

Reason To Believe

Written by Philip Gerson / Directed by Terrence O'Hara

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. FIRST RIVERBANK - DAY ONE - JUNE, EIGHTEEN SEVENTY-TWO

The river flows past wooded banks. All is bucolic, quiet water-lapping and birdsong for a moment, and then --

A hand grabs onto a branch that hangs from a tree stump over the river. The hand belongs to a buckskin-clad arm -- and we know (we hope!) that it's Sully, even though we can't see him fully yet. He's obviously weak, but strains to pull himself out of the river...

The current of the river threatens to pull him along... the hand almost lets go, but then his other buckskinned arm also grabs the branch, and with a last desperate effort, SULLY hoists himself onto the riverbank, landing with a thud on his stomach --

A FLOCK OF BIRDS (STOCK)

explodes in surprise from the top of the forest of trees.

A DETAIL OF FOUR SOLDIERS FURTHER UP RIVER,

searching the riverbank on horseback, hears the birds flying overhead.

The CORPORAL in command (corporal #1), stops, looks up at the birds, pondering, his eyes narrowing -- can this be meaningful?

SULLY

(who has lost his belt and tomahawk) is in extremely bad shape, a compound fracture in one leg, a hairline fracture in the other ankle, lots of bad cuts and bruises.

Sully battles with the pain, and to stay conscious (this is about as much pain as you can possibly be in, and still be conscious) -- he knows that he has to get off that riverbank fast.

He turns over painfully to look down at his broken leg. His pant leg is ripped below the knee. He sees that it's a compound fracture and knows that it's useless. He tries to put his other ankle down on the ground, but winces with sharp pain.

He painfully turns around again onto his stomach, forces himself up onto his elbows, and looks around. He sees thick woods nearby (perhaps twenty feet away). He forces himself to think clearly, through his pain.

He grabs the branch that he used to hoist himself out of the river, and breaks it off the tree stump.

He then starts to drag himself on his elbows towards the woods, his legs dragging painfully behind him. After a foot or so, he twists around and sweeps the branch across his tracks behind him, covering his trail. Then he drags himself a little further towards the woods...

EXT. MEADOW - DAY ONE

Soldiers are starting to set up army tents in the meadow, and a handful of Indians sit, shackled tightly together, under the armed guard of several other soldiers.

Townfolk look on, concerned, chattering nervously among themselves --

A couple of SOLDIERS ride by on horseback. We follow them across the bridge toward the Gold Nugget, and we see that the town is already beginning to feel different, edgier.

The soldiers on horseback blast past townfolk, assuming they'll get out of the way -- and they do, narrowly avoiding injury. We follow the soldiers to --

OUTSIDE THE GOLD NUGGET

where they dismount as a couple of DRUNK SOLDIERS explode out of the Gold Nugget in the middle of a fist fight. Townfolk scurry out of their way.

The two soldiers slug away at each other as the soldiers who rode up laugh and encourage them. One of the soldiers is slugged into a TOWNSWOMAN, knocking her over, her basket of groceries spilling into the mud.

MATTHEW rides up, a handcuffed looter on another horse tethered behind him. Matthew jumps off his horse and heads into the fight:

MATTHEW
That's enough -- !

But the soldiers take no heed of him, just continue punching away at each other. Matthew assesses the situation, takes out his gun and fires it into the ground.

The soldiers stop, surprised and spin to him, catching their breath --

MATTHEW
Move along... 'cept you two --

He heads toward the two soldiers who were fighting.

MATTHEW
You're under arrest for disturbin' the peace --

MCKAY (O.S.)
What peace?

Matthew turns around to see MCKAY dismounting:

MCKAY
The army's the only law you got right now... You want things to get better, Sheriff, we're gonna have to work together.

MATTHEW
Call that workin'?

He nods to the drunk soldiers. McKay turns to the two soldiers who rode up:

MCKAY
Take 'em back to camp and get 'em sobered up. And tell Corporal Bailey to get a detail ready -- some renegades were spotted on the Manitou road.

The soldiers take off. McKay turns back to Matthew; he's sympathetic to him, and treats him with respect:

MCKAY

Walk with me, Sheriff Cooper?

Matthew takes the reins of his horse, leading his horse and the tethered looter toward the jail with McKay, who leads his horse:

MCKAY
(nodding to the rustler) What'd he do?

MATTHEW
Looted the Emerson farm -- after some renegade Indians tore it up. (pointedly) Got enough trouble without your soldiers fightin' and scarin' folks.

MCKAY
Once we get things under control, they'll calm down... For that, I need your help.

EXT. JAIL - DAY ONE (MOMENTS LATER)

The door and windows are still ripped out from the explosion set by the Indians. Matthew walks out, joining McKay, who waits outside.

MCKAY
Think this place'll hold him?

MATTHEW
Cell still locks.

MCKAY
Cell ain't big enough. We need to secure the building.

MATTHEW
What for?

MCKAY
The worst of the renegades, I gotta keep 'em somewhere till I get reinforcements to transfer 'em. I'd appreciate it if you and the blacksmith could get this jail put back together as fast as you can.

MATTHEW
I got other business needs tendin' to -- Can't some of your soldiers do it?

MCKAY
I got every man spoken -- for huntin' down the renegades, lookin' for Sully --

MATTHEW

Drinkin' in the Gold Nugget.

McKay weighs the situation, and nods;

MCKAY

I'll send over a couple of men to help you.

A CORPORAL comes up to them (Corporal #2), hands McKay some rolled-up posters.

CORPORAL #2

These just came for you, Sergeant.

McKay unrolls the posters -- they're wanted posters, of Sully. ("Byron Sully... Wanted for Treason and Murder... Reward offered".)

McKay holds them out for Matthew -- it feels like a test:

MCKAY

Post these 'round town.

Matthew looks at the posters, doesn't take them.

MCKAY

We all got our jobs to do, Sheriff.

Matthew sets his jaw, takes the posters. McKay mounts his horse and rides off.

Matthew watches McKay ride away (back toward the meadow). Once McKay rounds the corner, Matthew rips the posters in half...

MIKE,

a day of dust and hard searching on her, and the worry and frustration of its failure written on her face, rides into town (on FLASH). WOLF is at her heels.

As she approaches the livery, Matthew looks up at her hopefully... but Mike just shakes her head -- she hasn't had any luck.

MIKE

What about the others -- Robert E? Jake and Hank?

MATTHEW

Nothin' so far... (wanting so badly to help her) It's only been two days. I'll ride out with you tomorrow, Dr. Mike -- we'll find him...

Mike looks at the posters in his hand -- even though he's ripped them in half, they're still readable. Mike reacts:

MIKE

We have to find him before the army does.

ON MIKE, looking off at the hills with determination, as if she could find him by sheer will power, we

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT ONE

The family works in silence -- Mike feeding KATIE as she checks out a map on the kitchen table; BRIAN packing supplies for her for tomorrow's search (pouring water into canteens, etc.); COLLEEN putting dinner on the table.

Matthew comes downstairs, sees the silence, feels the need to say something:

MATTHEW

Sure you don't mind me sharin' your room, Brian?

BRIAN

It's like the old days... it's good to have you here.

Mike looks up at them, and smiles slightly as Matthew clamps his hand on Brian's shoulder. They're all feeling needy.

MIKE

It's good to be together again... all of us under the same roof.

All, except for the one person who's missing. Mike can't help but look out the window into the night as if searching for him in the darkness.

The kids watch her -- they're all worried, but don't want to admit it; they try to bolster their spirits:

COLLEEN

He'll be alright, Ma --

MATTHEW

You know Sully --

BRIAN

He can take of himself.

MIKE

(nods; then) We'll ride out first thing in the morning, look further downriver, in this area... (referring to the map)

BRIAN

Can I go with you, Ma?

MIKE

(gently) We discussed this, Brian... Colleen's taking care of Katie and the clinic -- we need you to stay here and look after the homestead and the animals.

MATTHEW

Keepin' things goin' here is just as important as ridin' with us.

Brian nods -- he understands, but he isn't happy about it.

COLLEEN

Dinner's ready.

They head over to the dining table and sit down... with Sully's spot at the head of the table conspicuously unoccupied.

Mike looks across at his empty chair.

The kids exchange looks. Colleen takes Mike's hand, and one by one, they join hands around the table, gaining silent strength from one another, and we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LIVERY - DAY TWO

ROBERT E mounts his horse; Mike and Matthew are already on horseback (they're picking him up); Wolf waits. GRACE finishes packing food into Robert E's saddle bag:

GRACE

And that's some fried chicken -- Sully's favorite.

MIKE

(moved by her gesture) Thank you, Grace.

They're about to ride out, when McKay gallops up with a couple of soldiers:

MCKAY

Trouble, Sheriff -- we got reports that the renegades are movin' towards town.

Matthew looks over at Mike, torn between helping her and his job:

MCKAY

Your duty is here, Sheriff.

Mike sees how this is tearing Matthew up, and wants to let him off the hook:

MIKE

Go ahead, Matthew... there's enough of us.

Matthew nods, frustrated.

McKay and Mike exchange a look. She's determined to find Sully... and before his soldiers do.

Mike and Robert E ride off. McKay, his soldiers and Matthew ride out in another direction.

EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY TWO - CONTINUOUS

Townfolk crowd in and out of the store, more briskly and urgently than usual. HANK comes out, mounts his horse next to JAKE, who's been waiting for him on horseback. Mike and Robert E ride up to them, and the four of them take off together.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY TWO - CONTINUOUS

Townfolk are hoarding supplies, carrying armfuls over to the counter, where an overworked (but not unhappy) LOREN totals up their purchases -- right now DOROTHY's groceries:

LOREN

That'll be a dollar and a half.

DOROTHY

Just for these?

LOREN

Supply and demand, Dorothy, supply and demand.

Dorothy shakes her head, realizing she has no choice, and digs into her change purse...

INT. CLINIC - DAY TWO

Colleen finishes wrapping a wound on a Soldier's arm. Katie sleeps nearby in her carriage.

COLLEEN

Make sure you change the dressing every day, and rub this on to prevent infection...

She hands him a small jar. He nods his thanks and heads out the door, almost bumping into ANDREW, who's on his way in.

ANDREW

Thought I'd see if you could use some help...

Colleen is reserved with him -- polite but restrained (she isn't happy about what she saw go down at the Chateau Springs with Teresa):

COLLEEN

Thank you Andrew, but I'm handling things all right...

ANDREW

Of course you are...

Katie starts crying. Andrew happens to be nearest her carriage, and reaches down to pick her up --

ANDREW

Your father's going to be back soon, Katie...

But Colleen brushes past him, getting to Katie before him, and picking her up -- she doesn't want Andrew doing this. Andrew gets it, is surprised...

Suddenly, a panicked SETTLER barges through the door, carrying his WIFE, who's unconscious; he's bruised, too:

SETTLER

She hit her head -- Indians attacked our place --

Andrew helps the Settler place his wife down on the examination table; Colleen quickly puts Katie down and joins them:

SETTLER

Can't pay you nothin' --

COLLEEN

No need to worry 'bout that here --

No sooner is but of her mouth than Colleen realizes what she's said (it's what she's feeling about Andrew, but she didn't mean to say it).

She looks at Andrew, who has caught it. He gets the point. She didn't mean to slam him, but they both know it was justified. They exchange a brief look...

But more important is the patient, and they quickly set to work on her.

EXT. FIRST WOODS - DAY TWO

Sully, looking as if he's spent a hard night, readies himself for what he knows will be one of the most painful experiences of his life -- setting his leg.

He lies on his back, having already placed his leg in the Y of a tree. He now reaches over

his head and grabs onto another tree behind him for traction. He breathes deeply, forcing himself to readiness... and then yanks himself back towards the tree behind him, snapping his leg back into place, the pain flashing across his face as he silently absorbs it --

EXT. SECOND RIVERBANK - DAY TWO

Mike and Robert E, on horseback (with Wolf), search on one side of the bank for signs of Sully -- looking for footprints or any other sign that he emerged from the river -- while Jake and Hank (also on horseback) search the other side.

They hear soldiers' voices in the distance.

MIKE
(worried) The soldiers are catching up...

ROBERT E
They ain't lookin' so close.

MIKE
We have to keep ahead of them.

And they redouble their efforts, searching the banks for signs of Sully as they move downstream...

EXT. MEADOW - DAY TWO

McKay and several soldiers march in Indian prisoners (including some women and children).

PRESTON watches with Dorothy from the edge of the meadow:

PRESTON
Sergeant -- why aren't you keeping them out at the reservation?

MCKAY
The reservation's closed.

PRESTON
Permanently?

MCKAY

(nods) We're transferrin' 'em to East Fork as soon as we get the troops to escort 'em.

DOROTHY

East Fork? That's even worse than Palmer Creek -- Cloud Dancin' almost died there, the soldiers were horrible --

PRESTON

(ignoring her; to McKay) The sooner the better. It can't be safe keeping them here.

Dorothy gapes at his insensitivity. McKay doesn't even answer (he apparently thinks Preston's a jerk, too), and heads into the meadow. Preston defends himself to her:

PRESTON

Like it or not, Dorothy, you must admit that Colorado Springs will be safer once they're gone.

DOROTHY

Maybe they're not the ones who oughta be leavin'.

She gives him a look, meaning him -- and then turns and walks away.

EXT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY TWO

Loren stands outside, exasperated with HORACE, who is busy sending a stack of telegrams and doesn't have time to look up at Loren:

LOREN

But I gotta get word to my suppliers, I'm runnin' outta everythin' --

HORACE

I gotta get these out for the army first.

LOREN

Folks are breakin' down my doors wantin' more supplies --

HORACE

Yeah, I heard bout how you're gougin' prices.

LOREN

I'm performin' a community service. It'll be on your head if folks can't get what they need.

HORACE

And what's gonna happen if the army don't get their reinforcements? I told you I'll get to yours as soon as can.

LOREN

Well, I'm gonna stand right here 'til you do.

He stares at Horace, thinking it will change Horace's mind. But Horace continues sending his stack of telegrams, without looking up:

HORACE

Turn blue if you like.

OFF LOREN, nearly doing just that --

EXT. THIRD RIVERBANK - DAY TWO - DUSK

It's getting late and growing dark. Jake and Hank cross the river on horseback, joining up with Mike and Robert E (and Wolf).

HANK

Gettin' late.

JAKE

It'll be too dark to see anythin' in a few minutes...

MIKE

Then it's still light enough now.

And she dismounts and starts searching on foot, from which she can see better.

ROBERT E

Dr. Mike, we'll come back tomorrow when it's light.

Robert E looks to Jake and Hank for confirmation. They avoid his look -- they're not planning to come back. Robert E reads this, and defiantly gets off his horse to join Mike.

JAKE

(quietly, to Robert E) Robert E, it's been four days --

HANK

And nights.

But Robert E glares at them, then starts walking the bank with Mike.

Jake and Hank shake their heads, and ride off.

EXT. FIRST WOODS - DAY TWO - DUSK

Sully, looking as if he's been working at this all day, finishes strapping a makeshift splint (made from a couple of saplings, and strapped with vines) onto the leg with the compound fracture.

Finished, he pauses in his efforts to marshall his strength. He then rips off the piece of his pant leg that was dangling below his knee, and starts to wrap around his other ankle...

EXT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT TWO

Mike and Brian head up from the barn towards the homestead, Wolf at their heels. Brian carries her saddle-bags for her. Mike, although bone-tired, is doing her best to keep Brian optimistic:

MIKE

The woods there are full of things for him to eat -- all we have to do is find out where he got out of the river...

The sound of a horse approaching stops them. They look into the darkness... and see that it's McKay. Mike and Brian exchange a look -- what can this mean?

MIKE

Sergeant... ?

MCKAY

(very solicitous) Dr. Quinn... I hope I didn't come too late.

He dismounts. Mike picks up on his change in manner, and presence here:

MIKE

Something's happened -- (exchanging a hopeful look with Brian) You found him?

MCKAY

No ma'am... In fact -- (taking out a telegram) I've just received orders... to stop searchin' for him.

Mike's mind races ahead, despite her exhaustion:

MIKE
You think he's dead.

MCKAY
(beat) It's a matter of limited resources -- General Wooden has ordered me to devote all my men to the Indian situation, in particular to finding Cloud Dancin' and the other renegades.

MIKE
(formally; she's not buying that Sully's dead) Thank you for coming to tell me.

She turns away; she and Brian start up toward the homestead. McKay can't help feeling for her:

MCKAY
If you don't mind me sayin'...

Mike and Brian stop and turn back to him:

MCKAY
We searched the whole area, there's no sign he got out of the river. Even if he did survive that fall...

It's clear what he means. Brian starts to fight back tears. Mike puts her hand on Brian's shoulder, and addresses McKay:

MIKE
You don't know Sully.

She leads Brian into the homestead.

EXT. FIRST RIVERBANK - NIGHT TWO

Sully (who has created a pressure bandage with moss and vines over his leg wound) lies on the river-bank on his stomach, leaning over the river, reaching into the water with his hands. He cups his hands, draws water to his mouth, drinks thirstily.

Then he starts his slow progress back to the woods, crawling on his elbows -- his splinted and bandaged legs still useless, if less painful than they were -- brushing his tracks with the branch behind him...

INT. MIKE AND SULLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT TWO

Mike sits at her dressing table, distractedly brushing her hair, by rote, wide awake despite being exhausted.

She looks at the bed in the mirror. The empty bed. She fights back the tears of frustration -- and the fear that she won't acknowledge to anybody...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOMESTEAD - DAY THREE - DAWN

Very early. Brian heads up from the barn, carrying a pail of milk, when he hears a horse approaching. Fearing more bad news, he turns with dread and looks down the road...

BRIAN'S POV - A RIDER APPROACHES

dressed in Western outdoor garb, and galloping for all he's worth.

BRIAN

lights up, as, shocked, he recognizes the rider:

BRIAN
Daniel... ?

He drops the pail of milk and runs toward the rider, shouting:

BRIAN
Daniel!

DANIEL

is, sure enough, the rider who gallops hell-bent for leather up to the homestead. Brian runs toward him as fast as he can:

BRIAN

Daniel!!

Daniel comes to a stop in front of the homestead and dismounts in one movement.

Brian runs to him and throws his arms around him. They hug tightly for a long moment, as if by doing so they could bring back Sully.

Mike rushes out the front door, drawn by Brian's shouts. She halts on the porch, surprised --

Daniel looks up at her, over Brian's shoulder, out of breath:

DANIEL

I read 'bout Sully in the newspaper...

He and Brian finally release each other. He straightens up, peering at Mike to see if it's all right with her that he's here:

DANIEL

I caught the first train to Denver, rode all night to get here...

BRIAN

You gotta be hungry -- I'll get you some breakfast...

And he runs into the house, past Mike, who looks at Daniel, overwhelmed.

There's an uncomfortable silence between them -- it's the first time they've seen each other since he told her that he loved her, and he got on that train.

Daniel wants to get this out in the open and over with right away:

DANIEL

Michaela -- there ain't nothin' more important to me than findin' Sully and gettin' him back to you...

Mike nods -- but she can't help but still be concerned. Daniel keeps his distance until he's had his say:

DANIEL

I promise, you'll never have cause to think of me as anythin' other than a friend --

Mike is relieved...

DANIEL

And that's why I'm here. (determined) We're gonna find him, Michaela.

MIKE

nods, fighting back tears:

MIKE

Thank you, Daniel.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. HOMESTEAD - DAY THREE

Colleen gives Daniel some breakfast as he and Mike study the map; Brian takes Mike's saddle-bags outside (Katie's there, too):

BRIAN

I'll go get the horses ready.

MIKE

I've searched about five miles down river from where Sully fell there's no sign of him having come up on the bank.

DANIEL

(smiles) That's good.

MIKE

(surprised) Good?

DANIEL

If he died in the fall, he would've washed up long before there.

Mike hadn't thought of that; it gives her new hope and energy:

MIKE

That's right... but then, what does that mean -- that he's further down river?

DANIEL

Maybe -- but more likely he got himself outta the water as soon as he could.

MIKE

But we haven't found any footprints --

DANIEL

Sully'd know the army was after him -- he'd make sure there was no sign of him.

MIKE

Then how will we ever find him?

DANIEL

I know Sully, we think alike... Don't worry.

Mike nods -- and exchanges a relieved glance with Colleen. They're very glad Daniel is here.

EXT. SECOND WOODS - DAY THREE

Sully cuts a frond off a five-finger fern. He chews it for a moment, and then takes it out of his mouth, and applies it to a bad cut on his side, grimacing...

EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY THREE

Mike and Daniel walk briskly out of the store, carrying some food, heading toward the livery. Dorothy comes up to them, seeking Mike anxiously:

DOROTHY

Michaela... could I have a word with you?

MIKE

Of course, Dorothy -- I'll meet you at the livery in a minute, Daniel...

DANIEL

Nice to see you, Dorothy...

DOROTHY

You too, Daniel -- it's real good of you, comin' here to help find Sully.

They nod to each other with a smile, and Daniel takes off.

Mike sees that Dorothy is distracted and anxious:

MIKE

What's wrong?

DOROTHY

It's Cloud Dancin'...

MIKE

(anxious herself) Have you heard from him?

DOROTHY

No -- and it finally hit me... he's never gonna come back here. Things happened so fast, I never got the chance to tell him... what he means to me. I can't eat or sleep, thinkin' bout it.

Mike understands what that's like; she feels for Dorothy.

DOROTHY

I was thinkin' I'd try to find him, just to see him one more time, to say goodbye...
(lowering her voice) I know he was headin' up to the Tongue River Valley --

MCKAY

walks up from the meadow toward the store with Corporal #2, listening to a PAWNEE SCOUT (who is dressed in a combination of Pawnee and Western clothing, including riding boots).

PAWNEE SCOUT

The dog soldiers moved their camp again -- but I believe their moves are a trick to confuse you --

MIKE AND DOROTHY

DOROTHY

I been lookin' at maps, I know how to get there...

Mike spots McKay, takes Dorothy by the arm to warn her to keep quiet. Dorothy follows Mike's eyes, sees McKay.

MCKAY

sees Mike and Dorothy look at him, and then walk away briskly toward the livery, whispering to each other. It looks very suspicious.

He thinks quickly, turns to the Pawnee Scout:

MCKAY

The woman in the (insert color description of Mike's clothing)-- follow her.

The Corporal looks at him questioningly:

MCKAY

Look at 'em -- she saw us and started whisperin' -- could be she knows more than she's tellin' us 'bout Sully. (handing the Pawnee a small pouch of money) There'll be more when you come back with information.

The Pawnee Scout nods.

MIKE AND DOROTHY

walk toward the livery. Mike turns back, sees McKay, the Pawnee Scout and Corporal #2 moving away from them, and feels safer.

DOROTHY

But then I think, what's the use? Look what's happenin' here -- soldiers everywhere, people scared of the Indians -- I mean, I know I used to feel the same way, but... And Sully -- (what can she possibly say?) I don't see how he's ever gonna be able to get out of this. Maybe it's better to just...

MIKE

What?

DOROTHY

(this is it) Let things be.

She means, give up. And that's like a red-flag for Mike:

MIKE

Dorothy... I don't know *how* we're going to get Sully out of this, I don't know *how* we're going to help the Indians, or get our town back from the army -- but I know we *will*.

Dorothy looks away, she isn't so sure. Mike has to convince her... and to convince herself:

MIKE

People can do amazing things -- things they'd never dream they'd be able to do... I see it in my clinic every day, the will to live against impossible odds --

Dorothy looks back at her, caught up in her passionate argument:

MIKE

Think what you've accomplished, what you've been through, how you've prevailed... If somebody told you five years ago what you were even considering doing -- riding out alone into the wilderness to find a Cheyenne Indian who you cared about enough to risk going to jail for, would you have ever believed them?

Dorothy's fears dry up, as she takes in her friend's urgent message. Mike realizes that she's talking herself up, too:

MIKE

Human beings can do impossible things, things against all reason... if they believe in themselves. (then) You can do it, Dorothy.

Dorothy, very moved, flings her arms around Mike's shoulders. The two friends hug tightly for a long moment.

Then Dorothy whispers into Mike's ear:

DOROTHY

Give my love to Sully.

MIKE

(whispering back in her ear) And you tell Cloud Dancing our hearts are with him.

They break up the hug, look each other in the eye and squeeze each other's hand, then turn away from each other and separate, Dorothy heading back toward the Gazette, Mike heading on to the livery...

EXT. LIVERY - DAY THREE - CONTINUOUS

Matthew, Daniel and Robert E are getting ready to go (a couple of soldiers work on repairing the jail in the BG):

DANIEL

How far from the river has the army searched?

ROBERT E

Just to the edge of the woods.

Mike joins them, untethering Flash from a post.

DANIEL

Sully'd figure that and cover his tracks...

MATTHEW

But how're we gonna know where to look if he didn't leave any sign?

DANIEL

By lookin' for no sign...

They look at him questioningly.

They're interrupted by McKay, who walks quickly toward them with Corporal #2, angry:

MCKAY

Sheriff! I've just learned that some of your citizens have been pickin' fights with my men.

MATTHEW

You got proof of that?

MCKAY

My soldiers, word --

MATTHEW

More likely your "soldiers" got drunk at the Gold Nugget and took after each other.

MCKAY

It's your job to guarantee their safety in town --

MATTHEW

No -- it's my job to guarantee the safety of this town.

He cinches up the saddle on his horse. During the following, Mike, Daniel and Robert E mount their horses:

MCKAY

Sheriff, I regard this to be the very highest priority --

MATTHEW

I'm goin' after a man wanted for treason and murder.

MCKAY

(sees through that) To help him escape? Your duty oughta come first.

Matthew ignores that, gets ready to mount his horse. McKay bristles:

MCKAY

You're the law in this town.

MATTHEW

(deliberately) That's right.

MCKAY

(at the end of his patience) I've been placed in charge of this area by the Government of the United States, and I command you to follow my orders -- you're the *sheriff*.

Mike, Daniel and Robert E look at Matthew -- what's he going to do? Matthew smolders for a long moment, trying to work his way through this...

Finally, Matthew takes his star off his jacket, and tosses it to the ground:

MATTHEW

Not any more.

He mounts his horse and gallops out. Daniel and Robert E follow him

MIKE,

proud of Matthew, relieved, and grateful for his help, watches him ride out. She casts a final look back to McKay, and then gallops out after Matthew.

ANGLE - THE RIDERS

gallop off, leaving McKay behind. He picks up the star from the ground...

EXT. SECOND WOODS - DAY THREE

Sully scoops some termites out of a log and eats them.

He then returns to completing the construction of a crutch for himself. He finishes cutting a dowel hole (with a sharpened stone) in a piece of wood that will serve as the top piece of the crutch (for under his arm). He tries it out, fitting it onto the long piece of wood that is to serve as the crutch itself, the top of which he has cut to a dowel point. It fits.

EXT. GAZETTE - DAY THREE

Horace, carrying a telegram, knocks on the door of the Gazette, peers inside. No answer.

Preston and Andrew approach from the direction of the clinic, see Horace knocking.

PRESTON

Horace? Can I help you?

HORACE

Got a telegram here for the Gazette...

PRESTON

I'll take it.

Horace looks at him, not sure.

PRESTON

I am the owner.

HORACE

Co-owner.

PRESTON

(it will *a/ways* rankle him) Surely that's sufficient for your purposes.

Horace sees that it is, hands him the telegram, and takes off. Preston opens the

telegram, reads it.

ANDREW

Good news, I hope -- we could certainly use some.

PRESTON

Just an official notice for publication -- (then, pleased) Well... it seems the government is selling the land that served as the Palmer Creek reservation. Too good for the Indians anyway.

ANDREW

It doesn't say that... ?

PRESTON

No, / say that... (back to the telegram) Sealed bids accepted through the twenty-fifth, et cetera, et cetera --

He suddenly stops, getting an idea -- then quickly covers it, stuffing the telegram into his pocket:

PRESTON

Lunch -- we were on our way to lunch, weren't we?

He takes Andrew by the arm, heading for the alley.

ANDREW

Shouldn't you leave the telegram for Dorothy so she can publish it?

PRESTON

I'll give it to her when I see her. (leading him into the alley) Ah, I smell tomato soup -- nobody makes soup like Grace does...

EXT. FOURTH RIVERBANK - DAY THREE

Mike, Daniel, Robert E and Matthew are searching the bank on foot, foot-by-foot (with Wolf). It's hard work and unrewarding; they can't help but be discouraged. Daniel looks up at the sky.

DANIEL

(looking up at the sky) Sun's too high in the sky...

MATTHEW

What's the difference?

DANIEL

You can see tracks better when the sun's lower -- gives you more shadows.

MIKE

Then we need to be here when the sun comes up.

She and Daniel return to looking inch-by-inch along the riverbank.

Robert E pauses, looks up...

ROBERT E'S POV

The cliff that Sully fell down looms in the distance. It seems insurmountable.

ROBERT E

looks up at it, pensively. Matthew sees him:

MATTHEW

Robert E... ?

Mike and Daniel turn quickly, thinking maybe he's found something. They catch him looking up at the cliff pessimistically.

Robert E sees them looking at him, and feels caught.

ROBERT E

(almost like an excuse) Sure is a long fall.

He returns to searching the riverbank...

The others share a look of concern about that cliff, then return to their searching.

THE PAWNEE SCOUT

watches them, hidden in the woods.

EXT. TOWN - DAY THREE

The relative peace of the day is shattered when a party of RENEGADE INDIANS, their faces painted like dog soldiers, gallop through town, shouting, shooting their guns in the air.

Townfolk scatter and take cover --

The Indians ride past the Gold Nugget, shooting a window out of the Gazette, and then out the road past the meadow --

Soldiers grab their guns, run to their horses, jump on and ride out, following the Indians --

OUTSIDE THE GOLD NUGGET

Townfolk start to come out from cover, as Hank rushes out, brandishing his gun. Jake follows him out. Hank sees the Gazette window shattered.

HANK
That's it -- we're gonna board up the windows.

JAKE
You're over-reacting --

HANK
You know how much they cost! We just had to replace two of 'em

JAKE
Nobody's gonna want to stay here if they think it ain't safe -- board up those windows and you can kiss the business goodbye.

HANK
I'd like to have a business left standing when this is over, Jake.

He heads off toward the store...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LIVERY - NIGHT THREE

Mike, Daniel, Matthew and Robert E return to the livery, looking exhausted -- and are greeted by a very nervous Grace.

GRACE

Thank God you're back -- some of the renegades rode through today, shootin' and screamin'...

ROBERT E

You all right?

He puts his arm around her, concerned. She nods, still shaken:

GRACE

You find anythin'?

MIKE

We'll get out there earlier tomorrow, catch the good light...

ROBERT E

Dr. Mike -- I been thinkin'...

This is extremely difficult for him:

ROBERT E

I can't help but be worried 'bout Grace and Anthony -- and the cafe and livery, with all the trouble here...

The others realize that Robert E believes there's no point. Mike is shaken by his pessimism, but lets him off the hook:

MIKE

You're right, Robert E -- you should stay here in town.

ROBERT E

(feeling awful about it) I don't want you think I'm givin' up...

MIKE

Of course not.

But of course that's exactly what he's doing, and everybody knows it. It's uncomfortable for all of them. Grace is relieved, but feels for Mike.

ROBERT E

(forced optimism) You're gonna find him real soon...

He hears how empty it sounds, looks down.

Mike nods, and she turns and walks Flash toward the train station. Daniel follows her, concerned, as Matthew pats Robert E on the back...

MIKE AND DANIEL

Daniel catches up to Mike, sees how hard this has hit her:

DANIEL

We ain't givin' up, Michaela.

Mike nods -- but she now seems more desperate than certain, as we

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. CLINIC - DAY FOUR

Mike walks briskly out of the clinic, joining Daniel and Matthew who wait for her on horseback; she's carrying some extra medical supplies, which she proceeds to pack in her saddle bags. Colleen follows her out, worried, carrying Katie:

COLLEEN

But why do you have to stay away overnight?

MIKE

We're going to have to look further downstream --

DANIEL

And into the woods.

MATTHEW

Comin' back and forth to town just eats up time...

The word "time" hits them all hard -- they know they're running out of it. Mike takes Katie

in her arms to kiss her goodbye.

COLLEEN

How long you gonna be gone?

MIKE

As long as it takes.

She hands Katie back to Colleen, and mounts up as Brian rides down the street (from the direction of the livery):

BRIAN

Ma!

They turn to him -- and see that he's dressed for the trail, with saddlebags on his horse:

BRIAN

Ma -- I just talked to Robert E, he said held go to the homestead and take care of the animals -- Colleen and Katie can stay here at the clinic... Mr. Bray said held look out for 'em.

He looks to Colleen, hoping she'll agree with him. Colleen smiles, nods to Mike, indicating it's okay with her.

BRIAN

(strong, assured) I'm comin' with ya.

Mike takes a moment, then nods with a smile. Brian sighs, relieved. Daniel pats him on the back.

Mike turns back to Colleen, grateful and treasuring her:

MIKE

Thank you for taking care of things here.

COLLEEN

You're gonna find him, Ms.

Mike nods. She reaches down for one more hug with Katie...

And then rides out, followed by Daniel, Matthew and Brian --

EXT. THIRD WOODS - DAY FOUR

Sully hobbles effortfully on his makeshift crutches (his feet barely brushing the ground) toward a tree. He reaches up to take a small egg out of a bird's nest, cracks the shell neatly in two, and slides the egg into his mouth...

EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY FOUR

The store is still doing a land-office business. The REVEREND sits on the porch, talking with a Townswoman:

REVEREND

If we all stay calm, and try to go about our lives as --

Suddenly, a man bursts out of the store, carrying some tins of food, running away. A second later, Loren dashes out:

LOREN

Stop! Stop him!

Jake comes over from the barber shop.

REVEREND

What's wrong?

LOREN

Stop him, he stole some -- aw!

The man has disappeared into the street.

JAKE

Figured this was comin'.

LOREN

Now you're gonna tell me it's my fault for raisin' prices.

REVEREND

If the shoe fits, Loren...

JAKE

(disgusted) It's all the new people comin' in, settin' up in shanty-town, some of 'em even

livin' on the street.

REVEREND

It's not their fault their houses have been burned.

JAKE

Well, it ain't our fault either -- why should we have to suffer?

REVEREND

It's only natural that they'd come here lookin' for work.

JAKE

Lookin' for handouts, you mean --

LOREN

And to steal from honest citizens.

As Loren and Jake head into the store, commiserating, the Reverend shakes his head; he doesn't like what he's hearing:

JAKE

We gotta do somethin' 'bout this...

LOREN

The army started it, they oughta take care of it...

EXT. RESERVATION - DAY FOUR

Preston rides onto the area that was once the reservation. While the sign still stands, the reservation itself is no more -- tattered, burnt pieces of the tents and shacks remain, but that's it.

Preston reins in his horse, stops, looks the place over. His eyes light up, and he breaks into a grin.

What does he see? We're not sure, but whatever it is clearly spells possibilities.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FOURTH WOODS - NIGHT FOUR

Mike and Daniel sit by the campfire, which is down to embers. Their bedrolls are laid out across the fire from each other; Brian and Matthew sleep nearby in their bedrolls.

Although tired, neither Mike nor Daniel are sleepy; rather, they are wistful, thoughtful. After a moment, Mike quietly speaks what's on both their minds:

MIKE

What do you think Sully's doing right now?

DANIEL

He's restin'. Savin' his strength.

MIKE

(beat) Whenever he's been away, I could always picture him. It wasn't just my imagination, I felt like I could really see him -- where he was, what he was doing... (then, with great difficulty) But now, this time...

She can't say it -- but what she means is obvious: she can't picture him. Daniel wants to ease her worry:

DANIEL

He's lyin' under a shrub or maybe inside a cave, somewhere to keep himself warm. He's found some five-finger fern to rub on any cuts he might'a gotten -- and some meat, or nuts and berries. He's lookin' up at the moon, the same moon we're lookin' at... thinkin' bout you.

Then they hear a BIRDCALL, and Mike starts, surprised... and then disturbed by it:

DANIEL

It's just a bird...

MIKE

I thought for a minute -- it's like the call that Cloud Dancing makes when... when he's nearby.

DANIEL

Where was he goin'?

MIKE

Cloud Dancing? By now, he's probably with the northern Cheyenne in the Tongue River Valley

THE PAWNEE SCOUT

sits still as the night hidden in the woods nearby, listening to them, watching them through the trees.

PAWNEE SCOUT'S POV

MIKE

It's Indian land, he'll be safe there... (with great sadness) I suppose I'll never see him again.

MIKE

looks off into the woods sadly. If there was ever a moment that Daniel would want to reach out to her, to take her in his arms and take care of her, it is now. But he resists the desire to do so, and instead says, simply:

DANIEL

We better get some sleep.

She nods. He rises and goes to his bedroll, leaving her to curl up on her bedroll by the fire...

THE PAWNEE SCOUT

rises, and silently treads away from them...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FIRST RIVERBANK - DAY FIVE - DAWN

Daniel washes out the cooking pot in the river, and then suddenly sees something which gets his attention --

It's the tree stump from which the branch extended that Sully used to hoist himself out of the river...

What gets Daniel's attention is the bit of branch that remains where Sully broke off the branch to cover his tracks... it looks like a fresh break.

DANIEL

(urgently) Michaela--!

Mike emerges from the woods, putting on her hat, and goes to him, followed by Matthew and Brian.

MIKE
Have you found something?

DANIEL
Maybe... Look -- there's a new break here where a branch was hangin' over into the river.

MATTHEW
You think he used it to get out of the river... ?

DANIEL
It's possible...

They all start examining the ground near the tree stump.

MATTHEW
There's no tracks or sign of anybody --

Daniel starts carefully brushing away the dirt and leaves on the surface of the ground near the tree stump --

DANIEL
He woulda covered his tracks... maybe usin' that branch --

He sees something on a rock that he's just uncovered:

DANIEL
Look -- dried blood...

They all look at the rock --

MIKE
He was here --

DANIEL
(looking at the woods) He'd probably have stopped covering his tracks when he got into the cover of the woods.

They all head quickly towards the woods --

EXT. FOURTH WOODS - DAY FIVE

Mike, Daniel, Matthew and Brian have fanned out in the woods, looking for tracks.

Suddenly, Mike shouts out:

MIKE
Here! Footprints!

They all rush over to her side. Matthew and Brian grab her hands joyously, as Daniel looks down at the ground:

DANIEL
Hard to say when they were made maybe yesterday or the day before... but they are boots like Sully's.

MIKE
He was here! So close to where we were...

MATTHEW
Looks like he's walkin' all right --

BRIAN
But then why hasn't he come home?

MIKE
He might have been unconscious, or perhaps he's been waiting until he thought it was safe...

MATTHEW
Looks like he headed this way.

They start following the footprints deeper into the woods.

EXT. TONGUE RIVER VALLEY - DAY FIVE

Dorothy (looking as if she's been riding for a couple of days) rides out of some woods into a clearing.

She stops to take a drink from her canteen -- and hears something -- a branch crack? -- in the woods behind her. She turns to it. There's nothing there. She corks her canteen, and rides ahead...

She only gets a few feet when she sees four CHEYENNE approaching her at a fast clip on horseback.

She hears another sound from behind her, turns, and sees another two Cheyenne coming out of the woods on foot.

She stops and steels herself hard as the Cheyenne horsemen arrive.

She's surrounded.

They say nothing. After a moment:

DOROTHY

I am a friend... (in Cheyenne) Friend.

Nothing from the Cheyenne -- as if to say, prove it.

DOROTHY

Cloud Dancin'... (in Cheyenne) Cloud Dancing -- he is a friend of mine.

The Cheyenne talk quietly among themselves, evaluating her.

She takes out the pouch that Cloud Dancing gave her, holds it up for them to see.

DOROTHY

(in Cheyenne) Take me to him... please.

One of the Cheyenne horsemen nods to one of the walking Cheyenne --

Who suddenly jumps onto her horse, behind her, startling, and, yes, frightening her for a moment.

He takes the reins of her horse around her, gives the horse a kick -- and they're off at a fast gallop, surrounded by the other Cheyenne horsemen...

EXT. FIFTH WOODS - DAY FIVE

Daniel tracks the footprints in the woods, followed by Mike, Matthew and Brian. They're all excited --

Suddenly, Daniel stops short, straightens up -- something's wrong, and Mike can tell right away:

MIKE
What is it?

DANIEL
(sighs: can't lie) Hoof prints. (pointing them out, demoralized) The footprints stop and... then there's hoof prints.

Mike and Matthew understand what this means, and deflate. Brian is still putting it together:

BRIAN
You mean from a horse?

Daniel nods, glum.

MIKE
We found Sully's horse on top of the cliff...

BRIAN
So -- what're you sayin'....?

DANIEL
This fella mounted on the right side of his horse -- prob'ly an Indian... (fading out, with disappointment) That's the way they do it...

BRIAN
(doesn't want to believe it) The tracks weren't Sully's?

Mike shakes her head, desperately fighting back tears, trying not to give in to despair.

DANIEL
Look -- we had a good start -- what we saw at the river. We just got distracted by the wrong trail.

MATTHEW
That's right, we gotta go back and start again.

Mike nods, but it's clear that she's almost at the breaking point. The others look at each other, equally worried...

EXT. SIXTH WOODS - DAY FIVE

Sully hobbles along on his crutches when suddenly one of the crutches slips underneath him. He goes down with a hard thud, and rolls down a small incline, his legs getting tangled up with his crutches

As he lands, he groans in great pain. He looks down at his leg, and sees that he's opened a couple of wounds that are bleeding again... and now infected.

He sees his crutches lying a short distance away. He tries to raise himself to get to them, but he's too weak -- he falls back to the ground.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF THE GOLD NUGGET & CLINIC - DAY FIVE

The Pawnee Scout is talking with McKay, who is accompanied by Corporal #2 and a couple of soldiers. (In the BG, Andrew and Colleen walk towards the clinic from the store, with Katie in her carriage.)

PAWNEE SCOUT

They do not know where Sully is but Cloud Dancing is with the northern Cheyenne in the Tongue River Valley...

CORPORAL #2

That's Indian land, we ain't got jurisdiction --

MCKAY

Not over the northern Cheyenne, but we do over Cloud Dancin' -- he's a wanted man no matter where he is. (to the Pawnee) Good work...

He hands the Pawnee Scout another pouch of money --

When suddenly, that party of renegade Indians painted like dog soldiers rides into town, SCREAMING and SHOOTING.

Andrew rushes Colleen and Katie behind the water tower, as other Townsfolk duck for cover --

One of the Indians sees the Pawnee Scout, and shoots him point blank.

The Pawnee falls to the ground. Townsfolk scream and scatter. McKay plunges for cover behind a horse-trough --

Andrew and Colleen watch from behind the water tower, Colleen sheltering Katie. Andrew, without thinking, goes out from behind cover to the Pawnee, who lies nearby --

COLLEEN
(screaming) Andrew!!

McKay shoots at the Indians from behind the horse-trough, and they return fire as they gallop through town...

Hank bursts out of the Gold Nugget, firing at the Indians --

Andrew turns the Pawnee over on his back to check him out --

Colleen watches, terrified... but also proud of Andrew -- and feeling like she's seeing his true nature shining through...

The Indians are too fast on their horses for McKay, Hank and the few soldiers firing at them. They're out of town before anybody can hit them.

And then it's over as suddenly as it began. The Indians are gone, the shooting stops.

Colleen steps out to Andrew's side, as he rises to her, numb:

ANDREW
He's dead.

Colleen reaches her arm out to his shoulder -- treasuring him, thinking what might have happened...

EXT. FIRST RIVERBANK - DAY FIVE - SUNSET

Mike sits by the riverbank, looking into the river; in the BG, Daniel, Matthew and Brian build a campfire, make camp (the horses are tethered nearby).

MIKE

is as close to despair as we've ever seen her. She gazes absently into the waters of the river...

EXT. SIXTH WOODS - DAY FIVE - SUNSET - SULLY (CONTINUOUS)

Sully, still lying where we saw him land, just this side of consciousness, has a cluster of berries in his hand. With great effort, he puts one in his mouth and chews it.

He tries to put another berry in his mouth, but he can't -- he's too weak. His hand drops to the ground, his eyes start to drift closed...

EXT. FIRST RIVERBANK - DAY FIVE - SUNSET - MIKE (CONTINUOUS)

Mike shifts her gaze to the tree stump where Sully hoisted himself out of the river --

MIKE'S POV

And there, through the dusty light, she sees what looks like a plant with a single flower, where there wasn't one earlier today.

MIKE

How can this be? Is it a trick of the sunset light, which glows against the tree stump? It wasn't there before -- and it's totally against reason...

She peers at the tree stump and flowering plant through the dusty light. There's only one thing it can mean:

MIKE

(quietly, lost in the moment) Sully?

EXT. SIXTH WOODS - DAY FIVE - SUNSET (CONTINUOUS)

Sully's eyes blink open -- as if he heard that. He looks up at the trees:

SULLY'S POV - THE TREES

sway in the breeze above him...

MIKE (O.S.)

Sully... ?

-- or is it just the wind in the trees?

SULLY
(weak) Michaela... ?

Whatever it was, he's been pulled back to consciousness. With great effort, he brings the cluster of berries to his mouth, puts a couple in his mouth, and starts to chew them --

EXT. FIRST RIVERBANK - DAY FIVE - SUNSET (CONTINUOUS)

Mike looks at the flower growing in front of the tree stump:

MIKE
Sully...

The others hear her, and head over, wondering what's going on:

BRIAN
Ma... ?

MATTHEW
You all right?

Mike looks over to them -- how can she explain... ?

MIKE
I just saw...

She looks back at the tree stump...

The flower's gone. She's shocked.

And the others are worried about her:

DANIEL
We're all tired -- let's have supper.

MIKE
rises as she gazes at the tree stump, now quietly confident:

MIKE
He's alive.

And on her assuredness, calmer, stronger, and more genuinely certain than we've seen her before, we

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY SIX

The Reverend comes down the stairs, and is surprised to find the store open -- and, from what he can hear, even more frantically busy.

Excusing himself, he makes his way through the crowd of townsfolk picking the shelves clean, fighting with each other over the few supplies that are left...

And he finally arrives at the counter, where Hank is among the many trying to get Loren's attention:

LOREN
I'm all out of bullets, Hank, I told you yesterday --

HANK
When you gonna get some more?

LOREN
Talk to Horace -- he was s'posed to send a telegram.

Hank marches out of the store angrily, almost crashing into Grace, who's on her way in. She calls out to Loren:

GRACE
No more potatoes or beans?

LOREN

Only what's out there.

REVEREND

Loren, what're you doin' open on Sunday?

LOREN

You try and keep 'em out.

REVEREND

Service is in an hour --

GRACE

What 'bout greens? You don't have anythin'?

LOREN

Farmers are too scared to come into town --

REVEREND

Grace, I'll see you in church, won't I?

Grace responds absentmindedly as she heads back out the door:

GRACE

Do my best, Reverend...

OFF the Reverend, not liking what he's hearing --

EXT. THIRD WOODS - DAY SIX

Mike, Daniel, Matthew and Brian have again fanned out, and are searching the ground for footprints.

Brian sees Wolf circling a small area, sniffing --

BRIAN

Wolf's found somethin'!

They all hurry over to the area that Wolf is smelling, and look at the ground.

MATTHEW

No footprints --

But Daniel finds something on the ground that intrigues him. He picks it up...

It's a broken eggshell -- the one out of which Sully ate the egg. Daniel looks up at the nest directly above.

Mike, meanwhile, is distracted by something she sees on the ground, and during the following, she follows it a few feet away from them...

BRIAN
Just a broken eggshell...

DANIEL
But where's the egg from inside? And look how neatly the egg's cracked.

MATTHEW
You think... ?

DANIEL
If an animal had done this, it woulda been all broken up... Sully and I ate eggs from nests in the mountains lotsa times...

MIKE
suddenly realizes what she's looking at:

MIKE
Crutches!

THE OTHERS
look over to her questioningly, and go to her, as she points excitedly at the ground:

MIKE
Two indentations about two feet apart, repeating every foot or so, with some dragging marks in between them -- (looking up at them) He hurt his legs in the fall and made some crutches --

BRIAN
Wolf musta smelled Sully's scent...

DANIEL

They lead off that way --

And, newly excited and invigorated, they follow the crutch tracks off --

EXT. SIXTH WOODS - DAY SIX

Wind picks up -- a storm is on its way. Sully still lies where he fell last night... but his condition has worsened. He's sweating and shivering as if he has a fever, and he looks weak and in pain.

He looks around, trying to force himself to focus. He sees a large, fallen log -- hollowed out with age -- that could provide shelter, and he drags himself to it...

Getting weaker by the second, Sully burrows into the log. With his last ounce of strength, he struggles to pull branches over himself, and cover himself with leaves, trying to keep warm before he loses consciousness...

EXT. CHURCH - DAY SIX

The Reverend stands outside the church, waiting for the rest of his congregation, disturbed.

Colleen approaches, with Katie.

COLLEEN

Mornin' Reverend -- sorry to be late, we had a busy morning at the clinic.

REVEREND

That's all right Colleen... any news from Dr. Mike?

COLLEEN

(worried) Not yet.

REVEREND

We'll say a prayer for 'em. (then) You see any other folks on their way over here?

COLLEEN

No...

REVEREND

(makes a decision) Let's go find the rest of our congregation...

And he starts off toward town, with determination. Colleen puts out her arm to help him, but he's already off, his walking stick held in front of him with confidence

EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY SIX

McKay has been surrounded by a crowd of townsfolk (including Grace, Robert E, Jake, Horace, Hank and Loren), who are worried and angry. They're taking it out on McKay -- and each other.

GRACE

(to McKay) People are stealin' food left and right, you gotta do somethin'...

MCKAY

That's not the army's responsibility.

And he takes off toward the meadow. Robert E calls after him:

ROBERT E

You can't get folks scared, and then not do anythin' bout it.

Some of the townsfolk agree with that --

LOREN

Ain't his fault the Indians went and made trouble --

JAKE

That's right, we need the army here to keep law and order --

Other townsfolk agree with that. They start arguing with each other in the BG. The Reverend approaches, Colleen (with Katie) behind him, hearing all of this:

HANK

Can't count on the army, I say we gotta take care of ourselves -- (to Jake) Look after our own property.

JAKE

I told you, I ain't boardin' up the Gold Nugget --

The arguments escalate, everybody talking at the same time:

HANK

Since when are you the boss?

JAKE

Somebody's gotta be smart.

LOREN

(angrily to Horace) Didya ever send those telegrams, Horace, that's what I wanna know.

HORACE

I sent 'em right after --

ROBERT E

(to Horace) Didya send that telegram for the horseshoes? I hardly got any left --

HORACE

I sent it this mornin'...

ROBERT E

I gave it to you three days ago!

Preston (who has arrived during the above) makes his way to Horace, oblivious to anything but his own needs:

PRESTON

Horace, I need to send a telegram --

Horace looks like he's going to scream...

REVEREND

People... *People!*

People start to quiet down, as the look up at the Reverend.

REVEREND

Yellin' at each other isn't gonna help.

The townsfolk grumble -- it may not help, but it makes them feel better.

REVEREND

I may be blind but I can see you all clearly -- maybe more clearly than you can see yourselves... You're scared. Things are changin', you're feelin' like everything's gettin'

outta control. Believe me, I understand what that's like...

The townsfolk know that he does.

REVEREND

(more quietly, now that he has their attention) But that's the time when we gotta be best to each other.

Our townsfolk look at each other, seeing his point, softening their anger.

REVEREND

How long has it been since we had communion with each other -- and I ain't just talkin' 'bout goin to church... I'm talkin' 'bout sharing the burden of our troubles, instead of blamin' 'em on each other.

They know he's right.

REVEREND

Let's do it right here, right now... And let's start with a silent prayer for absent friends who need help more than we do...

The townsfolk bow their heads (some of them glancing at Colleen guiltily), right next to the folks they were yelling at a moment ago.

EXT. SIXTH WOODS - DAY SIX

Rain is falling, accompanied by wind. Mike, Daniel, Matthew and Brian (along with Wolf) follow the crutch tracks through the woods, approaching the spot where Sully's crutch went out from under him.

Suddenly, the trail goes cold.

BRIAN

Where'd he go?

They look around -- still can't find it.

DANIEL

Trail's gone cold.

MATTHEW

What happened?

Daniel shakes his head -- he doesn't know.

Wolf sniffs the ground, whines -- he can't find Sully's trail.

BRIAN
Wolf... ?

DANIEL
The rain's washed out the scent.

OFF Mike's growing concern as the wind picks up speed --

EXT. CHEYENNE CAMP (TONGUE RIVER VALLEY) - DAY SIX

Dorothy is "escorted" into the camp by the Cheyenne horsemen (the Cheyenne man riding on the back of her horse, as we saw earlier).

The Cheyenne skinning hides and preparing food at the camp are surprised --

None of them more so than CLOUD DANCING. They lock eyes.

He puts down his work and makes his way over to her, pleased and amazed to see her, as she dismounts, never taking their eyes off each other.

The other Cheyenne leave them alone. Dorothy -- nervous, thrilled to see him, feeling like she's stepping into the unknown:

DOROTHY
Nobody followed me -- I made sure...

CLOUD DANCING
It is good to see you.

DOROTHY
Thank God you're all right... (then) I came to say goodbye -- (realizing) But I don't think I ever can...

They drink each other in, their feelings for each other overwhelming... and then they kiss.

After a moment, they pull back, and can't help but feel awkward about it. Cloud Dancing tries to cover the awkwardness:

CLOUD DANCING
How is Sully?

DOROTHY
There's so much to tell you...

They walk off together, as she starts to fill him in --

INT. CLINIC - DAY SIX

Andrew leans against the examination table, still a little in shock from his experience yesterday.

ANDREW
What was I thinking, jumping into the line of fire like that?

Colleen, holding Katie, looks at him fondly, proudly:

COLLEEN
You weren't thinkin', you were bein' yourself.

ANDREW
(shaking his head) I have to do something about that.

They share a laugh. Katie starts to fuss.

ANDREW
It's all right, Katie, your mother and father will be back soon...

Colleen looks at him, now with something more than fondness and pride:

COLLEEN
Would ya like to hold her?

He would -- and he realizes it means more than just that, it means that Colleen trusts him again. He smiles his answer to her, and she hands him Katie...

EXT. CHEYENNE CAMP (TONGUE RIVER VALLEY) - DAY SIX

Cloud Dancing and Dorothy have walked a short distance from the camp, which can be seen in the BG. From Cloud Dancing's worried expression, we see that she's told him about Sully.

DOROTHY

Michaela and Daniel will find him... You gotta stay here, where you're safe.

He looks at the peaceful camp -- the Cheyenne dressed like Cheyenne, skinning hides, smiling and laughing with each other... but he knows what he must do:

CLOUD DANCING

My safety does not matter when my brother is in danger.

He strides back toward the camp. Dorothy is torn -- she is proud of him, but worried about his safety.

EXT. TELEGRAPH OFFICE - DAY SIX

Horace reads from a slip of paper that Preston has handed him to telegraph, surprised:

HORACE

That's an awful lot of money...

PRESTON

Never bid for anything you don't intend to own, Horace.

HORACE

What're you gonna do with that reservation land?

Preston ponders how much to tell Horace, then grins:

PRESTON

Get rich.

He tips his hat, and heads off.

EXT. CHEYENNE CAMP (TONGUE RIVER VALLEY) - DAY SIX

Dorothy mounts her horse as Cloud Dancing says goodbye to the Cheyenne.

Then, without looking back, he jumps onto a horse and rides toward her. She flicks her

reins, and they gallop off together into a new adventure...

EXT. WOODS - DAY SIX - CLOSE ON THE HOLLOWED OUT LOG

as the storm blows more leaves over the opening which Sully crept into (he's not visible at all)...

ADJUST TO REVEAL the searchers approaching. Matthew, Brian and Wolf are in the lead; Mike and Daniel follow, taking time to sweep details with their eyes. The wind blows in their faces, making it difficult...

They pass the log.

BRIAN
(quietly to Matthew, getting very worried) It's been more than a week.

Matthew nods. Brian goes on nervously:

BRIAN
You think Sully...

He means: could he survive, but he can't say it.

MIKE
suddenly sees something --

MIKE'S POV - THE FLOWERING PLANT

Growing on the ground, it's the same flower she saw on the riverbank, by the tree stump, last night.

MIKE
stops in her tracks as she looks around; they're surrounded by a lot of the plants. She turns around, looking at the plants all around her in amazement... then picks one --

THE PLANT
has berries like we saw Sully feeding himself.

DANIEL

turns back to find Mike, sees her stopped dead, looking at the plant in wonder.

DANIEL

Michaela... ?

He follows her eyes to the plants all around them...

And then he sees something else --

DANIEL'S POV

The wind blows leaves against the log and blows some leaves away from it, too, revealing that it's hollowed out (but not revealing Sully).

DANIEL

shivers slightly in the rain and wind --

And it gives him an idea -- not even really an idea, a sense. He probably couldn't explain it, but he sure feels it.

He goes back to the log, kneels beside it, and starts to push away the leaves...

MIKE

looks up from the plant, sees Daniel -- what's he doing?

DANIEL

pushes away the leaves, still revealing nothing...

MIKE

looks around at that plant growing all around her and she suddenly knows. Just knows.

She rushes to Daniel's side and starts pushing away the leaves with him --

MATTHEW AND BRIAN

turn back, checking on Mike and Daniel, and are surprised to see them digging away at a fallen log. They hurry over, followed by Wolf...

MATTHEW
What is it?

BRIAN
You find somethin'?

They join Mike and Daniel, when suddenly --

Enough leaves have been pushed aside for them to see a buckskinned leg in a makeshift splint. Sully's leg.

MIKE
Oh my God...

The wind whipping at their faces, Brian and Matthew join them, desperately pushing the leaves and branches aside, revealing Sully, still as the dead.

BRIAN
Pa!

Wolf whines. They push the leaves away from Sully's face. His eyes are closed.

Mike quickly leans into him, takes his hand, feels his wrist, then puts her head to his heart.

The others wait for what seems like an eternal moment. Then Mike finally looks up, tears in her eyes:

MIKE
He's alive... !

And as they start removing him from the log, we PULL BACK and

FADE OUT.

THE END

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