

"THE LAST INTERVIEW OF COLONEL CUSTER"

EPISODE ONE :
"Mona-Seetah"

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THE LAST INTERVIEW OF COLONEL CUSTER - (SERIES VERSION)

FADE IN

OVER BLACK

SUPER IMPOSE: The following is based on first hand reports, books, accounts, diaries, letters and witness testimony. It is June 17th 1876. At the Battle of Rosebud Creek General Crook is forced to fall back after a sustained bloody battle against Sioux tribes led by famed warrior Crazy Horse.

FADE TO

EXT. THE PLATEAU, ROSEBUD CREEK - SUMMER, MIDDAY

A green mountainous area with streams. A cluster of makeshift trenches have been hastily dug and contain CRATES and 300 X blue-coated American SOLDIERS. To the rear are horses and wagon-carts being readied for evacuation. GENERAL CROOK and his men are returning fire at about 100 INDIAN BRAVES.

Crook, 45, wears his officers uniform, has combed-back hair and a large bushy beard. He looks demoralised and tired.

The Indian Braves are dressed in hides and skins, adorned by jewellery and war-paint. The majority have bows or stone axes and YELP excitedly. Most are on HORSES adorned in paints.

This battle is almost over - about 30 soldiers lay injured or dead, Indians losses are far fewer.

CROOK

(shouting to soldiers)

Forget the supplies! Fall back men!

Everyone fall back! Retreat!!

A TRUMPET SOUNDS and a few soldiers shout "FALLBACK" and "RETREAT" repeatedly.

The soldiers abandon the trenches and retreat to the horses and carts nearby, some helping injured comrades or loiter to provide covering fire - but are quickly being overwhelmed.

Sensing victory many Indian Braves dismount, leap into the trenches and focus on fighting hand-to-hand. Among them is their leader: CRAZY HORSE, with his lieutenants TOUCH-THE-CLOUDS and LITTLE-BIG-MAN and WOODEN-LEG.

Crazy Horse is tall and physically imposing, with intense

EYES. He wears a loincloth and has WHITE SPOTTED WAR-PAINT.

Wooden Leg, 40, is weathered and wrinkled. His war-paint is from black charcoal. He has packets of herbs in his belt.

Little-Big-Man, 25, is slender and handsome, with platted hair. He has several necklaces, much jewellery and feathers.

Touches-The-Clouds is huge - tall and muscular. He carries a 2-handed STONE CLUB, adorned with feathers.

Crook and the surviving soldiers mount horses and retreat. Many Indian Braves pursue, yelping and howling euphorically.

Touch-The-Clouds explores the trenches, finishing off any remaining soldiers by crushing them beneath his club.

Wooden Leg and Little-Big-Man begin to open the abandoned crates as Crazy Horse finishes-off any the wounded also.

NOTE: All instances of the LAKOTA SIOUX LANGUAGE shall be indicated by being enclosed in [brackets]. Subtitles should be provided on screen for the benefit of viewers.

LITTLE-BIG-MAN

[Look how the Bluecoats flee!]

WOODEN LEG

[Almost a pity they don't fight as well as they run!]

LITTLE-BIG-MAN

[Crazy Horse! We have captured their supplies and ammunition!]

Crazy Horse approaches Little-Big-Man as he pulls out a rifle from the crate - one of many.

CRAZY HORSE

[This is indeed a great victory!! Just as the spirits have foretold!!]

Crazy Horse and his lieutenants YELP HAPPILY and wave their new rifles in the air. In the background the soldiers are retreating into the distance, a few Braves chasing.

FADE TO

MODEL SHOT / CGI - TRAIN TRAVELLING - DAY

A Steam Train circa 1860 travels though the American

wilderness, surrounded by rolling plains.

PAN AND CLOSE UP towards the passenger window where MARK KELLOGG is seated and gazing out.

Kellogg, 40, is balding with spectacles and a beard. He is dressed in a shabby worn suit with shoes held together by straps and bits of leather. He is not wealthy.

KELLOGG (V.O)

My name is Mark Kellogg. I am a part-time journalist with the Bismarck Tribune of North Dakota. I have taken the place of the Chief Publisher, whose wife has fallen ill. I'm to travel to Fort Lincoln in the Montana territories and meet the legendary George Armstrong Custer, who has agreed to be interviewed about his newest campaign.

FADE TO

INT. CARRIAGE INTERIOR - LATE MORNING

The carriage reflects the exterior, with a mix of mostly male seated PASSENGERS. Kellogg is alone and begins writing in his notebook as his Voice Over continues.

KELLOGG (V.O)

I'm promised this will be 'the opportunity of a lifetime' - something any journalist will relish - and a chance to see the quickly vanishing 'Wild West'. In truth I am more 'city folk' than a frontiersman. But I can ride a horse well enough and in my youth I learned to shoot... But I fear nothing from my formative years will have prepared me for the challenges that may lay ahead...

Kellogg pauses writing and pulls out a battered pocket watch to check the time.

FADE TO

INT. SITTING BULLS TENT - LATE MORNING

A large tepee of animal hides with smouldering fire in the middle. SITTING BULL lays sleeping on a crude bed, feverish

and twitching restlessly.

Sitting Bull, 50, is a craggy wrinkled Chieftain. He is clad only in a loincloth and has SCABS from self-inflicted cuts.

Sat nearby observing him is RED WOMAN. Red Woman, 45, is dressed in animal-hide clothing embroidered with bright red stitching (associated to her name) - one of his wives.

KELLOGG (V.O)

The Indian Rebels are led by Sitting Bull, spiritual leader of all Sioux who have united under his leadership and gathered in the Black Hills. Sitting Bull is a holy man and mystic, said to have visions of the future.

The flap of the tent opens and WHITE BULL enters, looking worried. He is half-brother to Sitting Bull, similar in looks but younger and dressed in patterned hide-clothing.

WHITE BULL

[Red Woman - is my Brother still not recovered from his ordeal?]

RED WOMAN

[No White Bull - not yet. I have bathed and cared for him, I think that soon he will awaken.].

Sitting Bull stops twitching and his eyes open. He sits up and looks around.

SITTING BULL

[You think correctly wife. For I am awakened... Hello my bother.]

WHITE BULL

(relieved and approaching)
[Sorry to see you so poorly Sitting Bull... Can you speak some more yet about your vision?]

SITTING BULL

[Soon I shall proclaim what I foresaw to all, but I still need more rest...]

WHITE BULL

[Did you foresee danger? Should we be ready to move the camp?]

SITTING BULL

[No need - there will be a great victory, one that all men will remember until the end of time.]

WHITE BULL

[That pleases me greatly! Let me know when you are ready and I will assemble the other chiefs to hear your words?]

White Bull turns to leave.

SITTING BULL

[Wait, there is more! We must not take the usual trophies and spoils from battle. If we do there will be DISASTER for our people - the likes of which will plague us for generations.]

WHITE BULL

[But I do not understand? How can we suffer if we win?]

SITTING BULL

[No matter how great our victory we must not take trophies! Fallen enemies must be treated with respect, as though members of our own tribe.]

Sitting Bull slumps back, panting and exhausted.

Red Woman gently cradles his head in her lap and begins to dab the sweat from his face with a rag.

WHITE BULL

[Rest brother - regain your strength. I will reassure the others for now.].

FADE TO

EXT. THE ROLLING PLAINS - MIDDAY

In the vicinity of a wide river, with hills and craggy peaks in the distance. An army convoy is proceeding - - the entire regiment of General Terry. 1500 mounted CAVALRY, 400 FOOT SOLDIERS, carts of mobile artillery, SUPPLY CARTS, MEDICAL WAGONS and last of all CIVILIAN CARTS. One civilian cart is filled with barrels and bottles, driven by JAMES COLEMAN.

Coleman, 45, is short and with large ears and moustache.

The final cart is driven by JOHN FRETT and is full of clothes. Frett is about 50, overweight and weasley-looking. Beside him sits an INDIAN SQUAW - his much younger wife.

Lagging behind all are several PACKERS - poorly trained civilians transporting supplies on mules.

Mounted and leading at the head of the column is GENERAL ALFRED TERRY, LIEUTENANT JOHN BURKMAN and Mr Kellogg.

General Terry, 50, has a side-parting and long curly beard. He is uniformed and looks sombre and stern.

Burkman, mid 30's, has dark receding hair and a long beard. He is the 'orderly' of Custer (his 'aid' and assistant).

Kellogg now wears a long dark 'duster' coat and his horse is noticeably poorer quality than all others.

KELLOGG (V.O)

My first meeting with Custer at Fort Lincoln was brief and unmemorable. I got a brief nod as he rushed past me. It wasn't really until I found myself on the march the next day with General Terry that I really got to meet him. And the rest, as they say, is history....

TERRY

(annoyed - to Burkman)

Where is Custer now?? Can't the man just do as he's told for once?? Give the order to halt the column, I've had just about enough of this nonsense.

BURKMAN

Yes sir.

Burkman drops back to give other nearby officers the order.

An uncomfortable moment passes where the disapproving General is effectively alone with Kellogg.

TERRY

Mr Kellogg sir - might I trouble you for a word?

KELLOGG

Who, me sir?

TERRY

Yes, you sir! Should you feel fit to record these events for posterity, I hope you will note this example of your patrons self-indulgent behaviour?

KELLOGG

Well to be honest, I'm not sure if this makes an exciting read...?

TERRY

Warfare is seldom exciting sir, it is merely a concoction of human tragedies that must be endured until over.

KELLOGG

Can I quote you on that General?

TERRY

No, you may not! Custer is your patron, not I. Personally I don't think you should even be here...

KELLOGG

I thank you again for this opportunity, General.

The column halts - as do Kellogg and General Terry.

TERRY

Perhaps Custer might listen to you if he won't take notice of his commander?

KELLOGG

Really General, I doubt if...
(cuts off - interrupted)

TERRY

You are here at his request, he is responsible for you. You can take a turn in reminding him of his duties! Ride up ahead and fetch him back. Remind him this is a military campaign, not some pleasure jaunt for Custer and his countless relatives!

KELLOGG

Yes General Terry, sir.

Kellogg begins to continue along the track alone.

TERRY
(calling)
Oh Kellogg - you are armed I take it?

KELLOGG
(calling back)
I have my Derringer!

TERRY
(quietly to self)
Effectively 'no' then?

TERRY
(calling to Kellogg)
Any problems, shoot up in the air - my
men will come immediately.

Kellogg manages to get his horse to accelerate to a lethargic gallop. Terry watches unimpressed and sighs.

FADE OUT

EXT. FURTHER ROLLING PLAINS - MIDDAY

Less vegetation, more isolated. GEORGE ARMSTRONG CUSTER is mounted and looking for his brothers who have galloped ahead.

Custer has long blond hair and goatee beard, an embellished uniform and, wears his hat on one side.

Suddenly a RATTLE SNAKE appears from beneath a rock which causes Custers HORSE TO REAR-UP IN FRIGHT. Custer is THROWN off his horse, which BOLTS. He lays dazed as the snake RATTLES ITS TAIL and bears its fangs.

Kellogg hastily approaches on his lethargic horse, he and his mount are both dustier from the ride.

KELLOGG
(calling as approaching)
Sir! Sir - are you all right?

Kellogg jumps off his mount and clumsily shoots at the snake with his tiny Derringer pistol. Custer is slightly amused that Kellogg's first shot RICOCHETS by his head!

The second shot KILLS THE SNAKE instantly. Custer lays looking at the dead snake and then turns to Kellogg.

CUSTER
Your timing is impeccable!

I am in your debt sir.

Kellogg helps Custer up to his feet.

KELLOGG

Just glad I was nearby sir.

Custer dusts himself down, a little embarrassed.

CUSTER

I see sir from your attire that you
are a civilian? One of the packers??

KELLOGG

I'm the reporter you invited from the
Tribune - we met the other day?

CUSTER

Ah yes, 'Mr Kelly' isn't it ?

KELLOGG

Kellogg actually. Mark Kellogg - sir.

CUSTER

(shaking hands)

George Armstrong Custer, at your
service.

FADE TO

EXT. ARMY CAMP AND STEAMER - LATE PM

A sprawling army campsite in the plains consisting of tents.
In the distance is the paddle-steamer 'The Far West' is
moored, with gangway down. A few soldiers patrol the
perimeter but most lounge around by their tents.

KELLOGG (V.O)

On his return - apparently to
embarrass Custer - General Terry
ordered him to remain at his side
until we found the Steamer 'Far West'
and made camp. Major Reno was selected
to go on a scouting mission to
investigate a possible sighting of the
enemy. We would wait in the meantime.

FADE TO

INT. CUSTERS TENT, ARMY CAMP - LATE PM

A larger better furnished tent, with a bed, table and chairs, a cooking area with portable stove and a tin bath. Custers dog 'Tuck' (a HUNTING HOUND) lays sleeping. Custer and TOM CUSTER are seated with whisky and cards. As at leisure they have unfastened jackets and loosened shirts.

TOM is Custers brother, similar facially, but darker-haired. He is a First Lieutenant and dressed accordingly.

Kellogg enters via the flap. The dog springs up and BARKS. All are momentarily surprised.

TOM

Down Tuck!! Down!

The dog obeys and sits quietly but stares at Kellogg.

CUSTER

Mr Kellogg come on in! Forgive me - I had quite lost track of the time?

TOM

Ah the roving reporter from The Herald you mentioned? Well 'Autie', I'll leave you to it and bid you both a good evening?

CUSTER

OK Tom, see you tomorrow... Early, if not bright?!

TOM

Well I make no promises, on either count. Good Evening Mr Kellogg!

KELLOGG

Good evening.

Tom exists.

CUSTER

Please Mr Kellogg, take a seat. Can I offer you a drink ?

KELLOGG

No... No thank you.

Kellogg fumbles with his notebook and pen.

CUSTER

I hope you'll excuse me drinking? It helps me to relax me in the evenings.

KELLOGG

Not at all.

CUSTER

Mr Kellogg I would like to offer you the opportunity for a few interviews, throughout this entire campaign. You may accompany me where-ever I go and we can chat whenever there's a quiet moment, such as this?

Kellogg looks surprised but pleased and NODS.

CUSTER

You probably saved my life back there, and your silence about the snake incident is much appreciated.

KELLOGG

Well, discretion comes with the job. Might I be direct with my questions?

CUSTER

Of course, be as frank as you wish, and I'll be as honest as I can be.

Custer sips his whisky.

KELLOGG

Thank you sir! In which case - my first question relates to that fateful incident with the rattler earlier.

CUSTER

Oh? Go on?

KELLOGG

You and your brothers were charging about earlier, well away from the main body of troops. You put yourself into a dangerous situation needlessly and very nearly paid a heavy price.

CUSTER

That's one way to put things? I suppose it would have been an ignoble end for 'The Great Custer'. Worse

still - I could have suffered the
greater indignity of having poison
sucked out of my arse by Major Reno!

Custer shudders theatrically. Kellogg seems surprised at
Custer and his unusual sense of humour.

CUSTER

Fortunately though you appeared in the
nick of time, so the famous 'Custer
luck' triumphs once again!

KELLOGG

But had you and your brothers not been
larking about, the whole thing would
never have happened? General Terry had
recalled you back at least two times
before, but still you persisted.

Custer suddenly seems annoyed and serious.

CUSTER

'Larking about' as you put it, was not
some mere foolishness on my part, as
you seem to imply sir?

KELLOGG

(stammering)

I - I meant no offence?

CUSTER

Let me answer your question with a
question of my own? How might it
effect the men to see their leader
acting in a manner like Major Reno?

KELLOGG

That little man with a ruddy face?

CUSTER

That's the one. Did you notice
anything odd about him?

KELLOGG

He was riding beside me much of the
march... His hands were shaking and he
kept taking swigs from his canteen.

CUSTER

You are an observant man Mr Kellogg.
And it's not water that the good Major

keeps in his flask. Although it pains me to speak ill of a brother officer, I wonder - do his hands shake from drink or perhaps from fear?

KELLOGG

Excuse my frankness, but I was asking about your conduct sir? Not his.

CUSTER

Indeed you were.

(takes another gulp)

Then compare his example to mine? If marching into battle in unfamiliar terrain, would you rather see your commander relaxed or afraid?

KELLOGG

You were hoping to put the men at ease by your actions? Was that it?

CUSTER

In every battle 'morale' is key to victory. A nervous commander makes the men nervous. One who is confident fosters confidence in others.

Custer finishes his glass and pours another.

KELLOGG

So you and this 'Major Reno' - I understand you have some history?

CUSTER

Yes, I have known Reno for many years... Since the Civil War.

FADE TO

BEGIN 'RENO' FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

Colour is more sepia, sound should be muted to allow the Voice Over to be heard clearly.

EXT. A VILLAGE IN VIRGINIA - MIDDAY

The outskirts of the rural village with a few shops and houses. Any wandering LOCALS are female (the men gone).

CUSTER (V.O)

Have you ever heard of 'The Grey

Ghost'?

KELLOGG (V.O)

The Grey Ghost?

PAN TO SHOP FRONT

COLONEL MOSBY is approaching the shop, gazing furtively around. Mosby, 50, has a partly hidden Confederates uniform under his coat, he has a beard and a large hat.

CUSTER (V.O)

'John Singleton Mosby', was a Confederate Colonel, known for guerrilla warfare tactics. He couldn't accept the war was over so he and his men kept fighting. A five thousand dollar bounty was put on his head. He was the last Confederate Officer to surrender...

MAJOR MARCUS RENO in the 'present' is 40, stout and ruddy-faced from years of heavy drinking. Here though he is several years younger - slim, sober and a Lieutenant Colonel.

Reno is exiting the shop carrying some groceries. He nearby BUMPS into Mosby who was entering at the same time. The two men stop and stare at each other for a moment, then Reno drops his goods and fumbles for his revolver. Using the door Mosby SHOVES Reno over and runs away down the street.

CUSTER (V.O)

I can't remember the name of the town, but Reno literally bumped into Mosby somewhere and set off after him. Luckily - or unluckily - he and his men had been assigned the task of mopping-up any lingering resistance.

Reno scrambles to his feet and pursues.

KELLOGG (V.O)

Really?! He bumped into him?

CUSTER (V.O)

Strange things happen in times of war Mr Kellogg. Although caught off-guard, Reno readied his men and pursued 'the Grey Fox' out of town...

FADE TO

EXT. WOODED GORGE - DAY

A woody area overlooked by rocky cliffs with a stream and a rough trail in the middle. Younger Reno and about 20 X mounted Northern CAVALRY are proceeding along the trail.

CUSTER (V.O)

Reno gave chase into a gorge a few miles away from the town. Whether it was the lure of the reward money or just his natural tenacity at the time, Reno had charged straight into a trap.

Establish Reno and his men coming under fire from several CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS in ragged uniforms, who had been hiding behind trees on both sides. Reno and his men quickly dismount and, using their horses as shields, they return fire.

CUSTER (V.O)

I hear it was like a shooting gallery, with poor Reno stuck in the middle.

Reno's men and horses are GUNNED-DOWN all around him.

CUSTER (V.O)

Although he survived he was wounded and lost nearly all his men that day.

Reno SCREAMS and panics as his men continue to fall. Soon only Reno is left, then he too is WOUNDED and collapses.

CUSTER (V.O)

After that unfortunate episode Reno became known for heavy drinking. Personally I'd have resigned from the army, but for reasons of his own Reno chose to remain in the service...

FADE TO

END FLASHBACK

INT. CUSTERS TENT, ARMY CAMPSITE - EARLY EVENING

Custer's Tent is as before, with Custer and Kellogg still seated together. Custer is pouring himself another drink.

KELLOGG

Poor old Reno? You know this how??

CUSTER

I make it my business to learn the history of all the men serving under me. It helps make better decisions.

KELLOGG

Sounds wise? And yes - I think I will join you for a drink now?

Custer pours Kellogg a glass, then sips his own.

CUSTER

As to why General Terry sees fit to send Reno scouting for the enemy and not myself, I cannot fathom.

KELLOGG

Perhaps this was punishment for your earlier behaviour?

CUSTER

By god you are very direct sir?!
But... I think I'm going to like you, Mr Kellogg.

Kellogg drains his glass and Custer seems impressed.

CUSTER

I see you're not taking many notes?

KELLOGG

I try to keep a lot of the stuff up here...

(points with pen to head)

I note down a few key points to help me to remember things later-on. If I try to scribble everything it gets in the way of a good conversation.

CUSTER

That I can understand. More?

Custer moves to refill Kellogg's glass.

KELLOGG

Thank you but no. A rule I have is never drink too much while working.

CUSTER

Very commendable... Technically I promised Libby - that's my wife by the

way - that I'd try to cut down... And on that note, I also have another ground rule, if I may?

KELLOGG

Oh?

CUSTER

I would deem it a favour if you allow me approval of the contents before doing anything?

KELLOGG

I thought that was the arrangement already? For the reports to my paper?

CUSTER

No - I mean about these personal interviews. Because I'm now speaking plainly, from one man to another.

KELLOGG

Ah, I think see your meaning?

CUSTER

For example - my remarks about Major Reno are better kept between the two of us, rather than be published.

KELLOGG

Yes, quite understood.

CUSTER

Publish and be damned, and all that.

KELLOGG

A quote from Wellington... Are you interested in other military leaders?

CUSTER

I've never pretended to be a scholar but I do have an interest in history.

KELLOGG

I think it's safe to say that you will be remembered long after people like me have been forgotten. How would you want to be remembered in history?

Custer thinks for a moment and sips his drink.

CUSTER

First and foremost as a good Cavalry man. And someone perhaps who could inspire his men to fight bravely.

KELLOGG

I heard you are keen on the play 'Julius Caesar'? Do you see yourself as another Caesar - a modern version?

CUSTER

Me? A new Caesar??

(laughing)

No! No - not really... But I can relate to him in some ways... I sometimes think the Indians are like the Gallic tribes and we like the Romans - hungry for their resources.

Kellogg nods and scribbles.

CUSTER

It saddens me a great general like Caesar is remembered more for his dramatic death than his many achievements. That he was murdered by his own people... *'Et tu Brute!'*

KELLOGG

Yes, indeed?

CUSTER

I wouldn't want to be remembered for losing a battle, like Napoleon. Or be thought of as a butcher of helpless natives. Indians are no weaklings, they are brave and cunning, trained as warriors from birth. They can put up one hell of a fight when roused...

KELLOGG

Sounds like you admire them?

CUSTER

In many ways I do... They can live in the wilderness with nothing, no technology or anything to aid them - places where we civilised men would stand no chance.

(pauses to drink)

It may surprise you to know that one

of my friends is a native Indian...
'Bloody Knife', my favourite scout.

KELLOGG

You're not just here for another
'glorious victory' for Civilisation -
crushing the barbarians? Another
laurel wreath for the great Custer?

CUSTER

(amused)

No, not at all! The objective here is
to intercept the hostile tribes before
their uprising grows any further. Then
to get them back to the reservations -
not just wipe them all out.

KELLOGG

If you say so? But General Terry seems
to have a lot of cannons and heavy
weapons around the camp?

CUSTER

I am here because of my knowledge of
the Indians and my previous
experience. Although there are some
who do not want a peaceful resolution.

KELLOGG

So what is the outcome YOU want?

CUSTER

The Generals and I want a short
decisive campaign, that nips this
uprising in the bud. Ideally get this
all done and dusted before the
Centennial Exhibition begins. Long-
term conflict will only lead to
growing animosity and unnecessary
losses... On both sides.

KELLOGG

This surprises me Custer? You are
known as someone good at fighting
Indians, even I find the idea of peace
with them 'uncomfortable'... Frankly
I'm used to hating them!

CUSTER

Men hate what they don't understand...
I'm not here because I hate Indians.

(pauses to drink)
 Although eclipsed by our own culture
 and technology, much like the Gauls
 fighting the Romans, these Indians
 have demonstrated time and time again
 they can still out-fox and even out-
 fight us. They can live off the land,
 are expert trackers - with abilities
 that seem almost inhuman to us.

KELLOGG
 Crafty and good fighters perhaps, but
 certainly also warlike and aggressive?

CUSTER
 At times, when roused... But as
 Shakespeare would say, 'If you prick
 us, do we not bleed'?!

KELLOGG
 Indeed, he probably would?

Custer drains his glass and seems tipsy.

BURKMAN (O.S)
 (calling from outside)
 Excuse me Colonel? It's me sir -
 Burkman?

CUSTER
 Ah John? Come on in?

Burkman enters the tent, dressed as before.

BURKMAN
 Excuse me Colonel, but General Terry
 has requested your presence. He
 apologises for the late hour.

CUSTER
 Ok - thank you. Let him know that I
 will be along directly.
 (to Kellogg)
 Oh and allow me to introduce John
 Burkman, my orderly?
 (To Burkman)
 John this is Mark Kellogg, who has
 kindly offered to conduct a series of
 interviews and write an account of
 this entire campaign.

BURKMAN

Pleased to meet your, sir.

FADE TO

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF THE INDIAN VILLAGE - MORNING

The sprawling Indian village is huge - a mobile village of assorted tents and tepees, with around 3000 inhabitants. A winding stream is to the East and a marshy area to the north.

MONAH-SEETAH and KATE BIG-HEAD are washing clothing and blankets in the river. There are several INDIAN CHILDREN playing and splashing about in the river nearby.

Monah-Seetah, 25, is a chieftains daughter, so has better quality clothes and jewellery.

Kate, late teens, is cousin to Monah-Seetah. Despite her name she is well proportioned but plainer than her cousin.

YELLOW BIRD is playing with the other Indian Children nearby. Yellow Bird is half-Indian, about six or seven years old.

KATE

[I still think you should ask permission to remarry?]

MONAH-SEETAH

[I hear your words Kate... But I still think one day he will return, I have not yet given on him.].

KATE

[But much time has passed already. No one can say you haven't waited... He may well be dead after so long?]

MONAH-SEETAH

[I do not believe that cousin - he is not a man who dies so easily].

MAHWISSA approaches the two ladies from the direction of the village. She is an Indian lady about 40 years old and the Aunt of both. Monah-Seetah and Kate turn to greet her.

KATE

[Greetings Mahwissa!]

MAHWISSA

[Here you both are? The head men have

been summoned to a meeting, I think there is soon to be an announcement. I suggest you come and listen?]

MONAH-SEETAH

[We are about finished here].

(calling)

[Yellow Bird! Yellow Bird!]

Yellow Bird stops playing and obediently runs to his mother, pausing to wave at his relative Mahwissa.

YELLOW BIRD

[Coming, mother!]

MAHWISSA

(to Yellow Bird)

[Hello young one!]

Monah-Seetah and Kate finish washing their clothes and quickly gather these up to bring with them.

YELLOW BIRD

(to Mahwissa, a daily question)

[Hello Mahwissa. Have you seen my Father today?]

MAHWISSA

[No, not today Yellow Bird... But maybe we will see him tomorrow?]

Yellow Bird seems unsurprised and apparently asks just for the sake of it. The three ladies take the laundry, Mahwissa takes Yellowbirds hand and they head towards the village.

FADE TO

INT. ARMY TENT - MID MORNING

A typical Army tent at the military campsite. SERGEANT JOHN RYAN is seated on a camp bed, polishing his boots. As Kellogg approaches he looks up and smiles. Ryan, mid 30's, has piercing eyes, a moustache and dark hair.

KELLOGG (V.O)

The next couple of days at camp were 'quiet' so with The Generals and Custers permission I wasted no time in interviewing a few of the men.

Sergeant Ryan looks up as Kellogg steps closer.

SUPER IMPOSE : Tent of Sergeant John Ryan

KELLOGG

I am Mark Kellogg. As you may know I'm a reporter, doing a piece on Custer. I have a quick question or two if I may?

RYAN

Ok... Shoot?

KELLOGG

If you could describe Custer in one sentence, what would it be?

RYAN

In just one sentence? *Hmmm...*

Ryan scratches his head thoughtfully for a moment.

RYAN

I'd say above all he is 'hard but fair'. Now I've heard it said otherwise but in my own experience I know if someone works hard Custer will recognise and reward them. He makes sure everyone is treated 'just' - but cross or disobey him at your peril!

Kellogg nods and scribbles a note in his book.

FADE TO

INT. SHARED TENT, ARMY CAMP - MID MORNING

A bigger shared tent with two camp-beds, a table and a few books and newspapers scattered about. LIEUTENANT WINFIELD SCOTT EDGERLY is in the process of tidying the tent. Edgerly, 30, has dark hair and a neatly trimmed moustache.

SUPER IMPOSE : Lieutenant Winfield Edgerly.

EDGERLY

That's easy - an 'animal lover'. He has lots of dogs that his aide Burkman helps keep an eye on, Custer just loves animals.

KELLOGG

(surprised)

Really??

EDGERLY

Oh yes. He has cats, dogs, birds, a lizard... And once a pet mouse called 'Oscar'. Little bugger would run up one sleeve and down Custer's other while you're there trying to give a report! He loved that little mouse...

FADE TO

INT. ANOTHER ARMY TENT, ARMY CAMP - MID MORNING

This tent is similar to Ryans. LIEUTENANT 'BENNY' HODGSON has removed his jacket and boots and is reclining on his camp bed with a newspaper. Hodgson is in his 20's, is slight of build and has a large droopy walrus moustache.

Kellogg stands nearby with notebook.

SUPER IMPOSE: Lieutenant Ben Hodgson.

HODGSON

A 'skirt chaser'! He's Woman-mad!!

KELLOGG

Really?!

HODGSON

Yep, he just can't get enough! Hell, I could tell you some stories... He and his brother were both seen heading to 'The Clap' Doctor last year!

Kellogg seems surprised but scribbles a note.

FADE TO

INT. MESS HALL, ARMY CAMP - LATE MORNING

A long tent with benches and tables. A couple of SOLDIERS are in the background, eating. In the foreground eating alone is COUNT CHARLES DE RUDIO. De Rudio is a 2nd Lieutenant, Italian, 45, with greying hair. He speaks with a strong Italian accent. Kellogg steps closer, notebook in hand.

SUPER IMPOSE: 2nd Lieutenant Count Charles De Rudio

KELLOGG

If you could describe him in one sentence, how would it be?

DE RUDIO

Let me think... Custer is a man of many qualities... Brave! Yes, above all he is brave. He would never back down from a fight - not ever.

FADE TO

INT. ARMY TENT, ARMY CAMP - LATE MORNING

The Army tent looks like many others. First Lieutenant DONALD MCINTOSH is cleaning a partly disassembled rifle. McIntosh, 30, is Canadian and has mixed Indian ancestry.

Kellogg stands nearby with his notebook, scribbling.

SUPER IMPOSE : 1st Lieutenant Donald McIntosh.

MCINTOSH

A gambler! He enjoys taking risks and can play one 'mean-hand' at poker - cleaned me out many times... Custer has the luck of the devil himself!

FADE TO

INT. INDIAN TENT, ARMY CAMP - LATE MORNING

This is a non-army tent within the camp and home of one of the scouts, more 'Indian' in contents. MITCH BOYER is sharpening a wooden spear and Kellogg is nearby. Mitch, 30, is half-Indian, flamboyantly dressed with cow-hide waistcoat.

SUPER IMPOSE: Senior scout Mitch Boyer.

MITCH

...As a hunter. Custer loves to hunt and explore and search new lands.

FADE TO

INT. MESS HALL, ARMY CAMP - LATE MORNING

The Mess Hall is as before. De Rudio and Kellogg are as before, Kellogg is trying to tactfully back away.

SUPER IMPOSE: 2nd Lieutenant Count Charles De Rudio (again)

DE RUDIO

...And Custer and Benteen still don't get on, so many years later.

KELLOGG

Thank you, but I really have to...

DE RUDIO

Oh there is more! All are related here, many even to Custer! Lieutenant Calhoun is in-law to Custer, his nephew and brothers are here. Its very incestuous, nothing like Italy. Did you know also that...

(cuts off)

FADE TO

INT. SHARED TENT, ARMY CAMP - LATE MORNING

A larger tent with two beds. LIEUTENANT WILLIAM COOKE is sitting on his bed, polishing the brass buttons as he talks. Cooke is about 24, tall and dark, with long 'drundrearies' (long flowing whiskers). Kellogg stands nearby, making notes.

SUPER IMPOSE: Lieutenant William Cooke.

COOKE

He is a born leader, able to inspire the best in the men. Custer is a great man, it is an honour to serve by his side.

FADE TO

INT. PRIVATES TENT, ARMY CAMP - EARLY PM

The Privates Tent is smaller. ISAIAH DORMAN is packing a backpack as he talks to Kellogg. Dorman, 30, is BLACK with a slight Jamaican accent. (The only coloured soldier here).

SUPER IMPOSE: Private Isaiah Dorman.

DORMAN

I can better tell you what he isn't, if that's any help?

KELLOGG

OK then?

DORMAN

Custer is not a bigot. He once said there is something you can learn from everyone, no matter their background, colour or creed. I never forgot that remark - it is unusual to hear such

words coming from a white man.

FADE TO

INT. SHARED TENT, ARMY CAMP - EARLY PM

A shared tent with two beds. 2nd LIEUTENANT GEORGE WALLACE is being questioned by Kellogg. Wallace, early 20s, has bushy sideburns and a moustache and a southern accent.

SUPER IMPOSE : 2nd Lieutenant George Wallace.

WALLACE

No - above all he is a music lover!
Custer really loves music and song.

Kellogg raises his eyebrows in surprise.

WALLACE

He even has his own travelling band
that normally accompany us out on
campaigns. Don't think they're allowed
with us on this one though...

Kelloggs scribbles a note.

FADE TO

INT. MESS HALL, ARMY CAMP - MIDDAY

De Rudio is still talking and following Kellogg who is retreating to the entrance, keen to leave.

SUPER: 2nd Lieutenant Count Charles De Rudio (yet again)

DE RUDIO

Wait, there is more I can tell you!

KELLOGG

Thank you again - but I think I have
enough now?

DE RUDIO

Lieutenant McIntosh is a direct
descendent of famous Chief 'Red
Jacket'? So he is hated by many tribes
who see him as traitor! And I myself
have a long interesting history too...

Kellogg looks pained and steps further away.

FADE TO

EXT. CLEARING IN INDIAN VILLAGE - MID MORNING

A clearing in the middle of the huge village with a smouldering bonfire. Gathered are numerous INDIANS, mainly Cheyenne and Lakota Sioux, including: Little-Big-Man, White Bull, Wooden Leg, Monah-seetah, Mahwissa, Kate Bighead, BLACK ELK, MOVING ROBE WOMAN and CHIEF KNIFE and Crazy Horse.

Black Elk is in his late teens, he doesn't wear much clothing and instead is adorned by numerous necklaces and bracelets.

Chief Knife is in his early 30's and looks sombre and serious. He wears a captured blue soldiers jacket.

Moving Robe Woman, 23, is a Sioux warrior. She wears a Mexican-like shawl and a captured 'prospectors' hat.

Wooden Leg and Little-Big-Man have since washed and cleaned off their war-paint.

Other Indians present are all ages, woman, men and teens. All unique in looks - influenced by rank and tribe. (eg, Cheyenne 'Dog warriors' are flamboyant, Cheyenne 'Elk warriors' are warrior-shamans, Cheyenne 'Fox Warriors' are aristocratic dandies. The Sioux are guerrilla fighters and dress themselves from whatever they take in battle).

Crazy Horse is dressed in skins and has removed his paint.

Addressing gathered the crowd is White Bull.

WHITE BULL

(to all)

[...That was the prophecy and those are the wishes of Sitting Bull.]

MAHWISSA

[But where is Sitting Bull now? Why do we not hear these words from him?]

LITTLE-BIG-MAN

[He is still weak from his vision and is resting in his tepee.]

CHIEF KNIFE

[Yes, he is old and needs his rest.]

WOODEN LEG

[His many wives must demand his

attention? No wonder he is so tired!]

There is a CHUCKLE among the crowd.

BLACK ELK

(to Crazy Horse)

[But what is the great victory that you speak of? What more is known?]

LITTLE-BIG-MAN

[Perhaps this was our recent victory over the Blue Coats to the south?]

CRAZY HORSE

[Those Blue Coats ran from us like frightened rabbits! Those who did not run were showed the mercy they deserved - we took many new scalps!]

WHITE BULL

(to all)

[My brother says there is a greater victory yet to come! The biggest our peoples have and will ever know.]

The crowd murmur their approval at these words.

WOODEN LEG

(to all)

[The Blue Coats will be afraid now - they will not soon return.]

LITTLE-BIG-MAN

[Should we seek out our enemies and attack before they have recovered?]

MONAH-SEETAH

(to all)

[No - we must fight in defence, as we always do! Do not provoke them.]

Touch-The-Clouds approaches carrying a CRATE on his shoulder, seen in the trenches before. He too has cleaned himself. He drops the crate in the clearing and begins to prise the lid.

CRAZY HORSE

[Touch-The-Clouds - show them the plunder taken from the Blue Coats!]

Touch-The-Clouds tears open the crate and tips it over, RIFLES spill out. The crowd seem impressed.

CRAZY HORSE

[We now have the means to drive the white man away from our sacred lands!]

WOODEN LEG

[We can kill them away using their own weapons and bullets!]

BLACK ELK

[That is good! Yes - very good!!]

MAHWISSA

[They have many more than our number, even with guns we must be cautious!]

WHITE BULL

[My brother would not want us to attack while he is recovering. He would want to study our enemies and devise a plan, not attack on a whim.]

CRAZY HORSE

[A whim?! We have many weapons and the greatest gathering of our peoples ever known! More Cheyenne and Sioux flock to us daily, swelling our ranks!]

BLACK ELK

[We should fight! Hunt our enemies!]

MOVING ROBE WOMAN

[Yes - let the White Man fear us!!]

WOODEN LEG

[Death to the White Man!]

There is a general murmur of approval among those present. Crazy Horse seems very pleased. Monah-seetah, Kate and Mahwissa however do not agree, they exchange worried glances.

FADE TO

EXT. ARMY CAMPSITE - PM

The camp is as before. Kellogg hurries away from the Mess Tent and almost bumps into FIRST LIEUTENANT EDWARD GODFREY. Godfrey, 30, he is large and physically imposing. He has a large moustache and an air of authority.

GODFREY

You're that reporter aren't you? I am

Lieutenant Godfrey. Come with me!

Godfrey firmly escorts Kellogg towards a medium-sized tent nearby. Kellogg looks apprehensive as being pulled along.

FADE TO

INT. BENTEENS TENT, ARMY CAMP - LATE PM

Benteens tent is similar to Custers and has a writing desk. CAPTAIN FREDERICK BENTEEN is seated and reading a letter.

Benteen, 37, has dark curly hair, a moustache and very piercing blue eyes. He talks with a Southern accent.

Godfrey enters the tent, SHOVING Kellogg ahead of him.

SUPER IMPOSE : First Lieutenant Edward Godfrey and Captain Frederick Benteen.

Benteen looks up from his letter and seems amused.

BENTEEN

Well if it isn't Custer's new best friend?! Come in Mr Kellogg, come in... Any friend of the great Custer is surely a friend of mine.

Kellogg straightens his clothing and looks annoyed.

GODFREY

I'll leave you gentlemen to get acquainted?

Godfrey nods to Benteen and exits.

KELLOGG

I have dispatches for my paper to complete before this day is out?

BENTEEN

This will only take a moment and will be time very well spent, I assure you.

KELLOGG

Your aide Godfrey says you have something important to tell me?

BENTEEN

Indeed, but first, am I right in my understanding - that Custer has

invited you to stay and has granted you a series of interviews?

KELLOGG
You seem surprisingly well informed?

BENTEEN
To coin a phrase from the scouts, I like to keep my ear to the ground.

KELLOGG
Custer has been very generous in allowing me access, yes.

BENTEEN
That sounds like any good reporters 'wet-dream' - I'm sure?

KELLOGG
I'm sorry, what did you say your name was again?

BENTEEN
Ah, where are my manners?! I've been living among these damned Yankees for far too long...
(stands and extends hand)
Captain Frederick Benteen, at your service sir.

KELLOGG
Benteen?

BENTEEN
(shaking hands)
Oh Custer mentioned me, did he? Well, I am flattered... Please take a seat?

Benteen gestures to the chair and Kellogg sits reluctantly.

KELLOGG
What is it I can do for you, Captain?

BENTEEN
As a journalist, I hope that you intend to write a fair and... 'completely accurate' account of your experiences here?

KELLOGG
Of course, that is my sole intention.

BENTEEN

I take it you know something of
Custer's history and past?

KELLOGG

What American hasn't heard of the
famous General Custer?

Benteen smiles coldly.

BENTEEN

Indeed... Although he is only a
Colonel now. Well there are two
important things you should ask him
of, should the opportunity arise.

KELLOGG

Two things? What things?

BENTEEN

Two names, to be precise... Names you
should enquire of him and watch
closely and see how he squirms.

KELLOGG

What names are these?

BENTEEN

The first name is 'Major Elliott'.

KELLOGG

I'm trying to record what is happening
here and now, not drag up ghosts from
Custer's past.

BENTEEN

The past is very relevant to our
present situation I assure you... And
quite possibly key to our future also.

KELLOGG

Ok, so 'Major Elliott' then? I'll see
if I can slip this into the
conversation - but I make no promises.

BENTEEN

Of course, and most appreciated. The
second name is a little harder to
pronounce, as it is Sioux.

KELLOGG

An Indian?

BENTEEN

Mona-Seetah. That is 'Mo-nah See-tah'.
Watch his reaction closely.

KELLOGG

Very well.

BENTEEN

Another thing I'd like you to mull
over is a word of advice - be careful
what you choose to believe. As a
civilian you're uniquely placed to
investigate - so I suggest you make
the most of the opportunity.

KELLOGG

You're suggesting I snoop around?

BENTEEN

I'm asking you to do your job and keep
your eyes and mind open. You may learn
much more than you bargain for.

CAPTAIN MYLES MOYLAN enters the tent. Moylan is of Irish
heritage, about 30 with a goatee beard.

MOYLAN

Sorry Benteen, didn't realise you had
company?

BENTEEN

Its fine Moylan, come on in... We're
all friends here. And I believe Mr
Kellogg was leaving soon anyway?

KELLOGG

Yes, yes indeed I was.

Kellogg rises gratefully from the chair.

KELLOGG

Good day gentlemen!

FADE TO

EXT. BENTEENS TENT, ARMY CAMP - LATE PM

The tent of Benteen matches the interior. Kellogg exits but

instead of walking away he hovers nearby to listen.

MOYLAN (O.S)
 (from inside tent)
 Custer just paid a visit to one of the
 scouts - that 'Charlie Reynolds' guy
 he is so friendly with.

BENTEEN (O.S)
 (from inside tent)
 Lonesome Charlie? And just before his
 big meeting with the Indian scouts?

MOYLAN (O.S)
 I hear Charlie has some personal
 worries... There was a hubbub about
 him trying to resign his commission.

BENTEEN (O.S)
 Maybe he and I need to have a little
 chat? See if I can help put his
 worried mind to rest, find out what is
 troubling the poor soul?

Lieutenant Godfrey comes into view from behind another tent,
 heading towards Benteens tent. Kellogg quickly goes about his
 business. Godfrey watches Kellogg suspiciously.

FADE TO

INT. LARGER ARMY TENT, ARMY CAMP - EARLY EVENING

Similar to the Mess Hall. On one side sits Custer, BLOODY
 KNIFE and HAIRY MOCCASIN.

HAIRY MOCCASIN is a Crow Scout, he has a Mexican-style shawl
 over his buckskin. He speaks English, Crow and Sioux.

BLOODY KNIFE, early 30's, is dressed in tasselled buckskin.
 He is acting as INTERPRETER - using INDIAN HAND-SIGNALS to
 translate to all spoken to those present throughout.

Custer is well-groomed for this meeting.

Cooke stands in the doorway and he has a revolver tucked in
 his belt. He is acting as guard and look-out.

Opposite Custer is CROW KING.

CROW KING is a War Chief of the Lakota, tall with long
 platted hair and a bone-pipe/bead chest-piece and feathers in

his hair. He speaks only the Sioux language.

Next to Crow King are TWO CHEYENNE 'FOX WARRIORS' - both in beaded hide shirts and tribal clothing.

NOTE: As before the Sioux language is indicated by these [brackets], the Crow language is indicated by these {brackets} - SUBTITLES should be provided for both.

CUSTER

...Thank you Bloody Knife.

(to Crow King)

You may have heard that Congress has passed a law to stop the slaughter of the buffalo, but Grant - Great Father of our nation - has refused to sign it - so nothing will change.

Bloody Knife makes hand gestures to Crow King, who nods.

CUSTER

Grant knows the buffalo to be a sacred animal to all tribes and all rely on these for food. When the buffalo is gone, the red man will surely follow.

CROW KING

[This is no surprise to me. 'Grant' - is no friend to my people, he hates all red men! Even those he has tamed.]

Crow King looks scathingly at Hairy Moccasin, as Bloody Knife makes his hand gestures to all.

HAIRY MOCCASIN

{You are wrong, Crow King. Grant respects the Crow tribe and treats us fairly. We work with him against our peoples mutual enemies.}

BLOODY KNIFE

(to Custer)

Crow King says he is unsurprised about Grant. Hairy Moccasin says the Crow work with Grant to help fight...er... mutual enemies.

CUSTER

I know Grant well and have fought alongside him. He is a merciless man, ruthless, without compassion. He

became president only to line his own pockets and those of his friends.

CROW KING

[This is the way with whites - their leaders want wealth, not to help their people as our leaders do.]

BLOODY KNIFE

Crow King says such is the way with all Whites - you are ruled by greed.

CUSTER

After this conflict I will replace Grant - like him I am a well known hero to my people. As next 'Great Father' I will be a friend to all Indian nations and build a land that provides for all its peoples - not just the whites or the wealthy.

HAIRY MOCCASIN

[We of The Crow care little for enemy tribes, or their fate].

CROW KING

[Just as their enemies care little for the treacherous Crow, who think only of themselves!]

BLOODY KNIFE

They say they don't care about 'all Indians' - many tribes are still bitter enemies.

CUSTER

Tell Crow King - I have not forgotten my promise to his people, that I wish only for peace. Help me settle this conflict. There is no need for war, a war in which his people will suffer.

Bloody Knife makes hand gestures as he talks.

BLOODY KNIFE

(to Crow King)

[The 'Long Hair' wishes for peace - all Sioux will suffer if there is to be war.]

CROW KING

[I will pass on your words to Sitting Bull - but is it not 'The Long Hair' who leads the Blue Coats?]

BLOODY KNIFE

Crow King asks will it be you who leads the attack?

CUSTER

I will ensure my men and I are first to arrive - but we want to talk, not fight. Ask him where his camp is?

BLOODY KNIFE

(to Crow King)

[The Long Hair will arrive first, before the others. He does not want to fight. Will you tell us where your camp is?]

CROW KING

[No I will not tell you, nor do I trust 'The Long Hair'. But I will pass on his words to Sitting Bull and, if time, I may return with a reply.]

BLOODY KNIFE

He will not tell us. But he may return if there is a reply and enough time.

CUSTER

Thank him for me - and remind him that I am a friend to his people, I have not broken my vow.

There is a slight RUSTLE SOUND from outside. All pause and the Fox Warriors reach for their weapons. Cooke raises his hand in the air to calm those present.

COOKE

Stand easy folks - I'll go and look.

Cooke exits the tent, reaching for his revolver.

SLOW FADE TO

EXT. LARGE TENT EXTERIOR, ARMY CAMP - EVENING

The large tent is in the civilian section of the camp. Cooke emerges from the tent and looks around, pistol drawn.

The shadowy form of KELLOGG is seen disappearing away, slipping between a few nearby tents.

FADE TO

EXT. CUSTER'S TENT, ARMY CAMP - EVENING

As before, but dog absent. It is now darker and a few soldiers carrying lanterns patrol the perimeter of the camp.

Kellogg passes a few tents and heads towards Custer's tent. There is a light shining from inside - Custer is in.

KELLOGG (V.O)

It seemed strange Custer is having secret meetings with Indians, though I couldn't understand much of what was said. Things here are not as I expected, as Benteen hinted at.

Kellogg arrives at Custers Tent and enters.

FADE TO

INT. CUSTERS TENT, ARMY CAMP - EVENING

There are signs of Custer having just eaten - he dines alone. The dog 'Tuck' is absent. Custer is seated with Kellogg.

KELLOGG (V.O)

Having returned to Custer's Tent a little later I found him in good spirits, though apologetic for Benteens earlier chat. It seems both Benteen and Custer each have spies of their own.

CUSTER

By any chance you're not a 'Mormon' are you Mr Kellogg?

KELLOGG

A Mormon??

CUSTER

Don't get me wrong, a man's beliefs are his own affair, for some reason Benteen has an 'issue' with Mormons.

KELLOGG

I'm not religious. But don't worry -

Captain Benteen is nothing a roving reporter like myself cannot deal with.

CUSTER

Ha! Well then, lets commence our interview? I hope you don't mind me having a drink or two to loosen up?

Custer pours himself a drink and gets another glass.

CUSTER

Care to join me?

Kellogg nods and Custer pours him a drink.

CUSTER

Just to prove that I am a man of my word, I'm even happy to answer the questions Benteen suggested if you wish? I guess you'd be curious??

KELLOGG

He said the first name to ask about is 'Major Elliott'.

CUSTER

(laughing)

Ha! Really?? That old chestnut?

Kellogg looks confused by Custers reaction.

CUSTER

Benteen is like a broken phonograph - unable to change his tune...

KELLOGG

Well I have to admit, I've never heard of this 'Major Elliot'?

CUSTER

Well - allow me to give a quick explanation...

FADE TO

FLASHBACK BEGINS - The battle of Washita sequence.

EXT. SMALL INDIAN CAMP - DAWN

The battle of Washita, 1868 - an Indian camp consisting of around 20 tepees is under attack by Younger Custer and his

SOLDIERS. Some soldiers are mounted, who circle the camp and fire. Foot soldiers also fire as they advance, then draw swords and engage in hand-to-hand combat. Younger Custer leads, with a younger Benteen and younger Sargent Ryan.

NATIVE INDIAN MEN rush to fight the soldiers, armed with bows or stone axes or spears. Some start to 'dig in' making shallow trenches for cover from the bullets.

PAN AROUND THE VIOLENCE as Custer narrates his tale.

CUSTER (V.O)

You have doubtlessly heard of the battle of Washita River?

KELLOGG (V.O)

Vaguely I think?

CUSTER (V.O)

Well... It was a great victory. My attack was somewhat opportunistic, having almost stumbled across hostiles by accident. This is really how any battle is won - luck is a big factor. I pressed our advantage with a dawn attack - we caught them napping!

KELLOGG (V.O)

Oh yes, I remember - I heard there were lots of women and children?

CUSTER (V.O)

Did you indeed? Well most non-combatants simply hid away as soon as the shooting started.

KELLOGG (V.O)

I don't mean to be disparaging, that's just what I heard?

CUSTER (V.O)

I heard the same - rumours spread by Benteen. Why though is a mystery, considering he was there himself?!

KELLOGG (V.O)

So there were lots of women there?

CUSTER (V.O)

Some - but unlike our culture - Indian woman will often fight alongside their

men. An enraged woman with a spear can kill you just as surely as any man!

FADE TO

FLASHBACK ENDS

INT. CUSTERS TENT, ARMY CAMP - EVENING

The Tent is as before, Custer and Kellogg sit conversing as before. Kellogg pulls out his notebook.

CUSTER

This whole affair is well-reported. I even wrote an account of it myself, including the fate of Major Elliott.

KELLOGG

And what of him?

CUSTER

With the village secured, without orders Elliott took a group of men to pursue a group of fleeing Indians.

KELLOGG

So - he was reckless then?

CUSTER

He was - they went charging off without orders and disappeared.

KELLOGG

Sounds rather familiar??

CUSTER

(laughing)

Ah Mr Kellogg - you are bold sir?!

Custer drains his glass.

CUSTER

It was regrettable but this was war and these things happen. To spare men and horses to search for the missing men, in a hostile area, would have potentially cost even more lives.

KELLOGG

You left him behind?

CUSTER

In so many words. Other nearby tribes were sending out war parties of their own and gathering nearby. We had to move to a more secure location.

KELLOGG

Benteen seems bitter about the matter?

CUSTER

He and Elliott were close friends, Benteen has never forgiven me. But had it been Benteen in command I'd bet real money he would have made exactly the same decision.

Custer sighs wearily, as if remembering events.

KELLOGG

Well... thanks for clearing that up.

CUSTER

If it wasn't this though, I'm sure Benteen would have found some other excuse to hold a grudge. That's just the sort of man he is - petty.

Custer stands and stretches, then fetches a fresh bottle of whisky. He opens this and refills both glasses.

CUSTER

Ok... So what was the second name?

KELLOGG

Ah now that's an Indian name... Er... Its 'Mo-nee-seetah'... I think?

Custers smile fades.

FADE TO

FLASHBACK BEGINS

NOTE: As the Voice Over concludes the sound levels return to normal, to allow spoken dialogue between characters.

EXT. SMALL INDIAN CAMP - DAWN

The camp has bullet holes and some tents are on fire. About 30 dead Indians - mostly male - are being dragged into a mass grave in the centre by soldiers. Present is Custer, Ryan and

Benteen - all younger. Ryan is only a corporal here.

Also present is ROMEO - a Mexican civilian scout. Romeo is large overweight and Hispanic, flamboyantly dressed.

INDIAN BRAVES are watching from hills overlooking the camp. A few INDIAN LADIES and Children stand near the mass-grave weeping. Soldiers search the tents and keep guard.

CUSTER (V.O)

I should have known? Well... I met Monah-seetah at the end of the very battle I described. We had captured what was left of the village but large numbers of Indians from other tribes began to gather and watch us.

KELLOGG (V.O)

As you mentioned before?

CUSTER (V.O)

What we hadn't bargained for was the unexpected spoils of war - a large herd of ponies and horses. Hiding in the tents was another surprise...

Ryan emerges from one of the tents and waves to Custer. Custer pulls back the flap and looks inside.

POV OF YOUNGER CUSTER - looking into tent.

About 30 X Cowering Indian women and children are inside, plus Monah-seetah. Here she is about 17 years old.

BACK TO SCENE

Younger Custer and Romeo gesture to the Indians to be calm and join the others outside. The captives file timidly out and gaze sadly at the mass grave. Benteen and other soldiers keep their guns trained on them.

CUSTER (V.O)

We had about forty non-combatants, they'd been hiding in the dead chieftains tent. Back then I had a translator called 'Romeo' to help calm things down. Tensions were high though - if the prisoners ran I couldn't be sure what some of the men might do. I didn't want a massacre!

Monah-seetah is last to leave the tent, she stands defiantly before Younger Custer with hands on hips.

CUSTER (V.O)
...And then I saw HER.

POV from Custer looking Monah-seetah up and down.

CUSTER (V.O)
She seemed to stand-out from the
others - beautiful and wild, like some
rare captured animal - still defiant.

BACK TO SCENE

NOTE: Sound in the scene returns to normal levels.

MONAH-SEETAH
(to Younger Custer)
[I am daughter of Chief Black Kettle.
If any man touches me or Mahwissa my
aunt we will fight to the death!]

Younger Custer seems dumbstruck. Romeo however is looking at Mahwissa with a sly grin.

MAHWISSA
(to Monah-seetah)
[Wait child, these are White Men, they
may just rape us and burn what is left
of the village if we co-operate?]
(looks at Romeo)
[Though don't co-operate too much,
some men like a little struggle...]

YOUNG CUSTER
Romeo - what are they saying??

ROMEO
The girl is the late chiefs daughter,
the woman is her aunt. They want to
know if we plan to rape and kill them
now or a maybe a little later?

YOUNG CUSTER
Tell them we will not harm them. If
they co-operate as our prisoners, we
will treat their wounded and let them
go when we are safe.

MAHWISSA

(to Romeo)

[You - fat one! You speak our words?]

ROMEO

[I do madam. I am to tell you that you and your people must co-operate, or there will be further trouble!]

MAHWISSA

[You don't plan to rape us?]

ROMEO

[We do not - but don't take that as an insult. It is not our way. Other warriors have been seen nearby and we must either leave or fight soon.]

Mahwissa looks to the distant Indian Braves and nods.

MAHWISSA

[Yes, I recognise them. These are enemy tribes - keen to finish what you started. How can we defend against them now all our men are dead?]

Custer looks with curiosity at Romeo.

ROMEO

They say the other Indians around us are enemies, they have no men left to fight against them.

YOUNG CUSTER

Tell them we shall protect them, but they must come with us to our fort.

NOTE: sound fades and is replaced by Voice-Overs.

Romeo nods and speaks to Monah-seetah, translating for Custer (this is MUTED). Mahwissa seems suspicious but nods.

CUSTER (V.O)

We took our prisoners and many ponies to carry them back to 'Camp Supply' - our Fort. All the time we were watched and followed by other Indians, but they didn't attack. This was a gamble - prisoners can slow us and cause problems - but if we ran into trouble we could use them as hostages.

DISOLVE TO

END FLASHBACK

INT. CUSTERS TENT, ARMY CAMP - EVENING

Custer is pouring himself another drink, Kellogg sips his.

KELLOGG

So you were using them as 'human shields' in effect?

Custer is surprised and spills a little.

CUSTER

Not quite the way I'd have put things Mr Kellogg! They helped us get to safety as we helped them in return.

KELLOGG

I take it then the other tribes were not their enemies and didn't attack?

CUSTER

They didn't. And once back in the fort our prisoners were treated as respected guests and I gave orders that none were to be harmed.

FADE TO

FLASHBACK BEGINS

EXT. FORT 'CAMP SUPPLY' - MIDDAY

The fort wooden, added onto what had previously been a smaller supply camp with new wooden walls and battlements.

Younger Custer, Ryan and Benteen - lead the same column of cavalry, soldiers and Indian prisoners as before on small horses in through the gate, along with Romeo, Mahwissa and Monah-seetah. The Indian prisoners are mainly female.

CUSTER (V.O)

I personally led them through the gates. Once inside Monah-seetah addressed me directly.

Younger Custer issues an unheard order and soldiers begin to scurry about bringing boxes and crates into the courtyard. Soon everyone has entered and dismounted.

NOTE: Sound in the scene fades back in.

MONAH-SEETAH

(to Custer, nods to crates)
[I am pleased to see the supplies you
have promised are here - will we be
permitted to leave soon?]

YOUNG CUSTER

I'm sorry but I do not speak your
language?

(turns to Romeo)
Romeo, what did she say?

ROMEO

She thanks you for sparing her people
and for the supplies. She is pleased
you kept your word - so far.

YOUNG CUSTER

Can you tell her that I, Custer, am
not her enemy. Be sure she understands
my name and that I am in command here.
Tell her I show my enemies no mercy
but will protect those who submit.

ROMEO

(to Monah-seetah)
[This man with long hair is called
'Custer'. He 'big chief' here. You
will have fresh supplies and soon you
may leave here - unharmed.]

Monah-seetah nods.

MAHWISSA

(to Monah-seetah)
[Do not trust these white devils! They
shot your father in the back as he
waved their flag to show his loyalty!
These people have no honour!!]

MONAH-SEETAH

Yes Aunt - I know these whites are
treacherous. We should never have
believed their many lies.

(to Romeo)
[Fat One! May we rest somewhere? My
people are very tired and hungry.]

ROMEO

[We will provide food, medicine too -
as long as you all behave.]

MAHWISSA

(to Romeo)

[When we leave we will make a new camp
- but will you seek to attack again?]

ROMEO

[You may camp where-ever you like? Our
hostilities are ended.]

Younger Custer looks confused.

ROMEO

(to Custer)

She says when they are rested and
leave they will make a new camp. I
have said we will not harm them.

FADE TO

FLASHBACK ENDS

INT. CUSTERS TENT, ARMY CAMP - EVENING

Custer and Kellogg are seated, all as before.

KELLOGG

They made their new camp nearby?

CUSTER

Immediately opposite, yes. There was a
river nearby, they found the location
'favourable'. For Indians it is the
women that set up all the tents.

KELLOGG

They didn't resent you or hold a
grudge for what happened before?

CUSTER

Quite the reverse. In their culture,
when defeated it is usual for captured
women and children to become slaves.
But we treated them well, so to them
we were being 'beyond generous'.

KELLOGG

Custer the 'Indian Giver'?

CUSTER

I have never cared for that expression. And my orders were to subdue local tribes and pacify the area. So my plan was simple - deal fairly with local tribes and build up a positive relationship with them.

KELLOGG

Surely they were suspicious of you?

CUSTER

At first yes - but soon we came to greatly rely on each other...

FADE TO

FLASHBACK BEGINS

EXT. FORT 'CAMP SUPPLY' - PM

The fort is peaceful, soldiers and Indians are wandering with one another. The Indians are now cleaner and recovered, most wear items of western clothing. In the background adjacent the camp is a newly constructed SMALL INDIAN CAMP.

Mahwissa and Romeo walk arm-in-arm as they chat (muted), she does not object as his hands wander.

Benteen - younger - is watching events around him unhappily.

CUSTER (V.O)

I gave permission for our men, when off duty, to visit our new neighbours who we always found very welcoming. In return they visited us regularly - to barter and trade.

Romeo hands a bottle of whisky to Mahwissa. She smiles and leads him into a room in the fort, they move from view.

Benteen watches this, looking annoyed.

FADE TO

END FLASHBACK

INT. CUSTER'S TENT, ARMY CAMP - EVENING

Custer and Kellogg are sitting together, as before. The bottle more empty and Custer is refilling his glass.

CUSTER

I'm sure Benteen would tell things differently, but for a long time I abstained from spending time with our new neighbours.

Custer sips his drink and pauses for a moment.

CUSTER

It could be said I have a reputation with being a bit of a 'ladies man'? Although I am no stranger in such matters, back then I'd been separated from my wife Libby for over a year, with hints of 'divorce' in the wind.

KELLOGG

What you say here is between us, I won't note or say anything?

Custer offers a refilled glass to Kellogg, who accepts.

CUSTER

I appreciate that Mark, I'm mid-flow so to speak, so may as well continue?

FADE TO

FLASHBACK STARTS

INT. YOUNG CUSTERS OFFICE, FORT 'CAMP SUPPLY' - EVENING

Custer's office within the wooden fort. Like a study but fairly basic, with simple furnishings only. Custer is younger here, writing letters at his desk.

CUSTER (V.O)

Bloody Knife had been teaching me Indian hand-signals and a little of the Sioux language. One evening he told me one of their leaders wished to speak with me privately.

SOUND in scene returns to normal levels.

There is a KNOCK at the door, younger Custer stops writing and opens the door. Younger Monah-seetah enters, she is dressed in an animal skin shawl and nothing else.

Younger Custer moves his hands to communicate as he talks.

YOUNG CUSTER
[You... wanted... see me?]

Monah-seetah smiles and her shawl drops to the ground, she is naked. Younger Custer swallows as she approaches seductively.

CUSTER (V.O)
Caesar had his Cleopatra... And it
seems Mona-seetah was to be mine.

FADE TO

FLASHBACK ENDS

INT. CUSTERS TENT, ARMY CAMP - LATE EVENING

Custer drains his glass, he looks a little embarrassed at what he has just admitted.

KELLOGG
Well... That's certainly one way to
negotiate I'd say?

CUSTER
You can say that again! Now I'm a man
of the world as we both are, but never
have I known such a time with any
woman. She was a she-wolf, insatiable
- passionate - utterly amazing!!

KELLOGG
You didn't try to resist her?

CUSTER
That would have been unkind - and
insult to her even. Besides - no true
man could resist such delights...

Custer refills his glass and drinks quickly.

KELLOGG
If you say so?

CUSTER
Trust me on this Mark - if you've
never been with an Indian woman,
you've never known true bliss!

Kellogg now drinks, seemingly embarrassed.

CUSTER
Sorry if I've embarrassed you?

KELLOGG
No, no not at all... Please continue?

FADE TO

FLASHBACK BEGINS

NOTE: Action during this sequence and the dialogue between characters is ENTIRELY MUTED.

EXT. A CAMP FIRE, WILDERNESS - EVENING

Nothing seen beyond the light of the fire. A wooden spit is awaiting meat. Monah-seetah (dressed), Mahwissa, Custer, Cooke and Burkman are sitting by the fire - all younger here. Monah-seetah has a rabbit to skin and fumbles in her belt for utensils. Younger Custer hands her HIS ARMY KNIFE. Unknown to him this greatly signifies trust. She smiles and takes the knife. The two ladies pause to exchange knowing glances.

CUSTER (V.O)
Monah-seetah and others from her tribe were happy to join us as we explored, making peaceful contact with other tribes. Monah-seetah had local knowledge and tribal leaders were courteous and respectful to her.

Monah-seetah prepares the rabbit and younger Custer sits next to Cooke and the two chat.

CUSTER (V.O)
Benteen was quick to voice his concerns, saying these Indian were not to be trusted. He would ultimately be proved to be wrong - as is often the case, I might add.

FADE TO

INT. CHIEFS TENT, ARMY CAMP - EVENING

Similar to the tent of Sitting Bull, but less decor. Younger Monah-seetah, Mahwissa, Custer and Cooke are as before, seated around the fire. Bloody Knife is present too.

Also present are a few INDIAN BRAVES and the INDIAN CHIEF. These are Lakota Sioux - like Monah-seetah. All are passing

around a LONG DECORATIVE PIPE and puffing in turn.

CUSTER (V.O)

As we travelled Monah-seetah and I spent more time together. I was able to learn more of her language and she mine. Her and her aunt were key in helping bring about a lasting peace with local tribes in the region.

Young Custer PUFFS on the pipe - he coughs and his eyes glaze. Monah-seetah leans into him, he puts his arms around her, both are very relaxed.

CUSTER (V.O)

The best way for an amicable outcome with a native is like that of any man - through stomach! I arranged for grain, hard tack, coffee and sugar to be offered as a gift to the various tribal leaders. Things went well.

KELLOGG (V.O)

So... It was a time for peace?

CUSTER (V.O)

Indeed. It may surprise you that nine times out of ten whenever there is trouble with native tribes it is usually because they are hungry and want to provide for their families.

KELLOGG (V.O)

I see?

Mahwissa smiles seductively at The Chief and speaks to him in their language (muted). The Chief replies and both stand and wander out of the tent together - HAND-IN-HAND.

Younger Custer seems confused so Monah-seetah whispers into his ear to explain. He nods.

CUSTER (V.O)

Mahwissa - Monah-seetah's aunt - also proved keen to do her bit for peace...

The Indian Braves nudge each other and seem amused.

FADE TO

FLASHBACK ENDS

Sound and visuals are back to normal.

INT. CUSTERS TENT, ARMY CAMP - NIGHT

As before but later, the bottle is nearly empty.

CUSTER

This period of my life convinced me that it is possible for peace between ourselves and native peoples. Like us they just want to get by. Very few are warlike for no good reason.

KELLOGG

What about the troubles now though?
The Sioux uprising?

CUSTER

I hear it is down to lack of food and us trespassing in their sacred lands. They're no fools - they know the odds are against them and do not take up arms lightly. But I am confident that peace is still possible, we don't have to butcher one another year after year until there are none of them left.

Custer refills his glass.

FADE TO

FLASHBACK BEGINS

EXT. WILDERNESS NEAR 'CAMP SUPPLY' - PM

The fort Camp Supply and the Indian camp are in the distance. A column of CAVALRY led by younger Custer, younger Cooke, younger Benteen and younger Hodgson are approaching the fort. Within the column is Monah-seetah and Bloody Knife.

As the Cavalry nears the Indian Camp several younger Indian ladies and some Indian children rush out and run towards them, cheering and laughing happily.

CUSTER (V.O)

I remember arriving back at the fort
aws always pleasant. Is there anything
more beautiful to behold than a
friendly Indian village, welcoming us?

KELLOGG (V.O)

I expect it was a pleasant period?

A couple of SEMI NAKED INDIAN LADIES who had been bathing in the river move close to Hodgson. Hodgson winks and waves to them, but is glared angrily at by Benteen.

CUSTER (V.O)

For a time it felt like home - a new life. Not just for me but all the men - a happy time for all. We continued to venture further afield and our neighbours doubled as our entourage. Those were happy days...

FADE TO

INT. SMALL INDIAN CAMP, NEAR FORT - DAY

The Indian camp is close to the wooden fort. There are numerous Indian tents. A few Indians - mainly women and children - are wandering around happily.

Custer and Monah-seetah - again younger - are in the camp. Custer now has part Indian attire. Both have just left a tent to investigate a noise outside. This is a mangy HOUND-DOG which BARKS and wags its tail.

Custer wastes no time in petting the animal. Monah-seetah seems less keen.

CUSTER (V.O)

Whenever back at the fort I found myself spending more time with Monah-seetah. We even ended-up owning a pet - a rather mangy mongrel I decided to call 'Frederick' - in honour of the good Captain Benteen.

FADE TO

EXT. RIVER IN THE WILDERNESS - DAY

A picturesque river in the wilderness. It is sunny. Custer and Monah-seetah - again younger - are paddling. Custer is stooped - trying to grab fish. Monah-seetah looks amused. Running about along the bank is the dog, wagging its tail.

NOTE: The 'SPLASH' sound should be at full volume here.

CUSTER (V.O)

Monah-seetah tried to teach me how to catch fish with my bare hands... In the manner of an Indian. Something I never really mastered in all honesty.

Younger Custer grabs a big fish - perhaps a salmon - and pulls this up out of the water for a moment. It thrashes around, he slips and topples backwards with a loud SPLASH!

Mona-Seetah doubles-up with LAUGHTER.

FADE TO

EXT. A CAMP FIRE, WILDERNESS - EVENING

Younger Monah-seetah and Younger Custer are seated with arms around each other. Custer is now in full buckskins. They gaze up at the stars as Monah-Seetah talks about them (muted).

CUSTER (V.O)

I learned the names of her spirits and legends - where the stars came from and what they each signify. It sounds silly I suppose, I've seen the stars a thousand times but it was as if I never really noticed them before... Now when I look up at night I cannot help but be reminded of this time.

FADE TO

INT. INDIAN TENT - EVENING

A small Indian tent with a central fire. Younger Monah-seetah is serving DINNER to Younger Custer - a type of stew.

CUSTER (V.O)

Monah-seetah even introduced me to Indian cuisine - I must admit that I found it very tasty for the most part. I really regret not recording some of the recipes - I'd probably outsell my own book had I published them!

Young Custer and Monah-seetah sit and begin to eat.

NOTE: SOUND in the scene fades in.

YOUNG CUSTER

(chewing)

This is really good! Where is
'Frederick'? I've not seen him today?

Monah-seetah smiles coyly.

MONAH-SEETAH

I'm sure he is closer than you think?

Still chewing, Custer looks at her with suspicion.

Monah-seetah laughs and pulls out the dogs tail - this is all
that is left of the dog. Custer looks rather shocked.

FADE TO

FLASHBACK ENDS

INT. CUSTERS TENT, ARMY CAMP - LATE EVENING

Kellogg and Custer are still seated. They are nearly out of
booze. Kellogg looks half asleep. Custer seems drunk.

CUSTER

I don't mean this as an excuse but it
wasn't just me who had taken Indian
wives, almost the whole company did
the same! Some even adopted the
fatherless children as well... As
months passed the Indians literally
became our extended families.

Kellogg seems reluctant - or too sleepy - to finish his
glass. Custer finishes his drink and pours the last drops.

CUSTER

From the look on your face I'm
guessing the question you want to
tactfully ask is 'had I gone native'?
I think to an extent we all had...
With one or two exceptions.

KELLOGG

Benteen being one of them?

Custer smiles but doesn't reply, he takes his last sip.

CUSTER

We genuinely succeeded in what we had
intended from a military perspective.

We had lasting peace - had good diplomatic relations with local tribes... And my eyes were opened about the Indians and their ways.

KELLOGG

So what happened with Mona-seetah?

CUSTER

I married her. She became known as my 'second wife' - quite normal in Indian culture. In so doing I effectively married into the Sioux and am now considered one of their tribe.

KELLOGG

(waking up more)

Married? Weren't you married already??

Kellogg scribbles a note in his notebook.

CUSTER

Er, this isn't something I'd want to be made public, by the way.

KELLOGG

No, no of course - this is just between us. I dare say that the public wouldn't be very understanding?

CUSTER

Oh? How so??

KELLOGG

There's bigamy for one thing... And Soldiers participating in heathen wedding ceremonies for another!

(tuts)

Some of my colleagues would have had a field day with this sort of thing. It would have been quite a scandal?!

CUSTER

A scandal? Yes... And that's why it had to end, and was the very the ultimatum I was suddenly faced with.

Custer looks sad and sighs.

FADE TO

FLASHBACK BEGINS

Sound is MUTED apart from the Voice Over.

INT. CUSTERS OFFICE, FORT - DAY

Younger Custer is standing to attention and he is being told off by GENERAL SHERIDAN. Sheridan is about 40, with dark hair and a moustache. Their conversation is 'one sided', although MUTED. (Sheridan is telling Custer he is a disgrace, he should think of his poor wife, do his duty, etc).

CUSTER (V.O)

Apparently Benteen had been writing letters about me, at least one of which found its way to my commanding officer - General Sheridan. He came to the Fort for a personal visit and did not approve of the things he saw.

I was reprimanded and given a simple choice - to do my duty and end things with Mona-seetah. This would preserve my reputation and keep my family away from a public scandal. Or I would face dishonourable discharge and become a civilian, branded a traitor and outcast from polite society. Sheridan kept uttering to 'think of my wife'. Meaning 'Libby' of course.

FADE TO

INT. CUSTERS TENT - EARLY MORNING

Glasses and the bottle are empty - it is about 02.00. Kellogg looks very tired. Custer seems drunk and unsteady.

CUSTER

In retrospect I believe Sheridan's true concern was himself, that he didn't want a scandal involving the men under his command.

KELLOGG

I expect the army are probably under public scrutiny all the time?

Custer struggles to stifle a TEAR trickling down his cheek.

CUSTER

I have fought in many battles, faced many foes... But parting with her was the hardest thing I've had to do in my whole life! Monah-seetah went into premature labour that very day.

KELLOGG

You had a child?!

CUSTER

(wiping eye)

Yes, born early but survived. He must be about seven by now? Called "Yellow Bird" on account of his lighter hair. And yes - I have made some discreet enquiries about them both.

KELLOGG

I see...?

CUSTER

The ironic thing is... all this was getting out anyway, despite Benteen.

FADE TO

FLASHBACK BEGINS

All sound apart from the Voice Over is muted.

INT. SMALL INDIAN CAMP, NEAR FORT - DAY

A few Indians - mainly women and children, as seen in previous flashbacks - are wandering around. Younger Custer and Monah-seetah are exiting their tent. Monah-seetah looks very portly and pregnant. Custer is carrying a few personal items in his arms, she trying to stop him and very upset. Indians in the background stop wandering and watch them.

CUSTER (V.O)

Before this was to reach the public I wrote about it, in my own book about my life on the plains. Here I gave my own version of events... Downplaying the marriage, trying to put a lighter spin on things.

FADE TO

INT. CUSTERS TENT, ARMY CAMP - EARLY MORNING

Kellogg is dozing and Custer looks unhappy, remembering.

CUSTER

(sadly)

But you Mr Kellogg... Now you at least
know the whole truth of things.

Custer puts down his empty glass and sighs sadly.

FADE TO

END CREDITS

END OF EPISODE 1