

(THE SAGA
OF)
JEREMIAH JOHNSON (c.1)

by
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**FOR EDUCATIONAL
PURPOSES ONLY**

FADE IN:
BIERSTADT'S "THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS"

1

FILLS THE SCREEN. Silence for a moment then the TWANGING of a banjo. As the banjo builds CAMERA ZOOMS into the white water in the painting as it spills over the golden rocks and:

DISSOLVE:

TRACKING REFLECTION SHOT

2

in the water of the MISSOURI. Green trees and a blue clear sky are reflected as the CAMERA slides along the mirror surface of the water.

EXT. RIVER - TREES - FULL SHOT - DAY

3

A riverboat as it slides along a dark leafy glade in still water, only the SOUND of the paddle wheel sloshing and forest birds are HEARD in the quiet afternoon. We round a bend into sunlight and the SOUND of primitive instruments is heard. In the distance are the dock and buildings of a small settlement. Smoke curls up from the Blacksmiths' hut and fires built on the beach. The river is lined by huge, dense, green trees and undergrowth. The cleared area for the town being the only mark on the impenetrable forest. As we pull up people wander down toward the dock -- brightly painted savages gawk and point at us, others just squat by the tepid water staring ahead. Painted women and children wash naked in the stagnant shallows. On the dock white men in broad hats command Negro slaves who pack piles of goods -- hides and furs are hung to cure.-- smoke curls up from a fire where some dirty men are roasting an ox. Everybody stands up, stops what they are doing, and stare and wave at the boat.

FULL SHOT - DIFFERENT ANGLE
FT. WASHINGTON, MISSOURI - SUMMER, 1858

4

The boat pulls up to the dock -- gangplanks are thrown down -- men clamber aboard. A man cracks a whip...his slaves lift their burdens ready to

load, various people disembark looking around annoyed at the surroundings. One of these is JEREMIAH JOHNSON...28, a lean man of strength beyond his years. He wears striped army pants and carries a large bundle on his shoulders. He looks around, an Indian groveling in the sand stares back at him and grunts. Johnson walks down the docks and up the main street of town which is about a hundred yards long, lined with crude saloons and trade-goods stores. Bearded men peer out of windows at him...others just turn as they walk by...most of the people just sit in whatever shade they can find. Johnson passes a saloon where fat Indian prostitutes sit sweating and trying to smile at him. He strides to the end of the street and its largest building on which is painted the sign: "J. M. Robidoux Trade Goods - We Got What You Want - White Men Only." Johnson stops, looks up at the sign and checks a piece of paper he is carrying.

4
CONT'D
(2)

INT. STORE - FULL SHOT - ROBIDOUX AND OTHERS

5

Old MR. ROBIDOUX sits behind a counter fondling a fourteen-year-old Indian girl. His sons stand around bored. Johnson strides in. They sort of flip out of his way...closing behind him like rats...Robidoux sits up as Johnson throws his duffle on the counter.

CLOSE ON JOHNSON

6

who looks directly into CAMERA.

JOHNSON (cold)
I wanta be a mountain man.

FULL SHOT - DIFFERENT ANGLE

7

Robidoux leans back on his seat. Nods slowly.

ROBIDOUX
I am Joseph M. Robidoux...you may
pro - nounce it how you like.
These here are my progeny.

He points to a tall sulking one:

ROBIDOUX
Jethro...

To a hairy one:

ROBIDOUX

Abraham...

To one chewing on a piece of meat:

ROBIDOUX

And Runt.

Runt - closely resembles a boar pig.

ROBIDOUX

Runt was named because he was
such as a child.

The "boys" look at Johnson's duffle.

JOHNSON

I am Jeremiah Johnson, I want
to trap bear an' kill beaver.

ROBIDOUX

That will prove of most interest.
I assume you are in need of goods
and advice.

JOHNSON

That be so, I am delivered into
your hands by Sam Hawkin of St.
Louis. He says you have one of
his rifles an' he also did this
writin'.

He hands him the paper. Robidoux looks it over
carefully...the Indian girl looks at it too.
Robidoux shoos her away.

ROBIDOUX

It says here that you are a man of
proper wit and adventurous spirit,
ideally suited to the rigors of the
harsh and treacherous mountain lands.
I believe I have just the goods you
need provided you have the gold.

JOHNSON

I have such.

He pats his duffle...the sons close around him.
Johnson quickly grabs his duffle and moves back.
Robidoux stands.

ROBIDOUX (gesturing)

Boys...boys... I understand, Mr.
Johnson, I am feared of strangers
myself, but you can place your
trust as many have before.

He puts his arm around Johnson, who is uneasy, and they walk to another counter.

7
CONT'D
(3)

ROBIDOUX

Indeed - it is essential that you be appropriately prepared, for the poor natives suffering the abusive deprivations of the white man and his encroaching civilization.

They reach a rack of rifles.

ROBIDOUX

Have taken to roasting good Christian skulls in a fire after deleting them of their hair.

He pulls a long rifle from the rack and hands it to Johnson.

ROBIDOUX

An unfortunate necessity.

Johnson looks over the gleaming new Hawkin rifle... he looks at the barrel.

JOHNSON

This one's only thirty caliber or the like. I 'as lookin' for fifty or better.

ROBIDOUX

You probably learned your knowledge of firearms in the army where you get those britches, but...

JOHNSON (examining
rifle)

I don't care to bandy words with you about the army.

ROBIDOUX

Well, then...a caliber of 50 tends to use up entirely too much lead, a valuable enough commodity where you intend to travel, and a 30 caliber ball performs well at the dispatching of deer, elk, Indians, without a ruination of the meat.

JOHNSON

How about bear?

ROBIDOUX

I suggest you shoot the beast twice thereby having far more than your proposed 50 calibers.

Johnson thinks about this for a moment.

ROBIDOUX

Besides it is the only rifle I have at present of Sam Hawkin's manufacture.

JOHNSON

How much?

ROBIDOUX

Fifty dollars.

Johnson's eyes narrow.

ROBIDOUX

Forty.

JOHNSON

That's twice the St. Louis price.

ROBIDOUX

It is a genuine Hawkin...you can go no better.

Johnson pulls out a sack and pours gold coins from it. The sons lean forward... Johnson turns on them suddenly and glares menacingly...they back slightly.

ROBIDOUX

Runt, Abe...I...I said keep back now.

Johnson turns back and hands him the money. Robidoux smiles a wide tobacco-stained grin.

JOHNSON

I'll need traps, a good horse and the other truck that goes with this work.

He grabs a bowie knife from a case and flips it and catches it with ease.

ROBIDOUX (uneasy)

I am here only to oblige.

EXT. STORE - FULL SHOT - ROBIDOUX, JOHNSON, OTHERS

8

Johnson is packing his duffle on a mule then turns and mounts a scraggly looking Comanche pony. Robidoux stands at the door with his hands on his hips, his sons peer out behind him. Johnson swings into the saddle...lifts his rifle and looks back at Robidoux.

JOHNSON

Jest where is it I can find beaver,
bear and other critters worth cash
money when skinned?

ROBIDOUX

You will have to cross the river by
ferry in the morning...head due west
as the sun sets, and bear to your
right at the Rocky Mountains --
May the good Lord bless your skies.

Johnson turns and rides down towards the river.

FULL SHOT - RIVER BANK - JOHNSON - TWILIGHT

9

Johnson gets off his horse near the trees at the river's beach about two hundred yards from town. Near him some naked Indian children sit in rancid water, watching. He grunts and makes a quick motion towards them...they run away. He goes back and unpacks his duffle, lays down against it and gets comfortable. He looks off.

P.O.V. - THE DISTANT HILLS

10

The sun is setting beautifully in the west.

CLOSE - JOHNSON

11

He smiles. Then he pulls out a blanket and takes his rifle from where it was leaning, cocks it and slides it down next to him. He leans his head back against the duffle to sleep...we HEAR only the SOUND of various insects that swarm around him...he swats at them occasionally and goes to sleep.

MED. SHOT - DIFFERENT ANGLE - JOHNSON - 'NIGHT

12

Johnson is snoring away -- we see a figure emerge from the river fog and walk up. It is an INDIAN WOMAN about 30; somewhat worn-out looking. She leans down and touches his arm. He stirs and jumps awake with his bowie knife ready.

WOMAN (quietly)

I love you.

He stares at her without moving, the knife poised.

WOMAN

...One silver dollar.

Johnson puts the knife down, relaxes, leans on his elbow and sighs.

JOHNSON

Two bits.

WOMAN

I love you.

JOHNSON

Bring your own blanket.

She pulls up her skirts showing her legs; she smiles, turns and walks off to get her blanket. Johnson leans back and rubs his forehead.

DISSOLVE TO:

MED. SHOT - DIFFERENT ANGLE - NIGHT

13

The fog is thicker now. In the distance three figures creep out of the night hunched over. They move to Johnson's pack mule and horse and begin to un-tether them.

CLOSE ON JOHNSON AND THE INDIAN GIRL

14

She is naked under the blanket. They both seem to be sleeping. CAMERA CLOSES in on Johnson, who opens one eye.

JOHNSON'S P.O.V.

15

The shadowy figures beginning to slip off with his things.

JOHNSON'S V.O.

Hey!!!

Suddenly everything explodes into violence. The figures hurl knives. Johnson fires a bellowing blast with his rifle. One of the figures screams with pain, Johnson having wounded him. The knives slam into the Indian woman...she groans in agony. Johnson is up with frightening speed and running forward, but as quickly as it started it is over. The figures have disappeared into the night. The pack mule and horse are still. Johnson stands staring into the blackness. The only SOUND is the soft splash of water and his heavy breathing. He HEARS a groan behind him.

MED. SHOT - JOHNSON AND THE INDIAN WOMAN

16

He lays aside his weapon and rushes to her. She moans and stirs, barely able to open her eyes.

JOHNSON

There's not much I can do.

WOMAN (barely

audible)

Throw me in the river...they will not bury me here.

She dies. He covers her face with the blanket.

FULL SHOT - DIFFERENT ANGLE - JOHNSON - DAWN

17

The fog is gone and the first light of dawn filters through the trees. Johnson stands over a newly finished grave with a fresh cut cross on it. He has a Bible in his hand.

JOHNSON

I guess you never hurt anyone - that's all I can say. I did not know you long but I feel it is a fair judgment.

He looks down at the Bible.

JOHNSON (continuing)
I am leaving this with you for
I feel that where I am going it
carries little weight.

17
CONT'D
(2)

He tosses it on the grave.

JOHNSON

A-men.

As the Bible hits the earth the TWANGING of the
banjo comes in again and remains in the b.g. of
the following scene.

LONG SHOT - DUGOUT CANOE - JOHNSON - FERRYMAN - DAWN 18

Johnson disembarks from the canoe on the far side
of the wide Mississippi. He pays the Negro ferry-
man and leads his animals off out of water. FROM
FAR AWAY WE HEAR:

FERRYMAN

Thanks you -- Thanks you kindly
sir. Keep good care of your hair.

Now the MUSIC BUILDS as TITLES START and the song
"Ballad Of Liver-Eatin' Johnson" comes OVER CREDITS.

ANOTHER PAINTING 19

Perhaps a REMINGTON or RUSSELL or perhaps BIERSTADT'S
"Estes Park" -- CREDITS OVER AND THE BALLAD CONTINUES.

FULL SHOT - PLAINS - JOHNSON 20

He and his pack animal are seen silhouetted against
the vastness of the great rolling plains.

SERIES OF PAINTINGS 20-22

Mountains, plains, rivers, of the early west.
CREDITS CONTINUE as does the BALLAD.

FULL SHOT - JOHNSON - SUNSET 23

In higher country now, Johnson rides into a sky
exploding with color as the sun slips behind faraway
peaks.

ANOTHER SERIES OF PAINTINGS

24-27

of trappers, mountain men, the vast stretches of the plains and fields, rushing rivers and giant trees. The Ballad begins to fade now.

LONG LONG SHOT - JOHNSON - DUSK

28

We see him and his animals lit slightly by the light of a small fire in a great endless expanse of dark prairie. END CREDITS.

CLOSE SHOT - JOHNSON - NIGHT

29

He listens to the NIGHT SOUNDS, his rifle across his lap, cocked...he closes his eyes seemingly asleep...one eye opens slightly and looks around.

LONG SHOT - PRAIRIE - JOHNSON - DAY

30

He rides towards us through a vast field of flowing golden grass like ocean waves in the wind. It extends from horizon to horizon. He looks around enjoying the vista when suddenly A BUCK DEER AND TWO DOES burst out of the grass and bounce away.

CLOSE - JOHNSON

31

He is startled and then quickly brings up the heavy rifle and fires. He misses and the deer bound away uninjured. Johnson is disappointed. The meat would have tasted good. He looks off.

JOHNSON'S P.O.V. - MOUNTAINS

32

In the distance the blue snow-capped mountains.

FULL SHOT - MOUNTAINS - JOHNSON - AUTUMN

33

Johnson rides up along a steep creek bank looking up at the pine trees and sharp rising cliffs. He dismounts and begins to forage around the rocks and in the bushes for roots and berries. He examines them carefully, not quite sure which are edible. He smells them, shrugs, then stuffs them in his pocket.

MED. SHOT - STREAMS - JOHNSON

34

He stands naked and shivering on the bank of a stream. He smears himself with bear-grease, the only protection he will have against the freezing waters. He takes a deep breath, picks up his traps, and steps into the icy waters. He grits his teeth against the cold and places the trap.

UNDERWATER CLOSE SHOT

35

In huge detail we see the setting and baiting of the trap.

FULL SHOT - CANYON - JOHNSON - AUTUMN MORNING

36

Johnson stalks down a canyon edge and peers over a rock; below is one of his un-molested bear traps... he frowns in disgust and walks out into the clearing to get another trap. As he starts further down the canyon he stops suddenly. WHIP PAN to reveal a huge grizzly standing up looking at him with its forepaw caught and bloodied in one of his puny traps.

CLOSE SHOT - JOHNSON

37

He drops his traps, takes quick aim, and fires a bellowing blast.

MED. SHOT - BEAR

38

The bear recoils slightly...grunts ferociously and charges.

CLOSE - JOHNSON

39

JOHNSON

Waugh!!!!!!

He turns and bounds for the nearest tree, which he climbs.

Johnson frantically loads his rifle...ramming powder and ball down as the bear smashes his broken trap at his feet...finally he cocks, leans down ramming the muzzle out of FRAME and fires. Smoke drifts up.

JOHNSON

That'll do you.

Huge roaring and battering SOUNDS then.

JOHNSON

Die, you son-of-a-bitch.

The tree begins shaking. The grizzly obviously intent upon ripping it down. Johnson feverishly loads but the tree is shaking so badly that he loses his powder horn. He grimly looks down.

CLOSE SHOT BEAR - JOHNSON'S P.O.V.

41

It snarls and spits blood, fire in its eyes.

CLOSE SHOT - JOHNSON

42

He grits his teeth...draws his bowie and looks skyward for reassurance. Finding none, he looks down just as the bear topples over dead from loss of blood.

NIGHT - CAMPFIRE - JOHNSON

43

He is just taking a huge bear steak off the spit he has made. He cracks open the bone and scrapes out the marrow. He rips a chunk of meat off and dips it into the hot marrow and raises it to his mouth. He chews for a moment and then throws his head back and laughs delightedly. In the b.g. is the skin of the grizzly being stretched.

FULL SHOT - JOHNSON - MOUNTAINS - WINTER

44

He rides through a light snowfall, looking at the ground. His legs are wrapped in the rotting skin of the grizzly which has frozen and thus become bearable. His beard is beginning to grow. He rides into f.g., sees something and dismounts.

CLOSE SHOT - JOHNSON

13

45

He squats on his haunches and looks at the fresh track of a bull elk. He gets up, mounts his horse and then...freezes.

JOHNSON'S P.O.V. - INDIAN BRAVE

46

About five hundred yards away on the crest above him stands a huge INDIAN BRAVE. He wears a buffalo robe and stares down at Johnson.

FULL SHOT

47

The moment is electric. Both men remain motionless, just wisps of their hair stir in the breeze. Then as if by some pre-arranged signal, they both move slowly off and away from one another.

FROZEN MOUNTAIN STREAM - JOHNSON - DAY

48

He is kneeling beside the freezing waters. He slowly slips his hand between two rocks.

ANGLE ON THE STREAM

49

We see two or three trout pass through the rocks. Johnson tries to slap his fingers closed around them, but it is difficult and he is a beat late.

ANGLE ON HIS FACE

50

Concentrated, frowning.

ANGLE ON THE STREAM

51

A beautiful rainbow trout slips through his fingers.

JOHNSON V.O.

Waugh!!!

FULL SHOT - JOHNSON

52

He rides along through the high mountain passes leading his pack animals and looking haggard. There are only about three pelts on his mule. His beard has grown and he looks tired and hungry. The wind blows fiercely. He is in heavy snow.

MED. SHOT - WOODS - TWILIGHT

53

In a tall pine forest Johnson shivers in his bear rugs. He crouches down and CAMERA CLOSES in to see him trying to get some damp tinder ignited with his flint. He is unsuccessful. He takes down his powder horn and sprinkles some of his precious powder on the wood. He strikes with the flint. It flashes and smokes and he nurses it finally to flame. He puts small pieces of bark on it and reaches his hands in to warm them. Suddenly a gust of wind blows through the trees and the snow over his head moistened by the heat of the fire falls through his hands and extinguishes it.

FULL SHOT - GREY DAWN

54

The sky is a cold dark grey over the vast stretches of snow. The sun is just coming up over the mountains. Johnson is a tiny speck huddled in his blankets as an icy wind blows small gusts of powdery snow in swirls.

CLOSE ON JOHNSON

55

Waking up. He is stiff and very cold. He stretches, rubs himself and gets out of his blankets. He is fully dressed and has his rifle under his blanket.

TRACKING SHOT

56

As he moves toward the small stream which is near him.

He takes a long pole and stretches it out over the water towards a stick which floats on top of the stream and marks one of his traps. Working the pole carefully he catches up the trap which remains underwater, and drags it towards the bank. Then he reaches his hand in and pulls it out of the water. Empty. He stares at it. A silent beat. Then:

JOHNSON (bellowing
at the top of his lungs)
BEAVER!!! WHAR THE HELL ARE YOU??!!!

MED. SHOT GULLY - JOHNSON

58

He rides his starving horse wearily up a snow-choked gully. Suddenly the horse rears back afraid and will go no farther. Johnson looks around, dismounts and ties the animal. He takes his rifle and edges off into the woods, creeping along.

FULL SHOT WOODS - JOHNSON

59

In the dark woods he silently crawls from tree to tree working his way up the hill.

CLOSE SHOT - JOHNSON

60

He edges up on his stomach over a snowy rock ledge and pushes the pine branches away looking up at the top of the pass. He points his rifle out...then looks more curiously.

LONG SHOT - SUMMIT - P.O.V. JOHNSON

61

We see a man sitting against a tree covered with snow. In his arms is a rifle. He is silhouetted against the sky - wind blows snow over him.

The man has snow all over him - ice on his eyebrows and hanging from his fur hat. He is very solidly frozen, even his rifle has ice on it. Johnson walks up, gets down on his haunches and looks into the man's frozen face. The man is grinning hideously. Johnson brushes away the snow from his hands holding the rifle - there is a note in one of them. He removes it, stands up in the stiff wind and reads. As he does CAMERA PUSHES IN to the frozen man's grotesque face:

JOHNSON (reading)

I - Hatchet Jack - being of sound mind and broke laigs do hereby leaveth my bar rifle to whatever finds it - Lord hope it be a white man - It is a good rifle and kilt the bar that kilt me - My injun pony run off and leaved me - that animal never did like me much - I do not fret the horse but it had a thirty dollar saddle - Anyway I am dead - Hatchet Jack.

Johnson throws the note away and looks back at the smiling, frozen dead man. He grabs the rifle but finds it is frozen to him. He places his foot on the man's chest and pries the rifle free. In so doing he loosens the body which falls over frozen solid. Johnson smiles as he looks at the rifle and chips away some ice from the lock.

JOHNSON

50 caliber Hawkin!

CLOSE ANGLE - MUZZLE OF THE .50 CALIBER HAWKIN

63

As it fires an incredible blast exploding with SOUND.

FULL SHOT OVER JOHNSON'S SHOULDER

64

He has just fallen a huge buck. He jumps up from his kneeling position and races toward it with joy. He draws his bowie and kneels to skin it.

NIGHT CAMPFIRE

65

The skin is being stretched on a rack. Johnson, mouth full, is scraping away a patch of snow to get at small shoots of grass for his horse.

JOHNSON
You too Agnes! I didn't forget
you!!!

65
CONT'D
(2)

The horse begins to nibble at the shoots.

JOHNSON'S FIRELESS CAMP - NIGHT

66

CAMERA is close on his face as he sleeps, contentedly, the hint of a smile on his lips. CAMERA SLOWLY PANS around and over to the huge carcass of the buck. From behind a tree we suddenly see two gleaming eyes. Emerging stealthily from the blackness is a huge but gaunt mountain lion. The lion soundlessly digs his teeth into the body of the buck and slowly drags the carcass into the brush.

FULL SHOT - JOHNSON'S CAMP - DAWN

67

A ray of sunlight creeps across his face as he slowly stirs. Then he sits bolt upright rubbing his hands together in anticipation of a hearty breakfast. He suddenly freezes as he looks off.

JOHNSON'S P.O.V.

68

The messed-up area of snow where the carcass was. Tracks of blood show the trail of the thief.

JOHNSON V.O.
(roaring)
WAUGH!! Son-of-the-Great-Bitch!!!

FULL SHOT - MEADOW - JOHNSON

69

Johnson rides through a snow-covered meadow, his Hawkins across his shoulders.

CLOSE SHOT - JOHNSON

70

He slumps along tired and haggard.

VOICE (o.s.;
in distance)
That be far enough, pilgrim.

He looks around for the owner of the voice. Nothing is seen in the snowy woods or rocks. Johnson cranes his neck around, his rifles waving about. He can't believe it.

70
CONT'D
(2)

JOHNSON

Where are you?

VOICE

You are a fine target, pilgrim.
Hold your horse and empty your
hand.

Johnson realizes there is nothing he can do. He drops the rifles into the snow. He scans the tree line but can see nothing.

DIFFERENT ANGLE

71

From behind Johnson a man stands up from the rocks -- he is dressed completely in white treated skins and could barely be distinguished from the rocks and snow. Johnson turns startled. The man walks forward, his long rifle aimed.

CLOSE - JOHNSON

72

JOHNSON

I haven't seen a live human man
in two months.

FULL SHOT

73

As the man walks closer we see he is old and whitened but still quite spry.

MAN

I am Bear Claw Chris Lapp - blood
kid to the grizzer that bit Jim
Bridger's ass - You are molesting
my hunt.

JOHNSON

I'm --

BEAR CLAW

I know who you are - you are the
same dumb pilgrim I been hearin'
for twenty days and smellin' for
three. How come you ain't scalped?

Johnson just looks at him. Bear Claw points his rifle at the traps.

73
CONT'D
(2)

BEAR CLAW
Ain't been too lucky, uh?

JOHNSON
I have seen no man nor trapped
nothing.

Bear Claw puts up his rifle and smiles a broad grin.

BEAR CLAW (laughing)
This place's been trapped out
since '25.

CLOSE - JOHNSON

74

He nods slowly.

JOHNSON
What're you goin' here then?

FULL SHOT

75

BEAR CLAW
I hunt griz.

JOHNSON
Griz?

BEAR CLAW
Grizzer-bear, pilgrim - I collect
the claws.

He jangles a set of grizzly bear claws around his neck.

BEAR CLAW (cont'd)
Had one in that thicket ready to
shake hands 'til you come along.

JOHNSON
I'm sorry then -

BEAR CLAW
That you look an' hungry too.
C'mon.

He turns and walks off.

MED. SHOT - TRAVELLING - JOHNSON - BEAR CLAW

76

Bear Claw trudges through the trees, Johnson behind.

BEAR CLAW

You know how to skin griz?

JOHNSON

I can skim most anything - I'll
earn my keep...

BEAR CLAW

That a fact.

(pause)

Sure are cocky for a starving pilgrim.

He gives Johnson a grin. Johnson just looks coldly
ahead.

FULL ANGLE

77

They emerge from the trees into a small hollow with
a snow-covered wood cabin below. They walk towards
it - Bear Claw stops.

BEAR CLAW

There she be - you just go in -
get warm, eat something. I'm
going back an' get that bar.

Johnson nods and walks down towards the cabin.

BEAR CLAW (yelling)

You sure you can skin griz, boy?

JOHNSON

As fast as you can find 'em.

Bear Claw gives out a cackling laugh and runs up
into the trees and disappears.

TRAVELLING SHOT - JOHNSON - CABIN B.G.

78

Johnson walks to the door of the cabin, kicks snow
away from it and walks in - TRACK WITH HIM inside.

INT. CABIN

79

We see the walls covered in bearskins and several huge piles of skins strewn about where the owner passes out occasionally. Large hunks of dried meat hang from the ceiling along with curing scalps. Johnson looks at one of these carefully. Various skinning knives and hatchets are stuck in the walls - from these hang bear claw necklaces. There is one large window open at the back. Johnson sniffs the air with no relish and sits down and starts chewing on a piece of meat. He finds a keg and is about to drink when we HEAR a low, deep shot echo through the mountains.

MED. SHOT - DIFFERENT ANGLE - CABIN - JOHNSON

80

Johnson rushes to the door and looks up into the silent woods. We HEAR Bear Claw's maniacal laughter drift and echo faintly through the trees. Johnson looks hard and listens.

JOHNSON'S P.O.V. - WOODS

81

We HEAR the laughter again closer - then see the old man come running through the woods. He stops, occasionally jumps, yells and laughs, then bounds down towards us. We see he is pursued by a giant grizzly bear dripping blood with vengeance in its animal mind. It growls, roars and tears at the air as it follows Bear Claw at full run, right down to the cabin. Johnson ducks inside.

INT. CABIN

82

Bear Claw tears in hotly pursued by the enraged beast. He vaults across the room, throws his rifle through the open window and follows it.

EXT. CABIN - MED. SHOT - BEAR CLAW

83

Bear Claw tumbles into the snow laughing as we HEAR all manner of growling, roaring, swearing and breakage from inside.

BEAR CLAW
Skin that 'un, pilgrim - I'll
go git another.

83
CONT'D
(2)

He laughs maniacally.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE SHOT - JOHNSON - MOUNTAINS

84

Around Johnson's neck are a set of grizzly claws.
PULL BACK. He walks through the deep snow leading
a horse and followed by Bear Claw. Both of them
are dressed in white treated skins and Johnson's
face is confident, grim and fully bearded. He
stops and looks at some tracks, large elk tracks.

JOHNSON
No more'n half a mile.

BEAR CLAW
Close as you can guess 'em.

JOHNSON
That's what I figured an' he knows
where we are - that's why he's
goin' up hill.

BEAR CLAW
Well since you got old Mr. Elk
all figured out you intend to go
up after him?

Johnson turns and smiles.

JOHNSON
No - I'm goin' around this moun-
tain an' wait 'til he comes down.

Bear Claw mounts.

BEAR CLAW
You're learnin'.

MED. SHOT - WOODS - TRAVELLING - JOHNSON - BEAR CLAW 85

They ride slowly through the deep woods, rifles
across their saddles.

BEAR CLAW
 You track well pilgrim, kinda
 like it, don't you?

85
 CONT'D
 (2)

JOHNSON
 Maybe.

BEAR CLAW
 Figures - human man always likes
 trackin' an' killin' - Injun, he
 figures it's natural. That's
 why a human man is meaner than a
 Injun.

JOHNSON
 What a you mean?

BEAR CLAW
 Injuns lived here all his life, his
 people lived here before him. Human
 man comes here an' it's somethin' new.
 He don't fit in, has to learn, has
 to be twice as tough, twice as mean.
 Huntin' an' killin' ain't natural
 to him, he enjoys it.

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT - MEADOW - ELK

86

A majestic bull and two cows stand on the far edge
 of the meadow.

JOHNSON (V.O.)
 Wind's right but it's all open
 between us an' them, they'll just
 run out soon as we step out a the
 trees.

BEAR CLAW (V.O.)
 There's a trick to it - get off
 an' walk on this side a your horse.

MED. SHOT - JOHNSON - BEAR CLAW

87

They are edging out into the meadow on the far side
 of their horses.

JOHNSON
What if they see our feet?

87
CONT'D
(2)

BEAR CLAW
Elk don't know how many feet a
horse have.

Johnson looks over the saddle. He starts to crouch
around to the horse's neck.

BEAR CLAW
No - you damn fool - slide her
up over the saddle.

He does, carefully.

MED. SHOT - DIFFERENT ANGLE

88

Johnson in f.g. eases the big Hawkin up over the
saddle and lines on the big bull about fifty yards
away.

FULL SHOT - ELK

89

A BLAST ECHOES through the high country, the elk
is blown off its feet - dead in mid-air.

MED. SHOT - JOHNSON - BEAR CLAW

90

At the shot all hell breaks loose. Johnson's horse
rears up and kicks him full in the face and chest,
knocking him spread-eagled in the snow. Bear Claw
is beside himself with joy and throws his hands up
and gives the Mountain Man yell.

BEAR CLAW
You got him, Pilgrim - nailed
him clean.

Johnson's horse has taken flight towards Canada.
Johnson pulls himself up - his teeth bloodied. He
is stunned.

Bear Claw pulls his horse away towards the dead elk.

BEAR CLAW
C'mon we got an elk to skin.

JOHNSON
What about that horse?

BEAR CLAW
He'll come back when he's hungry.

90
CONT'D
(2)

CUT TO:

INT. MED. SHOT - BEAR CLAW'S CABIN - JOHNSON -
BEAR CLAW - NIGHT

91

Johnson sits near the far end sewing moccasins together. He is having great difficulty and stabs himself several times with the bone-needle. Bear Claw gets up, goes to the window and opens it. It is solid snow outside. He pulls a hairy shank of bear out and closes the window. The fire is blazing and he stuffs an end of the shank into it.

JOHNSON

I already et that beaver tail
afore an' it did not set well.

BEAR CLAW

Suit yourself.

He turns the bear haunch which sizzles with good bear grease.

BEAR CLAW

Ole Lobo Ned liked beaver tail -
liked to cook the brains too -
Funny - cause that's what the
Cheyennes did to him.

JOHNSON

What?

BEAR CLAW

That's what the Cheyennes did to
him - Hung him up over a fire and
roasted his brains - Happened just
'fore you got here.

JOHNSON

Did you see it?

BEAR CLAW

No. Found out from a Cheyenne brave
I was doin' the same too.

JOHNSON

How do you know it was so?

BEAR CLAW

Man don't tell lies when he is
having his brains roasted.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT -- CABIN - BEAR CLAW AND JOHNSON - EARLY
SPRING

92

The snow is melting. A stream runs by Bear Claw's cabin. In the f.g. Johnson has built a lean-to. From it he carries his piles of beaver pelts and stuffs them into bags on his pack mule. Bear Claw sits in front of his cabin stringing together another necklace of claws. Johnson finishes packing his animal and steps back and looks at it.

BEAR CLAW

Not bad for a winter's take.

JOHNSON

Considerin' these parts were
all trapped out before '25.

BEAR CLAW

You have learnt well and will
go far...provided you ain't
scalped or burnt alive.

JOHNSON

I will do my best.

BEAR CLAW

You can cut wood an' leave it up
on the Judith. Put a pouch out
an' trappers'll leave you gold.
It is a good thing to know if
times gets hard.

(beat; as he continues
working on his claws)

Watch your topknot.

JOHNSON

Watch yourn.

He mounts his horse and looks back at Bear Claw. He waves. Bear Claw sort of acknowledges and takes a long drink on his keg. Johnson waits a moment but Bear Claw pays him no mention. He turns and rides away.

THE SECOND BALLAD OF LIVER-EATIN' JOHNSON - MONTAGE

93

The familiar sound of the TWANGING banjo and then the VOCAL with it's story of Johnson and the early West over the following:

PAINTING OF TRAPPERS

94

Early Remington painting of the trappers around a fire.

LONG SHOT - JOHNSON - SPRING

95

...riding through peaceful, beautiful green meadows.

PAINTING - "THE LONE MINER"

96

A Lithograph by C. Nahl and A. Wenderoth of the man alone against the trees holding his rifle.

CLOSE SHOT - JOHNSON

97

...taking muskrat or beaver out of one of his traps.

PAINTING - "GREAT SPRING OF THE FIREHOLE RIVER"

98

--the water color by Moran. Whites, golds and blues. Luminescent.

MED. SHOT - JOHNSON - DUSK - AUTUMN

99

He smokes a pipe and cleans a huge elk skin.

PAINTING OF WINTER .

100

The Rocky Mountains covered with snow.

LONG SHOT - JOHNSON - CAMPFIRE - SUNSET

101

Snow-covered trees. Johnson eats contentedly by his fire. His packhorse is loaded with his trappings.

PAINTING - "WINDRIVER MOUNTAINS"

102

--the water color by Miller. As this last scene DISSOLVES, the MUSIC FADES and we come to:

He rides silhouetted against a light sky up a steep pine ride. He turns and heads down toward us. Suddenly he stops and stays stone-still for a moment. All his senses are alert. A bird takes wing somewhere in front of him giving an alarm call.

CLOSE SHOT - JOHNSON

103

He dismounts, cocks both rifles...leaves one in the scabbard and leads his horses stealthily through the trees.

TRAVELLING SHOT - JOHNSON AND HORSES

104

He stalks through the aspens, his rifle ready. He goes up a gully brushing aside a bunch of berries and twigs, and moves toward the edge of a meadow. All the sound has stopped. He takes his bear rifle from the scabbard so that he has a rifle in each hand and then steps out of the trees into the bright afternoon light.

FULL SHOT MEADOW - CRAZY WOMAN

105

Across the meadow on a small rise is a half-built log cabin. Near it some fresh lumber and a broken down wagon, some tools and bedding. In front of the cabin, down on her hands and knees, is a white woman about forty-five. There is a dead Indian, horse and all, a few feet from her. She crawls back and forth like a dog from the body of a young boy...the grass bloodied near his head...to a naked young dead girl. She tries in bursts to put a dress back on the dead girl's body.

CLOSE SHOT - JOHNSON

106

Stunned. Looking on in silence.

CLOSE SHOT - CRAZY WOMAN

107

There is blood all over her dress. Some of it spattered on her eyelids which blink rapidly.

Just the other side of her are the bodies of two dead, naked Indians. Both shot. She shivers and her teeth chatter, but there are no tears on her face.

107
CONT'D
(2)

CLOSE SHOT - JOHNSON

108

His eyes flick across the scene of horror in front of him. His reaction is contained.

FULL SHOT - JOHNSON - CRAZY WOMAN

109

Suddenly she turns and sees Johnson standing by the trees. She leaps up, grabbing an axe, and picks up a rifle - all without stopping - then at a dead run veers towards Johnson.

CLOSE SHOT - JOHNSON

110

The expression on his face changes.

JOHNSON

Woman, you'd better stop there!!

FULL SHOT - JOHNSON - CRAZY WOMAN

111

She continues to run, the rifle dangling at her side. Finally about twenty paces from Johnson she stops and raises the rifle to aim at him. She is shaking violently. Johnson slowly sets the rifles down and raises his hands.

JOHNSON (sternly)

Woman, I'm your friend. It looks like you need one.

He advances towards her and she makes a small warning sound. It is like an animal. Johnson stops, unbuckles his revolvers and lets them drop. He spreads his arms wide and opens his hands.

JOHNSON

I am Jeremiah Johnson. We have graves to dig. You have a shovel?

CLOSE SHOT - BLANKET

112

as Johnson gently wraps the body of the young girl in it. He hands the crazy woman his rifle and then picks up the body and begins to walk toward the hill with it.

LONG SHOT - ACROSS FRESHLY DUG GRAVES

113

The two figures are tiny as they come up the hill towards us.

LONG DISSOLVE:

FULL SHOT - GRAVES - LATE AFTERNOON

114

Against a red sky the Woman kneels in front of the freshly filled graves. Johnson stands beside, looking down. He thinks perhaps she is praying, so he removes his hat and bows his head along with her.

EXT. CABIN - JOHNSON - SUNSET

115

Johnson walks down the hill, looking over his shoulder occasionally towards the kneeling figure of the woman silhouetted against the sunset. He approaches the cabin and looks at it.

CLOSE SHOT - CABIN

116

It is almost finished except for one wall and a door. There are various building utensils scattered about. Also a man's heavy jacket and work gloves.

FULL SHOT - CABIN - JOHNSON

117

He glances once more up toward the crazy woman on the hill, then moves toward the inside of the cabin.

INT. CABIN

118

Johnson enters and suddenly starts...and looks over toward one corner.

CLOSE ANGLE - YOUNG BOY

119

Cowering back against the corner wall is a young boy of eight. His eyes are wide with fear.

FULL SHOT - JOHNSON - YOUNG BOY

120

JOHNSON

Boy. Did you see all this?

The boy stares back silently. Johnson shakes his head and starts outside.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

121

Johnson cooks over a small campfire. Barely visible in the distance is the woman on the hill. He is about to take meat from the fire when the stillness is shattered by an un-earthly KEENING. It raises gooseflesh. Reeks of bottomless grief. He stares up the hill at the keening woman. Then takes some meat from the fire, gets up and starts toward the cabin, the horrible KEENING SOUNDS OVER.

INT. CABIN

122

In the flickering light from the fire Johnson sets the food down in front of the silent boy - stands back and looks at him. The boy does not move. Johnson turns and starts out, saying:

JOHNSON

Eat it, boy. It's good for you.

CLOSE ANGLE ON THE WOMAN

123

Silent now, her face tear-streaked. The wind blows her hair as she kneels with one hand on the grave of her daughter and the other on the grave of her sons. Her rifle is at her side. Out of the darkness behind her Johnson steps silently forward holding food and a robe over his arm. He slowly places the food down in front of her where she can see. Then he drapes the blanket over her shoulders.

JOHNSON

Don't you want to come down by the fire, ma'am? It'll be cold up here.

She makes no move or reply.

123
CONT'D
(2)

JOHNSON

I could not find your husband
anywhere, ma'am, so maybe he
will come back here.

Silence.

JOHNSON

The Indians will not bother you
no more since you are tetch'd...
they will be afraid now.

Silence.

JOHNSON

But what about the boy?

She obviously cannot be reached so after a beat
Johnson turns and walks back down the hill.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CABIN - YOUNG BOY - EARLY MORNING

124

He sits out under a tree staring over at Johnson,
who is ripping planks out of the wagon. He trims
two saplings to use as braces and nails the planks
together. Then, using his Bowie, he cuts the soles
off of two small pair of shoes, and using them as
hinges, nails one end to the planks, then hangs
the makeshift door to the cabin. He looks back
up the hill toward the woman who has not moved all
night.

JOHNSON

Here's some food, boy. You
understand?

The boy just stares. Johnson hesitates a moment,
then mounts his horse. As he starts to gather the
lead rope on his pack mule he looks up.

JOHNSON'S P.O.V.

126

Crazy Woman is running down the hills towards him,
her gun dangling down at her side.

FULL SHOT - JOHNSON - CRAZY WOMAN - BOY

127

The woman takes hold of the boy with surprising strength, yanks him to his feet and comes toward Johnson. She stops a few feet from him and pushes the boy forward.

JOHNSON

Ma'am I can't...

He hesitates...she cocks the rifle and points it at him. Johnson looks at the boy for a beat.

JOHNSON

I will take him to Ft. Hawly,
ma'am. That's where I'm headed.

He dismounts...reluctantly picks up the boy who is shaking, and puts him in front on the saddle. Crazy Woman just stares and then startingly speaks for the first time.

CRAZY WOMAN

Go. I must stay with my family.

LONG DISSOLVE TO:

MED. SHOT - MOUNTAINS - JOHNSON - CALEB (YOUNG BOY)

128

They ride along a steep mountain trail...the wind blows hard. Johnson looks at the boy.

JOHNSON

You got a name, boy?

The boy doesn't answer. Just holds onto the saddle horn and stares ahead.

JOHNSON (loud)

Huh?

No response.

JOHNSON (thinks a
moment)

I will call you Caleb. It is a
name I have always admired.

(beat; then louder)

Do you like it, Caleb?

Still no response.

JOHNSON

Well, do what you like. I was
much the same myself.

128
CONT'D
(2)

They ride on.

FULL SHOT - RISE - JOHNSON AND CALEB

129

Johnson leads his horse with Caleb on it. They cautiously approach the edge of a rise. Johnson cocks his rifle in f.g. and edges closer - TRACK WITH HIM as he looks over the edge.

JOHNSON'S P.O.V.

130

A small clearing below with a man buried up to his neck in its center. Near him is a spent campfire -- buzzards circle over him and walk around nearby.

CLOSE SHOT - MAN

131

With only his head exposed above the ground we see DEL GUE, about 30 - a wild-looking man with a full beard and a shaved head. His eyes follow the buzzards overhead. Suddenly a SHOT rings out and a dead buzzard thuds down in front of him, raising dust. The other buzzards take off. The dust rolls over him - he winces and then starts sneezing - he sneezes several times then catches his breath.

DEL

Damn.

He sneezes again.

TRAVELLING SHOT - JOHNSON AND CALEB

132

Johnson walks his animals up and ties them to a branch - he helps Caleb down and then stretches himself and sits down on a log facing Del. Caleb stays near the horses.

JOHNSON

You all right?

DEL

Oh sure - sure, I got a fine horse under me.

Johnson gets up and gets the buzzard and sits back down. He starts plucking it.

132
CONT'D
(2)

DEL

You ain't gonna eat that thing
are you?

Johnson pays little attention, keeps plucking.

JOHNSON

I'm hungry.

DEL

Only a savage would eat a buzzard.

JOHNSON

That so.

Del winces his face around and sneezes again.

DEL

I got me one them feathers in
my nose.

JOHNSON

Keep sneezing - it'll work out
all right.

He sneezes again twice.

DEL

I'd also be obliged if'n you'd
take it downwind.

Johnson puts the buzzard down.

JOHNSON

You haven't seen anyone pass
this way recent have you?

DEL

Well, nobody's gone in front a
me - I can't say what's happened
behind though.

Johnson plucks the buzzard pondering this.

DEL

That your boy?

JOHNSON

No, I'm just carrying him for a
friend.

Del nods understandingly.

132
CONT'D
(3)

JOHNSON
Injuns put you here, huh?

DEL
Well, it weren't Mormons.

JOHNSON
Blackfeet?

DEL
That's right - chief by the name
of Mad Wolf - nice fella - does
not talk much though. Say, you
wouldn't have an extra hat -
shade is scarce in these parts.

JOHNSON
Why'd you shave yer head?

DEL
Mad Wolf figures like every other
Injun I know. Says this scalp is
not fit for any decent man's lodge
pole. Ain't the first time I have
protected my head in such a way.

Johnson nods at his sagacity.

DEL
Sure would like to get my pelts
back.

Johnson nods.

DEL
Could use a feller like you.

Johnson waits.

DEL
You help me git 'em back an'
you got half 'em.

FULL SHOT - MEADOW - DEL, JOHNSON AND CALEB

133

Johnson and Del walk. Caleb rides on Johnson's
horse.

DEL (looking at Caleb)
He and the woman was all they left,
huh?

JOHNSON

I couldn't find the husband but
I found his scalp - I think he
escaped alive.

133
CONT'D
(2)

DEL

A man will do that.

They come to a clump of bushes. Johnson stops -
Del kicks the bushes aside revealing the remains
of a fire.

DEL

Not more than a few hours ago -
We'll find 'em tonight or tomorrow
morning - sure will be happy to
see my horse again. I hate walking.

Del notices his bear rifle in its scabbard.

DEL

'Ain't that Hatchet Jack's rifle?

Johnson nods.

DEL

How'd you git it?

(Cont.)=

Johnson gets up - leads them on.

JOHNSON:

That's right - found him froze
to a tree.

DEL:

Yeah - that Hatchet Jack was a
wild one. He was living with a
female panther - two years in a
cave up on the Musselshell - she
never did get used to him.

He shakes his head - they move on.

CUT TO:

MED. SHOT CLIFF DEL JOHNSON NIGHT

They crawl along a windblown cliff. Below we see a
distant campfire. They stop, overlooking the Indian
encampment. Del looks carefully and giggles - wildly
they whisper.

JOHNSON:

Shut up -
(pause)
How many you figure?

Del sniffs the air - seems to catch a scent and sniffs
crazily like a bird dog. Johnson watches, finally he
freezes almost on point.

DEL:

Six - just like before.

JOHNSON:

(amazed)
You were smellin' them Blackfeet!

DEL:

No, I was just tryin' to locate my
horse - it is the dirtiest animal
this side of hell.

Johnson nods in understanding and scans the camp again.

JOHNSON:

We'll wait until dawn - a man's
always tired when he's about to
get up. Where do you supposed
their lockouts are?

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

DEL:

You'll learn - these are heap big warriors powerful medicine - they don't use no lookouts. Now come light - you go down to that river wash. Give me that six-shot horse gun an' I'll attract 'em. When they look at me over yonder - give 'em that bear rifle full a nails.

JOHNSON:

In the back?

DEL:

They will not turn around for you friend - I'll do the rest.

FULL SHOT HORSES CALEB DEL JOHNSON

Del and Johnson return to their horses to find Caleb sitting all bundled up shivering.

JOHNSON:

Use that blanket boy -- keep you warm.

Caleb just stares ahead.

DEL:

He don't say a lot, does he?

Johnson ignores him. They take powder, horses, extra lead, knives and tomahawks from the pack horse. They start to leave. Caleb rushes up and grabs Johnson's legs.

JOHNSON:

No boy - you stay here an' watch these animals.

He just grabs Johnson tighter.

DEL:

Seems rather attached to you.

MED. SHOT TREES CALEB JOHNSON DEL

They are just finishing tying Caleb to a tree - Caleb just stares ahead, shivering. Del finishes tying the knots.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

DEL:

That'll hold him - till next winter anyway.

Johnson kneels down in front of Caleb.

JOHNSON:

I'm sorry Caleb - I do not favor this myself - but there's some things I don't want you to see.

Caleb just stares ahead into the night - Johnson looks at him a moment then gets up and leaves.

FULL SHOT INDIAN CAMP

DAWN

The light just barely passes over the camp - one or two braves are up, dressed in buffalo robes, tending the fires - the others are just watching. They are camped in a steep, dried-out river wash - their ponies tied on the side. The two awake braves look over a white man's horse piled with pelts - another with a buffalo head-dress holds a large Hawk as he sits by the fire - the others carry lances, bows and arrows.

DEL:

(o.s.; yelling)

I am Del Gue - and I can whip my weight in wolverines and ride straight through a crab apple orchard on a flash of lightning. You have stolen my pelts and die you must.

He laughs wildly - they start towards the bushes. Suddenly there is a tremendous blast and the brave holding the rifle is blown head-over-heels into the horses - which stampede.

DEL:

(o.s.)

Nice shootin', Johnson.

The Indians turn and another blast is HEARD, wounding another brave. They grab their buffalo shields and retreat down the wash - shooting arrows back.

MED. SHOT RIDGE DEL

Del scurries along the top of the wash, dodging from tree to tree. He fires his pistol once as the braves dash by - then scurries after them.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

DEL:
Shootin' high, Sim Roberts.

He runs to another position and speaks in a low voice.

DEL:
I know my sights is bent -
Lobo Ned'll get 'em.

He dashes along - fires again from another position.

DEL:
(in another voice)
That a boy, Ned.

He jumps to another tree enjoying himself thoroughly - shooting.

DEL:
(in still another
voice)
Not bad yourself, Creole Frank.

He dashes further along.

DEL:
(in a Creole accent)
I save them for you, Del Gue.

He rushes to the edge, sticks his butt out exposed.

DEL:
Thanks boys, I'll finish 'em up.

Three arrows thud into trees around him. He laughs and jumps down firing the revolver.

FULL SHOT WASH JOHNSON INDIANS

Johnson rounds a bend in the wash in foreground - rifle in either hand. Ahead the gully narrows sharply and ends in a tangle of dead trees and brush. The Indians are backed against this and pile up their buffalo shields to protect them. They see Johnson - one lets fly with an arrow as Johnson dives to the ground.

CLOSE SHOT JOHNSON

He looks up from behind a log - from his P.O.V. we see the shields forming a barricade about three feet high across the five foot ditch. Nothing can be seen above it.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

There is total silence. Del Gue rushes through the bushes at the top of the bank - a hail of arrows follow him. He rolls down to where Johnson is.

DEL:

(shouting)

Hold 'em tight, Sim Roberts.

(in a low voice)

I will do that, Del Gue - go fetch your rifle back.

He grins at Johnson and scurries away.

MED. SHOT DIFFERENT ANGLE JOHNSON DEL

They look over their log - Del is loading his rifle - Johnson has both of his and the pistol propped on the log.

DEL:

They won't go nowhere now.

He pours in his powder.

DEL:

Double grizzer charge.

He rams the ball down, takes aim at the shields and fires a tremendous blast.

CLOSE SHOT SHIELDS

They tremor as the huge ball rips through and thuds into solid flesh - there is a low groan.

CLOSE SHOT JOHNSON

He takes aim with the big Hawkin and blasts.

CLOSE SHOT DEL

He aims and blasts.

CLOSE SHOT SHIELDS

Big holes are being ripped in them.

CLOSE SHOT JOHNSON

He cocks his Hawkin and is taking aim when we HEAR the Indians start to chant - they chant loud and unearthly - Johnson hesitates.

DEL:

Death chant - keep shootin'.

Johnson cocks and fires.

MONTAGE DEL JOHNSON SHIELDS

A SERIES OF SHOTS, of Johnson and Del firing, loading - cocking, firing - big holes are ripped through the shields - pieces are blown off. The chant continues even though less and less men sing it - finally only one sings.

CLOSE SHOT JOHNSON

He grits his teeth, cocks and fires - smoke hangs over them - there is silence.

MED. SHOT SHIELDS

The shields are bent and broken - holes throughout them - there is silence:

MED. SHOT JOHNSON DEL

Johnson takes his pistol and crawls forward - Del following with rifle and knife. Johnson jumps up and looks over the shields - pistol cocked.

MED. SHOT DIFFERENT ANGLE

P.O.V. looking up over shields at Johnson - he fires directly at CAMERA all six shots - gritting his teeth, crazed - Del grabs him.

DEL:

That's enough.

Johnson looks down at him sharply.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

DEL:

You're wastin' good lead.

Johnson's gun hand hangs at his side - he looks down at the dead, then takes the locket with his other hand. He flicks it open, looking back and forth from it to the Indians - Del starts to climb over, giggling.

JOHNSON:

What're you doing?

DEL:

Just gonna collect these scalps is all - that first one you hit, that was Mad Wolf. His hair'll be worth a lot a somethin' at Fort Hawley.

He looks at Johnson who just stares down. He leans over and picks up a long, flowing blond scalp - he looks at it and the locket - throws the scalp down.

DEL:

Ain't you ever scalped a man before?

JOHNSON:

Nope.

DEL:

You mean you don't want any a these?

JOHNSON:

Nope.

He turns and leaves.

DEL:

Well, Mother Gue never raised such a foolish chile.

He climbs over, brandishing his knife.

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT TREES JOHNSON

Johnson walks up through the trees to where Caleb is tied. The boy shakes visibly and just stares up as Johnson walks up. They look at each other for a moment. Johnson kneels down and cuts the ropes - Caleb just stares at him.

(CONTINUED)

(Continued)

JOHNSON:

I was doing you a favor -
some day you'll understand.

He grins at Caleb - Caleb kind of grins back.

CALEB:

I didn't think you'd come back.

JOHNSON:

I'll always be back.

They look at each other a moment - Johnson takes the locket from around his neck and gives it to the boy.

JOHNSON:

Here - it's yours now.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT MEADOW JOHNSON CALEB DEL DAY

Johnson and Del ride casually in front, leading their pack mules and the Indian ponies, one of which Caleb rides. They ride through a wide meadow. From Del's bridle hang the six Blackfoot scalps. As they ride along, a group of mounted Indians ride out of the pines from the other side. They ride slow in single file, even with the mountain men - there are about sixteen of them.

MED. SHOT JOHNSON DEL CALEB

Caleb rides up afraid - Johnson cocks his rifle and reaches down and cocks the bear gun in its scabbard. Del looks the Indians over carefully - he motions to Johnson who turns and sees another group of ten or so following behind.

JOHNSON:

We can pull back into these trees.

DEL:

Don't go gettin' hasty, them is Flatheads and they have hurt nobody that I know.

JOHNSON:

Perhaps they have seen fit to change their ways.

DEL:

Too many of 'em anyhow. Just hold back.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

They have reached the narrow end of the meadow - the Indians walk their horses up casually and surround the trappers. Del seems quite used to this sort of thing. Johnson looks around nervously. Caleb just stares into space again. One of the braves rides up sharply and yells in his own language at Del.

JOHNSON:

What he say?

DEL:

Said them are Blackfeet ponies.

JOHNSON:

Smart, ain't he.

The warrior goes into a violent discourse to Del - animating wildly with his hands and spitting occasionally, then pointing at Johnson. Del lifts the scalps and waves them at him and speaks quickly in Flathead himself. When he's done he turns to Johnson and smiles.

JOHNSON:

Well.

DEL:

He asks if you are the great warrior who avenges the crazy woman in the Wolf-Tail Valley - she is big medicine, and so are you if you be that man.

JOHNSON:

What'd you tell him?

DEL:

I said we done both done the avengin' - they found them Blackfeet bodies yesterday.

The warrior yells some more - Del replies back.

DEL:

He asks why the one who grunts like a pig and has the head of a rat carries your scalps - I am well known around here. Anyway, I told him they make you sick.

Johnson grunts at this - the warrior yells some more.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

DEL:

He wants to take us to his chief -
great honor.

Johnson looks around - the warriors are surrounding them.

DEL:

We can only be killed.

They leave.

FULL SHOT FLATHEAD VILLAGE JOHNSON OTHERS

They ride into a typical plains Indian village. Men gather about the lodges - women scurry inside except for old squaws who are too tired. Dogs yap - buffaloes are being roasted and smoked over pit fires.

JOHNSON:

Why was the brave yellin' like
that?

DEL:

Scared of you.

He points at the scalps.

DEL:

Many coups -
(pause)
this chief here's name is Three
Tongues Lebeau - he speaks anything
quite well and will bend your ear
if given the chance.

They ride up to the chief's decorated lodge where Three Tongues Lebeau - an old, happy Indian and his medicine men all stand. They stop and dismount - the chief rattles off something to the warriors and they step away.

LEBEAU:

(pointing to the horses)
Good ponies - Blackfoot scalps -

Johnson just stares at him.

LEBEAU:

Humph - you speak Frenchy?

Johnson is quiet.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

LEBEAU:
You speak anything?

JOHNSON:
Just American.

LEBEAU:
Great warrior - six Blackfeet
coups, but you are not much good
for talking with.

He goes and looks at the scalps hanging from the bridle.

LEBEAU:
I have many scalps - you want
trade?

He motions to a brave who brings a pole with about thirty
scalps on it.

LEBEAU:
I am good Christian - I only take
scalps from heathens. You want
trade?

JOHNSON:
Take 'em.

DEL:
What?

JOHNSON:
Take 'em - take them ponies, too.
I have no use for 'em.

DEL:
Half them is mine.

JOHNSON:
You'd still be pickin' buzzard
feathers out of your nose were it
not for my good nature.

Johnson takes the scalps and two of the ponies and
gives them to Three Tongues Lebeau.

JOHNSON:
A gift.

Lebeau grunts unappreciatively.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

LEBEAU:

Come inside - you like whiskey -
we get drunk.

They follow him in. Caleb jumps off and runs past the
watching warriors to Johnson.

JOHNSON:

All right, boy.

LEBEAU:

Your son..

JOHNSON:

Son of the woman in Wolf-Tail
Valley.

LEBEAU:

Crazy Woman - big medicine.

They go inside.

INT. TEPEE MED. SHOT JOHNSON DEL OTHERS

Lebeau and several of his medicine men sit across from
Johnson and Del. Caleb looks around scared. Lebeau
confers with his men.

DEL:

(whispering)

You may have cooked our brains.

JOHNSON:

What'd you mean?

DEL:

He brought us here to honor you -
an' you went an' gave him a gift -
if he cannot give you a better one
it will all turn out an insult.

JOHNSON:

That is foolish.

DEL:

It'll make no matter after they
kill us.

Lebeau and a war chief confer softly - he sends the war
chief out - another comes in with a keg. Johnson and
Del look sort of worried.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

JOHNSON:
 (whispering to Del)
 Sorry anyway.

Del shrugs - Lebeau and his men confer wildly - pointing at the white men and yelling at each other.

JOHNSON:
 What're they saying?

DEL:
 They were gonna offer us mushrooms
 t'eat - but they decided agin it.

JOHNSON:
 Why?

DEL:
 Too powerful for the white man -
 last time I had Injun mushrooms
 I ate a tree.

Lebeau leans forward and unwraps a keg smiling - Johnson looks to Del wondering if they should drink.

DEL:
 I'd rather be drunk.

He laughs wildly and takes a long swig.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TEPEE FULL SHOT JOHNSON DEL OTHERS

Johnson staggers out into the light, blinks, then turns around as Caleb follows rushing over to him. There is tremendous laughter as Del and Lebeau crawl out arm in arm laughing, belching and spitting. Several of the braves help them to their feet.

DEL:
 (drunk)
 I think that'd be a good idea.
 I'll tell him now.

He staggers over to Johnson who is trying to shake off the effects of the alcohol. Del puts his arm around Johnson.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

DEL:

He done decided to give you his daughter.

JOHNSON:

What!

DEL:

Thata' right - says you got a son - now you need a wife.

JOHNSON:

I can't live with anybody.

Del leans close and whispers.

DEL:

(drunkenly)

Look - he may speak well an' read the bible and drink all right too, but he's still an Injun.

He points to the lodge pole laden with scalps.

DEL:

If you value your hair you'll get married.

JOHNSON:

I can't live with no one.

Del looks over and sees Lebeau and his war chiefs standing around looking somewhat stern. From behind them several braves bring up horses and several squaws push their way through and present a young, petite Indian girl of delicate beauty who looks down at the ground quivering in fear.

LEBEAU:

She is called The Swan but she will answer to whatever you want.

JOHNSON:

Don't you need her?

DEL:

(whispering)

You gonna' get us buried.

LEBEAU:

I got five young wives - make me plenty daughters and sons - I am good Christian.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

Del walks over and looks at Swan who is terrified of him.

DEL:

Kind of skinny.

Lebeau steps over, grabs her, opens her mouth and shows Del and Johnson her teeth - the way one would look at a horse.

LEBEAU:

Strong - good Christian woman -
speaks good American.

Del nods looking at her teeth - he takes her trembling hand.

DEL:

I am pleased to make your acquaintance
Mrs. Johnson - your husband has let
me know so much about you.

He laughs wildly, jumping about slapping Lebeau on the back so hard so that he sinks to one knee - Johnson warily looks over at his trembling bride.

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT INDIAN VILLAGE JOHNSON DEL OTHERS

Johnson and Del lead their horses down the creek that runs out of the Flathead village. Swan walks behind - Lebeau and others stand on a rise watching. Johnson stops and is fixing his saddle - he notices the Swan trying to untie some of his pelts and take off his baggage - he motions to Del.

JOHNSON:

What does she think she's doin'?

Del looks over and laughs.

DEL:

Lightening your mule's load.

JOHNSON:

Well, I need them pelts.

DEL:

She'll carry 'em for you.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

Johnson sees this and goes to the mule and takes them away from her - she cowers back, trembling, looking up at him. He reties the pelts angrily - then he turns to her.

JOHNSON:

Come here.

She backs away from him. He lunges out and grabs her by the wrist and pulls her struggling and trembling to his own horse. He picks her up - she looks terrified into his eyes - he puts her on his horse and stands back.

JOHNSON:

You stay there now.

He takes the reins and leads his horse off - Caleb following on one of the Blackfoot ponies. Del laughs at the whole thing, swings into his saddle laughing, but doesn't follow.

JOHNSON:

Well, ain't you coming?

DEL:

Wouldn't want to do-sturb your wedding night Jeremiah Johnson - I will see you in the fall. Have a nice honeymoon Mrs. Johnson.

He turns and gallops off laughing - drunk.

JOHNSON:

I will tend to you later, Del Gue.

He howls with laughter and rides away waving at Lebeau and the others. Johnson grunts at all this, takes his family and leads them off.

FULL SHOT MEADOW JOHNSON SWAN CALEB DUSK

Johnson leads his family through a peaceful green meadow - he is tired and it's late in the day. He stops, looks around and up at Caleb and Swan. They look helpless. Johnson shrugs at them.

JOHNSON:

Come here.

They hesitate.

JOHNSON:

Both of you.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

Caleb jumps off and runs over - Swan is more cautious. She looks at him expecting to be whipped or the like. Johnson pulls his pistol from his belt - Swan backs away trembling - sure that he is going to kill her. She backs away - he follows - she trips and stares up at him shaking.

JOHNSON:

No.

He leans down and picks her up - she is beyond resisting. Johnson points at a nearby tree with the gun and fires, blowing a huge piece of bark away. The shot echoes through the mountains. Swan stares at the gun in horror.

JOHNSON:

Now - you do it.

She doesn't understand.

JOHNSON:

You do it.

He takes her hand, places the cocked revolver in it and aims it at the tree. She shakes - the gun fires - she turns her head away at the noise and recoils.

JOHNSON:

Again.

He cocks it for her, aims it and makes her fire. This time she watches. He puts her thumb on the hammer, cocks it and lets go. She is holding the gun out by herself. He steps away - she waves it unsteadily, almost pointing at him.

JOHNSON:

Go ahead.

She looks at him, then holds it towards the tree, closes her eyes and fires.

JOHNSON:

I think everything'll be all right now.

He takes the gun from her.

JOHNSON:

It's Caleb's turn - then I'll show you how to load it.

She backs away, but not as scared as before - Caleb rushes up.

FULL SHOT CAMPFIRE JOHNSON SWAN CALEB

Johnson gnaws on a hunk of buffalo, looking over at Caleb and Swan, who boils something. He looks at her a long while, takes a big bite of meat and looks at her again. Caleb in the meantime finishes and curls up in his blanket near the fire. Johnson watches Swan move - she is graceful and slender.

JOHNSON:

Swan.

She turns around facing him, hesitant.

JOHNSON:

That's what you'll be called -
Swan.

She doesn't react.

JOHNSON:

Stand up.

She does - afraid.

JOHNSON:

Turn around - slowly.

She does.

JOHNSON:

All the way around.

He smiles at her - she is still afraid.

JOHNSON:

Take off them skins.

She does so, slowly, cautious. Johnson leans back on his saddle and wipes his mouth. Caleb looks up too as she undresses.

JOHNSON:

Them too - all of 'em.

She stands in front of him, almost totally naked and quivering; lit softly by the fire she is quite attractive. Johnson looks over and sees Caleb watching, too.

JOHNSON:

Pretty, ain't she.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

Caleb looks at him, then back at the girl. Johnson gets up, stretches and wipes his hands on his pants. He starts for her - she backs away. He grabs her around the waist.

CLOSE SHOT JOHNSON SWAN

She looks up at him afraid, but there is a gentleness in his expression as he draws her to him, embracing tightly and rubbing her back. He looks down at her head which is on his shoulder - her eyes closed. He picks her up, leans down and snatches up a blanket and starts into the darkness. Caleb scurries behind. Johnson turns on him.

JOHNSON:

You stay here.

Caleb looks like he has no intention of such.

JOHNSON:

I'll tie you to a tree again, boy.

Caleb stops - Johnson grins at him and walks off into the darkness with his woman.

FULL SHOT MOUNTAINS JOHNSON OTHERS DAY

Johnson rides along a ridge with the Swan sitting in front on his saddle. She looks up at him and smiles. They ride over the ridge - Caleb following - and come down into a gorge through which a fast mountain stream runs. Johnson looks up at the jagged cliffs and pine trees. He looks at the river and sniffs the air.

JOHNSON:

This'll do.

He swings out of the saddle - the others watch him. He picks up a handful of dirt, looks at it, throws it in the air watching the direction of the wind. He points to a brush-choked hollow along the cliff.

JOHNSON:

We'll go over there - river in front and the cliff behind. Good water and not much wind. I'll build a shed for the pelts - main place will go in there where nobody can see it. It'll be a good place to live in.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

He goes to the pack horse and takes off his shovels and axes. Caleb and Swan get off and follow him. He turns around and finds them standing there, looking at him, silent.

JOHNSON:

You know how to use an axe, boy?

Caleb nods "no."

JOHNSON:

You'll learn.

He hands it to him and starts for the trees. They follow - Caleb carrying the big two-bladed axe over his shoulder like an old lumberjack.

MONTAGE

SHOTS of axe blades sinking into big trees - bark flies - SHOTS of trees falling from the cliff crashing into the stream below. SHOTS of Johnson and Caleb pulling the trees from the water. CLOSE SHOTS of trimming the bark and branches. CLOSE SHOTS of a tree - successive axe blows - PULL BACK. Johnson stands sweating with his axe - Caleb at his side. They look up at the tree - Caleb kicks it smiling and it falls.

CLOSE SHOT SWAN

She boils water and meat in huge pots over a blazing fire. Johnson walks up with Caleb - they throw down their axes and sit down to eat - wiping sweat from their faces.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT CREEK JOHNSON CALEB SWAN RAIN

They haul a giant log from the river, straining in the mud. Johnson on one end - Swan and Caleb on the other.

MED. SHOT LEAN-TO JOHNSON OTHERS NIGHT

It is raining very hard. We see Johnson, Swan and Caleb all huddled together in the lean-to. Johnson's arms around them both - his pistol in his hand. They all

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

appear to be asleep. PULL IN on Johnson, his eye opens and stares out at us, then closes again.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT CABIN JOHNSON SWAN CALEB

The cabin is nearly built. Johnson works on its roof - Swan sits in the foreground sewing together a buffalo robe for Johnson. Caleb walks up with water from the creek - he puts it down, looking kind of bored, and picks up Johnson's light rifle. Johnson comes down from the roof. Swan takes the pelts over to him and holds them on his back measuring.

JOHNSON:

Them things itch.

SWAN:

They will do worse if you keep moving.

Johnson shrugs embarrassed and remains still while Swan measures his new robe.

JOHNSON:

How 'bout using that red one for the back?

Swan doesn't even look up.

SWAN:

You do not know much about buffalo robes.

Johnson looks down at her as she busily laces pelts together on him.

CALEB:

I'm tired of this - when are we goin' huntin'? I wanta shoot a big bear.

Johnson smiles at him proudly and looks over at Swan who smiles also.

FULL SHOT CABIN

NIGHT

The cabin is finished - the light of a fire flickers inside on a warm summer night. PULL IN on the open window in which we see Johnson and Swan looking out peacefully - she rubs his back - he looks down at her - she moves away seductively - he follows.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE SHOT WOODS JOHNSON CALEB DAY

Johnson cocks the hammer of his Hawkin for Caleb, who smiles and takes it mounting it to his shoulder as best he can. He takes careful aim and fires. The recoil knocks him back, the rifle flies up and Johnson catches it - Caleb is sitting on the ground embarrassed.

JOHNSON:

Forgot to spread your feet, boy.

He turns and walks away, Caleb jumps up and follows. He gets to the target - a piece of wood with a knot in it - the bullet hole right next to the knot. Caleb looks up proud - Johnson smiles down at him.

DISSOLVE TO:-

FULL SHOT CABIN JOHNSON SWAN CALEB DUSK

Johnson and Caleb ride up to where Swan is roasting a deer carcass over a pit. They both ride bareback in the manner of Indians. Johnson dismounts, tired - he is holding a very shot-up grouse and his bear rifle. Caleb carries his other Hawkin proudly. Swan stands up and goes over and takes the mangled bird from Johnson, looking at it disapprovingly and back to Johnson.

SWAN:

The great hunters.

JOHNSON:

It charged me. We had no choice.

CALEB:

It was him or us.

They both nod - she smiles back and throws the thing in a pot.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CABIN MED. SHOT JOHNSON SWAN NIGHT

The cabin has only one room with Caleb sleeping in the corner and Johnson and Swan sitting on buffalo benches in the other corner near their bed of animal skins. Johnson cleans his rifles - Swan finishes a buffalo robe - gets up and takes it to Johnson - he looks at her.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

SWAN:

It will keep you warm in a strong wind and the rain will not pass through, either.

Johnson gets up and tries it on. He looks quite wild with the hairy robe cape and long hair and beard. He looks it over, holding his arms up occasionally and grunting appreciatively.

EXT. LONG SHOT CABIN JOHNSON CALEB DAWN

They climb on their horses on an early autumn day. The wind blows hard and cold - they both wear their heavy robes and look quite like Indians. They ride away.

PULL SHOT MOUNTAIN STREAM JOHNSON CALEB

Johnson wades into the stream up to his neck carrying the traps. Caleb sits on the bank with the rifles, watching.

CALEB:

How deep is it, Pa?

JOHNSON:

It's over my - what'd you call me Pa for -

(embarrassed)

I ain't no blood kin to you at all.

CALEB:

Ma says you are.

JOHNSON:

(angry)

Well, how would she know - she's no kin to you neither.

Caleb starts crying - Johnson frowns at him.

JOHNSON:

You can call me Jed if'n you like. I was called that as a chile.

He ducks under water with the trap - Caleb sits on the bank crying. Johnson comes up.

JOHNSON:

(embarrassed)

Call me whatever you like - Jed - Jeremiah - Pa - just call me whatever you like.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

Caleb stops crying - just sniffles.

JOHNSON:

An' stop that snifflin' an' take
recollection of where I have put
these traps - ain't nothin' to
sniffle about nohow.

MONTAGE CALEB JOHNSON

SHOTS of Johnson setting beaver traps in streams - digging
bear traps in gullies - putting mink traps in bushes -
Caleb watching carefully. FINAL SHOT they ride through
the high mountains together in the late afternoon.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT CABIN

NIGHT

It is winter - the ground is covered with an early snow -
the wind howls - warm light comes from Johnson's window.

INT. CABIN MED. SHOT JOHNSON SWAN

They lie naked under a buffalo rug near the fire. Johnson
throws a log into it -

JOHNSON:

He called me pa today.

SWAN:

What?

JOHNSON:

Caleb -

He motions to the corner where the boy sleeps.

JOHNSON:

Called me pa -

(pause)

He even called you ma -

SWAN:

He has done that before - did
you like it?

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

JOHNSON:

Didn't mind it - Never thought
about it much before -

He looks over at Caleb.

JOHNSON:

Pa, eh -
(to himself)
Pa -

SWAN:

You will get used to it - In the
spring there will be another who
can call you pa.

Johnson looks at her and grins - she smiles back up at
him.

SWAN:

The buffalo are back - it is time.

JOHNSON:

I know - I seen them up on the Judith.
I'm going tomorrow.

SWAN:

How long?

JOHNSON:

Two, maybe three weeks.

He takes his revolver from under the rug and hands it to
her.

JOHNSON:

Keep it with you always - I'll
take only the big rifle.

She does not care to think of these matters and snuggles
up to him.

FULL SHOT CABIN JOHNSON SWAN CALEB DAWN

Johnson sets out up the ridge, away from the cabin and
the river - leading his pack mule and string of ponies.
He turns on the crest of the hill and waves back at Swan
and Caleb.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT MOUNTAINS JOHNSON

He rides alone, a solitary figure silhouetted against the huge trees and massive snow-capped cliffs.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT CLIFFS JOHNSON

Johnson struggles up a steep cliff-sided gully pulling his animals, kicking and whipping them as they slip in the loose shale and slippery ice. PULL IN as Johnson himself climbs further, his hands red and raw from frostbite, his breathing hard, his skins torn and dragging.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT JOHNSON RIVER

Johnson and his animals swim across a river with ice on its banks.

LONG SHOT JOHNSON PRAIRIE

Johnson rides to the edge of a great plateau. A solitary dark speck against the vast rolling plains that stretch to still more jagged mountains.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT JOHNSON'S CABIN SWAN CALEB DAY

The wind blows fiercely but Swan cooks outside in the manner that a squaw was taught. Caleb stands behind, watching from the shelter of the cabin door. She goes about her chores calmly and we see that the big pistol is hung by a thong around her neck.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT JOHNSON PRAIRIE

He rides quietly, sees something and stops. He dismounts and kicks a frozen pile of buffalo dung. Carefully he examines the hard ground for tracks then he gets down and puts his ear to it. When he is satisfied, he mounts and moves on.

FULL SHOT MOUNTAINS JOHNSON

DAY

Johnson rides along a great plateau of sparse sage and pine trees - his rifle cradled in its scabbard across his saddle - he turns his head from side to side, scenting the air.

MED. SHOT PLATEAU JOHNSON

Johnson edges along the ledge of an arroyo with his rifle and powder - he pushes dirt in front of him for concealment. TRACK WITH HIM to the edge where a huge herd of buffalo is revealed grazing below.

CLOSE SHOT JOHNSON

He brings up the big Hawk - rests it on the pile of dirt - cocks it, takes careful aim and fires.

FULL SHOT HERD

The big rifle BLASTS and echoes through the stillness - a bull drops - dust blasted from its shoulders. The herd is immediately on its feet and stampeding.

CLOSE SHOT JOHNSON

He rams another ball down the barrel - primes - takes quick aim and fires into the buffalo running below.

FULL SHOT HERD

Another massive animal falls on the run and cartwheels into foreground, dead.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT JOHNSON'S CABIN SWAN

The air is bright and crisp. Swan stands on a rock overlooking the cabin, the river and the mountains beyond. She is tending to the curing of Johnson's pelts and looks off occasionally in the direction of the WindRiver Mountains for a sign of her man.

CUT TO:

CLOSE SHOT JOHNSON PRAIRIE

Johnson aims his big Hawkin at us. It is braced on a forked stick to steady his hold. He concentrates and blasts. The shot echoes off in the distance.

FULL SHOT PLAIN JOHNSON

Johnson walks his horses and mule across the frozen ground to the two carcasses. He unties some equipment and starts sharpening his skinning knives. His horses pull back, uneasy. Johnson looks at them.

JOHNSON:

C'mon - you'll get used to 'em.

He sees the horses aren't shying away from the dead game - he looks around warily, pulls an animal between himself and a ridge and makes it lie down.

JOHNSON:

Easy boy, easy.

He props his rifle over the horse - the dead animals shielding him from behind. He scans the ridge from where he shot.

FULL SHOT RIDGE JOHNSON INDIANS

Johnson and the horse are in the foreground - on the ridge emerges a single Indian, wrapped in buffalo robes, silhouetted against the sky. Johnson cocks his rifle - the Indian is joined by about ten others, riding single file along the ridge. Johnson follows them with his rifle, ready. They ride down onto the plain, silently. They pause, looking at Johnson for a moment, then ride on and disappear beyond the next rise. Johnson watches where they have gone for a couple of seconds. The wind HOWLS across the plain. He uncocks his rifle and gets his horse up.

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT PLATEAU JOHNSON

Johnson rides on the open high prairie, leading his mule and string which are laden with buffalo quarters. The wind whips at him fiercely. He rides along warily - his rifle ready.

FULL SHOT MOUNTAIN JOHNSON

DUSK

He rides up the tree-covered pass towards his canyon - he is very wary and rides quietly - his horse snorts uneasily.

JOHNSON:

I don't like it neither, boy.

He dismounts and ties his animals then cautiously with his rifles he slips into the trees.

MED. SHOT JOHNSON TREES

He climbs up the steep pine-darkened hill, darting from shadow to shadow.

FULL SHOT CABIN JOHNSON

He emerges carefully in foreground and looks down at his cabin below. The door is open and there is no sign of life. The wind blows dead leaves through the canyon and the door opens and closes as it passes.

FULL SHOT JOHNSON CABIN

He walks towards the door which closes, not quite all the way then opens and slams back on its hinges. His rifles are ready; he walks further till he sees what has been keeping the door from closing and catching on its latch. His face contorts in horror.

MED. SHOT DOOR

P.O.V. Johnson. A naked leg is sticking out of the doorway. A woman's leg. On its delicate toes frost sparkles.

CLOSE SHOT JOHNSON

He rushes over and throws open the door. He looks inside.

JOHNSON:

No!

His hands tremble and one of his rifles drops.

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(Cont.)

JOHNSON:
 (yelling into the
 wind)
 Oh God No!

But there is no reply. He turns shaking from the doorway and staggers several steps. He sees Swan's skin clothing on the woodpile. He fires his rifle into the ground. The shot echoes off the canyon walls. When the echo stops he screams a long howling scream, picks up Swan's frozen clothes and buries his head in them, shaking. Finally he crumples to the ground, kicking and howling. He rolls over to the woodpile where a big double-bladed axe is stuck. He sees this and wrenches it free. Pulling himself to his feet, we see that he is completely mad. He runs wildly about, attacking trees and boulders with the axe - chopping wildly, screaming, he tears at everything and spins off into the trees. He screams and howls like a wild animal, echoing off into the canyon.

LONG SHOT CANYON

DUSK

We HEAR Johnson chopping and screaming over the HOWL of the wind as it gets darker.

CUT TO:

MED. SHOT JOHNSON

MORNING

Johnson ties up Swan's body in rawhide skins on a litter drawn by his mule. He looks dazed and tired. He swings up into his saddle and rides off leading the mule.

FULL SHOT BURIAL MOUND JOHNSON LEBEAU OTHERS

On a windswept burial mound Swan's shrouded body is placed on the traditional stilts about six feet above the ground. Medicine men and squaws sit underneath and chant - they are all silhouetted against a stormy sky - the wind blows dead leaves past. PULL BACK to reveal Johnson and Lebeau. Lebeau is looking at an arrow - Johnson hands him some eagle feathers.

LEBEAU:

Crow.

They nod.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

LEBEAU:

Crow arrow.

He grunts to himself - Johnson looks up the burial mound.

LEBEAU:

No sign of the boy -

JOHNSON:

None.

LEBEAU:

They'll raise the boy as one of their own - maybe a warrior.

JOHNSON:

(distant)

She was going to bear me another son in the spring.

He turns to his horse.

JOHNSON:

(almost to himself)

I'll get the boy back an' I'll settle with them that have done this.

LEBEAU:

There are too many Crow warriors - you will not know who to find.

Johnson jams his rifle into the scabbard.

JOHNSON:

I won't have to know - I'll kill everyone of 'em.

He turns his horse and rides up to the mound, scattering the squaws and old men. He looks for a second, then rides off along the ridge into the darkness. The squaws return and continue their chanting.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT MOUNTAIN

DAWN

The sun rises on a windy day - the sky is dark with gathering clouds - wind howls through the trees.

FULL SHOT RIDGE JOHNSON

Johnson rides along a pine ridge - bundled in his buffalo robes covered with snow and ice.

MED. SHOT DIFFERENT ANGLE JOHNSON

Johnson rides steadily along following the indications of windblown tracks in the snow.

DISSOLVE TO:

MED. SHOT CLIFF JOHNSON

Johnson climbs up along the ice-covered rocks of a steep cliff - below him is a spectacular gorge filled with pine trees. Johnson slips into position behind a rock, his rifle in its white buckskin scabbard. He pats snow onto his coat making it white and remains still. In the distance we can barely see movement among the trees, and finally two Indian riders emerge from the trees and trot across the edge of a snowy meadow. Johnson watches them carefully until they disappear into the trees.

CLOSE SHOT JOHNSON

He smiles to himself and breathes into his frozen hands.

FULL SHOT MOUNTAINS CROWS

The two Crows ride down through a steep snowdrift and wave to a large group of Crow warriors on the prairie. They ride to the group and move off away from us across a frozen plain. PULL BACK to reveal a clump of small pine trees laden with snow. One of the trees gets up and moves, revealing Johnson wearing it on his back -- he watches the distant Indians.

MED. SHOT PRAIRIE JOHNSON

NIGHT

Johnson is covered with snow and sagebrush. He watches the Crow camp below with its warm fires. He crawls toward the camp over a ridge and drops out of sight. We HEAR a wolf call in the distance.

MED. SHOT CROW CAMP JOHNSON

Johnson crawls stealthily through a small arroyo between the Crow lodges - a dog barks - he stops - the dog barks a few more times and stops. Johnson moves ahead slowly.

CLOSE SHOT DIFFERENT ANGLE JOHNSON

He crawls along through the snow and slush with his rifle - he is past the lodges and fires and nears the horses - they move around uneasily. Johnson slips into a freezing creek and wades carefully past the horses until he sees a single Crow warrior standing at the edge of the rope corral, wrapped in a buffalo robe. Johnson leaves his rifle on the bank and eases up behind the Indian - he scoops up a handful of wet snow.

CLOSE SHOT INDIAN

The Indian stares calmly out into the night - he listens to the distant wolves - he turns casually around - his eyes open wide and his jaw drops. Before he can cry out Johnson's hand pushes the wet snow into his mouth and quells him - the two fall. As they do we see the flash of Johnson's bowie.

MED. SHOT DIFFERENT ANGLE JOHNSON

The Indian lies face down in the bloodstained snow. Johnson draws his knife away from the dead man's throat. He quickly searches the body for weapons and takes a tomahawk, stuffs it in his belt. He scampers over to the creek and grabs his rifle - he crouches near the horses looking at the main fires of the camp where many warriors are sleeping. The horses are getting very uneasy. Johnson slips over to them as he notices another Indian walking his way. The brave wears a buffalo headpiece. He sees the horses are uneasy and comes forward, rifle cradled on his arm. Johnson slips in among the horses making them more nervous.

MED. SHOT HORSE JOHNSON

We see why the horse is acting so strange - Johnson is hanging onto it, his foot hooked over its rump so that he can't be seen. One hand holds the horse's mane - the other his rifle and tomahawk.

MED. SHOT CROW JOHNSON

The brave pushes aside the other horses and grabs the wild one by the head - the animal rears up uncontrolled, revealing Johnson standing, looking the brave in the eye. The Indian screams out but is cut short by Johnson who sinks his tomahawk full into the brave's face. He screams in agony, grabbing at his head and falls among the horses which have now gone wild. Johnson screams himself, an unearthly battle cry - stampeding the animals. He grabs one and jumps on it as they hurtle by around him.

FULL SHOT CROW CAMP CROWS JOHNSON

Johnson stampedes the animals into the fires where the warriors are caught on the ground and many trampled. Men scream and go under the wild horses - Johnson rides through hanging on the side. The lodges are trampled down - shouts ring out.

FULL SHOT DIFRERENT ANGLE

Johnson pulls himself up as an Indian rushes out in front of him. The brave sees Johnson, pulls his knife. Johnson leans over and rams his rifle into the man's face and blasts him into the darkness. Johnson turns again and runs down another brave who falls screaming under him. Johnson whips his horse, and, screaming the mountain man yell again, rides off into the darkness with the other ponies.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT PRAIRIE CROWS DAY

The entire Crow hunting party is on foot - they walk sullenly through a pass of high mountain prairie bordered by rocky cliffs. They carry their dead and wounded on litters drawn by other warriors. They are haggard and tired. The icy wind blows snow and whips at their faces. A wary brave walks in the foreground. Suddenly he is jolted as a heavy bullet rips through his chest - we HEAR the shot echo through the mountains. The brave falls heavily into the snow, staining it red. The others all drop - braves point to a puff of smoke on the cliff - we can see by the weary manner in which they act that they've done this many times before. They point again at the top of the cliff and see a

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(Cont.)

rider, silhouetted for a second, galloping along. Johnson's unearthly yell echoes through the wind. The Indians get up again and trudge on - several warriors pick up the body of their comrade, load him upon a litter and drag him along.

DISSOLVE TO:

LONG SHOT PRAIRIE INDIANS

The hunting party is just a speck on the snow-covered plain - the wind blows fiercely - we HEAR a shot echo - a man falls.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT MOUNTAIN INDIANS JOHNSON

The Crows labor at pulling their cargo up a steep pitch in the mountain pass. The wind blows very hard - a blizzard is beginning. The tired braves drag themselves a step at a time to the summit. As the first brave pulls himself into the foreground at the top, his hands drop to his side - he just stares in horror and starts his death chant - PAN to reveal Johnson mounted on his horse at the top. He cocks his big rifle and blasts - blowing the brave off his feet and tumbling him down through the snow to the others. Johnson turns and rides off.

CUT TO:

INT. CAVE CLOSE SHOT JOHNSON DUSK

Johnson kneels next to a small fire - he blows on it and adds more wood - he rubs his hands and sticks them almost in it. Outside - the blizzard rages with incredible force - the wind howls and whines. Johnson looks out as a gust blows snow in. He pulls his buffalo coat over him and crouches in closer to the fire.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CAVE MOUTH FULL SHOT JOHNSON DAY

Johnson walks out into the bright morning light - the air is still and cold - his breath can be seen - he leads his horse out, swats ice from the saddle, puts his rifle in its scabbard, mounts and rides.

CUT TO:

LONG SHOT PLAIN JOHNSON

Johnson rides over a small rise and sees below him the frozen bodies of the entire Crow party. They are strung out across the white plain - dark blotches in the snow - stretching several hundred yards.

FULL SHOT PLAIN JOHNSON

He rides down among the bodies frozen in grotesque positions and covered with ice. He dismounts, not even bothering to take his rifle. He looks over the bodies, walking his horse. Suddenly something catches his eye - he leans down and brushes the snow away from a dead brave holding a pistol. He has to pry the frozen body off the ground and chips ice away to get the pistol loose. He looks at it - holds it up in the sunlight - it is his pistol. He turns the brave over and takes his lance - on it are several scalps. Johnson brushes away the snow - one of them is long and dark. He drops the lance - his hands hang at his side and he cries. It is the only sound on the prairie. He just stands there crying for a moment, then looks down at the dead brave. Still crying he grabs the brave by his hair and draws his knife.

LONG SHOT PLAIN JOHNSON

We can barely see Johnson as he goes from body to body, but we can HEAR him crying in the distance.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT CROW VILLAGE

DAY

We follow a Crow warrior, Spotted Tree, as he rides past the burial rite of the Crow hunting party. The women and elders chant and wail around the 30 or so bodies, wrapped in their best robes and on raised platforms. Spotted Tree is a big man about 40 - he rides casually past the bodies - he is more concerned with the greatness of the warrior who counted these coups than the loss of comrades. He rides past the lodges of his friends waving to them. Everyone says something or waves to Spotted Tree - he is no small medicine.

MED. SHOT LODGES PRISONERS CALEB CROWS

Near a lodge a group of prisoner children are displayed in a circle. Among them is Caleb - the others are both white and Indian - their hands bound behind their backs. Two particularly dirty young braves about 14 walk through the prisoners talking to each other about them - kicking them or probing them with sticks and commenting on their reactions. A group of older warriors stand back watching and laughing occasionally. Finally one of the braves notices Caleb and is probing at him - sees he has something around his neck. He reaches down and starts to grab the pocket when Caleb bites his hand viciously. The young brave pulls away, but Caleb holds tight and must be kicked away. The warriors laugh and comment on this. Spotted Tree rides up and watches also. The young brave is jeered by the others and looks at his bleeding hand and back at Caleb. He pulls his scalping knife - spits in rage and starts toward Caleb, who doesn't move - just accepts his fate. Suddenly Spotted Tree rides his war horse into the circle, scattering people everywhere. He dismounts and faces the young brave who brags contemptuously and waves his knife around. Spotted Tree steps up to him - the young brave lunges - is caught and lifted into the air by the big man. Spotted Tree holds him above his head, carries him through the line of laughing warriors and throws him in a fire. He turns and strides back to Caleb and turns to the others. He shouts at them - takes out his coup stick and shakes it and his latest scalps at them. The warriors are silent. He turns to Caleb and reaches down to get the locket. Caleb bites him, too. Everyone breaks into great laughter - Spotted Tree looks down at his hand and at Caleb and laughs, too. Then he grabs Caleb by the scruff of the neck and throws him, kicking and fighting, over his shoulder - he walks through the crowd laughing.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE SHOT PLAINS JOHNSON

Johnson rides his horse on the open desert prairie. He howls and yells in an animal way. His horse is laden with scalps - strung from the bridle and saddle - some of them fresh. Johnson himself is dressed wilder than any Indian - On his hat is a full mounted falcon - human hair streams back from decorations on his shaggy clothes. His rifle and horse are decorated with scalps and feathers. He rides his prancing mount casually howling his own war chant. PULL BACK to reveal that Johnson is actually circling several Indians who stand by their dead horses on the open prairie. Johnson aims his rifle casually and fires - howling all the while.

MED. SHOT - CROWS - JOHNSON

The two surviving Crow braves try to hold up one of their comrades who has just been shot. They stand in the center of a pile of dead horses and men twisted grotesquely. They know they will soon join them. Johnson circles just out of range of their feeble bows. He chants to himself and fires occasionally at them.

CLOSE SHOT - JOHNSON

He rides full into FRAME chanting - howling and shooting.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE SHOT - CAMPFIRE - MOUNTAIN MEN - NIGHT

Two mountain men sit around a campfire chewing on buffalo jerky and warming their feet. Their leathered faces reflect the firelight.

MOUNTAIN MAN:

Fellow - name of Johnson - after the Crows for killing his Flathead wife - kind of crazy way I see it.

OTHER MOUNTAIN MAN:

Only a fool would stir with Crows.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE SHOT - ANOTHER CAMPFIRE - MOUNTAIN MEN

Four mountain men are seated close to the fire cleaning their rifles.

MOUNTAIN MEN:

Yeah - his name is Johnson - killed twenty a them Crows up on Rosebud.

ANOTHER MOUNTAIN MAN:

He is riding the death road - that one.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE SHOT - ANOTHER CAMPFIRE - MOUNTAIN MEN - NIGHT

More mountain men sit around another fire drying scalps or whatever.

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(Cont.)

MOUNTAIN MAN:

- Johnson - that's right. Killed
sixty-five Crows on the Judith -
took their hair an' ate their livers.

ANOTHER MOUNTAIN MAN:

Ate their livers?

STILL ANOTHER MOUNTAIN MAN:

Well, ain't he a ring-tailed squealer.

ANOTHER MOUNTAIN MAN:

Wonder how they taste.

CLOSE SHOT - ANOTHER CAMPFIRE - MOUNTAIN MEN - NIGHT

A large group of mountain men sit beside a roaring fire -
eating, belching, and snorting.

MOUNTAIN MAN:

Liver Eatin' Johnson had just come
through - there was dead Crows hangin'
in every tree an' spread out all over
the ground - must'a been near a hundred
and fifty - I helped myself to their
hair.

ANOTHER MOUNTAIN MAN:

They wasn't scalped?

MOUNTAIN MAN:

He wasn't interested in their scalps.

ANOTHER MOUNTAIN MAN:

Liver Eating Johnson, eh?

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE SHOT - MOUNTAIN MAN

His face is lit by firelight - he speaks directly into
CAMERA.

MOUNTAIN MAN:

Green shirt or blanket coat - land
trotter or river roller - he is a
man of massacre.

CLOSE SHOT - ANOTHER MOUNTAIN MAN

This one has a bear's head for a hat.

MOUNTAIN MAN:

Liver Eatin' Johnson's wiping out
the whole Crow Nation - he is a wolf
roarin' grizzer bar.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE SHOT - INDIAN

His face is also lit by firelight - he nods and grunts
first.

INDIAN:

Dapieks Absaroka - Killer of Crows.

CLOSE SHOT - MOUNTAIN MEN

MOUNTAIN MAN:

Eater of livers.
(he grunts, grim)

CLOSE SHOT - ANOTHER INDIAN

INDIAN:

Johnson - many coups - Dapieks
Absaroka -

CLOSE SHOT - CAMPFIRE - MEN - NIGHT

Just two mountain men sitting alone by the fire eating
grizzly jerky.

MOUNTAIN MAN:

Liver Eatin' Johnson - started when
the Crows killed his woman and took
his boy - kinda sacred - if you ask
me.

OTHER MOUNTAIN MAN:

I ain't gonna fool with no Crows.

CLOSE SHOT - CAMPFIRE - MEN - NIGHT

A trapper and a Shoshone sit by their fire watching some Wolverine meat roast on a stick. Suddenly from out of the darkness steps Johnson in full regalia.

SHOSHONE:

Dapiak Absaroka!

The trapper just yells. Both of them run out of there. We hear them mount and hoofbeats gallop off into the night. Johnson sits down, grunts, takes the roasting meat and gnaws on it with relish.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT - MOUNTAINS - JOHNSON - DAY

Johnson rides alone through a beautiful high valley - as he passes we see he has aged - he looks more grizzled and is wearing all manner of Crow finery - wolfskin coat - beaded and fringed trousers - many eagle feathers in his wolf-fur hat - Cheyenne moccasins ornate with designs, and his Colt's Dragoon pistol on a rawhide thong around his neck. As he rides along he is the absolute image of mountain-man ferocity - without any of the usual openness and geniality peculiar to that species. His eyes are cold. He rides along quietly leading his pack animal. He stops when he spies another rider coming over a distant ridge - the rider approaches at a gallop, howling and yelling. As he draws up we see it is Del Gue. Del has changed also, including a full head of hair that waves in the breeze and a hat with mule ears sticking out of it. Johnson just stops as he roars up.

DEL:

(shouting)

Whar's your full spittin' mule can
kick holes in the sky and shake a
saddle from its back - Whar's your
slaverin' wolf of the rollin' prairie
- H'yar's the old grizzer brown bar
can clob the bark off a gum tree -
H'yar's a man for you Liver Eatin'
Johnson - I am half horse - half
gator an a touch of the earthquake.
I got the purtiest girl, fastest
horse an' ugliest dog this side a
hell - can out run - out jump - throw
down drag out an' whip any man in all
Kintuck.

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By this time he is somewhat winded - he takes a deep breath.

DEL:

How you been, Liver Eatin'?

JOHNSON:

Staying alive, Del Gue - ain't that hair I see on your head?

He howls in delight - takes off his hat and mule ears, shakes his head wildly, howling.

DEL:

It sure is - I have decided that when I depart from this life I would like to leave something - at least to be remembered on some man's lodge pole.

JOHNSON:

Sound wisdom, Del - where you headed?

DEL:

Same place you are, Liver Eatin' - hell in the end.

They look at each other for a minute.

JOHNSON:

You're welcome along - but I must warn you that I've been known to attract Injuns in the past few years.

DEL:

Well come on then - I don't fancy talkin' in the wind.

They ride away together.

FULL SHOT - WOODS - JOHNSON - DEL - DUSK

It is nearly dark - Johnson leads Del through an aspen thicket carrying a freshly killed buck deer. As they reach the edge of a clearing we see Crazy Woman's cabin - light in the windows - smoke coming out of the fireplace. Johnson motions Del to stay where he is. Johnson slips out into the clearing and carries the deer to her porch where he puts it. He runs back stealthily and crouches near Del. They watch for a few moments - the door opens - Crazy Woman comes out - she looks much older now. She

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(Cont.)

looks around holding her pistol - when she is satisfied about whatever she was looking for, she drags the deer inside and bars the door.

DEL:

How'd she know it was there?

JOHNSON:

She knows - one time I made too much noise an' she shot at me.

Del points to the graves where gleaming white skulls adorn the crosses.

DEL:

Those look like new skulls.

JOHNSON:

They are.

He turns away.

JOHNSON:

(continuing)

They belonged to Crows.

Del just looks at the eerie sight a moment longer and slips back into the forest following Johnson.

MED. SHOT - CAMPFIRE - DEL - JOHNSON - NIGHT

Del is roasting some meat - there is a pan of biscuits nearby. Johnson attends to these.

DEL:

I don't think you're ever gonna find that boy - if you do he'll be more Injun than they are -

JOHNSON:

That don't bother me none - I'll find him - or I'll keep killin' 'til they give him to me - one or t'other.

DEL:

Them biscuits smell mighty good, Liver Eatin'.

JOHNSON:

I make the best biscuits this side of hell and it is all I care to brag about - I can back it up, too.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

DEL:

That I believe but I cannot brag
about your choice of campsites - out
in the open like this.

JOHNSON:

You can see the stars better.

Johnson throws another log on the fire.

DEL:

You ain't gonna make it bigger now.

JOHNSON:

You've just got old an' scarey since
you grew hair on your head.

DEL:

Well, I don't like it.

JOHNSON:

Just watch them biscuits.

Johnson goes over to his saddle and looks for something.
Del sits uneasily roasting the meat. We HEAR a faint
snapping of twigs in the distance. Del hears and freezes.

CLOSE SHOT - JOHNSON

We can tell he has heard also - he takes note and goes
about his business. We PULL BACK revealing Del tense -
Johnson's back is to the forest and suddenly behind him
emerges a huge Crow brave - painted fiercely in full war
bonnet - lunging with a lance and screaming wildly.

DEL:

(screams)

Liver Eatin'!

He rolls for his gun but Johnson turns and uncoils like a
spring - one hand grabs the lance, in the other is the
flashing bowie. The warrior's lunge impales him on John-
son's blade - they stand there frozen for a second. Johnson
lets go and steps away - the warrior staggers and falls
almost in slow motion into the fire. Del's gun is ready,
he looks out into the darkness.

JOHNSON:

Put it down - he's all that was out
there.

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He leans down and tears something from the warrior's belt.

JOHNSON:

Dog Lodge - Medicine soldier -
greatest of all Crow warriors.

DEL:

Does uh - this happen often?

Johnson looks at the patch.

JOHNSON:

Two are chosen every year - their
sole purpose in life is to kill me -
they cannot go back without my hair.
Twenty will be chosen in all.

DEL:

You have stopped huntin' them down
an' they are huntin' you.

JOHNSON:

I would've stopped years ago. My
vengeance was settled first winter,
theirs is not. They would be small
medicine if they did not kill me or
make an appropriate effort.

DEL:

Twenty men is an appropriate effort?

Johnson turns the dead man over out of the fire and removes
his knife.

JOHNSON:

I have vowed to kill every one face-
to-face - so that he shall know his
death and his killer - they will die
as the warriors they are. I smelled
him an hour ago and he was number
five.

DEL:

You are more Injun than they are.

JOHNSON:

I must give them the same that they
gave me. It happens that way.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

DEL:

How many more are out lookin' for
you?

JOHNSON:

Three.

DEL:

An' you just sit an' cook biscuits -
you just gonna wait for them?

JOHNSON:

I make myself easy to find.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT - CANYON - JOHNSON'S CABIN

They ride up onto a cliff edge overlooking Johnson's old
cabin. It is worn from the years but a good pile of fresh
wood is stacked where the tanning shed used to be.

DEL:

I didn't figure you'd ever wanta see
this place again, Liver Eatin'.

JOHNSON:

I come here always, whenever I can.

DEL:

The Crows know that?

He looks warily around the cliffs.

JOHNSON:

(wistfully)

I suppose so - but nobody ever
bothered me none when I'm here.

He points to the wood.

JOHNSON: (Cont.)

I keep it well stocked so's there'll
be wood to last the winter - so's she
wouldn't have to look too far. So's
there's always be something there.

Del looks at him. Johnson's gaze is fixed and demonic, but
there is a strange gentleness to it, almost a smile. Johns
turns his horse and they leave.

DISSOLVE TO:

RENDEZVOUS, FT. HAWLEY - 1862

A mountain fort of the period - on the upper Missouri - various Indian tribes are camped around it.

FULL SHOT - INTERIOR FORT - JOHNSON - DEL

Johnson and Del walk through the crowded settlement. Everything and everybody is filthy. Settler women haggle over their work - soldiers leer at them. Indians sell beaded works and crude bowls. Many fur traders and trappers are present - piles of pelts are everywhere - a man is bargaining with an old trapper over a collection of scalps. Mountain men are everywhere as well as plenty of Union soldiers. Johnson and Del walk up to a shed with a sign - A. B. BARTLETT - MULES - IF YOU GOT THE GOLD. BARTLETT, a fat, greasy looking man is standing near some miserable animals.

JOHNSON:

You Bartlett?

BARTLETT:

Yeah.

JOHNSON:

I am Jeremiah Johnson - you traded with the Bitterroot Crows?

BARTLETT:

Only a few animals and blankets and -

DEL:

An' guns an' whisky - Liver Eatin' knows.

BARTLETT:

(almost to himself,
scared)

Liver Eating Johnson?

JOHNSON:

You see any white captive boys - be about 17 now - I'd pay cash money.

BARTLETT:

I didn't - I didn't see nobody white, Mr. Johnson - nobody white a tall.

He looks away.

BARTLETT: (Cont.)

I just take care a my animals, Mr. Johnson - that's all.

Johnson stands there for a minute - then turns - Del follows.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

DEL:

You ain't gonna find him, Liver
Eatin'.

JOHNSON:

I know, but it ain't easy to get
used to.

They walk up to a group of very tough looking men. For that matter, these men resemble a group of fairly calm bears. In their center is an eastern-bred dandified MERCHANT who is doing his best not to look scared. Johnson and Del walk over.

MERCHANT:

You still do not understand the offer.

A grizzled savage steps forward and quiets the others. It is MARIANO MODENO, ravager of the Utes. Behind him is BIG ANTON SEPULVEDA, feared from St. Louis to the coast of California. Big Anton knows no peer with a Green River fighting knife, and Mariano has been known to win fights to the death with his teeth.

MARIANO:

Hold up.

The general jeering stops.

MARIANO: (Cont.)

What you want is to form us all
together sort of. Buy our pelts on
the lot -

MERCHANT:

That's right.

ANTON:

What if we had a bad year?

MERCHANT:

We'd guarantee you living expenses
from what we made on the good years.

MARIANO:

(sarcastic)

I like this "guarantee" - you want us
to take less gold for a guarantee. You
gonna guarantee that no red savage lifts
my hair, you gonna guarantee that my
horse don't throw me into a tree an

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(Cont.)

MARIANO: (Cont.)
 leave me for the bears. You gonna
 guarantee that it don't git cold
 enough for my jaw to freeze shut?
 You can't do that 'un, can you?

MERCHANT:
 What I'm offering you is security -
 a kind you've never known.

MARIANO:
 I left Santa Fe so's I wouldn't have
 to know it.

Three snarling trappers, the Krile brothers, step forward -
 JONAS, LEETHAM and MAD MOSE KRILE.

MOSE:
 Me an my brethren like what the man
 says.

MARIANO:
 You side with this possum shit 'n they'll
 run us out the whole Rockies.

MOSE:
 I like what the man says - fill your
 hand, Modena.

Mariano draws his Green River fighting steel. Mad Mose
 does likewise. They circle and charge - blood splatters,
 muscle is ripped. They growl and bite each other and split.

ANTON:
 He half scalped you, Mariano.

MARIANO:
 But I got his finger.

He holds it up. At this moment Mose charges. Mariano
 ducks aside and sinks his knife into his opponent's stomach
 and rips up. Mose stands shakily.

MOSE:
 Son of the Great Bitch.

He falls in a pool of his own blood.

MARIANO:
 I claim his pelts an rifle.

His brothers glare.

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LEETHAM:

You claim a place in hell.

They raise and cock their rifles. Anton quickly responds by throwing his knife, sinking it in Jonas' chest. Leetham looks in horror at his dying kin and aims his rifle. A hand stretches and grabs it, pulling it down so that it discharges into the ground. It is the hand of Liver Eating Johnson. Leetham starts to reach for his knife.

DEL:

That is Liver Eating Johnson who will cut out your brains, boy.

He stops.

- DEL: (Cont.)

You best pass on - you are a sole survivor.

Leetham realizes that death has barely passed him by. He turns and runs.

MARIANO:

I owe you a favor, Liver Eatin'.

JOHNSON:

You don't owe me nothin' - just was not a fair fight - that is all it was.

He turns and leaves.

FULL SHOT - JOHNSON - DEL

They walk around the sheds and come to a large open area where a crowd of surly trappers and Mountain Men are gathered - they listen to a fancy gold-braided Union officer who stands on a recruiting table - a dirty looking Sergeant at his side. Behind him are various recruiting posters of the times.

OFFICER:

- And I am further authorized to give the men I choose the rank of Chief Scout - that means the equivalent of a 1st Lieutenant - an officer and gentleman.

MOUNTAIN MAN:

Go ahead, Luke - be a gentleman.

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(Cont.)

Two morons slap each other on the back, laughing at their joke - the officer pauses.

OFFICER:

Maybe you men don't realize that this American land that you cherish is right now, mind you, being split under by those who would have mankind held in bondage, never to breath a free breath of air - the very foundations of our resplendent Union have been shaken.

A small band starts up playing "The Union Forever." The officer removes his hat - he motions to the lazy Sergeant to do so also.

MOUNTAIN MAN:

Just whata we git fer all this?

The officer quiets the band.

OFFICER:

I could not hear you, sir - would you mind repeating your question.

The other Mountain Men jeer at their comrade, calling him "sir," etc.

MOUNTAIN MAN:

Whata we git fer this war?

The officer steps back, draws in his breath and assumes a most noble pose.

OFFICER:

In war - you will receive only - honor.

He yells this out.

OFFICER: (Cont.)

Credit -
Privilege -
Dignity -
Esteem -
Glory -

That one rolls off his tongue.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.1)

OFFICER: (Cont.)

Exaltation -
 Renown -
 Magnificence -

The crowd is listless by now, starting to disperse.

OFFICER: (Cont.)

Purpose -

The Sergeant stands up.

SERGEANT:

(loud)
 Horses!

They all stop - turn back around.

SERGEANT:

Guns!

They are all ears.

SERGEANT:

Whiskey!

A cheer rings out.

SERGEANT:

- Silver!
 - Gold!

They cheer wildly at the mention of these.

SERGEANT:

Black women!

They roar their approval.

SERGEANT:

White women!

They roar again out of control.

SERGEANT:

Land! - And scalps!

They go out of their minds, completely wild, tearing at the table the two soldiers stand on. It is only when the Sergeant raises his hands and yells for his armed troops that they quiet down. The officer steps forward again.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

SERGEANT:

Line up right here - sign your name
or make your mark.

OLD TRAPPER:

(yelling)

I ain't going.

SERGEANT:

Why not?

OLD TRAPPER:

All that'd spile me - I got them things
right now - I jest need a new saddle -
Stick that up your nose, soldier boy.

He nods his head in defiance and pushes back into the
crowd.

SERGEANT:

Well, all the rest of you'll get what
I promise.

They cheer wildly.

MED. SHOT - DEL - JOHNSON

They are pushed along with the rest.

DEL:

I ain't ever been to real war before
- this seems as good as any.

They are pushed up to the stand where trappers make X's
on pieces of paper and are given money.

SERGEANT:

There's an oath - raise your hand.

DEL:

How much is the pay?

OFFICER:

Eighty dollars a month - with certain
compensations.

SERGEANT:

Whatever you can steal is what he
means.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

OFFICER:

The Sergeant put it bluntly, but there are spoils in any conflict. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman guarantees to treat his scouts well.

DEL:

I have seen my fill a this land - let us git on with it.

SERGEANT:

Name.

DEL:

Del Gue - with one "e".

SERGEANT:

His.

DEL:

Liver Eatin' Johnson, spelled like it sounds.

JOHNSON:

Cut me out.

DEL:

What!

JOHNSON:

That is right - I want no part of this.

DEL:

We could git rich.

JOHNSON:

(to Del)

I have my own war - I will see you after this feud is finished.

They look at each other's eyes for a moment, shake hands.

DEL:

Whenever.

Johnson turns and stalks out of the crowd.

SERGEANT:

Who's your next of kin?

DEL:

What?

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.1)

SERGEANT:

Your kin.

DEL:

I ain't got one. I sprung full blown into this world from the arm pit of a bitch alligator in heat.

SERGEANT:

(bored)

You got a wife or something?

DEL:

I had one, yes I did.

SERGEANT:

Where is she now?

DEL:

I sent her to Rome.

SERGEANT:

To Rome!

DEL:

I sent her to roam the open prairie - she is probably still there.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT - CROW VILLAGE - SPOTTED TREE - CALEB - OTHERS

Warriors dance dressed in buffalo heads and robes. Women beat drums and sticks - all chant. It is a time of great festivity- the making of a chief. The elders of the tribe crowd around the lodge of Spotted Tree, who sits in front of his three wives and eight children. He is older - grey and somewhat heavier - his life has been full, many scalps hang from his lodgepole - his coup stick is highly decorated. He smiles as the elders approach and hand him a ceremonial bonnet - resplendent in the finest eagle feathers. Spotted Tree smiles - PAN down the line of decorated and painted children, his sons and daughters, among them a white boy about 12 - CALEB - he has Johnson's old Hawkin rifle and he smiles like the rest and chants with his brothers. It is a time of great honors.

CUT TO:

CLOSE SHOT - MOUNTAINS - MONTAGE

In each of the following sequences Johnson gets older.

INDIAN - DAY

A Crow warrior, painted full for war, screams into the camera, draws his scalping knife and charges.

CLOSE SHOT - JOHNSON

Johnson howls his yell and pulls his bowie.

FULL SHOT - CLIFF - JOHNSON - CROW

The two collide on a cliff - silhouetted against the sky - Johnson knifes the warrior who tumbles screaming over the cliff into camera.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT - MEADOW - JOHNSON - CROW

Johnson stands in a meadow - a fierce Crow warrior prances his war pony on a ridge. He lowers his lance and charges down at full gallop. Johnson raises his pistol as the horse and rider thunder down on him - Johnson fires - the horse crashes down throwing the rider into foreground. Johnson draws his bowie.

DISSOLVE TO:

MED. SHOT - WOODS - JOHNSON

Johnson runs through the thick woods knocking branches aside, breathing hard - PULL BACK as he collides with a Crow warrior and the two crash through the brush and branches, knives flashing. Only Johnson gets up.

DISSOLVE TO:

MED. SHOT - PRAIRIE - JOHNSON - CROWS - DUSK

Johnson gallops hard, being pursued by two Crows. Shots ring out and echo through the air. Johnson gallops into foreground and pulls his horse down and jumps behind it in one motion - he quickly pulls down his big Hawk on

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

one Crow and blasts him from the saddle. He ducks back as the other one fires kicking up ground near him - then he stands as the Indian charges over him and takes the heavy rifle by the barrel.

MED. SHOT - DIFFERENT ANGLE

As the horse thunders by, Johnson swings heavily.

MED. SHOT - HORSE

The Crow's body crashes from the galloping pony into the dust.

DISSOLVE TO:

MED. SHOT - STREAM - JOHNSON - CROW

Johnson is carefully setting a beaver trap when a Crow warrior charges up the stream bank, fires his rifle and throws his lance which hits Johnson in the side and breaks off. He charges into the water where Johnson pulls his pistol, fans it, smashing the horse over. Then he kills the brave with his bowie.

Johnson staggers from the stream with the broken lance head stuck in him. He is bleeding heavily. He screams in pain and pulls the lance out, blood spatters on the ground. He tries to wrap himself in skins and pulls himself onto his horse.

FULL SHOT - PRAIRIE - JOHNSON

He rides bent over in his saddle towards a distant plateau.

FULL SHOT - CLIFF - JOHNSON - TWILIGHT

He rides up to a cave in the cliffside, falls off with his rifle and staggers inside. We hear the roar of some unearthly beast, then a shot. Johnson returns and leads his horse in, barely able to walk.

INT. MED SHOT - JOHNSON

He lies by a fire barely alive - the wind blows snow outside.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CROW VILLAGE - FULL SHOT - DUSK

The Crow village is alive with activity - it is spring, the time of the sun dance and other Plains' Indian rituals of manhood. Warriors dance wearing colorful buffalo robes and beads. Squaws and young girls chant and play drums, etc. Children are everywhere, even dogs are decorated with eagle feathers.

FULL SHOT - MEDICINE LODGE

Most activity centers around the Medicine Lodge - a large tepee where young men are beginning the ordeal of passing into manhood and being accepted as true warriors. The boys sit around the outside of the lodge, drugged and starved in preparation for this day. Among these is Caleb - now a strong young man. Painted and prepared for his test, he looks little different from the others, save his slightly lighter skin. The boys are nervous and look around at each other, uneasy. Finally some of the priests and chiefs step out of the Medicine Lodge - Spotted Tree - now aging and fat - is among them. They select several of the boys who stand up - come forward and go inside. Caleb is amongst them.

INT. MEDICINE LODGE - MED. SHOT - CALEB - OTHERS

The boys seat themselves around a small fire - a medicine man sits to one side. His eyes are glazed, he is obviously in a trance. The boys nervously look around. Another two priests enter - one ceremoniously takes a bowl of peyote buttons and offers one each to the young braves. They chew on them slowly - frowning at the disgusting taste. They grit their teeth and manage to consume the powerful mushrooms. The priest passes more - the man in a trance starts changing - a long, strange wailing chant - the other priests join in.

DISSOLVE TO:

MED. SHOT - MEDICINE LODGE - DIFFERENT ANGLE

The boys all chant now, too. They sway and blink - the drug is having its effect. One young brave grabs his face and starts shaking. The priests pay no attention to him and go on with their ritual. Suddenly Spotted Tree and another chief enter the lodge. The priests look up at them - they grab one of the boys who is limp with the drug and carry him outside. The others chant softly - we HEAR a scream of pain from outside. They enter again and grab Caleb.

EXT. FIRE - CLOSE SHOT - MEDICINE MAN - CALEB - NIGHT)

They burst from the lodge and drag Caleb to the priest in foreground, sitting near a fire. Holding him with other warriors, they extend his hand - the priest grasps his small finger - forces his hand onto a rock and chops it off. Caleb winces but does not cry out. They thrust his hand into the fire to seal the wound. He just stares blankly into space. Warriors comment on this show of strength - one nods at Spotted Tree who stands back watching proudly.

FULL SHOT - FOREST - CALEB - OTHERS

The Crow warriors ride through the forest leading Caleb. They emerge into a moonlit meadow. He just stares blankly as they take him down from his horse and lead him out into the open. Then they remount - shout some incantations and turn and gallop off leaving him alone in the mountains. He has no weapons.

DISSOLVE TO:

LONG SHOT - PRAIRIE MEADOW - CALEB - NIGHT)

Caleb wanders across a long grass-covered meadow in the moonlight. He walks aimlessly - a wolf howls in the distance. He pays it no mention.

FULL SHOT - RISE - CALEB

Caleb comes to rise in the meadow where a few small pine trees grow. He climbs slowly up the rise and notices something. He falls to his knees - in the grass are piles of bleached buffalo bones and several skulls. He picks one of these up in awe and places it at the summit of the rise between the trees - then he starts a long deep chant. In the distance the wolves hear him and howl to each other.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT - RISE - DIFFERENT ANGLE

FROM LOW ANGLE - we see Caleb has placed all the bones in a pile in foreground. He howls his chant, framed against the moon. He picks up one of the skulls and holding it above him chants long and loud - conjuring up the spirit of the departed beasts. The wolves howl also, very close)

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

this time. Caleb puts back the skull and turns to the meadow, silent. He HEARS a low snarling and the dark shape of wolves circling in the grass can be seen. One darts in towards him. He shouts a challenge - the wolf stops snarling.

FULL SHOT - CALEB - DIFFERENT ANGLE

The wolf is joined by others, they circle the rise warily. Caleb goes back to the skulls and selects a large bone. With his back to the trees, he moves out between the skulls and the wolves.

CLOSE SHOT - WOLF

It snarls and charges.

CLOSE SHOT - CALEB

He swings hard, brings the bone above his head and swings again and again. The wolf snarls in its death throes. Caleb starts in with his chant.

FULL SHOT - CALEB - WOLVES

He stands over the dead wolf, chanting defiantly at the others - defending the buffalo bones and the spirit that dwells in them - as the beasts stalk him warily.

LONG SHOT - RISE - CALEB

He can barely be seen amongst the still trees in the moonlight - his chant mingling with that of the wolves that wait for him to weaken.

FULL SHOT - RISE - CALEB - DAWN

The dawn rises dramatically becoming a spectacular orange against the dark blue sky and black clouds. Caleb stands framed against this, holding up the buffalo skull, chanting as strong as before. PULL BACK to reveal several dead wolves that lie in the grass and others sitting attentively, surrounding the rise, howling with him - waiting.

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT - MEADOW - CROWS - SPOTTED TREE - DAY

It is later in the day - Spotted Tree and other chiefs and old warriors follow Caleb's tracks - they HEAR a distant chant - now weak. They urge their horses on and draw up at the base of the rise. They stare in wonder - PAN to reveal Caleb on hands and knees - waving his club in challenge and barely able to chant at all - but still fiercely defending the buffalo bones. He looks at the others but doesn't really see them. Dead wolves lie around him - he is clawed and bitten, but the wolves have fled. Spotted Tree and the others just stare in wonder. The chiefs start congratulating Spotted Tree, for his boy has truly found his totem spirit - that of the great buffalo bull no less - he has become a warrior and a man.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MED. SHOT - CAVE - JOHNSON - SPRING

He walks out into the sunlight - his beard is ragged and long. In the background are the bones of one of his horses. He looks at his side which has healed, and out at the land.

LONG SHOT - P.O.V. JOHNSON

The valleys and meadows are green with the new growth of spring.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT - JOHNSON - PRAIRIE

Johnson heads back across the vast expanse towards the towering Rockies in the distance.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT - VALLEY - JOHNSON

He rides to the edge of a butte overlooking a long stretching valley, the grass turning golden in the summer's heat. It is unmarked save for a long line of polished steel that bisects it neatly. A railroad track.

MED. SHOT - TRACK - JOHNSON

He rides up to the track shining brilliantly in the noon day sun. He shakes his head, gets off his horse, goes

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(Cont.)

over and kicks at it awhile, then he leans down and puts his ear to it. He shakes his head again, mounts and leaves.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT - PRAIRIE - JOHNSON

He rides down through the open prairie looking at the skulls of buffalo, bleached white by the sun, where great herds used to roam.

CLOSE SHOT - MEADOW - JOHNSON

He kneels next to a battered old Indian shield and a rusty harness - horses hooves lie about - Pull back as he gets up to reveal much debris in the green meadow. He walks a couple of steps and pulls up a bent cavalry saber and a tomahawk.

FULL SHOT - MEADOW - JOHNSON

Johnson rides slowly through the thick aspens and comes to the edge of a beautiful green meadow. It is a meadow Johnson has seen before - it is Crazy Woman's valley. He looks out and is surprised to see that the old cabin has been rebuilt - and smoke comes from its chimney. Johnson rides through the tall grass and pulls up in front of it. The graves of Crazy Woman's family are gone and in their place are two mounds - one very large and one smaller - both decorated with Indian finery. The door of the cabin opens and out walks Del Gue and his Indian wife and their son. Del's hair is gray and long - he smiles.

DEL:

Been waitin' for you, Liver Eatin' - welcome home.

JOHNSON:

Glad to be here, Del Gue. How was the war?

DEL:

Fair, as those things go. This my wife and boy.

JOHNSON:

They look fine. - good and strong.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

Johnson dismounts and walks over to the mounds.

JOHNSON:

Crow?

DEL:

That's right.

JOHNSON:

What happened to her?

DEL:

(indicates)

She went blind and starved to death -
last winter. Sorry to tell you Liver
Eatin'.

JOHNSON:

Woulda' happened sooner or later -
What about that one?

DEL:

You better read it.

He walks over and reads carefully.

JOHNSON:

Medicine soldier - Man-That-Walks-
Behind-His-Horse.

He gets up and looks off at the mountains.

JOHNSON:

(almost to himself)

There was never no Injuns quite like
the Crows.

DEL:

How's that?

Johnson still stares off at the mountains as he speaks.

JOHNSON:

This warrior set out to track me eight
years ago - it was his life's chore -
no tellin' how many times he had to hide
by his village to watch his children
grow strong - his wife grow old - his
friends die off. He was alone - had
nobody to talk to - to spend a cold
winter with - nothin' 'cept what he had
set out to do. His soul would let him
go no different.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

He turns to Del.

JOHNSON:

He died in the cold, unfulfilled,
waitin' for me to come back.

They just look at each other, then at the mounds.

JOHNSON:

Looks like they built a monument to
'em.

DEL:

It ain't to them, Liver Eatin' - it's
to you... You're welcome to stay with
us - this is your home now.

JOHNSON:

No - no, I believe I'll be moving on -
(pause)
I found signs of big fight - Sioux and
the Army -

DEL:

There've been some of those - there'll
be more - this place is sacred to the
Injuns. They won't bother us here -
can't say the same for the Army.

JOHNSON:

Well, I'm going to Canada. Hear
there's land up there a man has never
seen. But first I'd like you to do
me a favor, Del.

DEL:

Whatever, Liver Eatin'.

JOHNSON:

I'd like you to come with me back to
my old cabin - I got somethin' to do
there. It won't take long.

Del nods, speaks quickly to his wife in some Indian tongue,
and she hurries off to get him his horse.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT - JOHNSON - DEL

They ride up the steep canyon and stand facing Johnson's old cabin. It has fallen into disrepair and the cut wood has long since rotted. They look at it for a moment.

DEL:

Wood's gone. Might have saved some poor devil's life last winter or afore.

JOHNSON:

Might have.

Johnson dismounts, strides to the door and kicks it open. He pulls off his powder horn - sprinkles its contents around, draws his pistol and fires into it, igniting the cabin.

DISSOLVE TO:

FULL SHOT - DEL - JOHNSON - CABIN

They stand on a cliff overlooking the cabin as it finishes burning to the ground.

JOHNSON:

A wind'll come outa the Wind River country an' blow away the ashes. Grass'll grow an nobody'll ever know what happened here.

They turn their horses and leave.

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT - RIVER - JOHNSON - DEL

Johnson and Del ride down a muddy embankment to the edge of a swift river that cuts through the frozen high prairie. They pause and wrap their rifles and powder in oilskins - then enter the icy water.

FULL SHOT - RIVER - DIFFERENT ANGLE

Johnson leads, hanging onto the neck of his horse as it swims uneasily out into the swift current. Del follows, they are swept downriver. Johnson's horse goes under because he is leading the pack animals. He is swept

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(Cont.)

downstream with the pack animals. Del pulls him along and they hang on frantically as the animal swims to the other bank.

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT - PRAIRIE - JOHNSON - DEL

The two men walk leading the one tired horse. They are spent, and shiver in the cold wind - they don't talk but just trudge along, tired. Johnson no longer has a rifle, only his pistol and knife.

FULL SHOT - DIFFERENT ANGLE

They plod ahead across low-rolling hills. Suddenly Johnson stops - he stands in foreground sensing something - almost smelling the air. He motions to Del, who stops also - they stare up at a distant rise - one by one silhouetted against the grey sky a line of mounted Indians appears. They fan out across the rise.

JOHNSON:

Crows!

DEL:

You sure?

Johnson just stares at the distant riders.

JOHNSON:

A hunting party.

Del just stares too.

DEL:

Son of a bitch - after all these years we may git scalped by a stinkin' huntin' party.

JOHNSON:

Didn't even see our tracks.

Del pulls the horse close.

DEL:

Well, get on and hold tight.

Johnson looks at the Crows as he talks.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

JOHNSON:

That pony's played out - break down right here with both of us on him.

DEL:

You wanta flip a stick?

JOHNSON:

You're the lightest - get going. You got something to go back to - this is my place. Get on!

Del leaps on the horse, he pauses for a second. Johnson takes the pistol from around his neck and throws it to him.

JOHNSON:

Don't wanta let just anybody have that.

Del takes a last look at his friend.

DEL:

Take care of yourself, Liver Eatin'.

JOHNSON:

I will, Del Gue.

He turns and whips his horse into a run. The Crows plunge down the hill and ride across the plain to Johnson. He just stands there waiting. They ride up and surround him silently - their lances, bows and rifles ready. They carry buffalo hides and meat on pack horses - they are a hunting party, not painted for war. Johnson looks around at them - he pulls his knife and charges the closest one, but the Indian backs his pony up and gallops away. Johnson attacks another, and he rides out of the way also. Wherever Johnson runs, the Indians pull back and avoid him - then close the circle again. Finally Johnson, breathing hard, falls in exhaustion. We HEAR the braves speak about their quarry. They mention the words "Dapiiek Absaroka" - can this be the killer of their people? No other warrior would have displayed such courage.

FULL SHOT - PRAIRIE - CROW CAMP - JOHNSON - OTHERS

The Crows ride their horses into their hunting camp. They lead Johnson, walking with a rope around his neck and his hands tied. He is also stripped to the waist in the harsh wind. He walks proudly straight as he enters the village. Women and children and other men rush out from the lodges and stare at him. They all whisper among themselves - we OVERHEAR many say the words Dapiiek Absaroka - the word has been passed - they know who he is.

INT. TEPEE - FULL SHOT - JOHNSON - CROWS

Johnson is tied up sitting near a fire in a Crow tepee. Numerous warriors and minor chiefs gather around. Some reach out and touch or poke him - another rubs a tomahawk blade on Johnson's head. Johnson just stares ahead. A medicine man wearing a buffalo headdress enters - there is much conversation. The medicine man takes a burning log from the fire.

MEDICINE MAN:

Dapieks Absaroka -

Johnson doesn't answer - he shoves the burning ember into Johnson's ribs - Johnson barely winces. All the warriors comment and approve of his stamina. It is the genuine Crow Killer - Eater of Livers.

MEDICINE MAN:

John-son - Dapieks Absaroka -
John-son. Soon you die - die as
chief in Medicine Lodge - John-son -
many coups.

Johnson stares ahead, doesn't answer. The medicine man sees he will say nothing. He speaks quickly to the others and leaves. They crowd around again, rubbing weapons on him, trying to capture his power.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINS - FULL SHOT

The sun rises over the snowy peaks on a clear, cold morning.

CUT TO:

EXT. CROW CAMP - LONG SHOT

The camp is serene in the early light of dawn - peaceful and quiet. Smoke drifts straight up from cook fires. WHIP PAN to reveal a grizzled mountain man crouched among trees in foreground. He wears a mountain lion's head over his own for a hat. Two more mountain men slip up to him - one has a full mounted eagle on his fur hat and is painted like an Indian. The other wears a grizzly's head - it is hard to tell which is the bear. They signal, and above in a tree can be seen three or four more shaggy, dirty men.

FULL SHOT - MOUNTAIN MEN - DIFFERENT ANGLE .

On the other side of the Crow camp five or six mountain men are seen crouched in their buffalo robes in tall grass. Four more slip from rocks and dart silently into the trees. In the foreground three carry up a heavy cannon and brace it against a rock - they tip it up and pour powder down - stuff some rags in and then fill it with rusty nails. They brace it carefully on the rock aimed at the camp. Several more duck around in front and slip down into the grass. All of them carry one or two rifles and a pistol. Many of them wear bushes and twigs on their backs and hats.

CUT TO:

INT. TEPEE - MED. SHOT - JOHNSON - CROW

Johnson stares at the young guard who stares back. Finally the guard can stare no longer - he mutters something to Johnson and looks away. Two Indians wrapped in buffalo robes approach - the guard says something - they answer and enter. Before the guard has time to react - one throws off his robe revealing that it is Del Gue - and grabs him. The other, now seen to be Bear Claw, tomahawks him. He falls heavily. Del gleefully pulls his scalping knife.

BEAR CLAW:

Wait - I hit him.

DEL:

Well - I held him.

BEAR CLAW:

That's my scalp.

DEL:

The hell it is, you old boar pig.

Bear Claw raises his hatchet.

BEAR CLAW:

I'll lift your hair you rat-sucklin' buzzard dog.

JOHNSON:

I'd feel much better if'n you cut me loose.

They swear at each other and go to cut him loose.

DEL:

(to Bear Claw)

Stand aside you decrepit pile a lizard dung - you are angerin' me.

(CONTINUED)

(Cont.)

BEAR CLAW:

I'll teach you t' talk to yar elders
with the tongue of a bitch-wolf -
wait'll we git outa here.

They go and start cutting Johnson loose.

CUT TO:

EXT. CROW CAMP - FULL SHOT - CROWS

The Crows are preparing breakfast and other camp chores. Dogs scamper around barking but nobody pays them any mention. Buffalo meat is being cooked - old men wake and stretch. A young girl, about 20, not unlike the Swan when she was alive, gathers up buckets and carries them down towards the nearby creek for water. A young brave says something to her and she smiles back at him.

MED. SHOT - DIFFERENT ANGLE - GIRL

She walks down to the stream and is filling the buckets - she looks at her pretty reflection in the still water.

CLOSE SHOT - GIRL'S REFLECTION

She is looking at her reflection - something moves in the corner of the FRAME - we see someone is standing darkly - looking down at her - she freezes - she looks up slowly in terror - she opens her mouth to scream but no sound comes out.

CLOSE SHOT - MOUNTAIN MAN

FROM HER P.O.V. An incredibly ferocious-looking man with a tree tied to his back raises his hand and yells the unearthly mountain-man yell.

MONTAGE - MOUNTAIN MEN

QUICK CUT to mountain men as wild as any beast to have ever walked the earth - they yell their blood-curdling battle cry in succession and cock their rifles.

MONTAGE - CROWS

CLOSE SHOTS - CROW BRAVES

Warrior Crow braves look up and around them in terror as the shattering yell floods into their ears. Men drop their breakfast and freeze - more burst forth from lodges..

MONTAGE - MOUNTAIN MEN

The man who gave the first yell fires - CUT TO: VARIOUS MOUNTAIN MEN - their Hawkins blasting one after another INTO CAMERA - the yell continuing.

CLOSE SHOT - GUNS

The hammers fall in rapid succession - the barrels spit flame - smoke - lead and death.

CLOSE SHOT - CROW WARRIOR

He is blown off his feet as his blood splatters against his lodge.

FULL SHOT - CROWS

Another two or three are cut down as the big slugs rip through them - some slump to the ground, lifeless and bleeding - others kick and scream - squaws and children run from the lodge only to be blown off their feet - arms, legs and heads shattered by the tremendous volley.

INT. LODGE - MED. SHOT - DEL - JOHNSON - OTHERS

Del is just finished untying Johnson as the fight begins - Bear Claw ducks as bullets rip through - two braves rush in with knives bared - Del blasts them both in the face with Johnson's old Colt - one falls into fire in foreground - Bear Claw shoots out with his rifle.

EXT. CROW CAMP - FULL SHOT - CROWS - ANOTHER ANGLE

A chief breaks from his lodge - is blasted through the head and falls among his horses - they stampede and fall as bullets rip through them, also. Women and children run from their shelters only to be run down by the mad animals or blown apart by the crossfire of the big Hawkins.

FULL SHOT - CROWS - ANOTHER ANGLE

Some of the warriors have formed a line and bravely fire muskets and arrows back at the ring of Mountain men - Old men - women and children are everywhere. In their panic the warriors often shoot them or horses, which gallop around completely mad with fear. One by one the warriors are cut down - lodge poles are shattered - snow is kicked up - everywhere men are falling, screaming and dying. A chief motions to his men - they grab their weapons and follow him - many fall.

FULL SHOT - MOUNTAIN MEN

They stand and shoot, then feverishly reload - the BLAST is almost continuous and they are so good that every shot counts. A big man in the foreground blasts - pulls his Walker-Colt and blasts again - he points off to the right.

MOUNTAIN MAN:

They're goin' right t' Modena.

MED. SHOT - MOUNTAIN MEN - CROWS

The Crows spill down towards a stream which seems their route of escape - but in the foreground stand Mariano Modena and Big Anton Sepulveda - two of the fiercest Indian killers of all time. Anton braces the cannon against the rocks - the Crows rush forward firing and whooping. Mariano touches it off, howling. It ROARS, cracking the rock. Big Anton is knocked over - red hot nails spray out leveling everything in their path.

FULL SHOT - CROWS

The blast of nails rip into the Crows, killing most of them horribly. The wounded survivors turn running, limping and dragging themselves back to the remains of their camp.

FULL SHOT - MOUNTAIN MEN - MARIANO - BIG ANTON

The mountain men now blast the survivors at their leisure - like shooting in a gallery. Mariano jumps out in front of them, holding up his hands, they stop.

MARIANO:

(with obvious relish)

Knives!

FULL SHOT - MOUNTAIN MEN

They all agree loudly that this is good sport - they draw their bowies and howling their wildest yell charge towards us.

CUT TO:

INT. TEPEE - MED. SHOT - JOHNSON - OTHERS

Johnson lies flat on the ground - four or five dead Indians are piled up around the fire - the lodge is riddled with holes. Del and Bear Claw crouch at the entrance shooting out. Del shoots.

DEL:

Nailed that one.

JOHNSON:

Untie my feet, Del.

Del turns around and starts over to Johnson.

BEAR CLAW:

Give me that rifle while yer gone.

DEL:

Sure.

He gives him the rifle and scampers around and gives Johnson assistance.

DEL:

They hurt you any, Liver Eatin'?

EXT. TEPEE - FULL SHOT - JOHNSON - DEL - OTHERS

Johnson pushes out into the open air holding his pistol, followed by Del and Bear Claw. Johnson stares in disbelief and horror at the scene around him. Bodies are piled up like cord wood - some of the tepees are burning and smoke fills the air.

FULL SHOT - CROW CAMP - JOHNSON - OTHERS

Johnson stands in foreground surveying the massacre. Crow men lie grotesquely on the ground - their women and children piled up around them. Dead horses are twisted into hideous shapes. The ground is black blotches of bodies and the red stains of blood. Johnson starts forward through the

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(Cont.)

carnage. Around him the mountain men go about their grim business with scalping knives. Several of them notice him and crowd around - others join.

MOUNTAIN MAN:

He looks in one piece - didn't touch a hair on his head.

ANOTHER MOUNTAIN MAN:

Want somethin' special, Liver Eatin'? I'll git it if for you.

He leans down over a dead brave and is about to cut out his liver. Johnson grabs him, lifts him up and smashes him across the face with his pistol, sending him rolling around the bodies. Mariano steps up.

MARIANO:

What'd you do thet fer - he ain't got but two good teeth.

Johnson is enraged beyond belief - he turns to the others.

JOHNSON:

This was between me and them - you had no right t' interfere.

MARIANO:

We come t' your rescue, Liver Eatin'.

JOHNSON:

How I got out was my business, Modena - you didn't come t' rescue me - you just came t' massacre Injuns.

Big Anton Sepulveda steps out.

ANTON:

This was just a huntin' party - there's plenty left.

MARIANO:

Yeah - there's all them Crows in the Bitterroots still t' go.

Johnson looks hard at them for a second.

JOHNSON:

I spit on the likes a you.

He turns his back and leaves - Del follows, sneering at them also - for the hell of it.

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(Cont.1)

BEAR CLAW:

Injuns must a poured coals in his
haid and sewed it back up.

ANTON:

I ain't gonna do no more favors fer
him.

He leans down and grabs a dead Indian by the hair.

CUT TO:

FULL SHOT - CREEK - JOHNSON

Johnson wanders down to the creek and catches one of the
Crow ponies. He swings onto it bareback and rides across
the creek - he stops, seeing something on the other side.

MED. SHOT - JOHNSON - DIFFERENT ANGLE

Johnson looks down at the body of the dead Crow girl who
looked like Swan - She lies on her back in the reeds - her
skirt pulled up - she has been raped and shot. Johnson
looks at her for a long moment, then rides past. Suddenly
something catches his eye. In a pile of bodies, something
glitters. Johnson dismounts, rushes over and pulls away
dead braves. There in the mud is Caleb, dead. Johnson
reaches down and looks at the glittering locket hanging
on a wolf's claw necklace. He opens it and the lock of
yellow hair blows away in the wind. A shadow falls over
him. He looks up. Del Gue stands there. They look at
each other.

DEL:

I'm sorry, Liver Eatin'.

JOHNSON:

You don't have to say nothin', Del.

He picks up Caleb's body.

JOHNSON:

I'm taking him back to his people in
the Bitterroots.

(pause)

It is all I can do.

He turns and goes to his horse.

FULL SHOT - JOHNSON - RIDGE

Johnson rides along a ridge in silhouette, Caleb's shrouded body over his saddle.

FULL SHOT - CROW VILLAGE - JOHNSON - OTHERS

Johnson leads his horse and cargo towards what is left of the Crow nation. A village of dirty lodges - spread around a stream. As Johnson leads his horse past the stream young Crow girls look up from their washing. Johnson passes, more notice him as he leads his horse and litter through the lodges. Old men stare out - squaws cluster around and gasp when they see who is being brought home. Men, women and children fall in behind Johnson, chattering to each other. They know who the warrior was. But who is this old, fierce one with the long beard? The old men know - others speculate - they whisper the name - children and young braves look up in awe. Johnson walks on - past the Medicine Lodge where the priests rush up - past the Dog Society where old warriors whisper - right up to the lodge of the chiefs. He turns and unties Caleb - then picking him up he carries him to where Spotted Tree and his sub-chiefs stand. He lays him gently on the ground. The two old warriors look at each other for a moment.

SPOTTED TREE:

Dapieka Absaroka.

Johnson nods - Medicine men chant and begin incantations. The chief slowly sits next to Caleb - he starts to chant. He looks up at Johnson - Johnson sits next to him. Together they chant with the medicine men.

LONG SHOT - JOHNSON - SPOTTED TREE - CALEB - OTHERS

They chant long and deep, a sad wailing in respect to fallen warriors. The mountains stand behind them - with clouds and snow at their peaks. The wind blows dust obscuring them briefly before they pass into legend.

FADE OUT