

"Sunrise"

Two brothers fight on opposite sides of a land struggle between the greedy railroad and black and indigenous homesteaders.

by
(Joseph R. Freeman)

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FADE IN:

SUPER: "Fall Of 1863."

EXT. ROUNDPOINT'S PLANTATION - DAY

Sunny day. Slaves work hard in the fields.

MR. ROUNDPOINT: (65) White male.

DAN ROUNDPOINT: (19) White male, short and thin.

JOHN ROUNDPOINT: (22) White male, tall and muscular.

In the hot sun, Mr. Roundpoint is giving his boys John and Dan shooting lessons. On a nearby fence, some tin cans have been lined up neatly in a row.

Squeezing off a few rounds, John hits a can with each successive shot.

MR. ROUNDPOINT

That's good, son. Good eye.

Dan shoots. Hits one can. Misses two.

MR. ROUNDPOINT

Slow down, boy. Take your time.
Squeeze the trigger. Breathe easy.

Easing up, Dan fires a shot that knocks a can off the fence. Nodding, Mr. Roundpoint appraises his sons with a smile.

INT. ROUNDPOINT'S HOME, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

LEE ROUNDPOINT: (16) White male, frail and sickly.

From the window, Lee watches his father and his brothers shooting targets.

INT. ROUNDPOINT'S HOME, LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Sitting in a rocker, warmed by a blanket and a blazing fire, Lee looks out across the plantation through a picture window.

Sitting by the fire, Mr. Roundpoint reads the paper.

Mrs. ROUNDPOINT: (60) Knitting in her rocker.

With a COUGH, Lee turns from the window and puts his attention on a pile of tin soldiers.

Dan reads by the fire. John stares into the fire, more or less unblinking.

MR. ROUNDPOINT

Oh, The Great Emancipator. Who the hell does he think he is? He just can't come on down here and tell us how to live. Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, and now Virginia. All seceding. That many folks can't be wrong.

Lowering his book, Dan considers his father.

DAN ROUNDPOINT

If it's war he wants, then I hear the boys are signing up!

John takes an interest in the conversation.

MR. ROUNDPOINT

I need you boys here. Maybe next season. Lets get this year behind us.

JOHN ROUNDPOINT

Won't be anyone left to fight, by the time we get there.

MR. ROUNDPOINT

Enough talk of war. Now who's all going tomorrow?

DAN ROUNDPOINT

Me!

JOHN ROUNDPOINT

Me too!

LEE ROUNDPOINT

(coughing)

I want to go.

MRS. ROUNDPOINT

Not this time, honey.

INT. ROUNDPOINT'S HOME, LEE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Mrs. Roundpoint rubs some oil on Lee's chest. Handing him a cup of tea, she steadies his hand. Lee takes a sip.

Getting to her feet, Mrs. Roundpoint hugs her son.

MRS. ROUNDPOINT
Good night, my love.

INT. ROUNDPOINT'S HOME, MRS. ROUNDPOINT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mr. and Mrs. Roundpoint lie in bed.

MRS. ROUNDPOINT
I don't like the sound of his
breathing.

MR. ROUNDPOINT
He'll be fine. It's just the wild
flowers. Had the same thing when I
was his age.

EXT. ROUNDPOINT'S PLANTATION, WOODS - AUTUMN AFTERNOON

Mr. Roundpoint, Dan, and John are hunting in the woods. John and Dan come to a shallow ravine. John looks over to see a flock of turkeys.

As John prepares a shot, Dan trips him. While John tumbles helplessly down the ravine, Dan readies a shot.

EXT. ROUNDPOINT'S PLANTATION - CONTINUOUS

BANG.

DAN ROUNDPOINT (O.S.)
(echoing)
I got one!

INT. ROUNDPOINT'S HOME, LEE'S ROOM - DAY

Hearing Lee COUGHING, Mrs. Roundpoint enters the room to see some blood on his chin and hands.

MRS. ROUNDPOINT
Oh, no.

EXT. ROUNDPOINT'S PLANTATION, WOODS - LATER

Mr. Roundpoint, Dan, and John trudge through the woods. John looks upset. Dan carries a turkey over his shoulder. Hearing a LOUD BELL from the plantation home, they all start to run.

INT. ROUNDPOINT'S HOME, LEE'S ROOM - LATER

Looking into Mrs. Roundpoint's concerned face, a DOCTOR shakes his head. Mrs. Roundpoint hides her tears.

SUPER: "Winter Of 1863."

EXT. ROUNDPOINT'S PLANTATION - DAY

In Confederate uniforms, John and Dan pose with their parents for a photograph by the grave of Lee Roundpoint.

EXT. RICH MOUNTAIN BATTLEFIELD - AFTERNOON

SUPER: "*1864. Rich Mountain Battlefield.*"

Dead bodies litter the ground. Under heavy fire, the Confederate army holds the line. Breaking rank, some of the boys start to run. Watching a young boy get shot, John winks at Dan. Then, he crams a wad of tobacco under his lip and takes a deep breath.

JOHN ROUNDPOINT
(yelling)
Let's go!!

John Roundpoint charges up the battlefield. Dan follows him, with a handful of other soldiers. Firing his handgun until it's empty, John picks up a rifle with bayonet. Shooting and stabbing Union soldiers, he continues the reckless charge.

DAN ROUNDPOINT
(yelling)
John, your left!!

Turning, John sees the Union soldier. Spitting out some tobacco juice and draws a knife. Lunging forward, he plunges the knife into the man's chest.

John glances over to his brother. Taking the dead man's handgun, picking up another rifle, John leads the other troops towards the Union line.

CAPTAIN ROBERT BATT: (35) Confederate officer, with a scar over his left cheek.

CAPTAIN ROBERT BATT
(yelling)
Hold the line! Hold the line!

Union soldiers break through. Confused Confederates soldiers start running. A few men stand their ground.

CAPTAIN ROBERT BATT
 (yelling)
 Retreat, retreat, retreat!!!

A TRUMPET BLOWS.

TOMMY: (16) Confederate soldier, retreats into the woods with Dan, John, and some others.

DAN ROUNDPOINT
 You all know where the rally point
 is. Take the woods back, keep east,
 and spread out.

Slowly, the smoke on the battlefield clears away. The remaining Confederate soldiers seek shelter in the woods. Union army stops short of following them.

INT. RUN DOWN BARN - NIGHT

John, Dan and Tommy. Dan looks out the window.

JOHN ROUNDPOINT
 I'll take first watch.

EXT. CONFEDERATE CAMPSITE - MORNING

John Roundpoint, Dan Roundpoint and Tommy walk through a bustling war camp.

EXT. STONEY POINT BATTLEFIELD - AFTERNOON

SUPERS: "*Stoney Point Battlefield.*"

Pinned down under mortar fire, John peers out through thick smoke from a fox hole. EXPLOSIONS. GUN FIRE.

TOMMY
 (yelling)
 Help! Help me!

John sees Tommy running, looking for cover. EXPLOSIONS in the distance.

JOHN ROUNDPOINT
 (yelling)
 This way! This way, Tommy!

Seeing that Tommy hasn't heard him, John jumps out of his fox hole.

EXT. STONEY POINT BATTLEFIELD, DAN'S FOX HOLE - CONTINUOUS

Dan watches John leaping from his fox hole.

DAN ROUNDPOINT
What the hell!

Grabbing Tommy, John drags him back to his fox hole.

EXT. CONFEDERATE ARMY CAMP - EVENING

DAN ROUNDPOINT
I get it, okay? The only way to
make it through this war is to not
think you're going to make it. I
get it. But that was a dumb move.

JOHN ROUNDPOINT
He reminded me of Lee.

DAN ROUNDPOINT
You got a death wish? Lee's dead.
We're blood. He's not.
(Dan pushes John)
Sergeant has a mission for us.
Morale boosting. There's a Union
camp, up across the river.

EXT. CONFEDERATE ARMY CAMP - RIVER BANK - NIGHT

Dan and John climb aboard a small boat. Settling in, John removes his backpack. Taking them from a fellow Confederate, Dan loads three rifles into the boat before setting sail down the river.

Downstream, they spot two horses tied to a tree. Pulling to shore, they tie the boat up.

EXT. RIVER BANK - CONTINUOUS

Collecting their supplies from the boat, John and Dan mount horses.

DAN ROUNDPOINT
We'll meet back here. Wait for my
signal.

They both ride off.

EXT. WOODS, NEAR UNION CAMP - LATER

Dan and John dismount their horses, and scurry into the woods. John positions himself on a hillside. Opening his backpack, he unpacks and prepares three separate mortar positions.

Sneaking across the camp, Dan hides in the grass.

BANG! BANG! Dan Roundpoint opens fire on the camp! fires BANG! BANG! Union soldiers run out from their tents.

Running between his mortar positions, John starts bombarding the Union Camp. BOOM! BOOM!

Pell-mell, Union soldiers are firing in all directions.

Dan shoots up a flare.

EXT. WOODS NEAR UNION CAMP - LATER

Unscathed, Dan and John mount their horses and ride off.

EXT. RIVER BANK - MOMENTS LATER

John and Dan quietly make their way back across the river. SHOTS are still being heard from the Union Camp.

EXT. CONFEDERATE ARMY CAMP - THE NEXT DAY

Standing in front of the Captain, John and Dan finish their report.

CAPTAIN ROBERT BATT
You boys did good last night.

DAN ROUNDPOINT
Thank you, Captain.

CAPTAIN ROBERT BATT
That's why I have to send you back out. This one's straight from the top. They need a prisoner. They're planning something big. Take Tommy and a few of the others with you.

JOHN ROUNDPOINT
Tommy? Are you sure?

CAPTAIN ROBERT BATT
He needs the experience.

EXT. CONFEDERATE ARMY CAMP, CAPTAIN'S OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

John, Dan, and Tommy approach Captain Robert Batt with two prisoners.

DESERTER: (19) Male.

TOMMY

Excuse me, Captain.

CAPTAIN ROBERT BATT

What is it soldier?

TOMMY

We caught this Union soldier in the woods along with this deserter trash.

DAN ROUNDPOINT

Yeah. Chicken shit...

(kicks the deserter)

...took off running. Left us, all to save his own skin. We also found this Union scum hiding in the woods.

CAPTAIN ROBERT BATT

Is that right soldier. You a deserter?

DESERTER

Captain, please. I got word my wife and child are down with consumption. I had to see them.

CAPTAIN ROBERT BATT

You two.

(pointing at Dan and Tommy)

Take him to the stockade.

Dan and Tommy lead the prisoner away.

CAPTAIN ROBERT BATT

Take this deserter with you, and have him shot.

JOHN ROUNDPOINT

Captain?

CAPTAIN ROBERT BATT

You heard me. Can't allow this sort of thing to catch on.

The deserter collapses to the ground. John hoists him up and walks him away.

EXT. STOCKADE TENT - LATER

Dan and Tommy approach a Confederate soldier, with the prisoner in hand.

DAN ROUNDPOINT

Captain says lock 'em up. Dan spits tobacco, while the stockade soldier takes the prisoner away.

BANG! A single GUNSHOT startles Dan and Tommy.

EXT. CONFEDERATE ARMY CAMP - AFTERNOON

Captain Robert Batt addresses a GROUP OF SOLDIERS.

CAPTAIN ROBERT BATT

Stoney Point was hard. You boys know what's at stake here, don't ya? Or do you even care! Our way of life, our women, our children are being threatened. Do you want those Union hands touching your women? Owing your lands? Taking your property?

GROUP OF SOLDIERS

HELL NO!!

CAPTAIN ROBERT BATT

Well, that's exactly what's gonna happen, unless we get into this war and fight to win. Today we march towards victory. Tomorrow morning, we surprise them hard.

The assembled Group Of Soldiers CHEER.

EXT. CONFEDERATE ARMY CAMP TENT - NIGHT

John Roundpoint cleans his pistol.

TOMMY

What are you going to do after the war?

JOHN ROUNDPOINT

Not really sure. What about you?

TOMMY

I reckon I'll go home, marry June.
That's her name, I mean. June. Have
some kids. Got a little farm down
the way from some kin. Guess that's
what I'll do.

EXT. MILLER'S CROSSING BATTLEFIELD - MORNING

SUPER: "*Miller's Crossing.*"

Confederate soldiers rush into a Union camp, surprising the half-dressed, half-armed soldiers. Killing, burning tents, the Confederates push the Union soldiers back to the river. In the charge, John stumbles over the dead body of a Union soldier.

Hearing SCREAMING, John looks inside one of the tents. An officer's wife is being raped by a group of Confederate soldiers. At gun point, the officer is forced to watch the rape. Overcome with grief and rage, the officer rushes the Confederates.

BANG. Bleeding out on the ground, the Union soldier watches the Confederates bayonet his wife.

Surrounded by atrocity, John proceeds through the fog and smoke. In the din, he can see someone running towards him.

BANG! John shoots. Rushing forward, he sees that it's Tommy he's killed. John reaches for him.

TOMMY

Why?

JOHN ROUNDPOINT

I... I didn't... Oh, God!

Tommy dies in John's arms.

Taking fire, John runs for a barn - and he's surprised by a Union soldier in the smoke. Raising their guns, the two men look each other in the eye. Passing by one another, cautiously and quietly, they go their separate ways.

Through the smoke, Dan can almost make out the exchange between John and the Union soldier. Unsure of what he's seen, he shakes off his doubts and proceeds down the battlefield.

INT. CONFEDERATE ARMY BARRACKS - EVENING

Lying in his bunk, John stares at the ceiling. Too close by to give John any peace, some soldiers are chatting and playing cards.

MAN 1: Playing cards.

MAN 2: Playing cards.

Picking a bottle up off the floor, Man 2 helps himself to a stiff drink. Putting the bottle back, he wipes his hand on his pants.

MAN 2
Read 'em and weep.

Man 3 flips over three jacks.

MAN 1
I saw that!

MAN 2
You didn't see anything.

Man 1 reaches over to grapple Man 2, and pulls him into a fight. As the two start wrestling, cards fall out of Man 2's lap.

Getting to his feet, Man 1 draws his gun.

MAN 1
No good cheater! I don't want some
cheater watching my back tomorrow.

When the other soldiers start taking notice, Man 1 holsters his gun.

MAN 1
This ain't over.

Man 1 flips over the card table. Money and cards go flying. Man 1 storms out.

EXT. DREAMSCAPE

Wandering through the fog of war, John sees Tommy looking up at him. He sees Lee, and then a dead woman with her children, pointing in his direction.

INT. CONFEDERATE ARMY BARRACKS - NIGHT

Dan shakes John out of his dream. John wakes, soaked in sweat.

DAN ROUNDPOINT
You alright?

John closes his eyes and rolls over.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - NEXT DAY

Smoke, EXPLOSIONS, and GUN FIRE. Union and Confederate soldiers fighting hand-to-hand. Dan lights the fuse of a 32-Pound Field Howitzer.

In front of him, Man 1 sees Man 2 are patrolling near the treelines.

BANG! Man 1 shoots Man 2 in the back. Stepping over the dying man, Man 1 spits tobacco on him.

Shocked by the sight, John is caught off guard when a nearby EXPLOSION throws him off his feet.

Dan sees John sitting down on the battlefield, hands over his head, shaking and SHRIEKING.

Dan runs up the battlefield, firing his rifle at Union soldiers. His rifle jams, and he drops it to fire his six-shooter. Reaching his brother, Dan SLAPS John Roundpoint.

DAN ROUNDPOINT
What are you doing?! Get up!

Dan lugs John to his feet and drags him from the battlefield. EXPLOSIONS and GUN FIRE.

From his command post, Captain Robert Batt sees everything.

EXT. CONFEDERATE ARMY CAMP - NIGHT

Captain Robert Batt stops Dan on his way back towards the barracks.

CAPTAIN ROBERT BATT
Well?

DAN ROUNDPOINT
Well what, sir?

CAPTAIN ROBERT BATT
Looks like he's got an irritable
heart.

DAN ROUNDPOINT
What?

CAPTAIN ROBERT BATT
Your brother. I've seen it before.
Inability to cope with war. A
weakness, I do believe.

DAN ROUNDPOINT
He's fine.

CAPTAIN ROBERT BATT
He better be. Your squad's up
tonight. Search and destroy.
There's a small group of Union
soldiers dressing up as civilians.
Trying to cause some trouble
amongst the locals.

EXT. WOODS - EVENING

Dan, John, and a few other soldiers patrol the forest. Dan
points towards an old, rundown plantation.

EXT. PLANTATION - LATER

The men make their way quietly to the house.

Hearing NOISE from the barn, Dan points the way.

DAN ROUNDPOINT
(whispering)
Let's go. You three, come with me.

EXT BARN - MOMENTS LATER

John, Dan Roundpoint, and...

SOLDIER 1: (22) white male

...stand by the back barn doors. Rearing his leg, John kicks
them in.

INT. BARN - EVENING

Dan, John, and Soldier 1 storm the barn, guns drawn, getting the jump on four black soldiers and two white Union soldiers who are dressing themselves up as slaves and overseers.

SOLDIER 1

Union scum! N-n-n-niggers!

Reaching for a shotgun, one of the Union soldiers gets shot in the head by Soldier 1.

Dan fires on two others, hitting both in the chest. John has his gun drawn on the last soldier, but he doesn't shoot.

DAN ROUNDPOINT

Shoot him!

John Roundpoint freezes up.

DAN ROUNDPOINT

Do it!

John looks at Dan, and John lowers his gun.

While John stands there, motionless, the last Union soldier goes for his gun. Dan shoots, and kills him. Soldier 1 runs through the front doors of the barn, back to the other soldiers waiting for them. Marching up to John, Dan shoves him.

DAN ROUNDPOINT

What in hell is wrong with you?

Stepping out of the barn, Dan can see Soldier 1 by the tree line as he tells the other soldiers what happened with John.

EXT. CAPTAIN ROBERT BATT'S TENT - THE NEXT DAY

John stands in front of the Captain's desk.

CAPTAIN ROBERT BATT

You know I could have you shot.

John looks down.

CAPTAIN ROBERT BATT

Every soldier in my command has to look out for one another. We must all work as one. What would you have me do, here?

JOHN ROUNDPOINT
Permission to speak?

Captain nods.

JOHN ROUNDPOINT
I've seen things I can't get out of my head, Captain. Our own men raping, stealing, shooting prisoners. Old grudges being settled on the battlefield.

CAPTAIN ROBERT BATT
What the hell are you talking about! Look around you. This is war, god damn it. I've got about 100 regular soldiers and about 250 militia. You think all of them like each other? We all have to turn our heads to some things, and keep the bigger picture in mind - which is winning this war.

JOHN ROUNDPOINT
Winning at what cost?

CAPTAIN ROBERT BATT
Any! And all! Look. The men don't trust you. You might just be a battlefield grudge, yourself!

EXT. CONFEDERATE ARMY CAMP - LATER

Walking towards the barracks, John runs into Dan while he's having a smoke.

JOHN ROUNDPOINT
Are we right? Is all this right?

DAN ROUNDPOINT
Of course we're right. Right as rain. They're in there right now talking about you, calling you some kind of coward. Did you hear me? A coward!! I vouched for you. And this is what I get.

John shakes his head.

JOHN ROUNDPOINT
There are too many men dying. On both sides.

DAN ROUNDPOINT

That's war.

JOHN ROUNDPOINT

War?! Raping and pillaging. I'm not sure about any of this, anymore. And that's the truth of it. People dying all around - for what? Just to keep some black folk as slaves? That's crazy talk.

DAN ROUNDPOINT

You're the one talking crazy!

JOHN ROUNDPOINT

Do you think God cares if you're a Union or Confederate soldier, before he let's you in?

DAN ROUNDPOINT

You getting yellow?

JOHN ROUNDPOINT

I'm not afraid to die. That don't mean I'm willing to die for this.

DAN ROUNDPOINT

Honor? It's about honor, is it?

JOHN ROUNDPOINT

Honor?

(Laughing)

Two bullies trying to impose their will. And neither one man enough to settle it between them. They have to use us like dog-gone pawns. Hell, look around you. We're all poor men, fighting the war of rich men.

EXT. MILLER'S CROSSING BATTLEFIELD - FLASHBACK

Through the smoke and din, Dan watches John passing by the Union soldier...

EXT. CONFEDERATE ARMY CAMP - PRESENT

...and raising his fist, Dan charges at his brother.

DAN ROUNDPOINT

(Yelling)

coward!

Dan swings at John, pummels him, and John knocks him down. Getting to his feet, Dan charges again. Again, John throws him to the ground.

Spitting blood, Dan pulls out a pistol as he gets to his feet.

DAN ROUNDPOINT

You shame our family. Hell, I'll be dead shamed if you aren't already dead, to me.

Dan holsters his gun.

JOHN ROUNDPOINT

I'm leaving.

DAN ROUNDPOINT

They shoot people for walking.

EXT. CONFEDERATE ARMY CAMP - NIGHT

Wearing civilian clothes over what's left of his uniform, John throws a pack over his horse and rides away. Dan watches him go.

DAN ROUNDPOINT

(yelling)

Deserter! Coward!

Pulling out his pistol, Dan SHOOTs. John Roundpoint jumps his horse over a fence, John dodges the bullet. Turning back, he sees Dan firing another shot.

BANG!

INT. TRAIN COACH, SOME WHERE IN TEXAS - DAY

SUPERS: "1866. ONE YEAR AFTER THE CIVIL WAR."

BUTCH DAVIS: (40) Mayor, white male, balding and portly.

RAILROAD MAN: (30) White male, thin and wearing glasses.

Sitting in the caboose, the pair of them are talking and smoking while a photographer SNAPS their picture. POOF.

RAILROAD MAN #1

Shame the President gave all that prime land to a bunch of heathens and niggers. We could have dispensed it better.

(MORE)

RAILROAD MAN #1 (cont'd)

We need to drop more rails and connect this big country of ours. Hell, they can ride the train if they want. We'll just add some more fencing to the cattle section. Everyone wins, right?

They LAUGH. Butch Davis points to a large train model, while the photographer takes another picture. POOF.

BUTCH DAVIS

Here. This black area is what the government has designated as Indian Slave townships. You can see we already control most of the area. We can't buy the land directly from the government. The Blacks and Indians have to sell it to us direct. They're selling. Just got a few holdouts.

RAILROAD MAN #1

We need those land deeds. Hell the mineral rights will make us more money than tracks and trains put together. That's the future.

BUTCH DAVIS

I have a little gentleman's agreement with the folks in town. Store owners won't sell them enough to get them through the winter. They can sell to us, or they can freeze. Anyway the Sheriff is a good friend of mine.

Satisfied, Railroad Man #1 nods.

RAILROAD MAN #1

Good. They said you were a man who can deliver.

BUTCH DAVIS

I'll deliver, aright. You just make sure you do the same.

RAILROAD MAN #1

Of course, Mayor.

BUTCH DAVIS

That would be Governor Davis.

RAILROAD MAN #1
(Nods)
Certainly Governor.

Lurching, the train comes to a stop.

EXT. CABOOSE OF TRAIN - LATER

Gathering outside the caboose, a MURMURING crowd awaits a stump speech. Butch Davis and Railroad Man #1 step out, and the photographer takes a picture. POOF!

BUTCH DAVIS
I just got on this here train yesterday, in Hatcherson. And today, I'm in the lovely county of Lockwood. This same trip by wagon would have taken me two days and two nights on the trail. This fine gentlemen here next to me is the president of the West End Railroad. I have had the pleasure of being asked to ride the railroads and talk to you all about what a fine experience this way of travel can be. Just sit back and relax. I tell you, the food is great, and the seats are soft. I'll ride the train from now on, to get to where I've got to go.

RAILROAD MAN #1
That's right, Mayor. We spared no expense to provide our passengers with the very best in travel. We'll be adding more than two hundred miles of track to what's here already, linking all this land together. I invite you all to come and join us, as we make history together. Come on aboard. The ride's on us.

People make their way onboard, as the train steams off down the tracks.

EXT. MINING SHAFT - DAY

Hot. Summertime. Deep in the mines, John swings a pick. Scraggly, with an over-grown beard.

JOHN ROUNDPOINT (O.S.)
 Throw down that bucket, will ya?

From above, a miner lowers a bucket down the shaft. John Roundpoint fills the bucket with rocks and tugs on the rope, and the Bucket gets pulled back up.

EXT. MINING SHAFT - AFTERNOON

A bucket of rocks tumbles down a mining shaft, killing a miner.

EXT. MINING CAMP, LUNCH TENT - CONTINUOUS

Sitting by himself, John eats his lunch. In the background, miners continue working. Running across the camp, a man runs up to a tower and pulls on a rope. From the top of the tower, a bell RINGS out across the mining camp.

EXT. MINE - NEXT DAY

Passing John by, a buckboard wagon carries a coffin away from camp and down the road.

EXT. MINING CAMP, PAY TENT - AFTERNOON

Letting himself in a canvas tent, John presents himself to:

PAY MASTER: (70) is sitting behind the desk.

PAY MASTER
 Can I help you?

JOHN ROUNDPOINT
 Moving on.

PAY MASTER
 Can't say I blame you, mister.

Pay Master opens a big book and thumbs through the pages. John stops him, pointing at his name.

JOHN ROUNDPOINT
 Here.

PAY MASTER
 Okay. Sign here.

John signs the book, and the Pay Master hands him an envelope. Once outside, John opens the envelope and counts the money. Mounting his horse, he rides off.

EXT. MOUNTAIN BLUFF - DAY

SUPER: "TEXAS."

Cloudy. Cool mist hangs over the landscape. Dan eyes a herd of Buffalo through a pair of binoculars. Turning around, he walks up a bluff to where Butch Davis and a group of men on horse back are waiting.

DAN ROUNDPOINT

Follow me.

Butch Davis dismounts, grabs his rifle from a his horse's saddlebag, and follows Dan down the bluff. Dan SHUSHES him.

Ducking down, Dan positions Butch Davis's rifle for the shot. Butch looks through the scope at the herd. BANG.

EXT. DAN'S CAMP SITE - DAY

Patiently, Dan is dressing a buffalo.

EXT. DAN'S CAMP SITE - EVENING

Lying by the fire, Dan hears a NOISE, grabs his rifle, and crouches down, moving Grabbing his rifle and keeping low, he investigates - and soon, he's surprised by three Mexican bandits.

DAN ROUNDPOINT

What do you fellows want?

MEXICAN BANDIT: (30) bearded.

MEXICAN BANDIT

You sure got a lot of hides there, gringo. What are you going to do with so many hides?

DAN ROUNDPOINT

Just doing a little hunting, that's all. Don't want any trouble.

The three Bandits fan out around Dan.

MEXICAN BANDIT

Why don't you just lay down that
there rifle, and back up.

Dan lowers the rifle to the ground.

MEXICAN BANDIT

That's too many good hides for you,
gringo. Maybe we make your load
lighter. What do ya say?

They all LAUGH. Dan's not smiling.

DAN ROUNDPOINT

I don't think so.

MEXICAN BANDIT

(Laughing)

Look around you, cowboy.

Dan smiles. Faster than they can see, Dan drops to the ground
and grabs a gun from his boot. Firing three quick shots, he
disarms the bandits.

EXT. BUTCH DAVIS CAMP SITE - NIGHT

The governor sleeps in a covered wagon. Some horses are tied
to a tree.

GOVERNOR'S ASSISTANT: (25) male.

Sleeping outside, the Assistant hears the GUNSHOTS. Still
wearing his long johns, he grabs his rifle. Butch Davis pokes
his head out of the wagon.

Heading for Dan's camp, the Governor's Assistant hears
VOICES.

EXT. DAN'S CAMP SITE - CONTINUOUS

Dan has his gun pointed at the three bandits, when the
Governor's Assistant walks up.

DAN ROUNDPOINT

These good samaritans offered to
help carry our skins back to their
place.

The Governor's Assistant LAUGHS.

The Governor's Assistant helps secure the bandits, handcuffing them all together to a tree. Dan considers them sternly.

DAN ROUNDPOINT

If I hear anything, I'm just going to start shooting in that direction.

EXT. DAN'S CAMP SITE - DAY

Smoke rises from a dying fire. Dan stretches, looks around to see the bandits are gone. Dan stands up in his long johns, puts on his gun belt, and walks up to Butch Davis's wagon. Butch Davis sits outside smoking a cigar.

BUTCH DAVIS

Morning. I sent my man on up ahead with those boys. We'll meet up with him in town.

EXT. BUTCH DAVIS WAGON - AFTERNOON

Dan is driving the Governor's wagon, with his own horse in tow.

EXT. CAMP SITE - AFTERNOON (LATER)

Dan barbecues some bison meat.

EXT. CAMP SITE - AFTERNOON (LATER)

Dan hands Butch a plate of food.

BUTCH DAVIS

Mmm, this is good. Where did you learn to cook like this?

DAN ROUNDPOINT

My mother.

BUTCH DAVIS

And trappin'?

DAN ROUNDPOINT

That would be my father and older brother.

BUTCH DAVIS

Well, that buffalo head will look good on my wall.

(pauses)

You know, we been having some problems down near Smallwood with our Indian and black population. I could use a man like you, or your brother for that matter.

Dan smiles politely, fixes himself a plate.

DAN ROUNDPOINT

He's dead.

INT. SMALLWOOD JAIL - DAY

The three Bandits are behind bars.

EXT. SMALLWOOD JAIL - CONTINUOUS

Dan shakes Butch's hand, followed by the Governor's Assistant. His business finished, Dan starts walking away.

BUTCH DAVIS

Wait there.

Pointing at Dan, The Governor's Assistant pulls some papers out of his jacket, and hands them to Dan.

GOVERNOR'S ASSISTANT

By the powers invested in him, our newly Governor elect Butch Davis, I do so hereby make you a Ranger.

DAN ROUNDPOINT

What?

BUTCH DAVIS

That's right boy!

(patting Dan on the back)

Take these papers on down to Fort Brick in Smallwood. See Jim Hill. Pays \$25.00 a month.

Butch Davis and Governor's Assistant climb into a stage coach and rides off.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - AFTERNOON

Hot day. John looks bushy and tired, working in a gang of Black, White, and Asian men laying train tracks. Train guards pace back and forth on watch.

Collecting a pay envelope from one of the guards, John opens it.

JOHN ROUNDPOINT

What's this. This isn't a month pay.

TRAIN GUARD: (35) scraggly, scar on face.

TRAIN GUARD

Railroad takes out room and board for everyone. You knew that when you signed up.

JOHN ROUNDPOINT

Room and board? Are you kidding! A cold leaky tent, rancid chow and not enough of it! I break my back and bloody my hands for this?

John is starting to draw attention to himself. The train guard rests his hand on his sidearm.

TRAIN GUARD

You want to make this a problem?

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - NIGHT

John mounts his horse and rides away from the railroad.

EXT. OPEN RANGE - LATER

Raining hard. COUGHING, John crosses the steppe on horseback. His hat and his coat are all that protect him from the elements.

EXT. BOOMTOWN - LATER

Hard rain. Still COUGHING, John dismounts in front of bar. Over his head, a sign swings from an awning:

"THE PALACE."

INT. PALACE - LATER

Smoky bar. Men playing cards. Women walking around. A working girls escorts a grimy man upstairs.

Tossing back a drink, John considers a wanted poster hanging on the wall:

"Wanted: War Time Deserter \$300 reward".

Sure enough, the picture is of John. He looked cleaner, then.

The Bartender comes over.

JOHN ROUNDPOINT

Another.

After the bartender pours his drink, John grabs the bottle. SLAMMING some money on the bar, and leaves. For a moment, the Bartender considers the poster.

EXT. OPEN RANGE - LATER

Cold, rainy, and windy. Shaking as he rides, John takes a drink of whiskey.

EXT. SMALLWOOD MAIN STREET - MORNING

In the drizzling rain, a sign reads:

"Welcome to Smallwood population ~~100~~ 95."

John rides into town COUGHING. He takes a drink of whiskey.

INT. LIVERY STABLE - LATER

Holding his COUGH, John rides into the livery stable and hands the man some money. The man in question offers John some directions.

INT. LIVERY STABLE STALL - CONTINUOUS

Shaking, John backs the horse into a stall. Taking another drink, he grabs his rifle and slides off the horse into a pile of hay. Curling up behind the horse, he falls asleep.

EXT. FORT BRICK - DAY

SUPER: *"FORT BRICK."*