

Red Sunset

Written by

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Draft Revised:
December 12th, 2020

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FADE IN:

EXT. SHACK - SUNSET INTO NIGHT

Missouri:

1855

A ONE-ROOM SHACK sits isolated under the stars. Its withered walls are RIDDLED WITH HOLES where CANDLE LIGHT FLICKERS THROUGH. HOLD THIS SHOT for several moments.

INT. SHACK - CONTINUOUS

A young **JONATHAN JOEL** of FOURTEEN YEARS lies asleep in bed. He trembles as sweat streams down his face and a calloused, female hand rests upon his shoulder.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Jon.

He doesn't respond. The hand shakes him.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Jon.

He jolts awake to find his BEAUTIFUL, BRUNETTE MOTHER (24) standing over him in a WHITE GOWN, her BRIGHT, EMERALD EYES somehow defiant, vulnerable, and benevolent all at once.

THE FATHER (33) CAN BE SEEN IN THE BACKGROUND, passed out in a CHAIR. AN EMPTY GLASS and BOTTLE OF WHISKEY rests on the TABLE next to him.

MOTHER

Another nightmare?

Jon nods. She sits beside him.

MOTHER

What'd you see?

He shakes his head.

MOTHER

Tell me.

Nothing.

MOTHER

(sternly)

Jon.

Still nothing.

MOTHER

(concerned)

You can't ignore your dreams.
They're there to tell you things--
important things. Now, what'd you
see?

JON

(silently)

Drownin'.

MOTHER

What?

JON

Drownin'...I was drownin' in a
river...but with no water.
Just...tar or somethin'.

She pulls him in for hug. He tries to move, but she grips him tighter.

MOTHER

An' what do ya think that's
supposed to mean?

JON

Not to drown.

She lets him go.

MOTHER

(chuckling)

Well, I guess that's a way to look
at it.

He willingly rests his head on her bosom and she hugs him once more.

MOTHER

We're gonna get over this. Hear me?

Beat as Jon gazes into her eyes.

JON

Does Paw get nightmares too?

CRASH. They turn to find the father still asleep in the chair, his arm strewn on the tabletop. The bottle ROLLS ALONG THE FLOOR and INTO THE WALL, coming to a stop as they breathe a sigh of relief.

MOTHER
 (conflicted)
 Lets get ya back to sleep, hon.
 (kisses his head)
 We'll talk in the mornin'.

Jon tucks himself in and she smiles.

MOTHER
 I love you, Jon.

JON
 I love you, ma.

MOTHER
 (singing)
 Now, O Lord, please lend me thine
 ear. The prayer of a cattleman to
 hear. No doubt the prayers may seem
 strange, but I want you to bless
 our cattle range. Bless the round-
 ups year by year, and don't forget
 the growing steer; Water the lands
 with brooks and rills for my cattle
 that roam on a thousand hills...

She SINGS a SOFT, WARM TUNE and he relaxes. Her voice soothes
 him into a deep, peaceful sleep as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

DREAM SEQUENCE

BLACK HAZE. A DARK, PURGATORY-LIKE SPACE from which A BRIGHT
 LIGHT EMERGES like a tunnel in the distance. A FIGURE ATOP A
 SHADED, GLOOMY HORSE APPEARS FROM WITHIN and JOGS TOWARDS US.

THE RIDER EMANATES AN IVORY GLOW, HIS HORSE AN ASHEN GREY.
 He's PURE WHITE ON THE HEAD AND TORSO, but BLACK ON THE ARMS
 AND LEGS. Over his heart sits A DARK RED CIRCLE, as if burned
 into it.

He rides CLOSER. We HEAR A SLIGHT BREEZE as he does so.

MOTHER (V.O.)
 You're pathetic...

THE SOUND OF RUSHING WATER BEGINS TO BUILD.

MOTHER (V.O.)
 ...Pathetic...

THE RUSH GETS LOUDER.

MOTHER (V.O.)
Pathetic.

THE RIDER DISAPPEARS IN DISTORTION AS WE...

SMASH CUT TO:

JON ASLEEP IN BED

A SCUFFLE IS HEARD OFFSCREEN and his eyes open to see the father swing at the mother.

MOTHER
Stop. STOP, you drunken--

SLAP.

MOTHER
(in pain)
AHHH.

FATHER
SHUT UP.

He THROWS HER TO THE FLOOR and pounces, his lightning blue eyes burning with rage.

MOTHER
GET OFF ME.

Jon turns to face the father's LOADED SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN on a rack several feet away. He looks back, then creeps for it.

MOTHER
JON. JON.

The father takes the glass off the floor and throws it, missing into the wall where it SHATTERS.

FATHER
STAY THERE, JONATHAN.

MOTHER
HELP.
(to father)
STOP. STOP.

FATHER
I SAID SHUT THE FUCK UP.

He SMACKS HER AGAIN and grips her throat as she GASPS FOR AIR.

Jon takes the gun, COCKS IT, and points it at the father, hands trembling. The father turns, confused, but doesn't let go of her neck.

He and Jon stare each other down for a long beat, then...

...His mother goes limp and her eyes roll to the back of her head, emitting a HOARSE GROAN.

JON

NO.

The father releases her and brings his hands to his head before stumbling away.

Jon DECOCKS THE GUN and sprints to his mother, taking her in his arms.

JON

Ma.

Nothing.

JON

MOMMA.

Still nothing. He hugs her close just as she did to him. We LINGER ON THIS IMAGE until he looks up with an expression of ANGER and REGRET.

ANGLE ON THE FATHER. He rubs his eyes with shaking hands as we HEAR THE GUN COCK behind him and his eyes widen. He turns to see Jon with gun in hand and tears down his cheeks.

SLOW CLOSEUP ON JON'S COLD, GREY EYES before we...

FADE TO:

EXT. BLEAKBELLOW - NIGHT

Fifteen years later

THE NIGHT SKY'S VEILED BY AN UNENDING COAT OF DARKENED CUMULONIMBUS CLOUDS. THE SOUND OF A GREAT FIRE CAN BE HEARD BELOW.

RAIN BEGINS TO FALL and an ECHO OF THUNDER SOUNDS IN THE DISTANCE. The drops gain speed and we PAN DOWN TO SEE A SALOON ENGULFED IN FLAMES.

FOUR COWBOYS ride outside. Three of them HOOT and HOLLER, SHOOTING in the air as the fourth hangs back, silently watching his comrades.

He is: **TATUM BROOKS (29)**, the lone African American of the group. Although he doesn't show it here, he has an infectious smile and inviting eyes that distract from the age spots formed around them. Strong, yet fatigued.

The others are: **Teddy Bascom (24)** and **DUTCH and HARVEY SCARBOROUGH (31)**. Bascom watches the latter two with amusement, his toothy smile SHINING in the fire.

The brothers ride constant side by side, never out of sight of the other. Their faces are SCAR FILLED, though Harvey's much more so, a BLEMISHED "H" BRANDED ON HIS NECK. Dutch downs what's left of his WHISKEY and tosses it, leaning back on his HORSE.

DUTCH
(like a wolf)
WOOOO.

HARVEY
(shouting toward the
saloon)
COME ON, JON. WHAT'S TAKING YA?

LOW ANGLE ON A FULL GROWN **JONATHAN JOEL (29)** as he makes his way out the saloon, A SILHOUETTE AMONG FLAMES, holding TWO BOTTLES OF WHISKEY IN EACH HAND.

He wears a BLACK KNUDSEN HAT over a head full of brown hair that runs through his coarse beard. He also wears a JET BLACK JACKET over a DARK RED, BUTTON UP SHIRT.

He WHISTLES and his HORSE pulls in front of him. He puts the whiskey in his SADDLE BAG and raises himself on top the animal.

Harvey removes a STICK OF DYNAMITE from his BAG and tosses it into the saloon.

HARVEY
Let's go, boys.
(kicking his horse)
HIIYYAA.

He, Dutch, and Bascom ride off into the storm, DISAPPEARING IN THE RAIN while Brooks remains motionless. He looks to Joel who returns his gaze.

JOEL
Don't wait up on me.

Brooks nods and TAKES OFF.

Joel moves through the village, approaching a STONE WELL with a BUCKET TIED TO A WOOD COVERING. He grips HIS FATHER'S SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN as a FIGURE breaks into a run, but he lets them go, leaving the weapon sheathed.

He looks to the WINDOWS of the few TWO-STORY BUILDINGS in town. A WOMAN, INDISTINGUISHABLE IN THE DARK, watches through a pair of BLACK CURTAINS. She puts her hand to the window as...

...Joel reaches the edge of town and THE DYNAMITE EXPLODES, COLLAPSING THE SALOON. Beat before we GO TO A...

...BACK ANGLE ON JOEL and watch him like he's the angel of death, FADING AWAY INTO THE STORM as HEAVY RAIN POUNDS THE LANDSCAPE.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. PLAIN - THE NEXT MORNING

Joel's passed out face first on the ground, his hat and coat covering his face from the mud. His horse lays several yards away, sporting a BROKEN LEG from a misstep the night prior.

PAN BACK for a beat as we HEAR TWO PISTOLS COCK OFFSCREEN.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

A little late in the day to be
sleepin' ain't it? That could get a
man killed in these parts. Wouldn't
ya agree, Mr...?

A BOUNTY HUNTER no older than TWENTY YEARS stands with his HORSE behind him, holding TWO LARGE COLT PISTOLS at his sides.

BOUNTY HUNTER

That storm was hell all right. Be a
shame to survive it just to be
killed outta one's own
carelessness.

Joel still lies unmoving. We can't tell if he's asleep or not.

BOUNTY HUNTER

Damn shame. Damn shame. Now, Mr., I
don't like killin' folks, but I
sure will if they don't do what I
like of em. So Imma need ya to do
as I say 'fore I take care of what
that there storm couldn't.

(MORE)

BOUNTY HUNTER (CONT'D)

Now roll on over, take off that hat, an' show me your face.

Nothing.

BOUNTY HUNTER

Maybe you ain't hearin' me. What I said was: move your pathetic, drunk ass an' show who you is right now.

Nothing.

BOUNTY HUNTER

(frustrated)

Motherfuckin.

He takes his left Colt and CLEARS THE CHAMBER. Each round HITS WITHIN INCHES OF JOEL'S BODY and SPLATTERS MUD all over. The man puts the gun in its holster, keeping the right in hand.

BOUNTY HUNTER

(pissed)

I said take that goddamn hat off 'fore I load your carcass with every bullet I got in this thing. Now.

Finally, Joel starts to stir.

BOUNTY HUNTER

That's right. Smart man.

Joel rises to his feet, takes his hat, and places it on top of his head. We SEE HIS FACE CLEARLY FOR THE FIRST TIME and he's ghoulishly hung over.

BOUNTY HUNTER

Oh yeah. You're who I want alright. I've got Jonathan Joel in the flesh staring down the barrel of my ol' Colt.

No reply. Just a stare. The man takes a few steps forward.

BOUNTY HUNTER

Good shit. The bounty on that forehead of yours been raised up to eleven hundred after that shit you pulled last night.

JOEL

Last night?

BOUNTY HUNTER

Yeah. Last night. You remember.

JOEL

I do. Vaguely.

BOUNTY HUNTER

Vaguely. Then you understand what ya got comin' for ya don't ya? You an' that gang of yours. Where're they off to? Fayette? Glasgow?

(beat)

Now, before I tie you up, Imma need you to pitch them pistols. Get em gone.

Joel tosses them to both sides. The man moves forward and positions himself behind Joel. Replaces his pistol and takes out a LASSO, then starts to tie Joel's hands together.

BOUNTY HUNTER

I appreciate ya not makin' me shoot ya dead, Jonathan. The extra five hundred is gon' be that much sweeter when we get back. Especially when I see em hang your ugly ass.

He LAUGHS at the prospect, then Joel yanks his wrists away and TACKLES the man to the ground. Puts his left knee between the man's legs and THRUSTS IT INTO HIS GROIN, repeating this several times.

He raises himself to a proper mount and HAILS FISTS. BUSTS THE MAN'S NOSE and BLACKENS HIS EYES, then wraps his hands around his throat and squeezes.

The man struggles, but it's no use. He can't breathe, he can barely see, and his weapons are trapped between he and Joel's bodies.

ANGLE ON JOEL'S FACE, fierce but conflicted. HOLD ON THIS for a beat, then...

...He suddenly lets go, wide-eyed, almost unbelieving of what he's done. He begins to HYPERVENTILATE and shakes at the hands and shoulders.

He reaches into his shirt pocket and removes a LARGE, BRONZE FLASK. Takes a great, long drink and his breathing slows. SLAPS HIS FACE before taking another large swig.

SIDE ANGLE ON JOEL as he stares into the man's eyes, HOLDING for a beat before we CUT TO...

...Joel removing the man's PISTOLS, AMMO, CANTEEN, MONEY, and BOOTS. He tosses the boots away without care. Reaches in the man's jacket and pulls a MAP and TWO SKETCHES OF WANTED MEN.

The first is for he, Jonathan Joel. It's new and offers NINE HUNDRED DOLLARS for him dead, ELEVEN HUNDRED alive. He CRUMPLES and pitches it behind his back, then looks at the second.

It's for a man named WESLEY DUNN (30): a member of the GARDNER GANG. He's up for EIGHT HUNDRED dead, NINE HUNDRED alive. Last seen at one of the gang's hideouts outside of FAYETTE, MISSOURI, marked by a RED "X" on the map.

He inspects the map and sketch, folds them into fourths, and puts them in his pocket. Retrieves his pistols and jacket and, with sympathy, turns his attention to his horse.

He removes his saddle and belongings and puts them on the dead man's horse, then returns to his own and SHOTS IT IN THE HEAD.

PAN TO and FOCUS ON THE CORPSES while Joel MOVES OUT OF VIEW TOWARD GLASGOW, mounted on horseback.

We SEE THE MAN'S FACE, then THE HORSE'S, a GAPING HOLE IN ITS SKULL. BRAIN MATTER SPILLS from the ENTRY AND EXIT WOUNDS, though both eyes remain intact. They appear stuck in a never-ending shriek as we LINGER ON THIS SHOT and...

FADE TO:

EXT. BLEAKBELLOW - SAME TIME

A RIDER ENTERS TOWN and looks about the place. No one's there as far as we can tell. He dismounts in front of the WRECKAGE THAT WAS THE SALOON and studies it diligently.

ANGLE ON **CANTON MCCAULEY**. He's THIRTY-THREE, though his stale complexion would say otherwise. He's bald with a hint of grey and blonde stubble along his rough jawline. Pale from lack of sunlight, eyes dark from lack of sleep.

He wears a BLACK JACKET with BOOTS and PANTS as well as a WHITE BUTTON UP and KNUDSEN HAT. A SCAR sits above his left brow, looking like a REVERSE, LOWERCASE "Y." ANOTHER (in the form of a BULLET) just barley protrudes over his collar.

ANGLE ON THE BURNED DOWN SALOON. He surveys it for a beat, then turns in the direction Joel went the night prior.

CLOSE UP ON HIS ROYAL BLUE EYES, PANNING CLOSER AS WE CUT TO...

...HIS POV: THE OPEN PLAIN THROUGH THE TOWN. PAN IN for a beat as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GLASGOW - AFTERNOON

Joel rides through GLASGOW. Dismounts by the GANG'S HORSES and sees BASCOM facedown in the road.

JOEL

Ted?

Bascom VOMITS. Joel puts him on his side, then heads for the SALOON.

INT. SALOON - CONTINUOUS

Brooks sits between Dutch and Harvey at the bar. They LAUGH and drink BEER, still drunk from the night prior.

BROOKS

Young Bobby took one look at that grizzly an' wouldn't you know it, the sumbitch pisses his pants.

DUTCH

You're kiddin'.

BROOKS

Swear on my mother.

DUTCH

No fuckin' shit.

HARVEY

So what'd he do then?

BROOKS

His ass took off runnin' with piss in his shoes. Sounded like he was ploppin' through a puddle in a rainstorm.

Brooks IMITATES THE SOUND and they LAUGH HARDER.

DUTCH

Damndest thing I ever heard.

BROOKS

Damn near. Grizzly saw him run.
Just watched him an' walked away
shakin' its head like it was
embarrassed for him.

They LAUGH UNTIL THEY CRY. Harvey raises a SHOT GLASS to his
lips, but Joel swipes it and gulps it down.

HARVEY

Hey, what the hell?

Joel sets DUNN'S POSTER on the counter.

HARVEY

(squinting)
What's this?

JOEL

What's it look like?

DUTCH

(still reading)
Five hundred dead...nine alive?

BROOKS

(joking)
Didn't know you could read, Dutch.

DUTCH

(mocking)
Ha-ha-ha. Says the negro.

BROOKS

Hey. It ain't my fault my owners
raised a slave better n' your
parents raised a son.
(looking at Harvey)
Or *sons*, rather.

JOEL

Ya'll coming or not?

DUTCH

Ooo, Jon. You know my thing about
huntin' our own kind.

JOEL

An you know my thing about staying
put to long.

HARVEY

What's wrong, Jon? A little
restless are we?

DUTCH
Like a buck without a doe.

HARVEY
Like a whore without a dollar.

They LAUGH more.

DUTCH
Hell, I don't blame him. He ain't
held either his entire life.

More LAUGHTER.

JOEL
And what about you, Brooks?

BROOKS
(looking into his bottle)
Well, Jon, I...appreciate the
offer. Coin calls, but, you
know...so does the liquor.

He, Dutch, and Harvey HOWL as Joel turns to leave. Bascom
ENTERS THE SALOON, VOMIT STUCK IN HIS BEARD.

JOEL
(passing Bascom)
We're going.

BASCOM
(dazed)
Where?

He follows Joel to the exit.

BASCOM
They not comin'?

Dutch and Harvey stand as the LAUGHTER SUBSIDES.

HARVEY
We'll be back in a second.

DUTCH
Back in a second.

They EXIT FRAME. Brooks takes a couple drinks, his demeanor
sulking inward. He removes a PENCIL and PAPER from his pocket
and begins to write. SPELLS OUT:

BROOKS
(written)
Dear, Sandra...

EXT. GLASGOW - CONTINUOUS

Joel and Bascom walk to their horses.

JOEL
It's not too far. Shouldn't take
more than half a day.

BASCOM
Simple enough, huh.

They mount as we CUT TO AN...

...ANGLE BEHIND MCCAULEY who watches from afar on a hill
outside of town. He lowers the BINOCULARS from his eyes and
we...

CUT TO:

EXT. GARDNER GANG HIDEOUT - EVENING

POV THROUGH BINOCULARS: SEVERAL BANDITS guard a STONE ADOBE.

JOEL (O.C.)
Four men. Five horses.

BASCOM (O.C.)
That's workable.

ANGLE ON JOEL AND BASCOM, laying on their stomachs about a
mile away.

JOEL
I've seen worse.

BASCOM
Well. On your mark, boss.

MINUTES LATER

The two crawl along, OBSCURED BY BRUSH. Bascom SINGS SILENTLY
to himself:

BASCOM
There was a fair lady who lived on
the plains. She helped me herd
cattle through hard stormy rains.
She helped me one season all
through the roundup. She would
drink with me from the cold bitter
cup. She loved the red liquor which
serves a man so.

(MORE)

BASCOM (CONT'D)

She was a fair lady as white as the snow. She loved the red liquor which serves a man so. She was a fair lady as white as the snow.

JOEL

Do you like being able to sing, Ted?

BASCOM

Only when it irks ya.

JOEL

I suggest you stay quiet, then.

BASCOM

(joking)
Droll you are. As always.

JOEL

Death and humor go hand in hand.

BASCOM

(following up his last statement)
And moral. Can't forget moral.

JOEL

Morality is in the eyes of the beholder, my friend.

ANGLE ON THE BANDITS for a beat...then BAM. A SHOT RINGS OUT and A BANDIT DROPS DEAD. BAM. ANOTHER SHOT and A SECOND BANDIT FALLS. The others RETURN FIRE, but can't quite hit their marks.

SOON THEY'RE ALL DEAD with Joel and Bascom creeping toward the entrance, rifles at the ready. They pause at the door and KICK IT IN.

INT. GARDNER GANG HIDEOUT - CONTINUOUS

WESLEY DUNN (43) stands, PISTOL pointed to the entrance.

BASCOM

Hey, now, partner. You put that pistol down or you're a dead man. Put em down now.

Dunn lowers his weapon to the floor.

JOEL

Slide it over.

He does so. Joel approaches and picks it up.

JOEL
Put your hands out.

He takes Dunn's hands and ties them behind his back, then does the same with his feet.

JOEL
Now.
(still tying)
You best not try any fuckery with us. Cause if you do, I'll have to shoot--

KABLAM. DUNN'S HEAD EXPLODES.

BASCOM
(turning)
What the--

BLAM. BASCOM'S HEAD SPLATTERS OVER JOEL.

JOEL
(wiping BLOOD from his face)
AH. Fuck.

He gapes at Bascom's body for a beat, then turns to find MCCAULEY in the entrance, holding him at GUNPOINT.

MCCAULEY
Hello, Jon.

JOEL
(seething)
Canton.

MCCAULEY
(pauses)
You know what to do. Come on.

Joel tosses his guns to the side and lies on his stomach. McCauley approaches and bound's Joel's wrists and ankles.

JOEL
(looking to Bascom)
You didn't have to kill him.

MCCAULEY
I did.

He KICKS JOEL IN THE GUT who COUGHS and SPATS IN PAIN. McCauley drags Joel into a corner and sets him up.

Ties his hands to a hook above his head, then SLAPS HIM PLAYFULLY on the cheek.

MCCAULEY
Thirsty, Jon?

He LAUGHS and PUNCHES JOEL IN THE FACE, launching into a VIOLENT BEATDOWN. CHOKING. BITING. KICKING. CUTTING. And MORE.

PAN BACK OUT THE DOOR as we HEAR JOEL'S SCREAMS OF AGONY and...

FADE TO:

HOURS LATER - SUNSET

JOEL'S POV: A HAZED IMAGE OF MCCAULEY, looking down on him.

MCCAULEY
You there?

STILL IN JOEL'S POV: McCAuley smiles. He SLAPS Joel and Joel's head dangles to the floor.

MCCAULEY
Sleep it off, Jon. I'll see you soon.

STILL JOEL'S POV: He BLINKS ONCE. TWICE. A THIRD TIME. FIVE SHOTS SOUND OUTSIDE and he searches for the source. Notices that Bascom and Dunn's bodies are gone, SEPARATE BLOOD TRAILS LEADING OUT THE DOOR.

ANGLE ON JOEL, GRUNTING as he gets to his feet and removes his wrists from the hook. He GASPS and crumples to the floor. Grips his abs, then stands tensely. Hops to the exit and FALLS THROUGH THE DOOR.

EXT. GARDNER GANG HIDEOUT - CONTINUOUS

He DROPS FACE FIRST IN THE DIRT.

JOEL
(pained)
Goddammit.

He surveys the place for a horse, but they're all dead, SHOT THROUGH THE SKULL. He SPATS BLOOD in frustration then starts away on his own.

HIGH ANGLE ON JOEL. We WATCH HIM CRAWL AWAY on his knees and forearms, GROANING THE WHOLE WAY as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HILL - MEMORY - AFTERNOON

YOUNG JONATHAN JOEL drags himself up a hill, COVERED IN BLOOD and MUCK. He SMACKS HIS LIPS to draw saliva and continues on. Stops as he comes across a PAIR OF BLACK BOOTS, then looks up to SEE CANTON MCCAULEY looming over him.

LOW ANGLE ON MCCAULEY. His skin's bronze from healthy sun, head full of light blond hair and no bullet scar to be seen, though the REVERSE, LOWERCASE "Y" remains. He frowns at Jon, then extends his CANTEEN.

HIGH ANGLE ON JON, still gazing at McCauley, then...

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSKIRTS - GLASGOW - MORNING

Joel's eyes snap open. He PANTS as he fights his restraints, then glances up to see...

...HIS POV: GLASGOW, A FEW MILES OUT.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANGEL'S GULCH - SUNRISE

WIDE SHOT OF MCCAULEY RIDING HIS HORSE TOWARD THE CAMERA. He moves through the middle of town, a WHITE BANDANA covering his face from the nose down. DUNN'S and BASCOM'S BODIES rest behind him on the horse's ass.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

He ENTERS to find an OLD-TIME SHERIFF and TWO TWENTY-SOMETHING DEPUTIES going about their business. They stop and stare for a beat before he says:

MCCAULEY
I'm here to claim a bounty.

SHERIFF
(skeptical)
Which one?

McCauley slides toward the sheriff's DESK and sits behind it.

MCCAULEY
Two, actually. Wesley Dunn and
Teddy Bascom.

SHERIFF
(annoyed)
How 'bout you take off that mask
first. And get outta my chair.

McCauley rests his feet on the desk, ignoring him.

MCCAULEY
Should come to twelve hundred
overall. Thirteen, if you're kind.

SHERIFF
(stepping forward, hands
on hips)
Mister--

MCCAULEY
I have rights, Sheriff. Don't tread
on them.

SHERIFF
Where are those two now?

MCCAULEY
Outside.

A deputy moves to the window and peers outside.

SHERIFF (O.C.)
Dead, I assume?

DEPUTY'S POV: DUNN'S and BASCOM'S CORPSES, still on his
horse.

MCCAULEY (O.C.)
Of course.

The deputy turns to the Sheriff and gives him a nod. The
Sheriff scowls for a beat, then nods back to the deputy who
moves to a WOOD CHEST in the corner. He opens it and counts
the MONEY, then crosses the room and hands it to McCauley.

MCCAULEY
(smirking under the mask)
You do good work.

The Sheriff crosses his arms and watches McCauley count the
money.

SHERIFF
You'll be going now.

MCCAULEY
Do you drink, Sheriff?

SHERIFF
Can't say I do.

MCCAULEY
(chuckling)
You're a better man than I.
(to a Deputy)
What about you, son? Do you drink?

DEPUTY
(scoffs)
'Bout got to. Place is fuckin'--

The Sheriff SMACKS HIM ON THE CHEST.

SHERIFF
(firm)
You'll be going now.

MCCAULEY
(stretching)
Oh, I suppose I shall.

He stands. Removes his hat and puts it over his heart.

MCCAULEY
Good day to you, sirs. Thank you
for all you do.

He shuffles toward the door, but the Sheriff NOTICES THE REVERSE "y" SCAR ON HIS FOREHEAD as he turns.

SHERIFF
(whispers)
What a minute.
(to McCauley)
Hey. Hold it.

SLOW MOTION AS MCCAULEY SPINS AROUND, PULLS HIS PISTOLS, and UNLOADS THEM ON THE SHERIFF and DEPUTIES. THEY FALL DEAD IN A SHOWER OF BLOOD AS THE SLOW MOTION ENDS.

A FEMALE SCREAM SOUNDS OUTSIDE as McCauley holsters his guns and removes the bandanna, glaring at the bodies before him. He steps over the Sheriff and moves toward the far wall, full of WANTED POSTERS. He takes one down and eyes it. We SEE...

...HIS POV: A BOUNTY FOR JOEL. NINE HUNDRED DEAD. ELEVEN HUNDRED ALIVE.

ANGLE ON MCCAULEY as he folds and pockets the paper before EXITING.

CUT TO:

EXT. GARDNER GANG HIDEOUT - EVENING

We SEE MCCAULEY RIDE OVER THE HORIZON toward the Gardner's STONE ADOBE. HOLD for a beat, then...

INT. GARDNER GANG HIDEOUT - CONTINUOUS

...He ENTERS and stops, stunned.

HIS POV: THE EMPTY ADOBE.

LOW ANGLE ON MCCAULEY. He frowns slightly and tenses at the neck. Bares his teeth in a snarl before we...

CUT TO:

INT. SALOON - GLASGOW - MORNING

OVERHEAD SHOT OF BROOKS as he sits at the counter. He writes TIGHT, CURVED WORDS, ending with:

BROOKS
(written)
Yours, without a doubt, Tatum
Brooks.

LOW SIDE ANGLE CLOSEUP ON BROOKS, a faint smile along his lips. We HEAR FOOTSTEPS as he turns to SEE HARVEY DASH THROUGH THE ENTRANCE.

HARVEY
(breathing hard)
Jon's hurt.

EXT. SALOON - GLASGOW - CONTINUOUS

Brooks and Harvey look down on Joel who lies in the fetal position, SMACKING HIS LIPS for moisture.

BROOKS
(shocked)
Jon.
(MORE)

BROOKS (CONT'D)
 (kneeling down)
 What happened?

JOEL
 (gasping)
 Canton...Water...

HARVEY
 (confused)
 You can't water?

BROOKS
 Get him some water.

DUTCH ENTERS THE FRAME, a BUCKET OF WATER in hand. He SPLASHES IT OVER JOEL who SCREAMS IN SHOCK, spasming in the wet dirt.

BROOKS
 (cupping his hands)
 Give him a drink.

Dutch pours what's left into Brooks' hands who puts it to Joel's mouth. Joel sucks it down. Licks his lips through rapid breath.

BROOKS
 Jon, what happened?

DUTCH
 Where's Ted?

JOEL
 (shivering)
 C--C--C--C--C--C--Canton...

BROOKS
 (leaning in closer)
 What?

JOEL
 (shivering)
 C--Canton's...ali--i--alive.

PAN RIGHT FROM HARVEY TO DUTCH TO BROOKS. The brothers furrow their brows, confused, while Brooks stares on with somber remembrance.

BROOKS
 Canton?

HIGH ANGLE ON JOEL. Overtaken by shudders.

JOEL
 (shivering)
 Water...

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSKIRTS - GLASGOW - MINUTES LATER

FRONT ANGLE ON THE GANG RIDING ON HORSEBACK TOWARD THE CAMERA. They jerk with angst, scanning back and forth for a sign of McCauley.

I/E. SALOON - GLASGOW - CONTINUOUS

BACK ANGLE ON MCCAULEY outside the saloon, watching the gang ride away. He ENTERS and steps to the center of the barroom. Unholsters his GUN and FIRES INTO THE CEILING.

The OCCUPANTS migrate their gazes toward him, THIRTY-SOME IN ALL. He raises JOEL'S BOUNTY SHEET in the air.

MCCAULEY
 Who needs to make some money?

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODLAND - AFTERNOON

Harvey COCKS HIS RIFLE and marches to the edge of camp.

DUTCH (O.S.)
 West is clear.

HARVEY
 I got eyes on East.

Brooks tends to Joel, sat up by a massive AMERICAN SYCAMORE. He wipes the BLOOD and DIRT from his body with a WET CLOTH.

BROOKS
 (at his wounds)
 That's rough.

He takes a CLEAN CLOTH and SOAKS IT IN WHISKEY.

BROOKS
 Hold still.

He rubs it over Joel's wounds who clenches tight, GROANING THROUGH HIS TEETH.

BROOKS
Yeah. Liquor's a wonderful thing.

JOEL
(squirming)
Fuckin'--Get it off.

BROOKS
(holding him in)
Oh, don't be no damn child.

JOEL
(furious)
I ain't no child.

BROOKS
(stops)
Huh?

JOEL
I ain't no child, goddammit.

BROOKS
Then don't act like one.
(resumes)
There. You're done.

Joel storms to his feet, then crumples to a knee, seething in the pain.

BROOKS
(taking his arm)
Let me help you to your horse.

Joel breaks his grip and limps off.

BROOKS
Jon. What the hell are we doing?

Joel ignores him. Looks through his saddle bag.

BROOKS
(tauntingly)
Alright. That's all good. Don't say shit. I'll just ride on out and go back home to Mississippi. See the river again. Maybe even build a house and farm the land before I croak out. What do you think, boys? That sound like a life to lead?
(to Joel)
At least I wouldn't be looking out for your ass anymore. Hell. It'd make things a hell of a lot more--

JOEL
 --You still owe me, Tate. You still
 owe me.

BROOKS
 That so.

JOEL
 (nods)
 It's so.

BROOKS
 (beat)
 Fine.

He mounts his horse as Harvey approaches.

HARVEY
 (to Joel)
 Hey. He may owe you somethin', but
 we don't owe a goddamn thing.

JOEL
 Which is--

HARVEY
 (stepping in)
 --Not a goddamn thing.

JOEL
 (blunt)
 Which is why you are free to go. If
 you so choose.

HARVEY
 If we so choose.

JOEL
 That's right.

Beat before Brooks rides between them, separating the pair
 with his horse.

BROOKS
 Nah. Don't be like that, boys. It's
 just good ol' payback for Teddy.
 Right, Jon?

JOEL
 That's right. For Ted.

HARVEY
 For Ted?

Joel nods.

HARVEY

(beat)

Fine.

He and Dutch mount their horses before RIDING OUT with Brooks, leaving Joel behind to ponder this thoughts.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ANGEL'S GULTCH - NIGHT

ANGLE ON A PUDDLE OF BLOOD in the middle of Main Street, the SOUNDS OF FIRE AND TERROR all around. HOLD for a beat while a PAIR OF BLACK BOOTS step in, SPLATTERING THE BLOOD ABOUT.

PAN UP FOR A LOW ANGLE ON MCCAULEY surveying the town. EVERYTHING'S ON FIRE. HIS MEN chase the TOWNSFOLK through the streets. GUNSHOTS ARE HEARD OFF-CAMERA along with the CRIES OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

A YOUNG WOMAN is brought before him by TWO MERCENARIES.

WOMAN

Please, mister.

He pulls his PISTOL. CLICKS THE HAMMER BACK.

WOMAN

Please.

He moves slow. Puts the barrel to her forehead, then PULLS THE TRIGGER. Her body falls before him.

SIDE ANGLE ON MCCAULEY'S FACE. He smirks for a beat, then puts his head back and closes his eyes, as if bathing in the horror.

BACK ANGLE ON MCCAULEY, PANNING BACK AS WE...

CUT TO:

THE NEXT MORNING

SIDE ANGLE ON ANOTHER PAIR OF BLACK BOOTS walking through a PILE OF RUBBLE. PAN UP TO REVEAL JOEL standing at the center of Angel's Gulch, which has been COMPLETELY BURNED TO THE GROUND.

Brooks, Harvey, and Dutch wade through the WRECKAGE. Their gazes wander around the destruction, roaming from BODY TO BODY, STRUCTURE TO CHARRED STRUCTURE.

Everyone wears expressions of frightened astonishment, their arms and legs shaking.

Joel and Brooks spot her at the same time. The WOMAN, dead in the street. Brooks approaches. Looks down on her while Joel stays back, watching his reaction. His lip quivers. Eyes wide and bloodshot.

HARVEY

We...We should split up.

BROOKS

(exasperated)

What?

HARVEY

Cover more ground that way. Report when he's found. Go from there.

BROOKS

That's got to be the dumbest idea you have ever had.

HARVEY

Jon. Let Dutch an' I out. We'll take the South West. Both you East.

JOEL

No. We're staying together on this.

HARVEY

Pfff.

JOEL

We're stronger when we're together.

HARVEY

And we will be. After a pair of us locate the sumbitch an' tell the others where he is.

JOEL

No. We're going to Armstrong and we'll find him there.

HARVEY

Fuck that.

(turning)

Come on.

The brothers mount their horses.

JOEL

The fuck're you goin'?

HARVEY

South West. Just like I said. Meet you boys near Armstrong. Half day time.

BROOKS

Fools. Fools the both of ya. Go on. Get your dumb asses shot an' killed an' leave us the mess to clean. Go on. Get. Get, simple sisters. Get.

HARVEY

Suck shit.

He and Dutch RIDE OFF as Brooks watches, hands on hips.

JOEL

Ain't no use. Best just wait here a minute. We'll follow, when they're out of sight.

BROOKS

(sighs)

(shakes head for a beat)

Sounds good.

He WALKS OFFSCREEN. Joel turns and puts his hands on his hips as he shuffles away.

FADE TO:

EXT. CAMP - FIELD - DAY

THE POSSE sits at CAMP, brewing COFFEE and cleaning their WEAPONS. FOCUS IN ON TWO IN PARTICULAR: **ERNEST EVANS (46)** and **THE KID (16)**.

The kid carves a stick with his KNIFE, hands CALLOUSED and DIRT RIDDEN. He's a handsome boy, minus SEVERAL SCARS and a ROUND BURN MARK on his left cheek. Fair haired with a strong jaw. He's lean under his FRAIL, LINNEN RAGS, spy and fit.

Evans sips from his BLACK AND WHITE MUG, keeping watch on the kid. A SCAR protrudes from his hairline through his right eye, WHITE FROM BLINDNESS. ANOTHER SCAR (from a NOOSE) wraps around his throat.

The kid looks offscreen.

HIS POV: MCCAULEY, sitting just outside the camp. Writing in a MINIATURE JOURNAL.

He blows on the stick and sheathes his knife. Stands and starts toward McCauley before--

EVANS (O.S.)

--No.

The kid turns. Evans stares offscreen at McCauley.

KID

Pardon?

EVANS

(turns to the kid)

No.

The kid gives a curious frown, then turns. Jolts back as if to say something, then thinks better of it and WALKS OFFSCREEN.

ANGLE ON EVANS, glowering at the kid.

ANGLE OVER MCCAULEY'S SHOULDER. The kid comes our way and stops several yards out.

KID

So, partner.

(beat)

What's your story?

BACK ANGLE ON MCCAULEY as he slowly turns to face us.

MCCAULEY

What do you want to know?

EXT. SHACK - PLAIN - SAME TIME

Joel and Brooks approach a RUN DOWN SHACK on horseback. On closer inspection we SEE it's the SHACK FROM JOEL'S CHILDHOOD. He broods while Brooks stares coolly.

JOEL

Go on, Tate.

BROOKS

What?

JOEL

Don't worry.

(beat)

I know these people.

MCCAULEY AND THE KID - SAME TIME

The kid sits by McCauley, hands on his knees.

MCCAULEY

The savages were waiting when we came over the pass. About ten or fifteen of em. We moved in and when we did the rest came on around the mountain and circled us. Corralled us.

KID

What'd you do?

MCCAULEY

What was there to do?

INSERT CUTS OF A YOUNG MCCAULEY AS COWBOYS DIE ALL AROUND HIM. They're SHOT with GUNS and ARROWS. CUT DOWN by BLOOD STAINED TOMAHAWKS and SCALPED ALIVE by FLINT KNIVES.

MCCAULEY (V.O.)

They had us like cattle. In the pen for slaughter.

THE NATIVES CONTINUE TO SWARM, CRYING THEIR CHANTS OF WAR.

JOEL - SAME TIME

He ENTERS THE SHACK as Brooks RIDES OFF IN THE BACKGROUND.

MCCAULEY (V.O.)

To this day I've never seen anything like it. The noises I heard. Such suffering.

MCCAULEY AND THE KID - SAME TIME

MCCAULEY

It's where I got this.

He points to the REVERSE, LOWERCASE "Y" on his brow.

JOEL - SAME TIME

FRONT ANGLE AS HE WALKS TOWARD US, dread on his face.

KID (V.O.)

You're still here, though.

MCCAULEY (V.O.)

I am.

KID (V.O.)

Tell me.

MCCAULEY (V.O.)

Do you really want to know?

ANGLE(S) ON THREE PEOPLE SPRAWLED DEAD ON THE FLOOR: A MAN, A WOMAN, and A BOY. The boy lies on the woman's bosom, a BULLET HOLE in his skull. She's been choked to death, the culprit several feet away in a POOL OF HIS AND THE BOY'S BLOOD.

Joel buckles and falls to his knees, unable to look away. Grits his teeth and tears break through. He holds his breath as his arms shake, then gulps for air.

MCCAULEY AND THE KID - SAME TIME

The kid nods. McCauley pulls a CIGARETTE and LIGHTS IT.

MCCAULEY

(exhales)

There was nothing I could have done, unfortunately.

(almost as an
afterthought)

Nor my brothers for that matter.

EXT. SHACK - PLAIN - SAME TIME

Joel ambles about, the shack FAR IN THE BACKGROUND. He drinks from his flask. Once. Twice. A third time. Spits up VOMIT before holding the rest down.

MCCAULEY (V.O.)

We were out thought. Out manned.
Overwhelmed from the outset.

INSERT CUTS OF YOUNG MCCAULEY AS THE NATIVES KILL HIS MEN. MOVING CLOSER. He FIGHTS BACK, then...

MCCAULEY (V.O.)

It was probably a few minutes before the savages could work their way through to me, but, son, I tell you it felt...

(snaps in time with a
kill)

...just like that. In a blur I saw the men I rode with cut down.

(MORE)

MCCAULEY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

All of em. Skulls split. Limbs
hacked away. Some scalped as they
stood. Tossed aside to be trampled
in the dirt.

...RETURN TO JOEL, THE SHACK NOWHERE IN SIGHT. He drinks
more. Stumbles more. Hits and leans on a SYCAMORE for support
before moving on.

MCCAULEY (V.O.)

And I was about to be there with
them, dying in the desert. Til
something happened.

KID (V.O.)

(guessing)

Dynamite blast. Or y--you got
reinforcements.

MCCAULEY (V.O.)

No, my boy. It was luck. Just luck.

YOUNG MCCAULEY FIRES AT THE NATIVES. THEY'RE ALMOST ON HIM
NOW. He KILLS SEVERAL before his horse is SHOT IN THE NECK
and collapses, sending him to the dirt. Two more horses then
tumble onto him, COVERING HIM FROM VIEW...

MCCAULEY (V.O.)

I killed as many as I could, but
they were on me by then. When I
went to reload, my horse took an
arrow to the neck and down we went.
Got to my knees and another came
down on top of us. Then another and
that was it. I was out.

...THE NATIVES FINISH THEIR SLAUGHTER, KILLING THE LIVING and
SCALPING THE DEAD. They take what they can, then RIDE OUT OF
SIGHT, CHANTING as they go.

MCCAULEY (V.O.)

The savages looted what they could,
then left. They must've missed me.
I broke my leg, but I climbed from
the wreckage and crawled on to
safety. Three days on my hands and
knees getting back.

LONG SHOT OF THE HORIZON AS THE SUN SETS. CORPSES ARE ALL WE
SEE IN THE FOREGROUND as young McCauley crawls from under the
bodies and stands, covered in BLOOD and URINE. He turns away,
staring at the blood red sun.

MCCAULEY AND THE KID - SAME TIME

He exhales SMOKE as the kid nods to the ground.

KID

So that's what this is about.
Payin' us all that.

MCCAULEY

(laughing)
Again, no. No, my boy. This...
(inhales)
...This is a more...
(thinking)
...personal matter.

KID

Somebody killed your wife then. Or
your paw or somethin' like that. I
know it.

MCCAULEY

You could say that.
(chuckling)
Yes. You could very much say it's
something like that.

SMASH CUT TO:

JOEL - SAME TIME

He trips and falls to his hands and knees. Gags, but holds it
in, trying to breathe all the while. Beat as he catches his
wind, then...

...HIGH ANGLE ON HIM as he surveys his surroundings and
becomes aware of where he is: THE EXACT SPOT HE MET MCCAULEY
FIFTEEN YEARS AGO. He stares on as if in a trance, a
sorrowful furrow in his brow.

LOW ANGLE OVER HIS SHOULDER, FOCUSED WHERE MCCAULEY HAD BEEN.
HOLD ON THIS IMAGE for a long beat before we...

FADE TO:

INT. PRAIRIE SCHOONER - DAY

A WOMAN and her TEN YEAR OLD SON lay asleep in a halted
PRAIRIE SCHOONER. A SCUFFLE IS HEARD OUTSIDE and she awakens
with a jolt.

BOY
 (sleepily)
 What're we stoppin' for, ma?

WOMAN
 (worried)
 Stay here, Danny.

She EXITS the cover of the white canvas. There's a moment of silence before she SCREAMS and CEASES with a THUMP.

BOY
 Ma, you okay?

No answer.

BOY
 Ma?

Still no answer. We HEAR FOOTSTEPS approach from the outside.

BOY
 Who's there?

The FOOTSTEPS STOP for a beat before A KNIFE SLICES THROUGH and CUTS AN OPENING IN THE CANVAS. HARVEY REACHES IN and DRAGS THE BOY OUT.

EXT. PRAIRIE SCHOONER - LAKE SIDE - CONTINUOUS

The boy LANDS HARD. He sees his mother and father unconscious several feet away.

BOY
 (dazed)
 Ma? Pa--

Harvey yanks him by the ankle and he CRIES IN PAIN. Dutch watches as Harvey struggles with the writhing boy.

ANGLE ON BROOKS RIDING TOWARD THE CAMERA (JOEL DEEP IN THE BACKGROUND).

BROOKS
 (loud, worried)
 Hey. HEY.

Harvey grabs the boy and gets his hand bit as the boy tries to flee.

HARVEY
 (screaming in pain)
 DUTCH.

DUTCH SPEARS THE BOY. We HEAR THE AIR LEAVE HIM before he's picked back up and shoved towards the waiting Harvey. He PUNCHES HARVEY IN THE CROTCH as he tumbles to the ground.

HARVEY
 (squeaking)
 (falling to his knees)
 KILL THE RASCAL.

Dutch PULLS HIS GUN, but Brooks TACKLES HIM, JUMPING FROM HIS HORSE, AS HE FIRES. The bullet SMACKS INTO THE EARTH A FOOT FROM THE BOY.

BROOKS
 THE HELL YOU INBREDS DOIN'?! I know
 I didn't just see you shoot at some
 kid.

DUTCH
 Brooks, he was comin' for us. We
 had to--

BROOKS
 (exasperated)
 --Shut the fuck up. Shut the fuck
 up. Don't even try to defend what
 you just did. We ain't killin' no
 kids. I'm drawing a motherfucking
 line. Alright?
 (to Harvey)
 No kids.
 (to both)
 No kids and no parents. Is that
 fuckin' clear?

Joel stops his horse several feet behind Brooks, gaze centered on the boy.

BROOKS
 (to Harvey)
 I assume he ain't here.

Harvey shakes his head.

BROOKS
 Then I suggest we ride. Get on your
 fuckin' horse.
 (beat)
 An' no more splittin' up. Fuckin'
 told y'all that was a stupid idea.

The boy looks to Brooks who returns his pitiful stare.

BROOKS

(warm)

Go on an' help your folks, son.

The boy does as he says. Brooks eyes Joel who's still transfixed.

BROOKS

(moving to Joel's side)

Everything alright, Jon?

SLOW CLOSE UP ON JOEL'S FACE, then SLOW CLOSE UP ON THE FAMILY before we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CREEK SIDE - MAGIC HOUR

Dutch and Harvey ride side by side. Joel and Brooks lag behind.

DUTCH

You alright, Harv?

HARVEY

(quietly)

I'm fine.

(coughs)

PAN BEHIND THEM and REST ON JOEL. He stares ahead at nothing, a scowl on his face.

MOTHER (V.O.)

Jon. JON.

SIDE ANGLE CLOSEUP ON HIM AS HE LOWERS HIS HEAD.

JON (V.O.)

Ma.

CLOSEUP ON HIS EYES.

JON (V.O.)

MA.

He jerks his head and slows alongside Brooks who WRITES ANOTHER LETTER. They ride in silence for a beat before:

JOEL

(awkward)

Fine...penmanship you've got there.

Brooks ignores him. Just WRITES.

JOEL
 (still trying)
 Real fine. You're the...
 (beat)
 ...jack of all trades.

No response.

JOEL
 (sighs)
 You did good today. Takin' control
 like that. It happens again...
 (beat)
 ...just do what you did. I'll back
 you up.

He starts on ahead for a beat when Brooks says:

BROOKS
 It's who you think it is.
 (beat)
 Who I'm writing for.

Joel returns to his side.

JOEL
 So you've spoken since--

BROOKS
 (shaking his head)
 --No. No I haven't.

Awkward silence.

JOEL
 (searching for what to
 say)
 I'm sorry.

BROOKS
 I'll mail these out when we get to
 Lordsburg.

JOEL
 Multiple?

Brooks frowns at him.

JOEL
 That'll be alright.

BROOKS
 Yeah?

JOEL

Yeah.

Brooks looks away.

BROOKS

First thing.

JOEL

First thing.

BROOKS

(beat)

This all better be worth it.

JOEL

Of course.

BROOKS

I mean it.

JOEL

Of course.

BROOKS

And no more favors on my part. I'm done with that shit.

JOEL

Understandable.

BROOKS

You're an ass. You know that, right?

JOEL

Mhm.

BROOKS

And a right fool for takin' us on this...

(thinking for a word)

...crusade of yours. If any of us should have a vendetta on the fucker, it should be me.

JOEL

He deserves this, Tate. He's had it comin' for a long time. You know that.

BROOKS

So do we, Jon. So do we.

Joel looks off into the SUNSET. Tries to speak, but can't think what to say. HOLD ON HIM for a beat before we...

FADE TO:

EXT. LORDSBURG - OUTSKIRTS - NOON

FRONT ANGLE ON MCCAULEY, leading the POSSE into town. He comes to a stop and stares at something offscreen.

HIS POV: THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE.

EXT. POST OFFICE - LORDSBURG - LATER

The gang ride to a POST OFFICE on the opposite side of LORDSBURG, busy about its work. Joel and Brooks dismount. He fishes in his SADDLE BAG and pulls out a BOTTLE OF WHISKEY as Brooks makes his way inside. Starts to drink.

INT. POST OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Brooks ENTERS and walks to the counter. Sets his LETTERS on it and the ATTENDANT greets him.

BROOKS
(neighborly)
Hi. How ya doin'?

EXT. POST OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

CLOSEUP ON JOEL as he takes a huge swig of whiskey. He lets it down, then turns to the town. A CLOUD OF SMOKE BILLOWS HIGH IN THE SKY SOMEWHERE AT THE OTHER END.

INT. POST OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The attendant leans over the counter.

BROOKS
So...wait. How do I address this again?

EXT. POST OFFICE - MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Joel wanders towards the smoke. The Brothers look to each other questioningly, starting to follow, but Joel motions for them to stop.

INT. POST OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Brooks WRITES on the back of a WHITE ENVELOPE.

BROOKS
(chuckling)
Ain't had to do this in a while, ya
know.

EXT. MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Joel continues through the middle of town, now within eyesight of the SHERIFF'S. The posse surrounds the place as it BURNS. McCauley sits amongst them on horseback, watching the FLAMES.

FRONT ANGLE ON JOEL WITH A SLOW CLOSEUP, eyes dead on McCauley.

McCauley dismounts, smiling ear to ear, then turns and locks eyes with Joel. The smile disappears.

Long beat as we CLOSE UP ON JOEL, then CLOSEUP ON MCCAULEY before...

...Joel pulls his PISTOLS and FIRES, but McCauley pulls a mercenary in to TAKE THE HIT instead. The kid and the others turn as McCauley reaches for his gun.

MCCAULEY
(shouts)
There he is.

He and the posse FIRE IN UNISON as Joel sprints to cover.

INT. POST OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Brooks shelves his now sealed and addressed letters while we HEAR THE SHOTS FROM OUTSIDE. He spins and stares out the window.

BROOKS
Shit.

I/E. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Joel SHOOTS back behind a pair BARRELS while the posse gains ground. Gives himself COVERING FIRE and HIGH TAILS IT INTO THE DOCTOR'S.

MCCAULEY (O.S.)
 (shouting)
 Surround him. Surround him.

EXT. POST OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Brooks dashes outside and looks to Harvey and Dutch.

BROOKS
 HEY. The hell happened?

I/E. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Joel CRASHES THROUGH THE DOOR and to the floor. The DOCTOR jolts with a CRY and RUNS OUTSIDE.

DOCTOR
 Oh, Jesus. Jesus, oh, Jesus, oh,
 Jesus, oh--

BLAM. McCauley BLOWS HIM AWAY, then sheathes his pistol.

MCCAULEY
 (to some of his men)
 Go around back and cover the exit.
 Make sure he doesn't leave.
 (shouts toward the
 Doctor's)
 Hi, Jon. It's good to see you
 again. I've missed you since the
 last time we had the privilege...

EXT. ALLEY - MAIN STREET - SAME TIME

Brooks and The Brothers watch from an alleyway far down the street.

HARVEY
 Motherfuck. He didn't say shit
 about no goddamned posse.

DUTCH
 Damned fool. He's fucked himself.
 We can't break through that.

BROOKS
 Yes we can. There.

He points to the mercenaries moving around back of the Doctor's.

I/E. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A mercenary approaches McCauley.

MERCENARY

Ain't no door back, boss. Minus a window or two...

(points to entrance)

...that's only way out.

MCCAULEY

(waves him off)

So...

(beat)

...You gonna come on out here and talk things out? Or'll I have to come on in there and...

(beat)

...settle things myself?

JOEL (O.S.)

(shouts)

You lost your chance for that a long time ago. In. Out. It don't matter.

ANGLE ON JOEL as he sits RELOADING on the floor.

JOEL

Either way, you're getting put to the dirt, you sumbitch.

MCCAULEY (O.S.)

Boy. You never do change do you, Jon? Just as cold and cynical as ever.

Joel CLICKS THE CHAMBERS SHUT as...

...MCCAULEY motions to the kid.

MCCAULEY

(low)

Take every street candle you can find and bring them to me.

(to Joel)

Why are you out here all alone, Jon? Don't you have a gang or something to keep you safe?

JOEL (O.S.)

Naw. They left when I said I was comin' for you.

MCCAULEY
Even the nigger?

JOEL (O.S.)
(beat)
(begrudgingly)
Even the nigger.

MCCAULEY
(smiles)
So sad. You know, all things
considered, I actually liked him.
He was smart for a spear chucking
slave boy.

JOEL bares his teeth, clenching hard on his guns as the posse
LAUGHS OUTSIDE.

THE KID RETURNS, several STREET LAMPS in hand.

MCCAULEY
(taking them)
Ah, yes. Thank you, my boy.
(to Joel)
Well, Jon, I apologize that I've
seemingly taken everything from
you, but deep down you know you
deserve it. Deep down...
(beat)
...you know I'm right.

SIDE ANGLE ON JOEL, a scowl on his face.

MCCAULEY LIGHTS A LAMP.

MCCAULEY
You were made for hell, Jon. I'll
see that you reach it.

He TOSSES THE LAMP THROUGH A WINDOW where it BURSTS INTO
FLAMES.

JOEL jerks away from the heat while...

...MCCAULEY tosses in ANOTHER. And ANOTHER. And ANOTHER.
SMOKE BILLOWS THROUGH THE OPEN WINDOW as the posse CHEERS.

JOEL rushes around FLAMES to peer through the windows, but
all are covered by mercenaries.

THE KID leans in toward McCauley.

KID
He's been in there quite a while.

MCCAULEY

He has.

KID

Keeps it up, the smoke'll get him
before anything else.

MCCAULEY

Oh, no. It won't be that.

He puts his hands to his guns, ready to strike.

JOEL huddles in a corner and COUGHS HARD as smoke fills his lungs. Wipes tear stained eyes before hobbling toward the entrance/exit.

CLOSEUP ON MCCAULEY'S FACE, biting his lip.

JOEL continues toward the entrance/exit, then pauses. He grips his pistols tight and rears up for a stand.

ANGLE ON MCCAULEY'S HAND as it looms over his gun.

FRONT ANGLE ON JOEL for a beat. He breathes, then SHOUTS, ready to go as...

...BROOKS, HARVEY, and DUTCH ambush the mercenaries by the back window, mounted on horseback. The Brothers SHOOT THEM ALL DEAD while Brooks, holding Joel's horse, KICKS THE WINDOW IN.

BROOKS

JON.

JOEL swings his head around.

JOEL

Tate?

BROOKS

(motioning over)

Come here. We're goin'.

Joel sprints over as...

...MCCAULEY HEARS SHOUTS and FAINT GUNSHOTS over the CRACKLE OF FLAMES.

KID

Hell is that comin' from?

CLOSEUP ON MCCAULEY'S EYES as they squint in a scowl.

JOEL CRAWLS THROUGH THE WINDOW. Mounts as he shoots a look toward an alley from where McCauley and the posse EMERGE.

BROOKS
You alright, Jon?

JOEL
Just fuckin' go. GO. GO.

They sprint off as fast as their horses can carry, DUST TRAILING IN THE AIR as they go.

McCauley races after them on foot for a beat, then stops and PULLS HIS PISTOL.

FRONT ANGLE ON MCCAULEY. He grits his teeth. Aims with heightened focus, then...BLAM...

...We SEE THE BULLET TEAR THROUGH DUTCH'S CALF. BITS OF SKIN and MUSCLE HANG OFF as he emits an EARDRUM PIERCING SHRIEK.

BROOKS
Dutch? Are ya hit?

DUTCH
(wailing)
Ow. Shit. Oh, shit. Fuck. Fuck.

We WATCH THEM RIDE AWAY, listening to DUTCH'S SCREAMS for a beat before we GO...

...BACK TO MCCAULEY. SMOKE RADIATES FROM HIS PISTOL and WAFTS AWAY WITH THE WIND as he spikes it into the dirt and WALKS OFFSCREEN PAST THE POSSE, a grimace on his face.

FRONT ANGLE ON THE KID watching him leave. He frowns for a beat in confusion, then FOLLOWS OFFSCREEN.

CUT TO:

EXT. RISE NEAR BASIN - MINUTES LATER

The gangs stops. Dismounts and hustles to Dutch who hangs half off his horse. They grab and attempt to set him on the ground.

DUTCH
(in agony)
Be easy, goddamn it. Be fuckin' easy.

Harvey loses his grip and Dutch FALLS TO THE DIRT. It FILLS HIS WOUND and CRUSTS ONTO THE BLOOD. He SCREAMS as he moves to the fetal position, gripping his MANGLED CALF.

HARVEY
(frantic)
Goddammit, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

BROOKS
(inspecting the wound)
Too much dirt in there. Ain't no dressin' that.

DUTCH
Harvey, the fucker off.

HARVEY
(taken aback)
I ain't cuttin' your leg off.

DUTCH
Not the whole thing. Just below the knee.

HARVEY
(trying to stay cool)
I ain't doin' it, ya scared fool.

DUTCH
YOUR'RE GODDAMN RIGHT I'M SCARED.
I'm gonna die if you don't grow some fuckin' balls.
(tossing him his knife)
Here. Use this. I don't care. Just do it.

BROOKS
Ya ain't usin' no fuckin' knife.
Let me get the saw.

Brooks moves to his horse.

HARVEY
(to Brooks)
Why don't you do it, doctor boy?

BROOKS
(with attitude)
He asked you.

Brooks removes a SAW from his saddle bag and brings it to Harvey who hesitates a beat.

HARVEY
 (hiding rising emotions)
 Okay. Okay. Just...hold still.

He puts the saw above Dutch's calf, takes a breath, and CUTS. DUTCH'S HOWLS fill the air. We HEAR THE DULL SCRAPE OF SAW ON THE FIBULA and it's too much for Harvey to take.

HARVEY
 (near tears, trying to
 hide it)
 Fuck I can't do this. I can't
 fuckin' do this.

DUTCH
 (full of pain and rage)
 YOU FUCKIN' BITCH. YOU YELLA PIECE
 OF SHIT.

He pulls his PISTOL and aims at Harvey.

DUTCH
 I'M GONNA FUCKIN' SHOOT YOUR ASS IF
 YA DON'T--

JOEL
 --GODDAMMIT, I'll do it.
 (to Harvey)
 Move aside.

He takes the saw and chugs what whiskey's left in his FLASK. Dutch bites into his shirt and the two lock eyes.

Joel takes a DEEP BREATH, remorseful, then the CUTTING RESUMES and the SHRIEKS with it. LOUDER and MORE BLOODCURDLING.

CLOSEUP ON JOEL. He, like Dutch, struggles not to cry, his breath hastening FASTER AND FASTER.

INSERT CUTS OF BROOKS THEN BACK TO JOEL. REPEAT THIS SEVERAL TIMES, QUICKER WITH EACH CUT, until...

...JOEL GETS THROUGH THE LEG and gasps for air as BLOOD SPRINGS ON TO HIS FACE.

Dutch WAILS and grasps his STUMP while BLOOD SPURTS FROM BETWEEN HIS FINGERS IN RHYTHM WITH HIS ACCELERATED HEART RATE.

DUTCH
 (tears streaming)
 Fuck, fuck, fuck. I'm gonna die.
 I'm gonna die. I'm gonna die.

Joel takes the LIMB by the ankle, rears back, and LAUNCHES IT FAR AWAY, VOMITING as he does so.

ANGLE ON BROOKS, shaking, FRESH VOMIT ON HIS CHIN. Joel saunters over as he WIPES THE BLOOD ON HIS PANTS.

JOEL
(feebly)
Give him the fish-mouth, would ya?

Brooks looks from Dutch to Joel, lip quivering.

BROOKS
(in a whisper)
Fuck...I'll try...

He takes several a NEEDLE and WIRE from his bag, then approaches Dutch.

JOEL
You've done it before.

BROOKS
(almost ashamed)
I know I have.

Joel pauses for a beat. Looks to Harvey who sits with his brother hand in hand, then turns toward the horizon. Beat before we...

FADE TO:

EXT. SALOON - LORDSBURG - NIGHT

THREE MERCENARIES prop up a WORN LOOKING MAN, a NOOSE AROUND HIS NECK, HIS ARMS AND LEGS BOUND. ANOTHER MERCENARY tosses the noose over a BEAM at the saloon entrance. He and A FIFTH MERCENARY hold it in place, ready to pull.

MERCENARAY
Teach ya some respect, self
righteous lil' nigger.

MAN
(scared shitless)
I ain't done nothin', mister. I
ain't done nothin' to ya. Let me
go, please, misters. Let me go...

MERCENARY
Dammit. Hold him for a second,
would ya?

MAN

Please, misters, my babies' at home. Don't do this. Don't take me from them, please...

MERCENARY

(oblivious)

We all--

(to the man)

--SHUT UP.

(to the mercenaries))

We all ready?...

ANGLE ON EVANS across the street as the mercenaries SHOUT in agreement. He stares offscreen with his arms crossed. HOLD ON HIM for a beat before we...

...PAN TOWARD AND IN ON MCCAULEY, watching from a SECOND STORY WINDOW. THE KID stands beside him. Drinks WHISKEY from a BOTTLE.

MCCAULEY

That's the thing about a conscience. All's shrouded in subjectivity.

INT. SALOON - CONTINUOUS

He takes a drink.

MCCAULEY

The world tries so hard to convince us there's one right and just order to things, but in reality it's a constant shift of dynamism.

MERCENARY (O.S.)

Alright. Alright. On three. On three. Ya hear me? Three this time.

(beat)

One.

MCCAULEY

It's a divergence of conflicting paths. A forcing of one's own will into existence.

MERCENARIES (O.S.)

(in unison)

TWO.

MCCAULEY

A unification of worlds opposed.

MERCENARIES (O.S.)
 (in unison)
 THREE.

HOLD ON MCCAULEY'S FACE as we HEAR THE SNAP of the man's neck and CHEERS from the mercenaries. The kid flinches in the periphery, unable to take it.

MCCAULEY
 Remember, you boy. The meek inherit nothing but deceit and sorrow. Best not to let another man decide your fate.

PAN TO THE KID while he curls his nose in disgust. He drinks more, then...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AUCTION - MEMORY - DAY

FRONT ANGLE ON A TWENTY YEAR OLD BROOKS, standing in CHAINS on a SMALL PLATFORM. PAN BACK TO REVEAL A GROUP OF WHITE MEN waiting as an AUCTIONEER rattles off the bids.

AUCTIONEER
 (fast)
 ...that's a six fifty. I got six fifty. And there's for six sixty. Do I got six sixty-five? Six sixty-five. Yessir. I got...

FRONT ANGLE ON TWO OUTLAWS (20's), then PAN TO THE RIGHT PAST ANOTHER OUTLAW (20's) before RESTING ON JOEL (20) AND MCCAULEY (23). The pair study Brooks up and down. McCauley with interest. Joel indifference.

JOEL
 (arms crossed)
 Too thin.

MCCAULEY
 And you're not?

JOEL
 Look at the arms. Couldn't lift a rifle, let alone shoot a man.

MCCAULEY
 One can have more to them than shooting a man, Jon.

JOEL
No shit. I ain't a fuckin' fool.

MCCAULEY
Perhaps...
(turns to him)
...but you look the part.

He sneers as Joel looks away, scowling.

ANGLE ON THE AUCTIONEER.

AUCTIONEER
(fast)
...seven twenty-five. That's seven
twenty-five. Do I have a seven
thirty? Do I have a seven thirty?
I've got seven thirty? How 'bout
seven thirty-five? Any for seven
thirty-five...

ANGLE ON MCCAULEY as he shoots his hand in the air.

MCCAULEY
Seven fifty.

AUCTIONEER
(fast)
Seven fifty. I've got a seven
fifty. Do I have a seven fifty-
five?

MAN (O.S.)
Fifty-five.

AUCTIONEER
(fast)
Seven fifty-five for the gentleman.
Do I have takers for seven sixty?
Seven sixty. Do I have seven sixty?

MCCAULEY puts his hand in the air and the auctioneer acknowledges.

AUCTIONEER
(fast)
How 'bout seven sixty-five? Do we
have seven sixty-five?

MAN (O.S.)
Seven seventy.

AUCTIONEER
(fast)
And we've got--

MCCAULEY
Seven eighty.

MAN (O.S.)
Seven eighty-five.

MCCAULEY
Eight hundred--

MAN (O.S.)
--Eight twenty-five.

MCCAULEY
Nine hundred dollars.

AUCTIONEER
(accelerated)
That's nine hundred goin' once.
Twice. Three times an' this nigger
is sold to the man in the white for
nine hundred dollars. Thank you
very much.

WOMAN (O.S.)
NO. NO.

SAUNDRA BROOKS (21), a calloused, yet beautiful slave girl sprints toward the auction, crying tears of bitter loss.

SAUNDRA
NO. TATUM. NO. TATUM. NO...

Several men catch her as she fights against them.

SAUNDRA
...NO. LET GO OF ME. LET GO OF ME.
NO...

ANGLE ON JOEL, looking away as he tries to ignore her cries.

SAUNDRA (O.S.)
...NO. DON'T TAKE HIM. DON'T TAKE
HIM, PLEASE. LET HIM STAY. TATE,
HELP. HELP...

THE MEN THROW HER TO THE GROUND and BEAT HER DOWN. One pulls out a WHIP and USES IT ON HER as Brooks runs offstage.

BROOKS
SAUNDRA.

SAUNDRA

...TATE, PLEASE. HELP ME. HELP ME.
PLEASE. TATE, PLEASE...

Brooks TACKLES THE WHIP HOLDER and STOMPS HIM IN THE FACE. Swings his chains at the others and CONNECTS WITH ONE before picking up the whip and THRASHING THE REST.

ANGLE ON JOEL as he watches. Frowns and puts his hand to his holster for a beat, thinking about it, then...

...BACK TO BROOKS as he's swarmed by MORE MEN. He struggles against impossible odds, fighting valiantly, never giving an inch. This continues for a long, drawn out beat until...

...THWAP. He's knocked unconscious by McCauley who SMASHES HIM IN THE HEAD WITH HIS PISTOL. Sandra SCREAMS as she's dragged away.

SAUNDRA

...NO. NO. NO. LET HIM GO. LET HIM
GO. TATE. TATE, ARE YOU OKAY? TATE.
PLEASE, TELL ME YOU'RE OKAY. TATE.
TATE, PLEASE...

Joel takes his place beside McCauley, looking down on Brooks with pity as BLOOD drips from his forehead. The rest of the gang chuckles as they surround the slave.

HIGH ANGLE ON BROOKS, still out, while MCCAULEY'S SHADOW LOOMS OVER HIM.

MCCAULEY (O.S.)

Jon, get him something to drink.
Load him up and give it to him when
he comes to. Then give him more.

LOW ANGLE ON MCCAULEY. PAN IN TOWARD HIS FACE for a beat, then HOLD for another.

MCCAULEY

(nods)
Shall we.

BLAM. KABLAM. BLAM. GUNSHOTS SOUND as we...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Joel awakens inside his TENT, gasping for breath. He shakes as perspiration drips from his forehead. Wipes it on his sleeve and EXITS.

EXT. CAMP - EDGE OF FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Dutch lies next to the FIRE, tucked in a BLANKET in the fetal position, a BLOODY CLOTH WRAPPED AROUND HIS STUMP. He's unstable, evidenced by his cold, violent shivers.

Harvey sits beside him, trying to soothe his brother to sleep. Brooks rests across from them, an expression of pity on his face.

JOEL (O.S.)
(approaching)
Tate.

BROOKS
(in acknowledgement)
Jon.

Joel sits beside him.

JOEL
(sighs)
Thanks for today. Thanks for...
(beat)
...being there for me.

BROOKS
(shocked)
Yeah, well...
(beat)
...got lucky, I guess.

JOEL
Tate.

BROOKS
Yeah.

JOEL
You remember when we met?

BROOKS
What about it?

JOEL
I don't know. Just...crossed my
mind.

BROOKS
Betcha never thought you'd be stuck
with me this long.

JOEL
Never thought I'd be around anybody
this long.

BROOKS
My fightin' skills an' devilishly
good looks, I reckon.

JOEL
You were a good fighter.

BROOKS
Still am.

JOEL
It's why you're still here.

BROOKS
Still with you or just breathin'
you mean?

JOEL
You can figure for yourself.
(beat)
It's surprisin', either way.

BROOKS
What is?

JOEL
You. You're too good for this. This
work.

BROOKS
Nah, I ain't. Can't be, if I'm
still here.

JOEL
I guess. It is funny, though, us
workin' together.

BROOKS
Yeah? How so?

JOEL
I...
(trails off)
...don't know. Just...never mind.

He stares into the fire, lost in thought. Brooks studies his
face, but finds no insight. Turns to Dutch.

BROOKS
What're we gonna do with Dutch?

JOEL

See how he is in the mornin'. If he gets worse...we'll put him out his misery.

Dutch GROANS OFFSCREEN. We HEAR HIM CRY THE TEARS OF A DYING MAN.

BROOKS

Probably should've done that a while ago.

Joel regards Dutch with regret, hiding it well.

JOEL

Yeah.

(beat)

Yeah.

FADE TO:

THE NEXT MORNING

LONG SHOT OF THE LANDSCAPE. ALL'S COVERED IN THE BLACK OF NIGHT before THE SUN APPEARS OVER THE HORIZON. We HEAR THE SOUND OF A LONE BULLET ECHO as we WATCH IT COMPLETE ITS RISE, then CUT TO...

...DUTCH'S HALF HEADLESS CORPSE sprawled on the ground, limbs twisted from prior convulsion. The top right of his face has been BLOWN AWAY. BRAINS and SKULL SPLATTERED ABOUT.

PAN DOWN to FOCUS ON HIS STUB, GROTESQUELY INFECTED. FLIES BUZZ ABOUT and PECK AT THE SCABS. REFOCUS to SEE THE GANG RIDING AWAY IN THE BACKGROUND, DUST TRAILING BEHIND THEM.

EXT. HILLTOP - LATER

The gang lay prone on a hilltop overlooking Lordsburg, their blackened, bloodshot eyes evidence of their trauma and sleepless night. Joel watches the POSSE leave town through his BINOCULARS.

JOEL

Goin' South.

HARVEY

(serious)

An' the plan?

JOEL

Cut em off somewhere. Use the land
for advantage.

HARVEY

What they lookin' like, then?

JOEL

Twenty-three, including McCauley.
Got someone's head hangin' off the
front of his horse.

HARVEY

McCauley?

JOEL

Yeah.

HARVEY

Let me see.

HIS POV THROUGH THE LENSES: THE WORN LOOKING MAN'S HEAD TIED
TO MCCAULEY'S HORSE, bouncing as the horse trots along.

HARVEY

Morbid sum bitch. Who's is it?

JOEL

Dunno. Can't tell from here.

BROOKS

Don't think it matters. We know who
we're dealin' with.

HARVEY

Where you wanna cut em at?

JOEL

No idea.

HARVEY

I'll lead then.

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODLAND - SAME TIME

McCauley is mounted and moves at a walk while the posse
follows behind. The kid rides in the middle as he cranes his
head over the mercenaries in front of him, trying to spy
McCauley up ahead.

EVANS (O.S.)

No.

The kid spies Evans, riding right beside him.

EVANS

(shaking his head)

No.

KID

(beat)

You mind tellin' what the fuck your deal is?

(looks ahead)

Cause I'm bout' to gettin' to wantin' to--

He turns back, but Evans is gone, nowhere to be found. The kid pauses for a beat, then takes a drink from his FLASK before kicking his horse forward.

EXT. CANYON BOTTOM - EARLY EVENING

The kid reaches McCauley as they continue toward a CANYON-LIKE PIECE OF LAND, though one much smaller than most. TWO BOULDERS sit at both sides of the entrance. McCauley halts and so do his men. Examines and points to the ground above.

MCCAULEY

Keep your sight on that summit. Be ready.

He and the group move forward at their prior pace, watching the high ground.

BACK ANGLE ON THEM as they ENTER. JOEL, BROOKS, and HARVEY then appear from behind the boulders, each with LIT STICKS OF DYNAMITE that they toss high into the air. The sticks drop and EXPLODE AT THE POSSE'S FEET.

THE SCREEN FILLS WITH SMOKE, MANGLED LIMBS, and SPURTS OF BLOOD as the gang FIRES INTO THE CLOUD OF SMOKE AND DIRT. We HEAR THE CRIES OF MEN and HORSES ALIKE ON THE OTHER SIDE.

ANGLE ON MCCAULEY, still on his horse, watching the back of his group get SLAUGHTERED. He SHOTS back while others crash into him thanks to their OUT OF CONTROL HORSES.

THE SMOKE BEGINS TO CLEAR and the kid SHOTS through it. The rest of the posse FIRES as well, struggling to move over the CORPSES. Some bodies are trampled. Others act as snares, tripping horses and sending their riders into the GORE.

MCCAULEY
PUSH BACK ON THEM. PUSH BACK ON
THEM.

ANGLE ON THE GANG.

JOEL
(to Brooks)
Toss in another.

Brooks reaches in his satchel and pulls out a STICK OF
DYNAMITE and a PACK OF MATCHES.

BROOKS
Last one.

He LIGHTS THE MATCH on the boulder and PUTS THE FLAME TO THE
FUSE.

ON MCCAULEY AND HIS MEN, ready to charge.

MCCAULEY
ADVANCE. ADVANCE.

BROOKS tosses the dynamite in.

MCCAULEY
SHIT.

Some retreat far enough to survive, but the shockwave sends
them and their horses to the ground. The rest are TORN APART
BY THE BLAST.

HIHG ANGLE ON A SURVIVOR as he SCREAMS and drags himself with
BLOODIED FINGERTIPS away from THE CARNAGE.

MCCAULEY gets to a knee and sees the gang fire on him. He
jumps behind his horse which lays YELPING with a BROKEN LEG.

THE KID FIRES SEVERAL ROUNDS, but MISSES into the canyon
wall.

ANGLE ON THE GANG as they RELOAD. Brooks sees the posse start
to collect themselves. FIRES then turns back.

BROOKS
Gotta get going, Jon.

HARVEY
Not yet.

BROOKS
The surprise is over. Lets go.

HARVEY
 (ignoring him)
 I got one more stick on me.

BROOKS
 Jon, talk some sense into this
 prick.

JOEL
 (firing shots)
 He's right, Harv. We ain't got much
 longer.

MORE OF THE POSSE ARE FIRING BACK and SHIFTING CLOSER.

HARVEY
 (reluctant)
 Alright, lets go.

Joel and Brooks run along the OUTER CANYON WALL, not looking
 back. Harvey turns to follow, but...

...BLAM. THE KID FIRES A LONE SHOT.

ON HARVEY as he's HIT IN THE SIDE mere inches from cover. He
 drops to the dirt and grasps his stomach. No one in the gang
 notices due to the DYNAMITE and GUNFIRE still in their ears.

MCCAULEY approaches as he ROLLS IN HIS OWN BLOOD. Harvey goes
 to shoot, but McCauley KICKS the pistol from his hands. Steps
 on his throat while he kicks about in protest.

EXT. CANYON SIDE - MOMENTS LATER

Joel and Brooks mount their horses.

BROOKS
 Jon, where's Harv?

JOEL
 What?

BROOKS
 Where's Harv, Jon. Where the fuck
 is Harv?

JOEL
 He was behind you, wasn't he?

BROOKS
 Right the fuck behind.
 (spurs his horse forward)
 We gotta go back.

JOEL
(cuts him off)
We can't go back.

BROOKS
Well, we gotta do something. The
fuck do you suggest?

Joel frowns for a beat, then squints at something offscreen.

CUT TO:

EXT. PATH - MINUTES LATER

Joel and Brooks lead their horses on foot near the PEAK OF THE CANYON. They grab their RIFLES and hitch the horses to a tree before continuing to the top.

EXT. CANYON TOP/CANYON BOTTOM - CONTINUOUS

We SEE THE POSSE. Ten survivors surround Harvey. He's not dead, but probably should be with all the BLOOD on him. He's been BEATEN and STRIPPED NAKED with CUTS and BRUISES all over, TIED by his HANDS and FEET.

Evans (with HARVEY'S BAG) holds him up while McCauley BATTERS HIM with RIGHTS and LEFTS. He GROANS with each blow, barely conscious. The posse JEERS and SHOUTS with animalistic excitement.

HARVEY
Stop...

PUNCH TO THE JAW. A BLOODY, DECAYED TOOTH flies into the air.

ANGLE ON JOEL AND BROOKS, noses curled.

BROOKS
Is he alive?

Joel takes his BINOCULARS and raises them to his eyes.

HIS POV THROUGH THE LENSE: McCauley PUNCHES Harvey in the gut. Joel FLICKS THE LENSES OVER and we're right on HARVEY'S DAMAGED FACE.

JOEL
He's alive.
(removing the binoculars)
Though, not much longer, I reckon.

ON MCCAULEY. He LANDS ANOTHER RIGHT and his follow-through sends him off to the side, shaking his fist in pain. He turns to resume, but stops when he sees something above. A HINT OF SUNLIGHT REFLECTS off Joel's binoculars.

CLOSEUP ON MCCAULEY'S CURIOUS EXPRESSION.

ANGLE ON JOEL and BROOKS.

BROOKS

There's got to be something we're not thinking of. Some sneak we can--

JOEL

--GET BACK.

SEVERAL BULLETS HIT THE GROUND IN FRONT OF THEM and DIRT KICKS EVERYWHERE. They dive back and cover their heads as we HEAR THE DIRT RAIN OVER THEM.

MCCAULEY (O.S.)

Well, what are you two snakes still doing here? I figured you two'd be near Jeff by now.

MCCAULEY motions toward Harvey.

MCCAULEY

We've tried to make ourselves acquainted with your friend, but he seems unwilling to do the same.

JOEL

He don't get along with ghouls looking whores like you.

MCCAULEY

I imagine not. I also seem to remember there being four of you.

JOEL

You're spot on. Dutch is on his way right now with more dynamite, so you best let our boy go before we splatter you fuckers all over that wall.

MCCAULEY

(smirks)

Shame. Seems I'm about done for.

(beat)

How about you, Brooks boy. I see you've kept your slave colors on you.

Brooks glares, but says nothing.

MCCAULEY
How's ol' girl doing?

JOEL
Hey. I'm here. You keep your eyes
on me, you miserable sumbitch.

MCCAULEY
(to Joel)
Projecting are we? Don't tell me
you like being the center of
attention, Jon.

JOEL
Only when you're involved.

MCCAULEY
I'm touched. I always knew there
was some kind of heart behind those
dead eyes of yours. Holding you
back.

(beat)
Do you still dream, Jon?

JOEL
Here comes Dutch. Clear out now.

MCCAULEY
How do they go? The same or...
different?

JOEL
You've got five seconds.

MCCAULEY
Hurry it up, then.

Joel shakes with rage, his bluff called.

JOEL
Five.

McCauley nods with each beat.

JOEL
Four.
(beat)
THREE.
(beat)
TWO.
(beat)
ONE.

HARVEY
Hey, McCauley, you...fucker.

He SPATS as McCauley turns to face him.

MCCAULEY
I beg pardon.

HARVEY
(coughing)
You fucker. Look at you. Dead an'
don't even know it. Ain't never
seen such pathetic shit in all my
thirty-one years.
(beat)
Sure. You're gonna kill me. I'm
sure you'll kill those fuckers too,
but beneath those words you speak,
behind all that bravada you put
forth, is a just scared lil' baby
boy.
(beat)
Scared deep down that the world
don't care about him. And that the
world has and will go on without.
It ain't hard to see. Ain't hard to
see at all.

He looks up toward Joel for a beat and smiles.

HARVEY
(chuckling)
You both were made for each other.

He LAUGHS while McCauley twitches with rage. The sound ECHOES
along the canyon.

HARVEY
(still laughing)
You're both nothin'.
(serious)
Nothin'.

Long beat as they stare each other down, the others watching
in silence. Then...

...McCauley unsheathes his KNIFE and SLAMS IT INTO HARVEY'S
CHEST. He BUTCHERS HIM and it's gruesome. Harvey tries to
scream but can't, eyes bulging out their sockets.

The posse GASPS in horror, flinching at the SOUND OF CUTTING
FLESH.

JOEL BELLOWS while Brooks SHRIEKS and turns away, CURSING to no one.

HIGH ANGLE ON HARVEY. We SEE LIFE IN HIM, but it's faint. McCauley ceases his frenzy and stares as if hypnotized.

RETURN TO JOEL, his anger replaced with horror and regret. He grips his rifle.

ON MCCAULEY AND HARVEY, staring each other down.

BACK TO JOEL. He COCKS THE RIFLE.

MOTHER (V.O.)
HELP ME.

ON MCCAULEY while Harvey watches him in horror.

JOEL aims.

FATHER (V.O.)
STAY THERE, JONATHON.

HARVEY'S eye jolts to Joel and McCauley notices as...

...We're BACK ON JOEL. TIME STOPS as he pulls the trigger and the SHOT ECHOES ACROSS THE CANYON, but...

...MCCAULEY jumps out of the way. The bullet DRILLS INTO HARVEY'S FOREHEAD and PUNCTURES EVANS' THROAT. Both bodies crumple to the Earth.

BROOKS turns to run, but Joel stays put.

BROOKS
Jon, come on.

MCCAULEY glares up.

BROOKS grabs Joel, shaking him.

BROOKS
Jon, we gotta go.

MCCAULEY RELOADS and AIMS as...

...BROOKS pulls Joel by the collar.

BROOKS
Jon, lets GO.

Joel comes to his senses and they run as MCCAULEY FIRES. THE BULLETS HIT THE CANYON TOP, SHOOTING UP DUST.

EXT. PATH - CONTINUOUS

Joel and Brooks hurriedly mount their horses.

BROOKS
 (thoughts racing)
 We can get a good distance off if
 we hurry. Come on, Jon. We've got
 to get--

Joel GAGS.

BROOKS
 Jon, what're you--

JOEL VOMITS.

BROOKS
 For fuck's sake, Jon, get it
 together.

EXT. CANYON BOTTOM - SAME TIME

HIGH ANGLE ON MCCAULEY, pistol outstretched. He holsters it while the others gather around Evans. Evans pleads for help, but all we HEAR is a SICK BUBBLING.

McCauley ponders HARVEY'S CORPSE before turning his attention to the dying Evans. We SEE THE LIFE LEAVE HIS EYES. McCauley stares at the body like he's absorbing the man's soul, then takes Harvey's bag and puts it on his horse.

The kid looks down on Evans as McCauley approaches and hands him a HAND SAW.

MCCAULEY
 Tie it to my horse.

The kid watches him as he leaves, then turns to the corpses and gets to work.

EXT. PLAIN - CONTINUOUS

Joel and Brooks ride away as fast they can.

PAN FROM BROOKS TO JOEL AS TIME STARTS TO SLOW and Joel begins to shake. It's subtle, then becomes intense and uncontrolled.

INSERT CUT OF HARVEY BEING STABBED, then BACK TO JOEL and TIME RETURNS TO NORMAL. He struggles to breathe as if being choked...

...CUT OF DUTCH HOLDING HIS STUMP...

DUTCH
I'm gonna die. I'm gonna die. I'm
gonna die.

...BACK TO JOEL, TURNING BLUE...

MOTHER (V.O.)
Help me, Jon.

...CUT OF HIS MOTHER BEING STRANGLERD, THEN BACK TO JOEL...

MOTHER (V.O.)
Help me.

...CLOSER ON HIS MOTHER, REACHING DESPERATELY...

MOTHER
Help me.

...BACK TO JOEL. HE'S NEAR SEIZURE.

MOTHER (V.O.)
Help me.

He falls from his horse and HITS THE DIRT, rolling to a painful stop.

BROOKS
(turning around)
JON.

HIS POV: JOEL WRITHING ON THE GROUND.

Brooks hesitates for a beat. Turns to open land, then back to Joel. Does it again, then kicks his horse forward after another long beat.

He dismounts and manages to lay Joel on his (Joel's) horse. Mounts with Joel in front of him and takes off, reigns in one hand, Joel steadied in the other.

CLOSEUP ON JOEL for a beat. Trembling. Slobbering. Pathetic.

BACK ANGLE ON THEM BOTH as we WATCH THEM RIDE AWAY. Brooks' horse follows behind.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOTEL - MEMORY - NIGHT

ANGLE ON A DARKENED HOTEL as RAIN PELTS THE EARTH. Joel and TWO UNNAMED OUTLAWS (20's) sit on horseback outside, drinking WHISKEY from the bottle.

FRONT ANGLE ON JOEL (27), BRUISED ON THE LEFT EYE, a SMALL CUT just below his hairline. He gazes offscreen. Drinks and frowns as he ponders something. HOLD for a beat, then...

...TRACK WITH MCCAULEY (31) as he approaches the gang. Surveys them as he swigs from his FLASK and puts it away.

MCCAULEY

Where?

One of the outlaws nods toward an OPEN WINDOW on the SECOND LEVEL. McCauley stares before turning and ENTERING THE HOTEL.

FRONT ANGLE CLOSEUP ON JOEL. PAN IN for a beat as he continues to gaze offscreen, a wave of conflict in his somber eyes. He dismounts.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - MEMORY - MOMENTS LATER

FRONT ANGLE ON JOEL, TRACKING BACK as he strides through the HALLWAY. The SOUND OF A STRUGGLE IS HEARD IN ONE OF THE ROOMS OFFSCREEN. He reaches the source and ENTERS.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MEMORY - CONTINUOUS

McCauley tosses SAUNDRA (28) to the floor, then PUNCHES BROOKS (27) IN THE THROAT. KICKS HIM SEVERAL TIMES while Sandra CRIES OFFSCREEN.

TRACK WITH HER as she sprints toward McCauley.

SAUNDRA

NO.

She jumps on his back and they struggle for a beat before she's SLAMMED back to the floor. He pins her and wraps his hands around her throat.

SAUNDRA

(choking)

Tate...Tatum--Ggghhff...Help...
Help...

LOW ANGLE ON JOEL standing in the doorway.

SIDE ANGLE CLOSEUP ON HIS FACE as his lip quivers. PAN DOWN TO HIS HAND shaking over his PISTOL. HOLD for a beat before we GO TO A...

...SIDE ANGLE ON SAUNDRA fighting to no avail.

HIGH ANGLE ON MCCAULEY seething down on her. He bares his teeth as we GO...

...BACK TO JOEL'S HAND and it pulls the pistol from its holster. He COCKS THE HAMMER BACK and we RETURN TO A...

...HIGH ANGLE ON MCCAULEY who pauses upon hearing the CLICK. He relaxes his grip around Sandra's neck and hangs his head. Sighs for a beat, then pulls his PISTOL and takes aim at Joel before...

...BLAM. Joel FIRES and NAILS HIM IN THE THROAT. McCauley stumbles back into the wall and slides to a seated position. They stare each other down for a long beat as Sandra gets to her hands and knees, gasping for air.

ANGLE ON BROOKS, writhing on the floor.

BROOKS

Sandra. Are you okay?

She gets to her feet, half coughing, half bawling as she stumbles past Joel and OUT THE DOOR. Brooks trails behind, calling for her as he goes.

BROOKS

(loud)

Wait. Wait. WAIT. Sandra, come back here. Sandra. Sandra...

EXT. HOTEL - MEMORY - MOMENTS LATER

She runs across the street through the RAIN and mounts her HORSE as Brooks EMERGES FROM THE HOTEL.

BROOKS

(chasing)

Sandra, where're you going?

She gives him one last look, then spurs her horse out of town and INTO THE STORM.

FRONT ANGLE ON BROOKS, TRACKING BACK as he continues his chase.

BROOKS

(erratic)

No. No. No. No. No. Don't go. Come
back, please. Please, come back.

Saundra. No. Don't go. Saundra.

(beat as he slows)

SAUNDRA.

He stops and hangs his head, SOAKING HIMSELF in the rain.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MEMORY - SAME TIME

ANGLE ON MCCAULEY as he BLEEDS from the WOUND in his neck. He GARGLES with each breath, shaking with unbridled rage.

ANGLE ON JOEL as he steps forward. CLICKS THE HAMMER BACK on his pistol and takes aim as we...

...RETURN TO MCCAULEY. HOLD for a beat while he raises his pistol and puts it to his own head.

The two stare each other down. HOLD for a long beat before Joel BACKS OUT OF THE ROOM.

ANGLE ON MCCAULEY watching him, still holding the gun to the side of his skull.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - MEMORY - CONTINUOUS

FRONT ANGLE ON JOEL, TRACKING BACK as he walks through the hall. STOP as he rounds a turn and MOVES OFFSCREEN. HOLD ON THE EMPTY HALLWAY while a GUNSHOT SOUNDS IN ONE OF THE ROOMS OFFSCREEN.

EXT. HOTEL - MEMORY - MOMENTS LATER

He EXITS THE HOTEL and walks into the street. Stops and droops his gaze to the mud before turning to someone offscreen.

ANGLE ON BROOKS OVER JOEL'S SHOULDER. He approaches hesitant, trying to meet Joel's eyes.

SIDE ANGLE ON THE TWO as they behold the other, waiting for them to speak. Not knowing what to say. The RAIN'S ALL WE HEAR as we HOLD ON THEM for a final, long beat, then...

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMP - CAVE MOUTH - NIGHT

Joel awakens. SWEAT DRIPPING from his brow. He and Brooks sit by a SMALL FIRE at the mouth of a CAVE. It faces an open view of the wilderness so they can see anyone who rides their way.

Both display the fatigue of having ridden all day. They've pitched no tents to make a speedy escape, just in case.

Joel pulls out his KNIFE and peers into it, pondering his FIERY REFLECTION on the blade. HOLD ON THIS IMAGE for a long beat, then...

JOEL
Go.

BROOKS
What?

JOEL
Go. Leave this.

BROOKS
(jokingly)
An' where would I go?

JOEL
Saundra.

BROOKS
(caught off guard)
Yeah...Yeah, I guess...

Beat. We HEAR THE WIND and CRACKLE OF FLAMES

BROOKS
...but all things considered...
(beat)
...I still owe you one.

JOEL
You're makin' a mistake.

BROOKS
Yeah...but who knows. Maybe we'll
make it through.

Joel tries to smile, but can't bring himself to. His mind trails as if caught in a profound memory.

JOEL
(blankly)
I wouldn't count on it.
(MORE)

JOEL (CONT'D)

(beat)
What'll ya do? When we're done.

BROOKS
Find Sandra, then...

(beat)
...try to start somethin' new, I'd say.

JOEL
Children?

BROOKS
What?

JOEL
Gonna have any children?

BROOKS
(shocked by the question)
No...No. You?

JOEL
...Naw...

BROOKS
(trying to save the awkwardness)
You don't seem the fatherly type.

JOEL
Thanks.

BROOKS
Life'll be good I tell ya. No more sleepin' on the ground.

JOEL
No more runnin'.

BROOKS
No fights.

JOEL
No gunfire.

BROOKS
Paradise.

JOEL
Odd view of paradise.

BROOKS
What's yours? Dynamite and ash?

JOEL

Maybe.

BROOKS

Well, it ain't mine.

JOEL

May wanna get used to the idea.

BROOKS

Do you think we're gonna die?

JOEL

Everyone does.

BROOKS

You know what I mean. Tell me. Do you think we're gonna die?

JOEL

No...I guess...

BROOKS

...Good...
(trying to convince
himself)
...Neither do I...

Beat as the two gaze into the fire.

JOEL

(rising to his feet)
I'll take watch.

Brooks places a hand on his shoulder.

BROOKS

(standing)
Don't worry, Jon. I'll get this one.

JOEL

(skeptically)
You sure?

BROOKS

(smiles meekly)
You bet.

He walks by Joel and INTO THE DARK. Joel lays by the fire, rolls on his side, and drifts to sleep.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE TO:

THE NEXT MORNING

SIDE ANGLE ON JOEL sleeping in the ASH, HALF COVERED IN SOOT. He adjusts himself and SPITS.

BROOKS (O.S.)

Jon.

Joel mumbles.

BROOKS (O.S.)

(more urgent)

Jon, wake up.

Joel bolts upright and gazes to the open landscape.

HIS POV: A GROUP RIDING TOWARD THEM in a line across the horizon MILES AWAY. They're too far to see faces or even clothes, but we know who they are.

ANGLE ON BROOKS studying the posse through his BINOCULARS. Joel moves to his side.

BROOKS

They've got Harv with em.

JOEL

(taking the binoculars)

What?

HIS POV THROUGH THE LENSE: HARVEY'S SEVERED HEAD hung to McCauley's horse, bouncing from its neck as it sprints toward us.

Joel lowers the binoculars and we PAN IN SLOWLY before...

JOEL

(unbelieving)

Sonofabitch.

(defeated)

Sonofabitch.

...He and Brooks are mounted, sprinting off along the outside of the cave. DIRT FLIES as we...

SMASH CUT TO:

SHORT MONTAGE

Note: INTERSPERSE SHOTS OF MCCAULEY AND THE KID AMONGST THOSE OF JOEL AND BROOKS.

Joel and Brooks ride through the wilderness. They push their horses as hard as they'll go, making constant rights, lefts, and other maneuvers to throw McCauley off their trail.

They run for MILES and MILES, only stopping at dusk to take turns to sleep and keep watch. DAYS TURN TO NIGHTS, NIGHTS TO DAYS, during which both groups see each others' FIRE, far off from each other's CAMPS.

Skin grows encrusted with DIRT, SWEAT, and GRIME. Clothes grow BATTERED and WITHERED from overuse. Facial hair elongates into MANGLED BEARDS and their hands FLARE SCARLET with SUNBURN.

Dehydration comes in the form of DRY SPIT and CRACKED LIPS. They resort to WHISKEY when they run out of water, VOMITING every now and then.

We SEE THEM TAKE OFF AT FIRST LIGHT, but McCauley follows like a shadow. The posse maintains chase, no matter what.

END MONTAGE

CUT TO:

EXT. HILL OVERLOOKING BLEAKBELLOW - EVENING

POV THROUGH A LENSE: JOEL AND BROOKS RIDE TOWARD A TOWN.

FRONT ANGLE ON THE POSSE. They stand on a hill SEVERAL MILES FROM BLEAKBELLOW, the town the gang raided earlier. McCauley surveys the place with the kid beside him. Lowers his BINOCULARS with a sick smile.

MCCAULEY

Fantastic.

EXT. BLEAKBELLOW - SAME TIME

Joel and Brooks reach Bleakbellow, the posse nowhere in sight. They approach at a walk, looking like ghosts on phantom horses. Brooks SIGHS in relief, but Joel knows where they are.

BROOKS

(depleted)

Ahhh, thank Christ. People.

JOEL
I wouldn't be sure.

EXT. MAIN STREET - MOMENTS LATER

There's no one there. The two look where the saloon should be, now ASHES and RUBBLE. Joel recognizes the STONE WELL in the middle of town and points to it. Brooks' eyes light up and they kick their horses into a sprint.

Brooks tosses the BUCKET in, then pulls it back after a SPLASH. He tips it to his mouth and WATER POURS almost all at once. He gulps as much as he can, the rest drenching his frame.

He puts the bucket to his horse, then hands it to Joel who does the same. When Joel's done he lets the water stream over him as well.

They lead their horses to the BUILDING closest (labeled "TAILOR'S") and hitch them to the POST outside. Brooks takes his RIFLE and carries it over his shoulder while Joel grabs TWO BOTTLES OF WHISKEY from his saddlebag. They ENTER.

INT. TAILOR'S - CONTINUOUS

ANGLE ON A BROKEN MIRROR behind a COUNTER next to the BACK DOOR. PAN BACK so that we SEE A STAIRCASE on the right that leads to the SECOND LEVEL.

Joel and Brooks look upstairs as they sit behind the counter, seeing a LARGE WINDOW that faces Main Street. They SIGH and turn towards the mirror.

JOEL
(drinks)
They'll be here soon.
(hands whiskey to Brooks)

BROOKS
(takes a gulp)
Yeah.

JOEL
(grabs bottle)
Don't really care to run no more.
(drinks)

BROOKS
Neither do I.
(grabs bottle and drinks)
(MORE)

BROOKS (CONT'D)

Don't wanna end up like Harv or Dutch, though.

JOEL

May have no choice.

Brooks hands the bottle to Joel who swallows an ungodly amount. Brooks too then downs a great deal before giving Joel an ornery smile, holding his rifle for him to see.

BROOKS

(matter of factly)

Well, ya know, I actually can shoot this thing pretty damn well.

Joel smirks at his friend.

JOEL

Drunk?

BROOKS

We'll find out.

The two exchange mischievous looks. We LINGER ON THEM for a beat, then...

CUT TO:

I/E. SECOND LEVEL - TAILOR'S - MOMENTS LATER

GLASS SHATTERS as the DRAINED WHISKEY BOTTLE PUMMELS THROUGH THE SECOND LEVEL WINDOW. We WATCH IT FALL TO THE STREET BELOW as Joel and Brooks step to the now empty frame.

They gaze past the town where THE POSSE CAN BE SEEN RIDING THEIR WAY. They share another look, though this one of determination.

EXT. MAIN STREET - MOMENTS LATER

ANGLE ON MCCAULEY as he and the posse ENTER BLEAKBELLOW. They spy the well and gaze on for a beat, hypnotized. He and the kid then stay where they are while the rest make a b-line for it, SHOUTING MAD.

The two dismount and jog to the SIDE BUILDINGS A FEW STRUCTURES FROM THE TAILOR'S. They PULL THEIR PISTOLS and watch the others fight over the water.

KID
 (whispering)
 This don't feel right. They're here
 somewhere.

MCCAULEY
 I deduced as much.

KID
 Then why ya lettin' them fight like
 that out there? They're sittin'
 ducks.

MCCAULEY
 Precisely.

KID
 (flabbergasted)
 The fuck you mean precisely?

MCCAULEY
 (blunt)
 The ducks draw the fire. I hunt
 from there.

I/E. SECOND LEVEL - TAILOR'S - MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Joel and Brooks stand hidden on each side of the window, guns
 at the ready. They sneak peaks of the men at the well,
 searching for McCauley.

Brooks gives Joel a questioned look who replies with a nod.
 Brooks COCKS THE HAMMER on his rifle while Joel twists and
 POPS HIS NECK. They pause and BREATHE.

ANGLE ON THE POSSE, fighting...

...ANGLE ON MCCAULEY, waiting. Then...

...BACK TO THE POSSE. LINGER ON THEM for a beat, before...

...JOEL turns into the open window.

JOEL
 MOTHERFUCKIN' PIGS.

He FIRES SEVERAL SHOTS as Brooks leaves his cover and FIRES
 THREE OF HIS OWN. They HIT THREE OF THE FIVE MEN below. ONE
 DEAD. TWO WOUNDED.

The rest take cover behind the BLOOD SPLATTERED WELL, leaving
 the others to die. They RETURN FIRE as Joel and Brooks move
 to cover.

ON MCCAULEY as he steps out and sees Joel through the window. He FIRES TWO ROUNDS, the latter of which GRAZES JOEL'S SHOULDER.

ON JOEL, back to cover.

JOEL
(pissed)
Ow. Son of a--FUCKER.

Brooks PULLS HIS PISTOL and puts his arm out the window, FIRING THREE BLIND SHOTS in McCauley's direction.

JOEL
How's it look?

BROOKS
Well...
(fires a shot)
...No need to cut it off.

ON MCCAULEY as he RELOADS.

MCCAULEY
(to the kid)
Take the building from the back.

KID
(scared)
What?

McCauley whirls around, BACKHANDS HIM, and yanks him close.

MCCAULEY
Take the fucking building from the
fucking back.

He shoves the kid before returning to action. The kid backs away and RUNS INTO AN ALLEY.

ON JOEL AND BROOKS, continuing to SHOOT. Joel gives a WAR-LIKE SHOUT as he UNLOADS BOTH PISTOLS and OBLITERATES ONE OF THE MERCENARIES before returning behind the wall to RELOAD. ANOTHER MERCENARY FIRES BACK and Brooks BLOWS HIS ARM OFF.

FRONT ANGLE ON THE MERCENARY. He sits behind the well, grasping his ghost limb, SCREAMING. BLOOD SPURTS from the STUMP, his FOREARM and HAND laying on the ground next to him.

PAN TO MCCAULEY along the buildings, FIRING SHOTS every now and then.

JOEL grabs his WHISKEY and drinks, SHOOTING blindly out the window.

He and Brooks pause as they nod in agreement, then TAKE OUT THE FOURTH MERCENARY TOGETHER. Just one remains, FIRING SHOTS behind the well.

The kid ENTERS THROUGH THE BACK DOOR and FIRES, but MISSES as Joel and Brooks drop to the floor.

JOEL

Shit.

BROOKS

One of em's in here.

Joel SHOOTS BACK as the kid dives behind the counter. Brooks FIRES out the window, then drops back to cover.

JOEL

Show yourself.

KID

Show yourself, you.

Joel SHOOTS the counter as the kid FIRES blindly in his direction.

KID

FUCK YOU.

JOEL

FUCK YOU.

KID

You're comin' with me, you bastards. This is it.

JOEL

How you figure? There's two of us an' one of you.

KID

My boys are out there. You're surrounded.

JOEL

Your friends are all dead, boy. Give it up.

SEVERAL BULLETS HIT THE OUTSIDE WALL and we GO TO A...

...SIDE ANGLE ON THE LAST MERCENARY, FIRING from behind the well. CLOSEUP for a beat, then...

...Brooks turns to the window and SHOOTS HIM THROUGH THE SKULL. He falls to the Earth in a clump of broken waste.

ANGLE ON MCCAULEY as he sees the man die. Scowls for a beat, then...

...The kid rises from the counter, gun trained on Brooks.

JOEL
(urgent)
TATE, MOVE.

Joel FIRES and HITS THE KID IN THE SHOULDER as his SHOT MISSES WILDLY and Brooks falls to cover.

KID
(agonized)
FUCK.

JOEL
Like I said. Stand down, if you know what's good for you.

KID
FUCK YOU.

McCauley crouches, listening for beat.

JOEL (O.S.)
(pissed)
It's over. Give it up, you little leech, or I'll skin your fucking hide...

He rummages through HARVEY'S BAG and removes a STICK OF DYNAMITE. Gazes at the fuse for a beat before...

...Joel UNLOADS HIS PISTOL into the counter.

BROOKS
It's done, boy. Come out.

KID
NO.

BROOKS
We ain't gonna shoot ya. Just come out slow and you can go.

KID
(beat)
You're lyin' to me.

BROOKS
I ain't lying to shit. Slow up and slow out. That can be you, if you just do as I say.

KID
(thinking)
Swear?

BROOKS
On my life.

Beat as the kid ponders the offer.

KID
Okay. I'm comin' out.

JOEL
(tense)
Do it slow.

He and Brooks stand, training their guns where the kid will be. The kid breathes for a beat, then raises his hands over the counter, pistols to the sky. He rises to his feet and locks eyes with Joel and Brooks.

JOEL
Shuffle out.

The kid does as he says.

BROOKS
Now walk backward on out that door,
friend, and we'll never see each
other again.

KID
Alright

He takes a step forward.

BROOKS
(urgent)
Hey. Are you fucking dim? I said
out the back door now.

KID
(sarcastic)
Did you?

The kid takes another step.

JOEL
GODDAMMIT, MOTHERFUCKER. WE WILL
KILL YOU DEAD.

KID

No.

(beat)

No you won't.

They stare each other down for a beat before the kid flashes his pistols toward Joel and Brooks, ready to shoot, but before he can we...

...TRACK WITH THE NOW LIT STICK OF DYNAMITE FLYING THROUGH THE WINDOW.

Joel and Brooks watch it go between them, over the rail, and straight for the kid. He tries to run, but it's too late. The stick EXPLODES and he's CONSUMED BY THE FIREBALL.

It CRASHES THROUGH THE BUILDING and BLOWS EVERYTHING TO HELL. JOEL AND BROOKS FALL as THE UPPER-LEVEL COLLAPSES and THE ROOF TUMBLES IN ON TOP OF THEM.

We WATCH FROM THE OUTSIDE WHILE THE BUILDING CRASHES IN ON ITSELF, then get a long, oddly calming beat as the DIRT and DUST PUFF INTO A CLOUD and FLOW AWAY WITH THE WIND.

EXT. WRECKAGE - MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

McCauley walks to the CRUMBLED TAILOR'S as the DUST CLEARS and observes it with a proud eye. He steps through the RUBBLE and searches for life. All's peaceful. The only NOISES are the WIND and his FOOTSTEPS.

He stops in the middle of the devastation and looks around. Smiles and closes his eyes in triumph. We then HEAR the LIGHT RUMBLE of MOVING DEBRIS.

He turns to SEE A FILTHY, BRUISED, and CUT UP **JONATHAN MOTHER FUCKING JOEL** rise from the ASHES.

McCauley watches him, frozen in astonished frustration. Joel looks at him and SPATS. His DEAD, GREY EYES lock with McCauley's MAD, OCEAN BLUE ONES.

Long beat as we ANGLE ON JOEL, determined, then...

...ANGLE ON MCCAULEY a frenzy building inside him. He sprints and TACKLES JOEL. We HEAR his body CRASH INTO THE WOOD and DUST. McCauley LANDS A PUNCH and tries to mount, but Joel BLOCKS IT.

Joel GIVES A PUNCH OF HIS OWN and pushes him to the side, but McCauley maintains a hold and turns him on his back. He mounts and LANDS MORE STRIKES.

Joel STICKS HIS FINGERS IN MCCAULEY'S EYE and CLAWS DOWN. McCauley CRIES IN PAIN and brings a hand to HIS INJURED SOCKET.

Joel KICKS HIM OFF before charging and HITTING HIM with a TACKLE of his own. He mounts and EXCHANGES BLOWS before attempting to STICK HIS THUMBS IN MCCAULEY'S EYES.

McCauley grabs Joel's wrists and struggles. Joel PUTS PRESSURE ON THE CUT EYE, but can't on the other.

McCauley SCREAMS and BITES JOEL'S HAND before getting HEAD-BUTTED. He frees his leg and delivers a KICK TO THE GROIN, dazed.

Joel's stunned and McCauley releases himself. He BOOTS JOEL IN THE FACE and sends him to his back, glossy-eyed. He gets up and dives for a hammer-fist to Joel's face, but...

...Joel dodges and McCauley's hand SMASHES INTO THE DEBRIS. He HOLLERS and Joel KICKS HIM IN THE CROTCH. McCauley GROANS, but manages to ELBOW JOEL IN THE FACE before falling.

He crawls and pins Joel with his knee and wraps his hands around his throat, both bearing excruciating pain on their faces.

Joel takes his KNIFE and STICKS IT IN MCCAULEY'S RIBCAGE. McCauley PULLS HIS KNIFE and tries to slam it into Joel's face, but is BLOCKED at the wrist. Joel holds McCauley's blade with his right and TWISTS HIS OWN with the left.

McCauley, SCREAMING, puts both hands to his knife and pushes with all his might. Joel brings his left hand for support while McCauley's eyes light up with animalistic tenacity. He SNARLS and SPIT FLIES INTO JOEL'S FACE.

CLOSEUP ON JOEL'S FACE for a beat to wind up the tension, then...

...He shifts to the left and lets go of McCauley's knife. It SMASHES INTO THE RUINS and the momentum hurls McCauley's head into the handle butt with a THWAP.

Joel wrestles McCauley's knife free and THRUSTS IT INTO HIS COLLARBONE. McCauley falls to his back and Joel pounces, STABBING HIM IN THE CHEST. He REMOVES HIS KNIFE FROM MCCAULEY'S RIBS and STABS HIM AGAIN...and AGAIN...and...

...Into exhaustion. He stares at the BRUTALIZED FIGURE beneath him. McCauley gazes back through his ONE GOOD EYE, a silent yet powerful rage burning inside.

Joel tosses McCauley's knife and twiddles with his own. He grazes it along McCauley's face and neck for a beat, then sheaths it and walks to his horse, still hitched to the post.

McCauley COUGHS and somehow gets to his knees. Joel turns and stares, then removes HIS FATHER'S SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN. He OPENS THE CHAMBERS to make sure they're loaded and SNAPS THEM SHUT.

He puts his foot to McCauley's chest and SHOVES HIM TO HIS BACK. STOMPS on his chest and glares into his eyes, neither man blinking. Joel pulls the hammer back with a DOUBLE CLICK.

HIGH ANGLE ON MCCAULEY for a long beat, then...

...LOW ANGLE ON JOEL. Another beat before, finally...

...KABLAM. He SENDS BOTH SHELLS INTO MCCAULEY'S SKULL and it EXPLODES IN A FLURRY OF BONE, TEETH, BLOOD, and BRAINS. THE SHOT RINGS OUT long after it's sent.

Joel closes his eyes and takes a DEEP, DEEP BREATH. He waits for the anxiety to hit, but nothing comes. He's calm. At peace for perhaps the first time in his entire life. Until...

...We HEAR THE SOUND OF MOVING DEBRIS OFFSCREEN and he spins to SEE BROOKS CLIMBING OUT OF THE WRECKAGE, COUGHING MADLY.

JOEL
(sighs in relief)
Ya hurt?

BROOKS
(still COUGHING)
I mean, yeah, but I'll live.

He PULLS HIS RIFLE FROM THE RUBBLE and spies McCauley.

BROOKS
Damn. I guess he won't though.

Joel and Brooks meet eyes and silence falls between them. Joel's are somber. Brooks' awkward, not knowing what to say.

BROOKS
Goodbye, Jon.

Joel nods, fighting to remain stoic. Brooks moves to his horse and halts when he reaches it.

BROOKS
Hey.

Joel looks up.

BROOKS

Saundra, uh...when I met Saundra,
she spoke about some place she was
eyein' in Kansas. Talked about
settin' a home there and, um.
Maybe, you could come along.

(beat)

Find yourself some land, ya know
and settle in and...Hell, I don't
know.

Joel reflects the offer, but shakes his head, not knowing how
to thank him. Brooks looks to the ground, then to Joel.

BROOKS

Well, if you ever do...I'll have a
place set up for ya.

Joel gives a hopeful smile which Brooks half heartedly
returns.

BROOKS

(clarifying)

Hodgeman County.

(beat)

Kansas.

Joel nods and Brooks nods back. Brooks mounts his horse and
sheathes his rifle before taking one last look at Joel. The
two tip their hats to each other, then Brooks SNAPS the
reigns on his horse and RIDES OUT OF TOWN.

Joel takes a BOTTLE from his saddlebag and sits alone amongst
the ruins. He lifts the bottle to his eyes and gazes into it
after Brooks moves out of sight.

HIS POV: Just HALF THE WHISKEY REMAINS. This is a glass half
empty, glass half full type of deal. LINGER ON THIS IMAGE for
a beat, then...

...ANGLE BACK ON JOEL. SLOW CLOSEUP ON HIS FACE as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RIVER - MAGIC HOUR

A RIVER. Majestic, running smooth. The SUN GLISTENS OFF IT as
we HEAR TRICKLES OF WATER and SPLASHES OF JUMPING FISH. Long
beat as we soak in the peace and tranquility, then...

MOTHER (V.O.)

My boy. My boy.

...A FIGURE ON HORSEBACK BREAKS THE SILENCE and CROSSES THE CAMERA. PAN OVER TO WATCH HIM AS HE GOES. We SEE BROOKS, riding alongside the river.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL HOME - COUNTRYSIDE - EVENING

SAUNDRA (30) EXITS HER HOME and stares in amazement at something offscreen.

ANGLE ON BROOKS as he runs toward her. Tears pour as she runs toward him.

MOTHER (V.O.)

You've come a long way to find me.

The two bind in a PASSIONATE HUG.

CUT TO:

INT. CHAPEL - DAY

Brooks and Sandra stand in front of a PRIEST inside a SMALL TOWN WEDDING CHAPEL. It's PACKED FULL WITH GUESTS, none of which are Joel.

MOTHER (V.O.)

It's been a long, long time, but you've finally come back.

CLOSEUP ON BROOKS AND SAUNDRA as they kiss.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM - MORNING

ANGLE ON BROOKS AND SAUNDRA, tending to the GARDEN outside their HOME.

MOTHER (V.O.)

Oh, my boy. My sweet, sweet boy.

Brooks looks up from his work and something catches his eye.

MOTHER (V.O.)

You're home.

BROOKS' POV: A FIGURE ON HORSEBACK RIDES TOWARD US through the fields, too far to make out an identity.

CLOSEUP ON BROOKS, frowning slightly. We struggle to read his expression. If anything, he's troubled by what he sees.

MOTHER (V.O.)
You're home.

CUT TO:

EXT. BLEAKBELLOW - DUSK

LONG SHOT OF THE SKYLINE as the SUN SETS. It APPEARS FROM BEHIND THE CLOUDS and BLEAKBELLOW FLOODS WITH THE BEAUTIFUL, RED HUE. It's as if the place is PAINTED WITH BLOOD.

We get SEVERAL CUTS OF THE TOWN and SURROUNDING PLAINS, then GO TO A...

...FRONT ANGLE ON JOEL'S WHISKEY BOTTLE as the SUN REFLECTS OFF THE GLASS. It sits alone amongst the RUBBLE with no Joel in sight. Half empty. Half full.

CLOSEUP ON THE BOTTLE. We HEAR THE WIND as we LINGER ON THIS IMAGE until THE SUN DISAPPEARS INTO THE NIGHT and THE BOTTLE ALONG WITH IT.

THE END