horseback crests the ridge, pausing, then starts down the slope.

Hearing hoofbeats, Rachel turns, seeing Joe Buffalo Cloud approaching, with the headdress in his hand.

He pulls his horse up beside the bier.

JOE BUFFALO CLOUD

They will be coming soon. We have to hurry to prepare father.

He gallops ahead.

RACHEL

What will happen now?

Wayne takes her hand.

WAYNE

I don't know, but no matter what, we'll be together.

Hand in hand, they follow the body on the travois down the hill toward the tepees in the distance.

INT. TOUR BUS - MOMENTS LATER

Coming around the bend, the driver glances up at the hillside and brakes to a stop.

DRIVER (O.S.)
Hey, folks, look at that!

People press against the windows to get a look.

ON THE HILLSIDE ABOVE THEM, THE BODIES OF SOLDIERS LIE MOTIONLESS ON THE SLOPE BELOW THE 7TH CALVARY GUIDE ON.

The tourists gape at the battle site. ONE ELDERLY MAN shakes his head.

ELDERLY MAN
Can't get more real than that, even for a movie.

SMASH CUT:

IN A SEPIA-TINTED PHOTOGRAPH, CRACKED WITH AGE, the bodies of Custer's men lie strewn along the ridge. The haunting notes of a bone whistle drift in the distance.

SUPERIMPOSE

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

George Santayana

WITH A ZZZZUNG,

A SIOUX ARROW tears through the quote, embedding next to the 7th Cavalry banner atop Custer's Ridge.

THE END