

UNDER SILENT EARTH.

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FADE IN:

EXT. WOODS - VIDEO CAMERA P.O.V. DAY

Faint static HUMS in the microphone. A flicker -- then the camera boots up, jittery, unstable.

A wall of dense trees. Tall. Looming. The light should be strong, but something in the woods steals the color -- everything muted, washed out.

In the foreground, a metal detector sweeps through a blanket of damp leaves. Slow. Patient.

HENRY BRADEN (43), moves in and out of frame, focused. His hiking gear is rugged, broken in, the kind that's seen years of use. There's a quiet desperation in his eyes, hidden under the ease of his voice.

HENRY
Not yet... Nothing.

The detector lets out a hollow WHINE -- static woven into the signal.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Kinda surprised, thought we would
have picked something up by now.

A BEEP. Then another. Faster. Sharper. Urgent.

Henry stops. Looks up, just for a second --

The camera follows his gaze.

The trees. Still as stone. The deeper woods, almost... unnatural. Too dark for midday.

A breath of wind moves the branches -- a sound like whispers just out of reach.

Henry exhales. Then, like flipping a switch, he turns back to the camera, warmth sliding over his features. The showman smile.

HENRY (CONT'D)
We got something.

The camera jolts, set hastily on the ground.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Cole, you're up!

A RUSTLE. A teenage silhouette steps into frame.

The picture jiggles as the camera is set on the ground.
The kneeling Henry is just in frame.

COLE BRADEN (17), self-contained, sharp-eyed, the kind of kid who belongs out here more than most... at home in the silence than the spotlight.

A shovel sinks into the earth.

COLE
Just an inch. Don't wanna damage
it.

Dirt slides away.

Henry kneels, brushes with his fingers. He finds something. A tiny glint beneath the soil.

His breath catches.

HENRY
No way...

He uncaps a bottle of water, drips it onto the object --

Cole steps out of frame. The camera lifts and tightens its focus.

A shoe buckle. Rusted. Ancient.

Henry holds it up to the lens.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Eighteenth century.
(a beat, voice
quieter, almost
reverent)
Might be the first person to touch
this in two hundred years.

His fingers linger. Something unreadable in his face.

He glances to the trees again.

A long beat. The camera catches the hesitation.

Henry blinks it away, reanimates... and the smile slides back on.

HENRY (CONT'D)
All right, let's close it out.

The camera settles.

Cole reappears, kneeling beside his father. Henry comes alive for the camera.

HENRY (CONT'D)
That's our show for this week. A
spoon, a trace of colonial
pottery, and --

COLE
-- this eighteenth-century shoe
buckle.

A moment. The performance feels hollow.

HENRY
But next week... next week's gonna
be different.

A flash of something real in his eyes.

COLE
We're heading upstate. Deep.
(a glance to Henry,
then to the camera,
quieter)
Into uncharted ground.

Henry's fingers tighten slightly around the buckle.

HENRY
What will we find?

A beat.

COLE
We'll show you.

HENRY
For History with Henry and Son --
I'm Henry Braden.

COLE
And I'm Cole Braden.

They look into the camera. Their faces perfectly still.

HENRY & COLE
Because you never know what you
might dig up.

Freeze frame.

A long buzzing silence.

CLICK, the screen cuts to black.

INT. COLE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The paused video sits frozen on an editing screen.

A dim glow from the monitor.

Cole leans forward, fingers over the keyboard. Staring at the frame. At his father's eyes.

Next to him, ERNIE POTTS (17), -- cocky, restless, always moving, half-distracted.

ERNIE

You guys were just saying that,
right?

Cole blinks, pulled back.

COLE

Saying what?

Ernie gestures to the screen.

ERNIE

The part about not knowing what's
out there.

COLE

It's true.

Ernie scoffs.

ERNIE

Bullshit. You always know.

Cole doesn't answer. Just stares at the frozen image.

A faint HUM of static from the speakers.

Like the camera picked up something else. Something beneath their voices.

His fingers hover over the keys. Ernie watches him.

Not laughing anymore.

SMASH TO BLACK.

EXT. THE BRADEN HOME - DAY

An assembly line is behind the open tailgate of the SUV. Henry is inside, arranging the equipment handed to him by Cole, who gets them from Ernie.

BUZZY EVANS (16), approaches from the driveway, carrying a backpack nearly half his size. He's restless, skinny, eager to please, and wearing a hipster T-shirt with:

"IF YOU'RE HUMAN - DON'T TALK TO ME" printed on the front.

On the back it reads:

"YOU IRK ME."

BUZZY

You guys weren't planning on leaving without me, were you?

ERNIE

(deadpan, to Henry)
I thought we agreed on no last-minute strays?

HENRY

(shrugs, good-natured)
More hands to help carry gear.

Buzzy carelessly dumps his pack at Ernie's feet and checks his phone.

BUZZY

Did you know the Adirondacks have over 3,000 lakes, 1,200 miles of rivers, and --

ERNIE

(cutting him off, gesturing to the bag)
And one duffle bag sitting right in front of you.

Buzzy blinks, then hands Ernie the bag.

HENRY

How many more?

ERNIE

Just one bag.

BUZZY

Huh? Oh.

HENRY

Good. I don't think anything else will fit.

Buzzy passes the last bag to Ernie.

BUZZY

There are also swamps and bogs in the forest.

ERNIE

It would suck if you got lost in one, wouldn't it?

Henry climbs out of the side door.

HENRY

Locked and loaded and ready to hit the road!

He glances at his watch.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Seven-thirty. Right on time. Everyone all set?

Cole answers by opening the front seat passenger door. Ernie and Buzzy take the back seats. Henry makes his way to the front.

BUZZY

According to my GPS, it's a four-hour drive.

HENRY

A four-hour drive and a day of hiking.

With everyone inside, the car pulls out of the driveway.

MONTAGE:

- The SUV rolls through their small town, past a gas station, a coffee shop, and an old movie theater with a broken marquee.
- The SUV turns onto the highway.
- The car speeds along the open road.

- A road sign reads: ROUTE 87 ADIRONDACK NORTHWAY - 100 MILES. The car flies past it.

INT. THE CAR - DAY

Cole stares out the window, earbuds in, lost in thought.

Buzzy leans up from the backseat.

BUZZY

All that work for a bottle?

COLE

The bottle was a hundred and sixty years old.

BUZZY

Yeah, but still...

HENRY

Historical value can be more important than monetary.

BUZZY

So, you don't think many people have searched in the area we're going to?

HENRY

Right. It's important to get away from the easily accessible places and go to spots that most hikers avoid. Virgin territory.

ERNIE

Buzzy's used to virgin territory, and he doesn't have to go hiking.

BUZZY

Bite me.

EXT. THE HIGHWAY - DAY

The SUV travels in moderate traffic.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A BACK ROAD - DAY

The SUV travels alone on a two-lane road surrounded by trees... lush, green, lonesome, ominous, and isolated.

EXT. SERVICE STATION / CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

The car pulls into a ratty-looking gas station, and a store that looks even worse.

A rusted pick-up truck is parked in the front.

They come to a stop in front of a gas pump. Doors open, everyone gets out.

ERNIE

We're close, aren't we?

HENRY

Less than an hour.

Henry takes the cap off of the gas tank.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

Cole faces a gum-chewing PLAIN GIRL (20s), at the register behind the counter. He plops a credit card down.

COLE

Filling up on the SUV.

She takes the card.

INT. STORE AISLE - DAY

Ernie and Buzzy scan the bags of junk food, oblivious to two men who pass by the end of the aisle.

Ernie grabs a bag.

BUZZY

No, hate those.

Ernie returns the bag.

BUZZY (CONT'D)

So, how much treasure can you find on these searches?

Ernie shoots him a nasty look as he speaks in a whisper.

ERNIE

Keep quiet! Don't say shit like that out loud.

BUZZY

I was just asking.

INT. ANOTHER AISLE - DAY

The two men are now all ears after Buzzy's comment.

QUENT (50s), lean, tough, unkempt, scarred and weathered. Never smiles.

His son, JIM (20s), isn't much better in the cleanliness department. He is awkward and indecisive from years of being under his father's thumb.

ERNIE (O.S.)

I told ya to shut up about that shit! Listen, will ya!? You don't mention shit like that in a public place.

BUZZY

Got it. Chill.

Quent glances at Jim. A slow, knowing look. Jim fidgets but doesn't say anything.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

Buzzy and Ernie bring their bags of junk food to the counter, where Cole waits for them.

Cole smiles at the cashier.

COLE

You can put all this on the card.

She rings up the items.

ERNIE

Thanks, boss.

None of them notice Quent, who stares at them from the rear of the store, a quiet intensity in his eyes. Jim lingers a few feet behind him, uneasy.

BUZZY

If I knew you were paying I would have bought the expensive chips.

EXT. SERVICE STATION / CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

The rear door closes on the SUV, and it pulls out of the service lot.

Quent watches them go, then tosses his half-chewed toothpick onto the pavement.

Jim shifts his weight, hesitates, then follows as Quent heads for the pickup truck.

They get inside. The engine turns over. A beat -- then they speed out of the lot, a swirl of dust in their wake.

EXT. A PULL-OFF SPOT ALONG THE ROAD - DAY

The woods are filled with birdsong. Tranquil. The SUV has parked in a small clearing at the side of the road.

Everyone has their backpacks on and carries various duffle bags and cases of equipment.

HENRY

Got everything?

COLE

All set.

ERNIE

Yep.

BUZZY

Sounds good to me.

Henry closes the back hatch, adjusts his backpack, and leads them into the deep woods.

HENRY

We'll get eight miles behind us before we camp.

They disappear amongst the endless trees.

The rusty pickup truck pulls in next to the SUV. Quent and Jim exit the car. Jim watches the woods as Quent peers into the SUV's windows as he checks for anything left behind.

Quent heads to the truck bed, pulls out a shotgun, and hands it to Jim.

QUENT

You keep an eye on them. Keep your distance. I'm headed back to the house... get some supplies.

Jim hesitates, his grip tightening on the shotgun.

JIM

Pa... you sure?

QUENT

You heard yourself. Treasure. We live here. They don't. It's rightly more ours than theirs.

Jim swallows, uneasy.

JIM

Want me to leave a trail for ya?

QUENT

Nah.

Quent spits and climbs back behind the wheel.

QUENT (CONT'D)

I'll find ya.

Quent drives off, leaving Jim alone with the towering trees and silence.

After a beat, Jim sighs, shoulders the shotgun, and trudges into the woods.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Henry leads the group through the dense trees.

ERNIE

We won't reach the mountain you want till tomorrow, right?

HENRY

That's right.

BUZZY

What do you expect to find on it?

HENRY

Unless we discover the trail used by the Iroquois or Abenaki, we may not find anything.

EXT. FOREST - A DISTANCE AWAY - DAY

Jim crouches low and takes careful steps as he hears the distant voices.

BUZZY (O.S.)
It's a long way to go to find
nothing.

Henry laughs.

HENRY (O.S.)
Think of the adventure, Buzzy! The
adventure!

Jim shifts his footing -- SNAP!

His entire body goes rigid. He lowers himself slowly,
presses into the underbrush, shotgun tight in his grip.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Ernie stops, glancing over his shoulder.

COLE
What is it?

ERNIE
I heard something.

Cole takes a casual look behind them. The trees are
still, unmoving.

COLE
Probably a squirrel or some
animal.

Ernie lingers for a beat longer, then nods and moves on.

Behind them, Jim remains motionless, barely breathing.

EXT. FOREST - A DISTANCE AWAY - DAY

Jim kneels low, completely still. He listens as the
FOOTSTEPS of his prey fade into the distance. A small,
satisfied grin creeps across his face.

EXT. DENSE SECTION OF FOREST - DAY

Henry leads the group through the difficult terrain.

BUZZY
Has there been any Sasquatch
sightings out here?

COLE
Probably. No idea.

BUZZY
This looks like the kind place you
would find one.

ERNIE
Sasquatch?

COLE
I thought they were supposed to be
down south, or out by Oregon and
Washington.

HENRY
There have been sightings in the
Adirondacks.

BUZZY
Shit! For real!?

HENRY
The Native Americans have talked
about Sasquatch for hundreds of
years.

Buzzy scans the area with caution.

BUZZY
Oh, man. Oh, man!

HENRY
Relax. The recent sightings were a
long way from here.

COLE
Dad, you're scaring Buzzy.

HENRY
There's never been a report of a
Bigfoot killing anyone.

BUZZY
Yeah? Well, if Bigfoot kills
someone who's alone in the woods,
who's left to report it?

Cole laughs.

HENRY

I've been metal detecting for thirty years, and I've never seen anything that resembles a Sasquatch. It's bears you need to watch out for.

BUZZY

I'll watch out for both.

COLE

We're hunting artifacts, Buzzy. Not Sasquatch.

BUZZY

I know that -- but Sasquatch doesn't.

As they walk, Buzzy adjusts his grip on his duffel bag, momentarily lagging behind.

Now alone, he stops. Looks around. The forest looms silent and still.

With a muttered curse, he hurries to catch up.

EXT. FOREST - A DISTANCE AWAY - DAY

Jim watches from a hidden spot, his fingers tightening on the shotgun.

His grin widens.

EXT. THE FIRST CAMP - NIGHT

A small fire CRACKLES as the group finishes dinner. Sparks shoot upward into the dark.

Henry sets his empty tin plate down beside the fire. Cole follows suit.

COLE

I wonder if anyone ever settled around here.

HENRY

It's possible. We're in the flatlands.

BUZZY

So, why not look here?

COLE

We want to find trails used by the Iroquois. Those are in the mountains.

Buzzy sets his plate down and stands up.

ERNIE

Watch out for Bigfoot.

Ernie smirks. Buzzy shows no reaction as he flips him off and vanishes into the dark.

COLE

You believe in Bigfoot, Ernie?

ERNIE

Shit, yeah.

EXT. A DISTANCE FROM CAMP - NIGHT

Jim, hidden deep in the brush, watches. He sees Buzzy move away from camp. A moment later, he hears a light TRICKLE on the leaves.

Jim smirks.

EXT. WOODS - AWAY FROM CAMP - NIGHT

Buzzy stands tense as he pees, eyes darting through the darkness. Every rustling leaf feels louder than it should.

ZIP. He finishes, steps back.

A faint RUSTLE.

He freezes. Straining to listen.

Another RUSTLE.

This time, closer.

Buzzy swallows hard. His hand tightens into a fist.

He takes a careful step back, eyes locked on the dark.

Then another step.

Another.

And then --

A SNAP behind him.

Buzzy spins.

EXT. THE FIRST CAMP - NIGHT

A pensive Buzzy, looking over his shoulder, returns to the fire.

COLE

What's wrong with you?

BUZZY

I heard something out there.

ERNIE

What, like a squirrel?

BUZZY

No... like a rustle sound.
Something big moving through
branches.

HENRY

Raccoon, deer, bear --

ERNIE

Bigfoot.

Henry stands and stretches, then moves toward a tree near the tents.

HENRY

Speaking of bear, let's get the
food strung up.

The others follow, grabbing their food bags.

BUZZY

I wonder if a Sasquatch can climb
a tree?

Cole ties off a rope.

COLE

You volunteering to find out?

Buzzy glares at him.

EXT. THE MOUNTAIN - DAY

The group climbs a steep, uneven incline, sweat beading on their faces.

BUZZY
How many more miles?

HENRY
A few.

Buzzy turns to Ernie.

BUZZY
Shouldn't you be filming some of this?

ERNIE
You're a director now?

BUZZY
Just saying -- people might like to see how far we're going.

ERNIE
I want to conserve my batteries.

HENRY
Some footage of the trek might not be a bad idea, Ernie.

Ernie sighs, stops, swings his duffle off his shoulder.

ERNIE
All right. Keep moving. I'll get a shot.

He pulls the camera out and lifts it to his eye.

IN THE CAMERA VIEWER - DAY

The lens captures the distant treeline, then dips in a blur before settling on Henry, Cole, and Buzzy trekking up the incline.

Ernie holds the shot for several moments.

ERNIE (V.O.)
That's enough of this shit.

A static POP and the picture in the viewer goes black.

BACK TO SCENE

Ernie frowns, shoves the camera back into his bag, and hurries to catch up.

EXT. THE SITE - DAY

Henry stops, scanning the area. Redbud trees with pink blossoms surround the clearing, their colors stark against the deep green of the forest.

Cole watches his father, waiting for the decision.

HENRY

I think... this is a good place.

He drops his bags, removes his backpack. The others follow suit.

ERNIE

Why here, Mister B.?

HENRY

We're in far enough. Good a place as any.

Henry takes a few steps, surveying the land. Cole helps Buzzy shrug off his pack.

BUZZY

There's no Iroquois path.

COLE

Any path from that era is long gone.

BUZZY

Shouldn't we pick a spot with more open ground?

HENRY

Not going to find any up here.

ERNIE

Yeah, and Bigfoot could be behind a tree right now, watching you set up your tent. You'll be his breakfast before you know it.

BUZZY

Ernie, if you're trying to scare the hell out of me --

COLE

-- you're doing a great job.

Henry, Cole, and Ernie laugh. Henry kneels and starts assembling his metal detector.

COLE (CONT'D)

Buzzy, you might as well get the fire started.

BUZZY

Yeah, yeah.

They go about their tasks.

EXT. THE SITE - LATER - DAY

The firepit is dug, and the tents are nestled between the trees. Smoke from the small fire curls into the cool mountain air.

Ernie holds the camera to his eye, filming Henry, who sweeps the metal detector over the ground.

The CLICK-CLICK of static HUMS from the detector, steady but empty.

Henry speaks to the camera.

HENRY

So, we just set up camp, and I figured -- no time like the present to jump in and start searching.

He scans in silence for a few moments.

A step forward--then his boot sinks into the ground. He stumbles slightly.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Now, hold... just... a second...

He presses his boot down again. The ground gives slightly, not normal forest floor.

HENRY (CONT'D)

That's interesting.

Cole moves beside him, eyes locked onto the spot.

A strange silence hangs between them.

IN THE CAMERA VIEWER - DAY

Henry searches the ground and finds another indentation.

HENRY
Here! Get the camera in close,
Ernie.

The video camera zooms in close to Henry's boot. He now has a three foot long indentation of sunken ground.

HENRY (V.O.)
It appears to be a foundation.

COLE
Are you sure?

HENRY
Yes.

He takes several heavy steps. The ground sinks some more.

The camera swings back up to Henry and Cole.

HENRY (CONT'D)
So, no hits so far, but we seem to
have uncovered a foundation of
some sort, which is quite amazing.

ERNIE
And -- cut!

The picture in the viewer goes black.

BACK TO SCENE

Henry continues to press indentations in the ground.

HENRY
What the hell. This doesn't make
sense. It shouldn't be.

COLE
You think it's a house foundation?

Henry's steps turn a corner in a different direction.

HENRY
Looks like it.

He calls out.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Listen up! I think we have a cabin foundation. That means there's a well in the area, and it's most likely hidden. Be very careful.

COLE

Ernie, pick up filming when we're just about done tracing the outline on this thing.

Ernie takes the camera over to the firepit.

ERNIE

Right.

He plops down in a chair, his eye on the viewfinder as he rewinds the picture.

BUZZY

But you said no one would live here.

COLE

Who would build a homestead on the side of a mountain -- near an Indian trail?

Henry continues to uncover the foundation.

Cole notices Ernie, staring trance-like at the viewer in his camera, his face ashen.

COLE (CONT'D)

Ernie?

No response.

COLE (CONT'D)

Hey, Ernie?

Ernie speaks quietly.

ERNIE

We're not alone out here.

Cole hurries over to him.

COLE

What do you mean?

Ernie hands him the camera as Henry and Buzzy gather around and lean towards the viewer.

INSERT - CAMERA VIEWER

The video Ernie shot as they were ascending the mountain shows the sky as the picture pans down to the tree line in the distance.

A figure -- almost too quick to notice -- ducks behind the brush.

Just a blur of movement, but then -- freeze-frame.

A man. Holding a shotgun. Watching them.

COLE (O.S.)

What the hell?

The video rewinds.

ERNIE (O.S.)

Watch.

The video plays again. The picture freeze-frames as the figure appears. It's Jim, shotgun in hand.

BACK TO SCENE

Everyone stares at the tiny screen in silence.

COLE

Is this guy following us?

HENRY

Might just be a hunter we crossed paths with. I wouldn't worry about it.

Henry hides his concern, and returns to the foundation.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Still, let's keep our eyes open.

BUZZY

What if he's one of those backwoods freaks who hunts city people!?

COLE

We're from the 'burbs, Buzzy, and you've seen too many movies.

HENRY

Cole, get the flags out so we can mark this.

Cole and Ernie exchange an uneasy look before Cole heads into a tent.

EXT. THE SITE - LATER - DAY

Small yellow marking flags form a twenty-foot by ten-foot rectangular structure. A short distance away, Ernie films Henry as he uses the metal detector -- the STATIC sound indicating no hits.

Cole and Buzzy stand near the tree line, staring at the redbud trees, their strange square formation framing the site like a natural barrier.

COLE

What is it?

BUZZY

Might be nothing. Nah, forget it.

COLE

What?

BUZZY

The trees with the red leaves.

COLE

Redbud trees. Yeah?

BUZZY

Well... I was just thinking...they form a perfect square around the foundation.

Cole turns to the redbud trees. He pivots in a circle as he scans them.

With eyebrows raised, he whispers to Buzzy.

COLE

What the hell?

BUZZY

I'm no gardener, but trees don't form perfect squares unless they were planted that way.

A SHRILL BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! fills the air.

HENRY

Whoa! We've got something here!
Cole!?

Ernie spins the camera towards Cole.

IN THE CAMERA VIEWER - DAY

Cole grabs the shovel from the tent, hurries to Henry, and puts the blade on the spot.

HENRY

Strong reading. It's not very deep.

Cole presses his boot against the shovel, pushing it into the ground. He lifts a scoop of dirt and dumps it aside.

Henry kneels, waving a handheld detector over the hole. The BEEPS grow steadier. He brushes away the dirt.

A dull metallic glint peeks through the soil.

HENRY (CONT'D)

(low, fascinated)

Here we are...

He claws away more dirt. A jagged, sharp-edged object emerges. Henry's brow furrows.

He digs some more, exposing the details of the piece -- a small silver effigy of a warrior in ceremonial headdress, his mouth open in a silent scream. His arms are bound behind him, and his chest is carved with swirling, maze-like patterns.

Henry tugs at the object, lifting it from the earth. The twelve-inch figure is grotesque -- its face frozen in agony, its body twisted as if caught mid-struggle.

Henry stares at it. Speechless.

Ernie whispers, voice tight.

ERNIE (O.S.)

Jesus.

Henry whispers his reply.

HENRY

(quietly, still
staring at the
effigy)

This isn't Jesus.

The camera picture is turned off.

BACK TO SCENE

Buzzy takes an uneasy step back.

BUZZY
What the hell is it?

HENRY
(turning it in his
hands)
Silver!

Cole's eyes light up.

HENRY (CONT'D)
(grinning now)
It's solid silver!

A beat of silence.

From somewhere deeper in the woods, a dry branch SNAPS.

Everyone turns sharply toward the sound.

EXT. SHORT DISTANCE FROM THE SITE - DAY

Jim crouches low in the underbrush. His eyes widen as Henry's voice carries through the trees.

HENRY (O.S.)
It's silver! Damn! Hot Damn!

Jim licks his lips. Eyes fixed on the gleaming object in Henry's hands.

EXT. THE SITE - LATER - DAY

The sun hangs low, the light turning golden. The silver effigy sits on the artifacts table.

Cole, still digging, uncovers another find. Ernie films as Henry narrates.

HENRY
(to camera)
So far, we have found a musket
frizzen... the silver handle of a
cup... a silver talisman carved
with strange symbols... part of a
doll's porcelain face... and now
this.

Cole scratches at the dirt.

COLE
 (squinting, brushing
 something off)
 Here it is...

He lifts a silver button from the dirt.

HENRY
 A button!

COLE
 (brushing it off)
 It's got the number sixty. 60th
 Royal American Regiment.

He hands it to Henry, who turns it over in his palm, then holds it up to the camera.

HENRY
 (to camera, with
 authority)
 The 60th Royal American Regiment
 was formed after General
 Braddock's defeat -- so at the
 earliest, this button dates back
 to 1756.

ERNIE (O.S.)
 How do you know it's an officer's
 button?

HENRY
 See how the "60" is raised, with
 an ornate design? That means it
 belonged to an officer. The
 enlisted men's buttons were just
 stamped pewter.

He rolls the button between his fingers as he continues to study it.

The sun dips lower, and the woods darken.

HENRY (CONT'D)
 (continuing, to
 camera)
 Well, the sun is setting, and
 we've had a successful first day.
 What other treasures await us?

ERNIE
 Cut.

BACK TO NORMAL ACTION

Ernie lowers the camera.

Henry places the newly-found button next to the silver effigy and talisman.

Buzzy frowns at the table. He picks up the talisman, turning it over.

BUZZY

(uneasy)

A button I can understand. But not this.

(gesturing to the silver warrior effigy)

Who would have something like this?

Cole glances at the piece, then at the surrounding trees. The redbud blossoms glow a dull pink in the twilight.

COLE

(quietly)

Someone who built a cabin in the middle of nowhere.

He lifts the silver talisman from the table.

He gestures to the warrior effigy.

BUZZY

And this thing?

ERNIE

(shrugs)

Someone who built a cabin in the middle of nowhere.

EXT. A DISTANCE FROM THE SITE - SUNSET

Jim watches the group at the table. Light FOOTSTEPS fade in from behind. He turns to see his father.

Quent has two bedrolls on his back, and carries a hand-held cooler.

They speak in hushed tones.

JIM

What took so long!?

QUENT

(grumbling)

Your momma got real sick from the
crap she made for dinner, so I was
up all night with her. She kept
sayin' she was dyin'.

He nods towards the camp.

QUENT (CONT'D)

They find anything?

JIM

Yeah, but I can't tell what.

QUENT

(eyeing the site)

We'll get a closer look later.
Ain't makin' our presence known
till they get what they're lookin'
for.

EXT. THE SITE - SUNSET

Cole takes pictures of the found items with his phone,
including a porcelain doll's face, cracked in half.

Buzzy exits a tent and approaches him.

COLE

I'm gonna take a little hike, see
if I can get a signal on my phone.

BUZZY

Why?

COLE

I want to post them on our
website. Especially this.

He moves the phone close to the silver warrior effigy.

COLE (CONT'D)

(staring at it)

Maybe someone can tell us what it
is.

Cole snaps the picture.

EXT. THE CLIFF - SUNSET

Cole makes his way through the woods in the waning glow of sunlight.

He emerges onto rocky ground with no trees -- the edge of a steep precipice.

The forest sounds are gone -- just the low howl of a night wind.

He holds the phone in the air.

COLE

(muttering)

Come on, bars... I'll take one if you got it...

Three bars pop up.

COLE (CONT'D)

Awesome.

He types for several moments -- and sends.

With the phone still raised, Cole's eyes remain fixed on the small screen -- the silver warrior effigy stares back at him.

A distant, ghostly chorus of disembodied MALE and FEMALE VOICES drifts in over the wind.

GHOSTLY CHORUS

(whispered)

Wena' doke... Aka'wi netoh...
Nokisiye' wiwan'... Hahet tsi'
niyondeh!

(Translation for reference, not a super: You are warned... Do not disturb... The dead will awaken... They will take your blood!).

Cole's face slackens, almost as if in a trance.

The chanting fades.

Cole blinks hard, shakes his head slightly.

He lowers the phone, turns to face the mountains, and listens to the night wind.

EXT. THE SITE - NIGHT

Buzzy, Cole, and Ernie sit close to the fire, the table of artifacts behind them. The artifacts remain on the table, but the silver effigy is now covered by a towel.

One tent is illuminated from the inside.

The forest hums with night sounds.

ERNIE

So this talisman is Native American?

BUZZY

(shrugs)
Could be. Maybe Wyandot?

ERNIE

Yeah? And what does it do?

BUZZY

I don't know. Protection? A curse? A warning?

(grins)
Or maybe just a really creepy paperweight.

ERNIE

(deadpan)
Thanks, professor.

The light in the tent goes out.

Henry unfastens the tent flap, steps out with a book in hand, and approaches the group.

He notices the covered effigy.

HENRY

What's with the towel?

BUZZY

I did it. I don't want that thing looking over my shoulder.

Henry takes a seat, opens the book.

HENRY

I checked my notes. The 60th Royal American Regiment was here, in this area, in 1756.

COLE

Awesome.

HENRY

It's possible they were making their way to, or from, Crown Point.

COLE

(thinking, looking at the effigy)

Or maybe whoever owned it was a prisoner of the Iroquois.

ERNIE

(eyeing the effigy)

And they also dropped their weird silver warrior thing?

HENRY

That, I can't explain.

COLE

Do you think the cabin that was here dates to the same period?

Henry closes the book, considers the question.

HENRY

We need more findings from the household to make that determination.

The fire crackles.

EXT. A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY - THE BRUSH - NIGHT

Quent and Jim arrive in silence, and kneel behind the thick brush.

ERNIE

A little shack in the woods would not have this much silver! I mean, what's it worth?

HENRY

A lot. An awful lot. The effigy is solid.

Quent's eyes open wide.

HENRY (CONT'D)
 But the value is secondary to
 being able to touch history.

Jim moves and the brush rustles.

EXT. THE SITE - NIGHT

The conversation stops as everyone turns to the direction
 of the sound.

They listen.

A long beat.

BUZZY
 (whispers)
 Shit. It's Sasquatch! We're
 sitting ducks out here.

COLE
 (flat)
 They hit sticks on trees and throw
 rocks into camps to get people to
 leave. They don't rustle bushes.

Ernie stands, shaking his head.

ERNIE
 It's probably just a raccoon.

He takes a few cautious steps toward the brush. The
 firelight flickers across his face.

INTERCUT - EXT. A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY - NIGHT

Quent and Jim crouch low, hidden. Jim shifts his weight --

RUSTLE.

Quent shoots him a look: Be still.

They listen, barely breathing.

Ernie's footsteps CRUNCH closer.

BACK TO THE SITE

HENRY
 Could be. Or a bear.

Ernie stops mid-step.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Or a skunk.

Ernie exhales sharply, forcing a laugh.

ERNIE

Yeah, well -- no thanks.

A louder rustle from the darkness.

Ernie freezes. The others sit motionless.

BUZZY

(whispers)

Still a raccoon?

THE BRUSH

Jim shifts again -- SNAP.

A branch breaks beneath his boot. Quent clenches his jaw, eyes locked on Ernie's silhouette just beyond the brush.

BACK TO THE SITE

Ernie's hand creeps toward the hunting knife on his belt.

The woods remain silent.

Too silent.

After a long moment, he clears his throat, turns on his heel, and strides back toward the fire -- a lot faster than before.

ERNIE

It can wait.

They LAUGH -- but it's a little forced, a little uneasy.

The brush remains still. Watching. Waiting.

EXT. A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY - THE BRUSH - NIGHT

Quent and Jim back away in silence as the voices around the campfire fade.

BUZZY (O.S.)

Would the silver in that effigy be worth more melted down? It must weigh three pounds...

A smile comes over Quent as he backs into the dark.

HENRY (O.S.)

It's worth more as an artifact. No question about it.

EXT. THE SKY - NIGHT

A yellow, harvest moon guards the night sky. Beneath it, the silhouettes of treetops sway from a light breeze.

Melodious crickets and tree frogs lull the senses.

EXT. THE SITE - NIGHT

Buzzy and Ernie sit by the fire as it flickers in its death throes.

Buzzy -- wide-eyed and alert, scanning the trees.

Ernie -- chin on his chest, dozing.

A soft rustle somewhere in the distance.

Buzzy stiffens. Listens.

Silence. Only crickets and tree frogs.

He exhales, forces himself to relax.

The fire CRACKLES. A single ember drifts upward, swallowed by the dark.

INT. COLE AND HENRY'S TENT - NIGHT

Henry is asleep in his sleeping bag. Cole, flashlight in hand, studies the warrior effigy. His eyes locked onto the hideous, satanic, face.

EXT. THE SITE - NIGHT

Buzzy stares into the dying flames. Ernie's head tilts sideways, his chair wobbles -- he jolts awake.

ERNIE

Damn.

He blinks, groggy, then notices they're alone.

ERNIE (CONT'D)

When did they turn in?

Ernie checks his watch.

BUZZY

Three hours ago.

ERNIE

I should have, too.

He stands.

ERNIE (CONT'D)

No time like the present. You coming?

Buzzy doesn't answer right away. A rare flash of sincerity -- real concern.

BUZZY

What if something happens?

ERNIE

Like what?

BUZZY

I don't know. What if it kills us when we're sleeping?

ERNIE

You'll have time to get away.

BUZZY

How do you know?

ERNIE

He'll eat me first. I'm better looking.

He heads for the tent --

POP! POP! POP!

A hollow, distant sound. Deep in the woods.

Ernie freezes.

Buzzy sits up straight, eyes wide.

POP! POP! POP!

BUZZY
Oh shit. Oh shit, oh shit!

ERNIE
What the hell is that?

BUZZY
(whispers, terrified)
Sasquatch.

ERNIE
(skeptical)
Come on, dude.

BUZZY
(urgent, whispering
fast)
No, listen! It's hitting wood
against a tree -- just like Cole
said! It's a warning!

POP! POP! POP!
Ernie frowns, steps toward the tree line.

BUZZY (CONT'D)
Where you are going, Ernie? Get
back here!

POP! POP! POP!

Ernie cups his hands, SHOUTS into the woods --

ERNIE
Hey! Shut the hell up!

Silence.

A beat.

Cole stumbles out of his tent, followed by Henry.

COLE
What's going on?

POP! POP! POP!

Buzzy flinches.

BUZZY
You're just making them mad,
Ernie!

POP! POP! POP! echoes deep in the woods.

BUZZY (CONT'D)
So... what kind of animal does
that?

Henry stares into the dark. A long moment.

HENRY
Beats the hell out of me.

The night wind whistles through the trees. Henry turns
back toward camp.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Let's turn in.

BUZZY
What!?

HENRY
Buzzy, whatever is making that
noise is a long way off. Staying
up worrying won't change anything.

He and Cole head for their tent.

Ernie sighs, throws an arm around Buzzy's shoulders.

ERNIE
Come on, Buzzy. I'll tell you a
nice ghost story to help you fall
asleep.

Buzzy glares at him.

BUZZY
You would.

Ernie grins and unzips the tent.

Buzzy hesitates -- looks back toward the woods.

The trees sway. Nothing else.

He follows Ernie inside and zips the door closed.

EXT. QUENT'S CAMP - NIGHT

Jim rests against a tree as Quent lumbers out of the
woods, grinning.

QUENT

We got 'em wound up now! The little asshole thinks Bigfoot is gonna attack!

JIM

Now what?

QUENT

Let 'em dig up more treasure tomorrow. Tomorrow night, we bang sticks on trees, then throw big rocks into camp.

Jim squints.

QUENT (CONT'D)

They'll hightail it out in a panic, and we slip in and grab the silver!

Jim nods, impressed.

JIM

Good thinking, Pa.

EXT. THE SITE - NIGHT

Embers glow in the campfire. Shadows stretch across the tents. The redbud trees sway... but the wind has died.

INT. COLE AND HENRY'S TENT - NIGHT

Cole sleeps, his breath slow. The silver effigy sits beside him on a tackle box.

The warrior's face is expressionless, yet somehow... watchful.

A faint WIND picks up.

Then -- VOICES.

Low. Chanting.

GHOSTLY CHORUS

(whispering, layered,
growing louder)

Wena' doke... Aka'wi netoh...
Nokisiye' wiwan'

Cole winces in his sleep. His brow furrows.

GHOSTLY CHORUS (CONT'D)
 (rising, stronger,
 more distorted)
 Wena' doke... Aka'wi netoh...
 Nokisiye' wiwan'!

The chanting continues, growing in strength.

Cole's dream takes shape...

The walls of the tent ripple, as if caught in an unseen gust. The fabric quivers -- then begins to fade, turning translucent, like mist burning away in sunlight.

The forest bleeds through the canvas. The glowing embers of the campfire vanish, swallowed by shadow. The hum of crickets and rustling leaves morph into distant, blood-curdling WAR CRIES.

A CHILL WIND sweeps through -- Cole's sleeping bag flutters away into dust.

EXT. THE SITE - 1755 - DREAM SEQUENCE - NIGHT

Cole now sits on the cold earth, his tent completely gone. In its place stands a small log cabin, weathered and alone. A stone wall looms nearby.

The trees around him aren't the same -- they are too perfect, their symmetry unnatural. The redbud trees, vibrant in moonlight, form a calculated barrier around the cabin.

Cole exhales a shuddered breath -- his own modern clothes starkly out of place against the Colonial past.

Then -- the cabin door creaks open. A COLONIAL MAN (30s), musket clutched in white-knuckled hands, steps into the doorway. He doesn't see Cole.

Cole follows his line of sight -- his breath catches.

A massive, shadow-like WARRIOR materializes from the tree line. Dressed in a bearskin war bonnet, tomahawk in hand. His face is a void -- only his red, glowing eyes burn through the darkness.

KWAH-NOOH-TAH.

The Vampire Warrior of the Dead.

Two long, curved horns jut from the war bonnet -- just like the effigy. His mouth unhinges, revealing jagged, blood-stained teeth.

Cole freezes. Paralyzed.

The Colonial Man spins on his heel, slams the door shut.

THUMP. Kwah-Nooh-Tah advances.

The tomahawk rises high.

Cole stumbles back -- trips -- falls.

From the trees -- A FLASH OF RED!

CAPTAIN JOSHUA TILTON (25), a British Redcoat, barrels forward, silver-bladed tomahawk glinting in the moonlight.

Kwah-Nooh-Tah's head snaps toward him -- the two warriors collide.

CLANG!

The silver tomahawk and Kwah-Nooh-Tah's blade collide! A burst of sparks erupts in the dark.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. COLE AND HENRY'S TENT - NIGHT

Cole JOLTS AWAKE.

A sharp inhale. His chest heaves.

Sweat beads on his forehead.

His eyes dart around -- where is he? The tent. The camp. The present.

His breath slows. Reality settles.

Then -- he turns.

The effigy is right beside him.

Its hollow, carved eyes stare back.

EXT. THE SITE - DAY

Henry has a frying pan of eggs and bacon on the campfire. Buzzy hasn't slept and it shows. Ernie emerges from his tent, camera in hand.

ERNIE

Where's Cole?

HENRY

He's trying to get out of bed.
Didn't sleep too well last night.

BUZZY

No kidding.

ERNIE

(eyeing Buzzy)
You look like shit.

BUZZY

What do you expect!?

Buzzy rubs his eyes as Ernie flips the camera on, casually panning the camp.

BUZZY (CONT'D)

(hopeful)
Mister B. -- tell me we're leaving
today.

HENRY

Leaving!? We're just getting
started!

Cole climbs out of his tent. His movements are distant, distracted. Ernie's camera lingers on him, noticing his change in demeanor.

COLE

(hollers over his
shoulder, but
detached)
Good morning.

Buzzy watches Cole with mild concern, but says nothing.

Cole heads toward the side of the foundation, like something is pulling him there. Henry follows, wiping his hands on his jeans.

EXT. THE SIDE OF THE FOUNDATION - DAY

Cole grabs a dead branch and taps at the ground before him. Henry catches up, watching with curiosity.

Cole hits a HOLLOW TAP. Another TAP-TAP -- hollow TAP.

Buzzy shifts in his chair, now fully paying attention.

Cole clears the leaves and uncovers several rotting planks, nailed together. He hesitates. Then lifts them.

Henry steps forward and peers into the hole beneath.

HENRY

The well.

He turns to Cole, puzzled.

HENRY (CONT'D)

How did you know?

Cole draws back. His lip trembles.

COLE

(whispers)

We need to leave.

Ernie lowers the camera slightly. Buzzy swallows. They exchange a glance -- something is wrong.

EXT. QUENT'S CAMP - DAY

Quent and his son sit under the canvas lean-to as they eat a cold breakfast of jerky and biscuits.

JIM

I've been thinking about what you said last night. About them running away?

Quent listens.

JIM (CONT'D)

What if they don't run?

QUENT

What do you think the shotguns are for?

JIM

What!? What are you talking about!? No, Pa. No way!

QUENT

No one will ever find them, and we get the silver.

JIM

Murder! Shit. I ain't goin' there!

QUENT

Listen, boy. People go missin' up here all the time. Don't worry. We'll bury 'em good.

Quent stands.

QUENT (CONT'D)

Nice Christian burial.

He heads away from camp.

QUENT (CONT'D)

Time to water the shrubs.

EXT. THE SITE - DAY

Henry, metal detector in hand, scans the ground near the well as Ernie films.

HENRY

So about an hour ago, we found a half dozen arrowheads at the foundation line! That suggests the cabin had been attacked. Now, I'm here near the well, which my son Cole discovered this morning.

BEEP!BEEP!BEEP! A strong reading from the detector.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Ho-Boy! Listen to that!

The BEEP BEEPS grow closer.

HENRY (CONT'D)

This is amazing... another high reading!

The BEEPS merge into a single solid tone. Then -- they cut out.

Henry frowns. He presses buttons on the detector.

Nothing.

Cole arrives with the shovel.

HENRY (CONT'D)
The battery's dead. It should last
for hours.

Ernie lowers the camera.

ERNIE
Camera's dead, too. I just put a
new battery in!

Ernie pulls the battery out, frustrated.

COLE
Want me to dig, or wait for the
camera?

HENRY
Dig. Whatever it is, it's big.

Cole shoves the blade into the earth.

HENRY (CONT'D)
And you wanted to leave.

COLE
I still do. Dad, something's not
right, here.

HENRY
You've been talking to Buzzy.

Cole keeps shoveling.

COLE
Dad, I'm serious. The talisman,
the warrior effigy -- it's
witchcraft.

HENRY
(scoffs)
Which is just as real as Bigfoot.
Cole, get a grip. It's eighteenth-
century superstition.

Cole doesn't argue. He just digs.

Henry pulls out a hand detector, waves it over the hole.
It buzzes once -- then dies.

HENRY (CONT'D)
What the hell? For Christ's sake!

COLE

Every battery. Coincidence?

Henry ignores him. But there's tension in his face now.

Cole scrapes away dirt -- and something shiny glints in the soil.

Henry kneels, brushing away more and more silver.

A silver tomahawk.

HENRY

Damn! Cole -- look at this! A silver tomahawk! See? The bowl and the neck...

More of it is still buried. Henry digs faster.

Buzzy and Ernie rush over.

ERNIE

What you got?

HENRY

Get this on tape.

ERNIE

Is it important?

HENRY

Yes, it's important, damnit!

Ernie sighs, swaps batteries as --

ERNIE

Okay, okay! Just making sure! I've only got one battery after this one.

Ernie lifts the camera to tape as Henry shifts into showman mode.

HENRY

(into camera)

Folks, we're stunned here! We've just uncovered a silver tomahawk blade! Silver! Do you know how rare that is?

Ernie zooms in as Henry works the tomahawk loose -- then Henry stops.

HENRY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Odd. It's stuck in something.

Henry brushes away more dirt. Then -- something white.

The camera dies.

ERNIE

Goddammit! Another dead battery!

Henry doesn't hear him. He's too focused.

He brushes away more dirt -- then stops.

A face stares back.

A Wyandot death mask.

The mask is aged, cracked, hand-carved from wood, painted black with red tribal markings.

Cole goes rigid. Buzzy's eyes widen.

Henry, focused, lifts the mask.

Beneath it -- a skull.

The silver tomahawk is embedded in its temple.

A large rock is jammed into its mouth.

Cole and Buzzy instinctively back away. Ernie just stares, speechless.

For the first time, Henry doesn't have anything to say.

A long, hollow beat.

Buzzy whispers.

BUZZY

Must have hurt like hell.

EXT. THE SITE - LATER - DAY

The skull, its mouth still wedged open with a stone, rests on the artifacts table alongside the silver warrior effigy, the talisman, and other finds.

HENRY

A silver pipe tomahawk blade.

ERNIE

Who would have a tomahawk blade
made out of silver?

HENRY

An officer, I suppose.

BUZZY

Why shove a rock in his mouth?

HENRY

No idea. Some kind of ritual? A
warning?

Cole SNAPS a photo with his phone. He bends down to eye
level, adjusting the angle -- SNAP.

INSERT - COLE'S PHONE SCREEN

The skull, the warrior effigy, and behind them -- the
ominous redbud trees.

EXT. THE WOODS - DAY

Cole and Buzzy trudge through the thick underbrush.

BUZZY

I mean, if you had a silver
tomahawk, and you buried it into
some guy's skull -- would you
leave it there!?

COLE

No.

BUZZY

So why did they?

COLE

Buzzy, all we do is find this
stuff. We don't always get to know
the why.

BUZZY

Yeah, but you can guess.

COLE

Sure. With bottles, coins,
everyday things. Not silver
effigies, sacrificial markings,
and skulls with their mouths
forced open.

BUZZY
What's with the rock in the mouth?

COLE
I don't know, Buzzy!

EXT. THE CLIFF - DAY

Cole and Buzzy emerge from the woods and stumble onto a rocky precipice.

BUZZY
Damn! I didn't know it was this high up!

COLE
Don't tell me you're afraid of heights.

BUZZY
Okay, I won't tell you.

Cole raises his phone, searching for a signal. Buzzy edges toward the cliff, peering over.

BUZZY (CONT'D)
Holy shit, we're way up!

He picks up a small rock and tosses it over. A long silence before the distant IMPACT.

BUZZY (CONT'D)
Yeah. No, thank you.

He turns back as Cole finishes sending a message. A new text appears.

Cole's posture stiffens. His grip on the phone tightens.

BUZZY (CONT'D)
What?

COLE
Professor Shadix commented on the pictures I posted yesterday.

BUZZY
Who?

COLE
Professor Shadix. Deer River Institute.

EXT. THE TREELINE - DAY

Jim crouches low as he listens.

COLE (O.S.)
He helps us identify Native
American and eighteenth century
items we find.

BUZZY (O.S.)
What does he say?

EXT. THE CLIFF - DAY

Cole scrolls down, eyes darting across the message. His
breath catches.

COLE
The effigy isn't just an artifact.

BUZZY
What do you mean?

Cole looks up, face pale.

COLE
Shadix says it's a burial marker.
A seal.

Several beats.

BUZZY
A seal for what? What are we
supposed to do?

COLE
(quiet, shaken)
Something that should have
remained buried.

EXT. THE SITE - DAY

Cole stands rigid in front of the artifacts table, Ernie
and Buzzy flanking him. Across from them, Henry -- arms
crossed, jaw tight.

He is not happy.

HENRY
You actually expect me to bury a
solid silver artifact?

COLE

Yes.

HENRY

The biggest find we've ever come across, and you say *put it back!*?

COLE

Dad, I saw what happened here.

HENRY

Saw what?

COLE

In a dream -- but it wasn't a dream. It was real.

HENRY

Which was it? Can't be both.

COLE

I think that warrior effigy put it in my head.

HENRY

Oh, come on, now!

COLE

This effigy and the talisman -- they weren't just buried with the body. They were keeping something trapped.

HENRY

Like what?

Cole hesitates, then:

COLE

A warrior. But not human. It was all shadow, with red eyes. I couldn't see its face. It was like... a demon.

HENRY

Okay...

COLE

And then a British officer -- a Redcoat -- came out of nowhere. He had a silver tomahawk and was about to strike.

ERNIE

And then?

COLE

Then I woke up.

A long pause.

ERNIE

You were thinking about all this creepy shit. It got in your head. Classic nightmare.

COLE

Yeah? And the very next day, we find this?

He gestures at the skull. At the silver-bladed tomahawk still wedged in its cranium.

BUZZY

I still don't get the rock in the mouth.

ERNIE

Maybe the guy was a snitch.

BUZZY

It's not funny, Ernie.

ERNIE

Who said I was kidding!?

Henry gestures to the skull and tomahawk.

HENRY

Alright. Let's say -- for argument's sake -- this was a burial. Why would a demon be the one buried? Wouldn't it be the other way around?

Cole does not have an answer.

ERNIE

Look, let's just pull the tomahawk out, put the skull back where we found it, and call it a day.

Cole shakes his head.

COLE

I think we should put the whole thing back.

HENRY

Cole... that effigy alone is solid silver. Just in metal value, we're looking at least 800 dollars. As an artifact? It could be worth 50 to 75 thousand.

BUZZY

Yeah, but you'd have to sell it to, like... a Satanist or some cult freak. You know any?

Henry doesn't answer.

Instead, he lets out a slow breath. Composes himself. Then --

HENRY

We're here. We've got fresh batteries. Let's get back to work.

Cole won't meet his father's eyes.

A long, uncomfortable beat.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Cole?

Cole finally looks up. His expression is neutral.

Too neutral.

COLE

Anything you say, Dad.

EXT. QUENT'S CAMP - DAY

Quent sits, propped up against a tree, eyes closed, bottle of whiskey next to him. Jim approaches. Quent doesn't bother to open his eyes.

QUENT

Well?

JIM

Followed two of them to the overlook. They get phone signal there.

QUENT

And?

JIM

They got a message. All I could hear was, "put it back in the ground." Something like that.

Quent's brow furrows. He cracks one eye open.

QUENT

Put what in the ground?

JIM

Whatever they dug up, I guess.

Quent finally opens both eyes. His expression darkens.

QUENT

Put back silver? Who would do that!?

JIM

Maybe they ain't got any silver.

QUENT

I heard 'em say it.

JIM

What if you heard wrong? You've been all through these mountains, Pa. There ain't nothin' here.

Quent takes a drink.

QUENT

If there's nothin' here, then what are they lookin' for?

A long, unsettling pause.

EXT. THE SITE - SUNSET

Three new holes have been dug in the area around the cabin foundation.

Ernie films as Buzzy watches Cole and Henry.

Cole sets his shovel aside and kneels beside the latest hole. The mood is heavy.

COLE

It's another grave, Dad.

BUZZY

Are you sure it's a human bone?

COLE

It's definitely a finger bone.
There's a gold wedding ring around
it.

Cole turns to his father.

COLE (CONT'D)

Do you want it?

Henry freezes. Just for a second. Then his face hardens.

Cole doesn't push it. He silently shovels the dirt back
into the grave.

BUZZY

How could they have lived here in
those days? Always under the
threat of attack.

HENRY

The land was worth fighting for.
Some wanted to live away from
cities and towns, away from
Puritan law.

BUZZY

Whoever they were... they paid the
price.

Cole shovels more dirt. Then, suddenly -- he stops.

COLE

Something's not right.

Cole steps back, looking at the two graves.

COLE (CONT'D)

Why are they buried right next to
the cabin? They're inches away
from the walls.

Ernie lowers the camera.

ERNIE

And the tomahawk was on the other
side. Like they were enemies.

BUZZY

How do you make that jump?

ERNIE

These two were buried together,
like family. So why was the other
guy buried away from them?

A beat. The wind rustles the redbud trees.

Henry walks over to the artifacts table.

Ernie and Buzzy watch as Henry grabs the skull and the
silver blade.

Cole spins toward him.

COLE

Dad! No!

Henry twists, tugs gently --

COLE (CONT'D)

Dad, leave it in!

Henry removes the silver tomahawk blade from the skull. A
soft, wet sound as it pulls free.

Cole stumbles forward, breath caught in his throat.

HENRY

We'll bury the skull. But not the
silver.

A deep silence.

Henry examines the skull.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Whatever he did to deserve this...
it's long since past. He can rest
in peace now.

A long pause. The four of them stare at the skull.

BUZZY

(soft, nervous)

The professor said we should bury
this stuff.

No response.

BUZZY (CONT'D)

And I think he's right.

Then --

A sudden, blood-curdling WAR CRY.

Everyone JOLTS!

Their heads snap to the direction of the scream.

ERNIE

What the fuck was that!?

Silence.

Another WAR CRY.

Louder. Closer.

BUZZY

Maybe it's that guy with the
rifle... from the video...

Henry stares into the forest. His knuckles are white.

EXT. QUENT'S CAMP - DAY

Quent and Jim sit frozen, staring into the woods.

Jim grips his shotgun a little tighter.

JIM

Maybe it's just them at the camp,
foolin' around.

A distant WAR CRY -- this one even longer, even more
unnatural... almost inhuman.

QUENT

I don't think so.

The first BOOM of a WAR DRUM

Deep. Hollow. Ancient.

BOOM.

Then faster. The sound grows. Spreads. Surrounds them.

Jim licks his lips.

JIM

What the hell is that?

Quent doesn't answer. He just listens.

The war drums keep beating.

And they're getting closer.

EXT. THE SITE - DAY

Henry and Cole stand at the edge of camp, listening.

The war drums echo through the trees.

A ghostly WARRIOR'S VOICE sings the SCALP DANCE, weaving between the drumbeats.

Cole's voice is low. Unnerved.

COLE

What the hell is going on?

Behind them, at the artifacts table --

Ernie: Still. Studying the woods.

Buzzy: Pale. Terrified.

BUZZY

Okay, we need to leave -- now.

ERNIE

It's not like we can just jump in the car and go.

BUZZY

That's a war dance!

ERNIE

How do you know?

BUZZY

Because it's scaring the shit out of me!

Ernie walks toward Henry and Cole. Buzzy hesitates -- then follows, keeping close.

Ernie stops shoulder to shoulder with Cole.

ERNIE

I want to see.

Cole turns to him.

COLE

You serious?

ERNIE

What if it's the guy from the video?

Cole scans the trees.

COLE

Then he's got a lot of friends.

ERNIE

Or just a really good sound system playing "The Greatest Hits of the Iroquois."

A glint of curiosity in Cole's eyes.

COLE

Let's find out.

He steps forward. Henry grabs his arm.

HENRY

Hold on! Where are you going?

COLE

We'll keep our distance. Just wanna see.

BUZZY

I'll stay here. Y'know, watch camp. With your dad.

Ernie smirks, but says nothing.

Cole and Ernie disappear into the trees.

Buzzy glances at Henry.

BUZZY (CONT'D)

It's a recording, right?

Henry doesn't answer right away. Then --

HENRY

...Probably.

But he doesn't look convinced.

EXT. THE FOREST TO THE EAST - DAY

The shadows stretch long as the setting sun bleeds orange through the trees.

Quent and Jim move cautiously, shotguns in hand.

The DRUMS and CHANTING grow louder.

JIM
Pa, let's get out of here.

QUENT
You hush your gopher trap, or I'll
shoot you myself!

They press forward.

EXT. DEEPER IN THE FOREST - DAY

Cole and Ernie creep forward, branches gripped like
makeshift weapons

ERNIE
See anything?

COLE
No.

ERNIE
Wouldn't they have a fire or
something?

COLE
Maybe.

ERNIE
A few years ago my parents took me
to this Native American Pow-Wow...
they chanted and danced around
a... big fire...

They keep moving.

The SINGING STOPS.

The DRUMS STOP.

A vacuum of silence.

Cole takes a step.

SNAP. A branch CRACKS underfoot.

They freeze. Not a single sound.

Not even the wind.

EXT. THE FOREST TO THE EAST - DAY

Quent and Jim freeze mid-step.

Dead silence.

JIM

Why'd they stop?

Quent's eyes narrow. He scans the forest. Listening.

Suddenly --

SNAP.

A single, distant crack.

QUENT

Down.

They drop to one knee, rifles raised.

Another SNAP. Closer.

A RUSTLE in the brush.

QUENT (CONT'D)

All right! You had your fun! Step
out -- now!

Nothing.

QUENT (CONT'D)

I said get out here! Don't make --

WHOOSH!

A black blur slices through the air.

A wet THUNK.

Quent jerks -- eyes wide, mouth open.

A blood-tipped arrow juts from his throat.

A gurgle. Blood spills past his lips.

Jim staggers back, breath caught in his chest.

JIM

Pa...?

Quent wobbles. He tries to speak -- only blood.

Then -- he collapses.

Dead.

Jim chokes on a scream. His hands tremble on his rifle.
He spins, eyes darting wildly.

The trees loom. Watching.

Something moves.

Jim runs. Hard. Fast. Blind.

The forest swallows him whole.

EXT. THE CAMP - SUNSET

Henry and Buzzy stand at the edge of camp, listening.

Henry cups his hands and calls out.

HENRY

Cole! Cole!

No response.

Something catches Buzzy's attention. His eyes open wide.

He lifts a shaky arm and points.

Henry follows his gaze.

A silhouette stands at the tree line.

KWAH-NOOH-TAH.

Towering. Motionless. Cloaked in darkness. A bearskin war
bonnet drapes over his shoulders. From its sides, two
massive, curved horns.

The Warrior stares into camp.

Buzzy barely breathes.

BUZZY

Mister B?

Henry's jaw tightens.

EXT. THE FOREST - NIGHT

Cole and Ernie push through dense brush, their pace slowed in the dark.

ERNIE

We should have kept going.

COLE

Where!? The singing stopped, then the screaming started! We need to get back.

ERNIE

You think that's where they're headed?

COLE

I don't know, Ernie! I don't even know who "they" are!

ERNIE

I think some psycho's screwing with us.

Cole halts, throws an arm across Ernie's chest. They go dead still.

A distant rustle. Footsteps. Running.

ERNIE (CONT'D)

And it's fucking working.

Through the trees -- Jim. A blur of movement, sprinting for his life.

Behind him -- NATIVE WAR CRIES.

ERNIE (CONT'D)

We going after him?

COLE

We're going back to camp.

Cole bolts in the same direction as Jim. Ernie follows.

ERNIE

I thought we were headed back to camp!

COLE

This *is* the way back!

ERNIE

Great.

EXT. THE CAMP - NIGHT

Henry stands at the edge of camp. Unmoving.

Buzzy watches from the tents as he rummages through a duffle bag.

Kwah-Nooh-Tah remains at the tree line.

HENRY

The camera, Buzzy... hurry.

Buzzy's hands tremble as he pulls out --

BUZZY

(stunned)

A gun. You brought a gun?

HENRY

Two. Mine and Cole's. You'd be out of your mind hiking this deep without one. Put it back.

BUZZY

Shit!

HENRY

Put it back. I'm not sure we're going to need it.

Buzzy swallows, drops the pistol back in the bag. Keeps digging. Finds the camera. Walks it over to Henry, who takes it.

BUZZY

Pretty sure a gun's more useful.

Henry raises the camera. The Warrior framed dead center.

CLICK.

He lowers the camera, checks the screen.

The Warrior isn't there.

Henry frowns. Looks up --

The Warrior hasn't moved.

HENRY

Impossible.

He turns the screen to Buzzy.

Buzzy sees the empty frame. His face drains of color.

Henry raises the camera again. Click. Checks -- nothing.

HENRY (CONT'D)

What the hell?

A long silence.

Then --

FOOTSTEPS. A RUSH OF BRUSH.

Jim bursts from the woods, wild-eyed. SLAMS into Buzzy.

They both hit the dirt.

JIM

They killed him!

Jim scrambles to his feet. Panicked. Breathless.

Henry grabs his shoulders.

HENRY

Who!?

JIM

My father! He's dead! He's dead!

Jim struggles to break free. Henry holds firm.

HENRY

Hey! Hey! Calm down! Calm down! I want to help, but you have to tell me what happened.

BUZZY

Who killed your father!?

Jim stumbles, collapses into a chair. His body shakes. His breath shudders.

JIM

They shot him.

HENRY

Who shot him?

Jim's voice distant. Detached.

JIM

Indians.

Henry and Buzzy exchange a silent look.

HENRY

Indians?

Jim's breathing slows. A trance-like calm.

JIM

They were singing... we heard
drums... then the swoosh of an
arrow. I know that sound. I hunt
deer. I know what an arrow sounds
like when you shoot one.

(beat, whispering)

I heard it get closer... closer...
it swooshed right by my face...
and right into my dad's neck.

Jim shivers. The horror fresh in his mind.

HENRY

An arrow?

Jim nods. Eyes flickering in memory.

JIM

But when it hit him... there was
nothing there. Just a hole in his
neck. And the blood.

BUZZY

A gunshot then?

Jim slowly shakes his head.

JIM

No. No, I saw the arrow. I saw it
get closer and closer... and then
it just... wasn't there.

A thick silence.

The campfire flickers.

Somewhere, deep in the trees --

A distant drumbeat.

EXT. THE FOREST - NIGHT

Cole and Ernie weave through the trees, their breath sharp in the cold night air.

They freeze.

Ahead, bathed in a pale beam of moonlight, stands Kwah-Nooh-Tah.

His arms raised toward the sky. His voice low and rhythmic. A deep, guttural chant.

KWAH-NOOH-TAH

Kassiwī Niona Enna Odakozik...
Chibaiō Agaskwīkok... Kizos...
Aalakws Nionakiya...

ERNIE

What the hell?

COLE

(low, urgent)
Let's keep moving -- quietly!

They take a careful step.

Kwah-Nooh-Tah tilts his head skyward.

His voice intensifies.

KWAH-NOOH-TAH

Enni Taolani Agaskwīkok Noesal
Niona, Kizosaltoalakws Taolawisi
Maskozisis Taolwisi Nolka Moz.

Cole stops mid-step. Something moves beneath the ground.

A HAND bursts from the soil.

Then another. Clawing. Reaching.

ERNIE

(whispering)
Jesus Christ!

The earth ruptures.

Rotting WARRIORS claw their way up from shallow graves.

Their armor is rusted, their weapons cracked, but their eyes -- hollow sockets, endless voids.

Kwah-Nooh-Tah lifts his arms higher.

KWAH-NOOH-TAH
 Kassiwí Niona Enna Odakozik...
 Chibaio Agaskwikok...

A warrior's jaw unhinges. A soundless scream.

Cole and Ernie stumble back. Paralyzed.

ERNIE
 What the fuck!

Kwah-Nooh-Tah lowers his arms.

The warriors rise to full height.

A stillness hangs in the air.

Suddenly -- in a hoarse whisper --

COLE
 Run!

They bolt.

Branches whip against them as they tear through the forest, their breath ragged.

Behind them, the chant fades into the trees.

KWAH-NOOH-TAH (O.S.)
 Kassiwí Niona Enna Odakozik...
 Chibaio Agaskwikok... Kizos...

Ernie glances back, face pale.

ERNIE
 Cole, what the fuck was that!?

COLE
 I don't know!

They vanish into the darkness.

EXT. THE CAMP - NIGHT

Jim sits by the campfire, staring blankly into the flames, still in shock. Henry keeps a watchful eye on the forest, tension in every line of his body.

Buzzy approaches, nervous.

BUZZY

I watched the woods behind us for
twenty minutes. Not a sign of him.

HENRY

Same here.

BUZZY

I think it was just some nut.

HENRY

A nut who killed a man.

FOOTSTEPS. Fast. Closer.

Henry stiffens, gripping the pistol. Buzzy takes a step
back as --

Cole and Ernie BURST from the woods, gasping for breath,
doubled over.

COLE

There's... an Indian out there...
looks straight out of the
eighteenth century. He was -- he
was...

ERNIE

Bringing the dead out of the
ground!

BUZZY

(flinches)
What!?

COLE

Some kind of chant... and dead
warriors just crawled out of the
ground!

HENRY

How could they be dead if they
were moving?

COLE

Because they were half skeletal! I
don't know how else to explain it!

Ernie finally notices Jim by the fire.

ERNIE

Who the hell is that?

HENRY

Jim. The guy from your video.

ERNIE

Does he have anything to do with all this!?

HENRY

No. Whatever's out there -- killed his father.

BUZZY

We had one here. Big guy. War bonnet, horns coming out of it.

COLE

We saw him, too. He's the leader.

BUZZY

It's got to be some kind of prank. Local sickos.

HENRY

An elaborate prank, considering no one knew we'd be here.

A beat.

COLE

We need to get help.

BUZZY

How?

COLE

I can get a signal at the overlook. Send for help. They'll get my GPS.

ERNIE

I can make it to the car. Drive to the police.

JIM

The police are eight miles from where you parked.

They turn to see Jim, who watches them from the campfire.

COLE

How do you know where we parked?

JIM

Because me and my dad parked right next to ya.

A heavy silence.

BUZZY

Ernie, the car's a day away.

ERNIE

I can make it. Run all night. Get there by noon.

COLE

You sure about this?

ERNIE

You're forgetting -- I run track.

COLE

You're gonna have to stop and rest. What if those things sneak up on you?

ERNIE

Counting on them attacking you guys and leaving me in the clear.

BUZZY

I think you're insane.

COLE

I'm feeling better about this.

HENRY

How far away did you see them... these... warriors?

COLE

About a mile.

HENRY

I'm sure we can expect them back. We need to strike the tents, roll them up, use them as part of a barricade.

BUZZY

Barricade!?

HENRY

Turn the table over, stack the chairs... we need cover.

ERNIE
I should get started.

BUZZY
Try the phone first. If that
doesn't work, then we do it your
way.

HENRY
That makes sense, Buzzy.

ERNIE
Fine.

COLE
(to Henry)
I'll take Jim with me.

Jim tenses.

JIM
Me!?

COLE
(firm)
Let's go.

Cole turns to Henry.

COLE (CONT'D)
Be back soon as I can.

Henry hands him the Beretta. Cole shoves it into his
waistband, gives Jim a sharp nod -- move! -- and hurries
into the trees.

Jim hesitates, then follows.

Henry turns back to the group.

HENRY
Ernie, let's strike the tents.
Buzzy, pack up the artifacts.

BUZZY
You got it.

They move with purpose. Shadows stretch long under the
flickering firelight.

EXT. IN THE FOREST - NIGHT

Cole and Jim trudge through the underbrush, the darkness almost absolute.

JIM

Why do I have to go with ya?

COLE

Because I don't trust you.

JIM

You don't even know me!

COLE

I know you were following us.

JIM

That was my Pa's idea. Thought you were digging up a treasure.

COLE

And everything we dug up is still in the camp. So what was your next move?

Jim hesitates.

COLE (CONT'D)

I could see you making a play for one of the pistols.

JIM

Not me. I've had enough.

They push forward through the thick brush.

COLE

Were you watching us from the overlook earlier today?

JIM

Yeah.

COLE

I knew someone was watching.

They continue in tense silence.

EXT. THE CAMP - LATER

Within the cabin's foundation, a makeshift barricade stands -- the table on its side, tents rolled up like sandbags, folding chairs stacked for reinforcement at each end.

Henry steps back, surveying their work.

HENRY

Between this and the tree cover,
we should have decent protection
if they come back.

Buzzy sits against a tree, arms wrapped around his knees.

BUZZY

You really saw warriors coming up
from the ground?

Ernie, leans against the barricade, doesn't look at him.

ERNIE

Yeah.

BUZZY

You're not... like... screwing
with me?

Ernie, devoid of emotion, his face grave, responds.

ERNIE

No.

They sit in heavy silence.

Henry suddenly tilts his head, alert.

Ernie notices.

ERNIE (CONT'D)

Hear something?

HENRY

No... that's the problem.

A beat. The absence of sound settles over them.

HENRY (CONT'D)

No crickets. No tree frogs. No
owls. Nothing.

A beat.

Henry crouches low behind a tent roll.

HENRY (CONT'D)
 (urgent whisper)
 I think we have company.

Buzzy scurries behind the overturned table. Ernie ducks behind a tree, scanning the dark.

ERNIE
 How many rounds in that pistol?

HENRY
 Seventeen, and a box of ammo.

They wait.

EXT. THE CLIFF - NIGHT

Cole stands at the edge, phone in hand, trying to stay calm as he waits for a signal.

Jim paces behind him, jittery, eyes darting to the trees.

JIM
 Send the damn message and let's get back!

Cole ignores him, typing.

COLE
 I need to check my messages.

JIM
 Are you serious!? Who cares -- send for help!

COLE
 Shut up.

Cole's screen flickers as a video message loads.

On-screen, PROFESSOR SHADIX (70s), appears -- gray-haired, glasses, sweater loose over his frame. He speaks urgently, not looking at the camera.

SHADIX (ON VIDEO)
 Cole, I hope you get this message. Under no circumstances should you remove the tomahawk from the skull... or the rock from the mouth.

Cole stiffens.

COLE

Shit.

JIM

What the hell's he talkin' about?

SHADIX (ON VIDEO)

I believe you have the skull of Kwah-Nooh-Tah. The silver blade and the rock are keeping his spirit contained.

Jim's breath catches.

SHADIX (ON VIDEO) (CONT'D)

Kwah-Nooh-Tah was a Wyandot vampire. Long thought to be legend, but Captain Joshua Tilton's journals confirm he killed the creature in the Adirondacks.

COLE

Vampire!?

SHADIX (ON VIDEO)

Not like Dracula. He didn't drink blood. He consumed souls. His warriors would rise to feed with him.

Jim is staring at the screen now, horrified.

JIM

What the fuck...

SHADIX (ON VIDEO)

If those items are removed, you will unleash his followers. Warriors who were bound to his soul. They feed on flesh. They are, for lack of a better term... zombies.

A cold shock washes over Cole's face.

SHADIX (ON VIDEO) (CONT'D)

(leaning in, warning)

One thing stood out in your photo... the redbud tree. They aren't indigenous to that area...

but they keep Kwah-Nooh-Tah and his spirits away. The trees were planted for a reason.

Jim takes a step back.

SHADIX (ON VIDEO) (CONT'D)

I fear for your safety. You must leave that place at once.

The message cuts out.

Cole stares at the screen, frozen.

The forest around them is too still.

A RUSTLE.

Branches and brush whip aside as a rotting WARRIOR lunges forward!

KITCHI.

Eyes hollow, skin peeling, tomahawk raised high!

KITCHI

(war cry)

EYYYYYAAAAAHHHH!

THUMP!

He slams into Cole -- both tumble to the ground!

Cole's phone flies -- over the edge of the cliff.

The rotting face of Kitchi looms inches away from Cole, jaws snapping!

Cole struggles, arms shaking.

Jim reacts -- slams Kitchi hard!

The undead Warrior staggers back!

Cole rolls to safety.

THHHWAP!

A second tomahawk sails through the dark -- buries deep in Jim's neck.

Jim stiffens, choking. Blood sprays.

Cole lunges for him --

Kitchi SCREAMS and charges.

Cole yanks the Beretta free -- BAM!

Kitchi jerks back -- then keeps coming.

BAM! BAM!

A knife flashes -- Kitchi doesn't stop.

Cole scrambles to Jim and tries to pull him to safety.

Jim gurgles, his eyes wide, drowning in blood.

Kitchi seizes Cole -- shoves him aside.

Cole hits the ground hard.

He turns just in time to see --

Kitchi sink his jagged teeth into Jim's throat.

Jim's scream is strangled, wet.

Cole staggers back, horrified.

He runs.

Plunging into the dark forest.

EXT. THE CAMP - NIGHT

Henry keeps watch on the dark trees to his front. The forest remains silent, until the SNAP of wood rings out. Henry remains calm. And waits.

Buzzy turns to Ernie, behind him.

BUZZY
Did you hear that?

Ernie motions for him to be quiet.

Buzzy turns to his front. His eyes glance down to his hand that trembles as it grasps a hunting knife.

SNAP!

Henry takes his pistol off "safety," and stares ahead.

WHOOOOSH! An arrow flies towards him from the dark! He ducks down and turns to see the ground PUFF with dirt as it impacts -- except there is no arrow to be seen.

WHOOOOOSH! Another arrow SLAMS into the tree that shields Ernie with a THUD! The bark flies off on impact, but no arrow is seen.

Ernie points to the tree.

ERNIE

Nothing!

HENRY

I saw both arrows as they came in... but they disappeared!

ERNIE

Where the hell do they go!?

HENRY

I don't know -- but they do damage just the same!

WHOOOSH - THUD! Another arrow impacts the tree. Ernie ducks down and crawls to Henry.

ERNIE

We should charge them. They're not expecting that.

HENRY

We can't charge them when we don't know where they are.

A RUSTLE from the brush behind them.

BUZZY

Behind us!

COLE (O.S.)

It's me!

BUZZY

Cole!

Cole, crouched low, bolts into the campsite.

BUZZY (CONT'D)

Where's Jim?

Cole, winded, hunches over to catch his breath. Henry moves him behind a tree.

HENRY

Better take cover. They're shooting at us.

Buzzy and Ernie kneel next to him.

COLE

We need to get out of here.

BUZZY

Cole -- where's Jim?

COLE

Jim's dead.

ERNIE

What!?

COLE

He saved my life.

BUZZY

Holy shit! What!?

HENRY

What happened?

COLE

One of those things got him. It was terrible. You should have seen it...

ERNIE

Were you able to send for help?

COLE

No. I got a message from Professor Shadix. After I saw it, I was about to call for help. That's when we got attacked.

HENRY

What did Shadix say?

Cole has strong eye contact with his father as he speaks in a steady, calm voice.

COLE

When we removed the tomahawk and the rock, we released a spirit called Kwah-Nooh-Tah.

HENRY

Kwah-Nooh-Tah?

COLE

A Wyandot vampire.

Buzzy plops onto the ground, his eyes opened wide.

Cole turns to Ernie.

COLE (CONT'D)

Those things we saw crawl out of
the ground were his zombie
followers.

BUZZY

What!? Oh, shit!

COLE

These redbud trees supposedly keep
him away.

HENRY

That's a little far fetched, don't
you think?

WHOOSH-THUD! WHOOSH-THUD! Two arrows kick up dirt behind
them.

ERNIE

Like invisible arrows!?

Henry gives a quick, dejected sigh.

BUZZY

So, how do we get the spirit back
into the skull?

COLE

I'm not sure we can.

ERNIE

What did the Professor say?

COLE

We never got that far.

ERNIE

Where's the phone?

COLE

At the bottom of the overlook.

WHOOSH-THUD! An invisible arrow hits the tent roll! They
hurry back to the barricade.

Henry looks up and sees a Zombie Warrior charge him as he
flails a tomahawk over his head.

The Zombie Warrior SCREAMS a WAR CRY!

Henry FIRES! BAM! The Warrior stumbles from the impact, but keeps running.

He passes a redbud tree and vanishes -- only to emerge behind on the other side of the foundation.

BUZZY

It didn't kill him!

ERNIE

And he couldn't get into the camp!

HENRY

Yes, but their arrows can.

ERNIE

How come we see the arrows when they shoot them, but they're invisible when they hit?

COLE

Paranormal.

BUZZY

Why didn't the shot kill him!? It was dead-on!

COLE

Because he's already dead.

ERNIE

You're supposed to shoot 'em in the head, Mister B.

COLE

That's just a movie thing, Ernie. Zombies aren't real.

BUZZY

So what the hell was *that* thing!?

COLE

Vampires!? Demons!? How the hell do I know!?

ERNIE

Hey, if we got a real vampire out there, then zombies aren't a stretch.

COLE

I'm not arguing with you. Whatever it is, I saw it kill Jim, and it killed his father.

I know it's real, I just don't know what the hell it is!

BUZZY

The professor told you.

ERNIE

Yeah. He gave us the bad news but not the good news on how to get rid of it.

COLE

Let's say he actually is a vampire. How do you kill a vampire?

BUZZY

With a stake through the heart.

COLE

That's how it is in fiction -- which is where vampires belong! But would it actually work?

ERNIE

I understand this much -- with the phone at the bottom of the cliff, there isn't any help on the way.

Henry glares at the forest.

HENRY

They might be done for the moment. Maybe they're reevaluating the pistol and the redbuds.

ERNIE

Good time to slip out.

COLE

You still think trying to get to the car is a good idea?

ERNIE

Either that or we stay here till someone digs us up!

HENRY

I'll go.

They all turn to Henry.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I got you all into this.

ERNIE

All due respect, Mister B. That's a pretty dumb idea.

HENRY

Why?

ERNIE

Do you think you can outrun a ghost warrior?

HENRY

What makes you think you can?

ERNIE

My age and the medals I won in track.

COLE

Dad, it's not your fault, and he's right. You'd never make it.

ERNIE

So I'll go.

HENRY

Not yet. With age comes the experience of tactics. Wait till there's another attack.

ERNIE

Why?

HENRY

We keep them busy while you cut out to the west. If you go now, you'll have all of them on your tail.

Cole hands Ernie his pistol.

COLE

You should take this.

ERNIE

Nah. It will only slow me down. They won't catch me.

The WAR DRUMS of the Zombie Warriors echo through the forest. The Warriors SING the haunting SCALP DANCE.

Everyone stops and listens.

Their eyes scan the trees before them. The voices are deep in the forest.

ERNIE (CONT'D)
Hell, they'll never be more occupied than now!

HENRY
You know where the car is?

ERNIE
Yeah, more or less.

Henry hands Ernie the keys.

HENRY
Here you go.

COLE
Hey, Ernie?

ERNIE
Yeah?

COLE
You really think you can do this?

A shadow of doubt washes over Ernie's face... and he washes it away.

ERNIE
Hell, yeah. Just like running track.

Cole nods to the forest.

COLE
That ain't no track out there.

Ernie pauses.

ERNIE
I know I've been a bit of an asshole most of the time.

Ernie puts a hand on Cole's shoulder.

ERNIE (CONT'D)
But you've been a great friend.

COLE
Hey, don't you say that! That sounds like some kind of goodbye.

Ernie smiles.

ERNIE

I'll be back with the cops!

In a second, Ernie is out of the camp and fades into the dark of the forest.

Everyone watches till he disappears.

The SINGING and DRUMS continue.

HENRY

I think he got away.

Cole looks at a redbud tree.

COLE

I think we need more weapons.

A ghostly, distant WAR CRY from deep in the woods.

EXT. IN THE FOREST - NIGHT

Ernie tears through the trees, breath ragged, feet pounding the earth. The blackness ahead is endless.

THUD! He trips -- slams down hard.

A jagged rock juts from the ground, inches from his skull -- sharp, waiting.

He exhales. That was close. Too close.

Then --

The distant SINGING shifts.

Footsteps. Running.

Ernie's head whips around --

Shadows move between the trees.

He sprints. Faster than ever before.

EXT. THE CAMP - NIGHT

Cole and Buzzy crouch behind the overturned table, whittling the ends of branches from the redbud tree.

The SINGING and DRUMS continue, distant and rhythmic.

BUZZY

If we only had some holy water.

COLE

Whittle.

BUZZY

I'm serious! A little sprinkle,
and I bet they'd melt -- like
cheese on a grill.

Cole reaches into a box, pulling out the silver tomahawk blade and a sturdy piece of wood. Then, another reach -- he lifts the effigy and wedges it into the barricade.

Buzzy watches, frowning his brow.

BUZZY (CONT'D)

Okay, I don't get it.

COLE

Get what?

BUZZY

You! What's with the ugly statue?

COLE

I think this has something to do
with Kwah-Nooh-Tah.

BUZZY

Yeah? Then why did the Professor
say to bury it back where you
found it?

COLE

It's probably too late for that
now.

BUZZY

You don't know that!

COLE

Educated guess.

BUZZY

Hell, throw it at them. Maybe
they'll go away.

COLE

Or maybe it will make them
stronger.

Buzzy opens his mouth -- pauses.

BUZZY

Yeah! White flag. We leave them the skull, the silver, the talisman... everything. Maybe they let us go.

HENRY

And maybe they won't.

COLE

Buzzy, I saw one of those things eating Jim. Tearing his throat apart. You think you can bargain with that?

Buzzy shakes his head.

BUZZY

If pistols don't stop them... what the hell are these spears gonna do?

HENRY

We just need to hope Ernie gets help... and we can hold them off until then.

EXT. IN THE FOREST - NIGHT

Ernie sprints through the forest, leaping over fallen branches, dodging trees.

The DRUMS have faded. The SINGING is distant.

His pace slows. Breath heaving, he collapses against a tree for support.

He pulls out his phone, flips to video mode, and holds it up -- his own face staring back.

ERNIE

(whispering, shaky
breath)

Okay, so I'm about twenty minutes from the camp... listen...

He turns the phone toward the trees -- no sign of movement. The faint thrum of drums still lingers.

ERNIE (CONT'D)

Shit, you can still hear 'em. Maybe we edit this into the new video when we get outta here.

His voice wavers.

ERNIE (CONT'D)
 There's these guys... Indian
 warriors, but like, from way back.
 And they're dead. Zombies.

He swallows. Laughs nervously.

ERNIE (CONT'D)
 No, I'm not drunk. But I wish I
 was. These guys are totally fucked
 up.

Behind him -- A SHADOW MOVES.

A tall, dark FIGURE emerges from the trees.

Ernie doesn't see it.

ERNIE (CONT'D)
 So yeah, zombies are real -- or
 whatever the hell you want to call
 'em. Feels like some old-ass
 Native American curse.

In the phone screen -- A FACE APPEARS BEHIND HIM.

Half-decayed. Lifeless eyes.

A tomahawk gleams in its rotting grip.

Ernie's eyes widen.

A blood-curdling WAR CRY SHRIEKS from behind him!

ERNIE (CONT'D)
 Oh, SHIT!

The phone DROPS --

Ernie tears off running.

ERNIE (CONT'D)
 (screaming as he
 bolts through the
 trees)
 Shit! Shit! Shit!

The Zombie Warrior -- TAREGAN -- lunges after him.

Both vanish into the darkness.

EXT. THE CAMP - NIGHT

The DRUMS pound in the distance, steady, unrelenting.

Henry listens, jaw clenched.

Cole and Buzzy shore up the barricade, weaving fallen redbud branches between the overturned tents and chairs.

Henry opens a box of ammo, sets it within reach.

The DRUMS stop.

Silence.

The stillness is suffocating.

No wind, no crickets, no frogs.

Cole and Buzzy stare into the black void ahead.

COLE

Better get ready.

Cole places his pistol in front of him.

Buzzy grips a spear, stabs a knife into the dirt within easy reach.

A SOUND.

SLOW FOOTSTEPS in the dark.

Twigs SNAP. Leaves CRUNCH.

Buzzy peeks over the table.

Henry whispers.

HENRY

Stay ready...

From the shadows -- three FIGURES emerge.

MACHK. NOOTAU. KITCHI.

Dead warriors, cloaked in rot and war paint, advancing slowly through the trees.

Machk raises his bow.

An arrow LOOSENS--WHOOSH!

THUD! It strikes the barricade -- but vanishes on impact.

Nootau and Kitchi fire --

WHOOSH! WHOOSH! THUD!

Buzzy SCREAMS as an invisible arrow slams into his leg!

Blood spills through his pants.

BUZZY

Oh, damn! Shit!

BAM! BAM! Henry fires back -- each shot slams into a Warrior, knocking them to the ground.

Cole rips off his belt, looping it around Buzzy's leg -- pulls tight.

Buzzy grits his teeth, muttering through the pain.

BUZZY (CONT'D)

What happened to you, Buzzy? Me!?
Oh, I got hit by an invisible
arrow! Cupid's arrow? Nah -- some
fucked up zombie arrow from a
fucked up dead zombie in feathers!

COLE

This might hurt.

BUZZY

Can't be worse than this.

Cole cinches the belt tight. Buzzy CRIES out.

BUZZY (CONT'D)

OW! Yes, it can! Yes, it can!

HENRY

Cole.

Henry tosses Cole a cloth from the duffle.

Cole catches it, presses it hard against the wound.

BUZZY

How bad?

COLE

Didn't hit an artery. You'll live.

BUZZY

Thank God. Hurts like hell.

COLE
Yeah. Sorry, Buzzy.

Buzzy nods, weakly.

Cole turns to his father.

COLE (CONT'D)
See them?

Henry shakes his head.

BUZZY
Maybe they gave up.

COLE
Let's hope.

Cole continues to work on the tomahawk. His eyes shift to the effigy.

The warrior's face stares back at him.

EXT. DEEP IN THE FOREST - NIGHT

Ernie dodges trees and leaps over fallen branches.

He disappears into the blackness of the forest, only to burst into the silver-blue glow of moonbeams.

A quick glance behind. Nothing.

He slows, puzzled. Turns fully to scan the darkness. The only sound is his own breathing -- no pounding footsteps, no rustling leaves.

A scoff, a crooked smile.

He shakes his head.

ERNIE
Yes, Mister B. I can outrun a
ghost warrior!

Turning back -- he SLAMS into a solid mass.

TAREGAN.

The half-skeletal face looms inches from his own, hollow sockets burning into him.

Ernie chokes on a scream, stumbles back --

And crashes into Nootau.

ERNIE (CONT'D)

Shit!

Nootau grabs him, flinging him to the ground like a rag doll. Ernie scrambles, tries to push up, but --

A BOOT slams down between his shoulder blades. Taregan looms over him, pinning him in place.

A flash of steel. The blade glints in the moonlight as it's raised high.

Taregan grips Ernie's hair, yanks his head back.

A SCREAM rips from Ernie's throat as the knife carves deep into his scalp --

FFFFFFPPPT!

The skin peels away with a sickening wet sound.

Taregan rises, holding the dripping scalp high above his head -- a trophy.

Blood drips down his arm as the night swallows Ernie's fading SCREAMS.

EXT. THE CAMP - NIGHT

Cole stirs awake, eyes fluttering open. Something... off. A sensation more than a sound. He listens.

Nothing.

His gaze flicks to Buzzy -- still asleep, mouth slightly open. Then to his father, slouched in a light snooze.

Cole exhales, about to let sleep pull him back under --

A faint shimmer in the trees.

Tiny sparkles. Like stars. Hanging in the air.

Cole bolts upright.

Henry sees it, too. Their eyes meet -- silent alarm shared between them.

But they can't look away from the forest.

The silver moonlight shifts, casting a sepia glow over everything. Like an old photograph coming to life.

A stillness settles. Heavy. Too still.

Buzzy wakes with a jolt. He blinks groggily, uneasy before he even knows why. Sees Cole and Henry's frozen stares -- then follows their gaze.

Two COLONIAL CHILDREN -- a GIRL (10), and a BOY (13), -- sprint from behind the barricade, breathless, wild-eyed. They wear eighteenth-century clothes, the girl clutching a porcelain-faced doll.

Buzzy's gaze jumps to the artifacts box. Sitting on top is half of a porcelain face. Cracked. Dirty.

A BLOOD-CURDLING WAR CRY shatters the silence.

The children freeze, clutching each other in terror.

Cole, Henry, and Buzzy -- paralyzed -- watch in horror.

KA-BOOM!

A musket blast ERUPTS behind Henry's shoulder, spitting a plume of fire into the night.

A voice -- desperate. Shaking.

COLONIAL MAN (O.S.)
Elizabeth! John! Run! Quick! Run!

More musket blasts. KA-BOOM! KA-BOOM! KA-BOOM!

The children collapse mid-sprint. Lifeless.

From the shadows -- Taregan, Noontau, Machk, and Kitchi, in human form and in full war paint, rush forward.

A COLONIAL MAN bursts into view behind Henry, musket aimed -- FIRING at the charging warriors --

KA-BOOM!

The shot barely slows Taregan before he's on him, tomahawk sinking into the man's chest.

A choked gasp.

Taregan wrenches the blade free, shoves the dying man down, and raises his scalp knife.

From the opposite treeline -- a volley of muskets ERUPTS!

KA-BOOM!

Then -- emerging from the trees --

KWAH-NOOH-TAH.

The Vampire Warrior.

His sharp teeth glisten red with fresh blood.

Across the clearing, a lone FIGURE steps forward, bathed in flickering musket light.

CAPTAIN JOSHUA TILTON

Redcoat pristine. Silver-bladed tomahawk clenched tight.

Cole's grip tightens on his own tomahawk -- the same weapon, but tarnished with age.

Kwah-Nooh-Tah raises his own blade.

Tilton lowers into an attack stance.

A slow, predatory beat.

They charge!

Tomahawks CLASH-CRACK! Sparks erupt from the silver.

Tilton swings again -- another CRACK!

Kwah-Nooh-Tah counters, blade slicing into Tilton's redcoat -- tearing fabric, ripping flesh.

Tilton grunts -- twists and hooks his boot behind Kwah-Nooh-Tah's leg -- YANKS.

The Vampire Warrior CRASHES onto his back.

Scrambles to rise --

Tilton is on him.

Silver blade raised high.

He strikes.

The tomahawk crashes into the vampire's head with a sickening THUNK.

Kwah-Nooh-Tah's body convulses.

Tilton snatches up a rock -- shoves it deep into the vampire's gaping mouth.

A beat.

BUZZY

Jesus.

Cole flinches, blinks... and nothing is there.

No bodies. No blood.

The sepia glow is gone. The night normal again.

Crickets and tree frogs resume their song. The forest breathes... as if nothing ever happened.

There is a long silence in the camp, until Cole swallows hard, his voice barely above a whisper.

COLE

You just saw that, right?

BUZZY

Shit, yeah.

Henry's voice is tight, like he's forcing the words out.

HENRY

I saw it. I don't believe that I saw it, but I saw it.

Cole shifts, glancing toward the clearing where the battle played out.

Henry clocks his movement.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Whoa. Get down.

COLE

I just want to --

HENRY

Don't forget we still got company out there. You step out now, and you might take an arrow to the chest.

Cole clenches his jaw, but stays put.

Buzzy hasn't moved. He stares ahead, face slack -- lost in thought.

Cole nudges him.

COLE
Buzzy? You good?

No response.

COLE (CONT'D)
Buzz?

Buzzy finally blinks, like waking from a trance.

BUZZY
That was a residual haunting.

COLE
A what?

Buzzy gestures toward the overlook.

BUZZY
There's a cliff over there, right?

COLE
Yeah.

BUZZY
Lot of granite in the Adirondacks.

COLE
And?

BUZZY
There's this thing called "stone
tape theory." The idea that really
bad events -- trauma, death -- can
imprint onto stone, like a
recording. Under the right
conditions, the past just... plays
back.

Henry nods, absorbing this.

HENRY
I've heard of that.

BUZZY
See, what we just saw? And that
thing you saw earlier, Cole? They
didn't see us. They weren't
reacting to us. It was just --
history on a loop.

Cole, Henry, and Buzzy stare back into the empty clearing where it all played out.

BUZZY (CONT'D)
Of course... it's just a theory.

Cole exhales and reaches into a duffle bag, pulling out a roll of duct tape. He grabs the whittled stick meant for the tomahawk blade.

Buzzy watches as Cole tapes the blade to the handle.

BUZZY (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

COLE
What does it look like?

BUZZY
It looks like you're about to use that thing.

COLE
Does it?

BUZZY
Which would be a really dumb idea.

Cole keeps working, eyes on the blade.

COLE
Would it?

BUZZY
(exasperated)
Yeah, I think so.

COLE
We just saw that British officer kill Kwah-Nooh-Tah with this very blade. If he did it, I can.

Buzzy leans forward, incredulous.

BUZZY
That thing looked alive when the officer killed it. The one we've got is dead.

COLE
You sure?

BUZZY

Uh, yeah? You saw it! It's rotting, Cole! That usually means dead!

HENRY

I think Buzzy is right on this one.

COLE

It's worth a try, isn't it?

HENRY

I think we should wait till help arrives.

COLE

And when they attack again? We'll just sit here?

HENRY

No. We'll fight.

COLE

Then when they attack, I'm using this.

A low, rhythmic pounding echoes through the trees.

The war drums.

BUZZY

Great.

Henry checks the clip on his pistol.

HENRY

Buzzy? You all set?

Buzzy grabs a wooden spear and pulls his knife close.

BUZZY

Yeah, Mister B. Thanks.

The drums grow louder.

Buzzy lets out a breathy chuckle.

COLE

What?

BUZZY

I was just thinking... what if Ernie comes back with the cops and Kwah-Nooh-Tah and his zombie goons just... disappear?

Buzzy laughs again.

BUZZY (CONT'D)

We'll probably get arrested for staging a hoax.

HENRY

And your leg? Think they'll believe we did that to you?

BUZZY

Or some hunter who thought I was Bambi.

WHOOSH-THUD!

An arrow SLICES past Buzzy's head. He ducks hard.

Cole pulls his pistol and fires! BAM!

WHOOSH-THUD! WHOOSH-THUD!

Several arrows slice through the air, slam into the camp.

One buries into the back of the overturned table. Another punches through a tent roll.

A third kicks up a spray of dirt. BAM! BAM! BAM! Henry fires back, his jaw tight, eyes locked on the darkness.

Cole peeks over the barricade, scanning.

COLE

I can't see them.

HENRY

Keep silent. Listen for movement -- then fire at it.

WHOOSH-THUD!

More invisible arrows slam into trees. Bark explodes from the impact.

WHOOSH!

An arrow punches into the artifact box with a solid THUD!

Cole bolts from cover, rushing toward him.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CAMP - NIGHT

Cole crouches as low as he can, moving fast through the dark. He nearly stumbles over Ernie's limp form.

His face contorts in horror.

Ernie's head is a bloody mess, torn flesh and exposed scalp.

COLE

Damn, Ernie!

Ernie barely manages a whisper.

ERNIE

Help.

Cole scans the area, heart pounding.

COLE

Okay, let's get out of here.

He grips Ernie under the arms, hoists him up. Ernie staggers. They move fast toward camp.

EXT. THE CAMP - NIGHT

Henry rushes in to help, grabbing Ernie as Cole lowers him to the ground.

Buzzy stands frozen, eyes wide.

BUZZY

What the hell!? What the hell!?

Henry kneels beside Ernie, hands firm on his shoulders.

HENRY

Ernie!? Ernie, can you hear me?

No response. Ernie shivers violently.

HENRY (CONT'D)

He's going into shock.

(to Cole)

Get him a blanket.

Cole bolts to the supply pile, grabs a blanket, and rushes back.

He drapes it over Ernie's trembling body as Henry wipes the blood from his face.

Ernie's half-lidded eyes flicker open.

His voice is thin, cracked.

ERNIE

I... didn't... make it... car...

Henry grits his teeth.

HENRY

It's all right, Ernie. It's all right.

ERNIE

Is there... water...

BUZZY

Cole!?

Cole turns to see Buzzy with a water bottle. Buzzy tosses it to him.

Cole puts the bottle to Ernie's lips.

COLE

Water, Ernie... just drink.

Ernie barely manages a sip.

HENRY

Damnit, it was a bad idea. We should have stayed together.

COLE

Dad --

Henry keeps going, voice rising as Cole rushes to the supply pile.

HENRY

The worst mistake in enemy territory is dividing your numbers. We split up, and look what happens. Buzzy takes an arrow, and now -- this.

Cole returns with a First Aid kit. He yanks out a roll of bandages, hands working fast as he wraps Ernie's wound.

COLE

Stop it, Dad. It's not your fault!
If we had to do it over, we would.
It was the only choice we had.

HENRY

We should have all gone.

COLE

And gotten wiped out completely!?
Dad, that doesn't make sense --
then or now. Don't do this to
yourself.

HENRY

I'm not. It's just a fact.

Cole, focused, ties off Ernie's bandages.

He glances at Buzzy.

BUZZY

What?

COLE

You knew about residual hauntings.
Who the fuck knows about that kind
of shit!?

BUZZY

I saw it on TV! I don't know jack
about killing vampires or zombies!

A dark SILHOUETTE lingers at the tree line.

Not alone.

Kwah-Nooh-Tah stands still in the open, the four warriors
beside him. Watching. Waiting.

A chill creeps up Cole's spine.

Behind him, Ernie makes a faint sound.

Henry turns back, checks his pulse --

His fingers hover over Ernie's neck.

Two red puncture marks.

Henry's face hardens.

COLE

Ernie?

They stare at the lifeless body.

Buzzy sags back. His voice is barely a whisper.

BUZZY

We're not going to get out of here
alive, are we?

Cole turns to Henry.

COLE

Give me your phone.

HENRY

Cole, it's too dangerous.

COLE

Dad, we die here doing nothing, or
we die trying. We have to try!

HENRY

I'll go.

COLE

I know the way. I'll be back in no
time.

Henry meets his son's eyes. A long moment.

He hands over the phone.

HENRY

Make sure you call and make
contact. Let them get a GPS
reading.

Cole nods.

Henry sees Kwah-Nooh-Tah and the Zombie Warriors.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Those bastards are still watching.

He checks the clip on his Glock.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I'll open fire and keep them busy.

COLE

Thanks.

HENRY

Good luck, son.

They exchange a smile. Henry moves to the barricade, next to Buzzy, who clenches a knife.

Henry throws a quick over-the-shoulder glance to Cole, who crouches low and is ready to run.

Henry opens fire! BAM!BAM!BAM! The Zombie Warriors scatter and return fire with a volley of arrows!

Cole runs from the site, past the redbud trees, and into the dark.

The table splinters as invisible arrows SLAM into it.

BAM!BAM!BAM! Henry fires back.

WHOOSH-THUD!

Arrows continue to the trees and barricade.

EXT. IN THE FOREST - NIGHT

Cole sprints full-speed, dodging trees and leaping over fallen branches.

Behind him -- GUNFIRE erupts, echoing through the night.

The WAR CRIES of the attacking warriors mix with the chaotic sound of battle.

Cole doesn't look back.

He pushes forward, his own footsteps drowning out everything else.

EXT. THE CLIFF - NIGHT

Cole bursts out of the tree line onto the rocky overlook.

The forest noise fades. Only the wind whistling through the valley below.

He listens.

No gunfire. No screams.

The silence is unnerving.

He moves fast to the edge of the cliff, yanks out his phone, and dials.

BEEP... BEEP.... BEEP BEEP...

COLE

Come on!

A CLICK -- then a voice.

STATE POLICEMAN 1 (V.O.)

9-1-1, what is your emergency?

Cole exhales sharply, struggling to stay calm.

COLE

Hi - um, my name is Cole Braden,
I'm from Wilmington, Massachusetts
and here in the Adirondacks with
my dad and two friends.

(panicked beat)

One of them is dead.

STATE POLICEMAN 1 (V.O.)

Dead!?

COLE

Yes! We're being attacked by...
these crazy people! We need help!

STATE POLICEMAN 1 (V.O.)

Cole, can you give me a location?

COLE

We drove through Underwood --
parked at a pull-off on Route 73.
We hiked west for a day and a
half. I'm on an overlook -- it's
the only place I can get a signal!

STATE POLICEMAN 1 (V.O.)

Okay. You might be near Mount
Marcy. Keep your cell open so we
can trace you.

COLE

Hurry! Please!

STATE POLICEMAN 1 (V.O.)

Can you hold till sunrise? We need
to get a chopper out there.

COLE

There's no place to land!

STATE POLICEMAN 1 (V.O.)

We'll get you out. Leave your
phone on.

COLE

All right.

JIM (O.S.)

Cole. You left me.

Cole's stomach drops.

Slowly, he turns.

Jim stands in the moonlight.

But he's... different.

His eyes are clouded, covered by a milky glaze.

The side of his neck is shredded, dried blood crusted over the wound.

His skin is pale gray, tinged with purple blotches.

Jim takes a step forward.

COLE

Shit, Jim! I... I thought you were dead.

Jim tilts his head.

JIM

You did?

STATE POLICEMAN 1 (V.O.)

Just another moment, Cole. We're checking the towers for a ping signal.

Cole whispers into the phone.

COLE

Please... hurry...

Jim takes another step.

Cole instinctively backs up -- closer to the edge.

JIM

I'll take you to Kwah-Nooh-Tah.

COLE

Why?

JIM

So you can live, too.

COLE

I am living.

Jim's smile fades.

JIM

But not forever.

(beat)

Like me.

Another step.

JIM (CONT'D)

But first, I have to kill you.

(soft, almost sweet)

Drink your blood. Like our master.

Cole can't back up any further.

Jim lunges.

His hand clamps around Cole's throat and lifts him off the ground.

STATE POLICEMAN 1 (V.O.)

Cole? Are you there? Hello?

JIM

Don't you want to live forever?

Cole struggles, clawing at Jim's grip.

Then --

He drives his knee into Jim's crotch.

Jim loosens his grip -- but doesn't flinch in pain.

Cole drops to the ground.

He grabs the phone.

COLE

Please, hurry! Hurry!

Jim steps forward again, relentless.

Cole places the phone on the ground.

And in a split second -- BOLTS into the forest.

Jim watches him go.

Then, without a rush -- he follows.

The phone lies abandoned at the edge of the cliff.

STATE POLICEMAN 1 (V.O.)
Hello? Cole? Are you there?

EXT. THE SITE - NIGHT

Henry peers over the top of the barricade. Beyond the redbud trees, the silhouettes of the Warriors stand motionless among the trees.

Nearby, Ernie's blanket-covered body remains slumped against a tree.

Buzzy, video camera in hand, watches the standoff.

He turns to Henry.

BUZZY
We should have been filming all this. Think of the money we'd make.

HENRY
Everyone would think it was a hoax.

Buzzy raises the camera to his eye and presses record.

BUZZY
Just the same... action!

Before they can focus on the Warriors --

RUNNING FOOTSTEPS

Cole's voice shouts from the darkness.

COLE (O.S.)
It's me! Don't shoot!

BUZZY
Shit!

Buzzy nearly drops the camera.

BUZZY (CONT'D)
Oh, shit!

The red light on the camera remains on.

Cole bursts into the site, breathless.

HENRY

Did you get the police?

COLE

Yeah. They're sending a chopper at sunrise. We'll airlift out.

Henry checks his watch.

HENRY

One hour.

COLE

There's another problem.

Buzzy and Henry wait for an answer.

COLE (CONT'D)

Jim's turned into one of them.

BUZZY

What!? He's a zombie!?

Before anyone can respond --

A RUSTLE in the underbrush.

They turn --

Kwah-Nooh-Tah steps forward.

His hulking form appears just beyond the redbud trees, his horned war bonnet casting shadows across his face.

He raises his arms to the sky and begins to chant.

KWAH-NOOH-TAH

Kassiwí Níona Enna Odakozik
Chibaio Agaskwíkok. Kizos
Aalakws Nionakiya Alnobanogan
Nionakiya, Awzsiswogan...

Henry and Cole drop behind the barricade, eyes locked on the Vampire Warrior.

None of them notice -- behind them. In the camp.

A slow, gentle pull lifts the blanket from Ernie's body.

The pale gray skin. The purple blotches. The milky, glazed-over eyes.

Ernie blinks. Then --

WAR CRIES.

The four Zombie Warriors charge the camp! Henry and Cole fire immediately --

BAM! BAM! BAM!

Buzzy scrambles to his feet, gripping a makeshift spear. Suddenly -- he sees something. His face goes pale.

BUZZY

Ernie...

Cole turns. Ernie stands behind them.

Not alive. Not dead.

Before they can react, Taregan rushes forward.

Cole fires -- point blank.

BAM!

The bullet rips into Taregan's skull. He staggers back and collapses.

BUZZY (CONT'D)

It works!

Buzzy watches in disbelief as Taregan, despite the bullet wound in his skull, begins to stir.

Cole turns just as Taregan rises. The hole in his temple is still there -- but it means nothing.

BUZZY (CONT'D)

Shit!

Cole's gaze shifts -- Taregan and Kitchi flank left, while Machk and Nootau move right to surround the camp.

Kwah-Nooh-Tah stands motionless at the center, watching. Waiting.

BUZZY (CONT'D)

They're gonna hit us from all sides.

JIM (O.S.)

You'll live forever.

Cole and Buzzy whirl around.

Jim stands just beyond the redbud trees. His milky, vacant eyes glisten in the moonlight.

BUZZY

What the hell!?

HENRY

Oh, my God.

BUZZY

How can Ernie be in here!? I thought they couldn't pass the redbuds?

HENRY

Ernie died *in* our camp.

Cole processes that -- then it clicks.

COLE

So he can't follow us out!

Ernie lunges. Cole yanks up his pistol.

COLE (CONT'D)

Oh, hell, Ernie! I'm sorry about this.

HENRY

It's not Ernie! Shoot it!

BAM!

The bullet punches into Ernie's chest. He staggers back -- but keeps coming.

Buzzy grits his teeth, pushing through his own pain.

With a roar, he forces himself to his feet, spear clutched in his hands.

He lunges forward, the spear aimed dead center.

BUZZY

AHHHHHH!

The wooden shaft PIERCES Ernie's chest, sending him sprawling to the ground.

Buzzy leans in, using everything he has left to drive the spear deeper.

Ernie lets out a final, inhuman SCREAM.

Behind them --

Machk and Nootau reach the redbud treeline and launch their tomahawks.

Two whirling blades slice through the air.

THUNK!

Both sink deep into Henry's back.

He gasps -- his eyes wide, lips quivering.

Blood spills from his mouth.

COLE

Dad!

Cole lunges to catch him, but Henry crumples like a sack to the ground. Without thinking, he grabs the Glock from Henry's waistband --

Then vaults over the barricade.

Buzzy can only watch in disbelief.

Cole charges full-speed toward the Zombie Warriors.

He swings his spear like a bat --

THWACK!

The impact sends Machk sprawling. Nootau draws a knife --

Cole rams the spear through his chest.

Nootau drops, convulsing.

Cole rips the Beretta from his belt -- empties the clip.

BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM!

Nootau twitches once...then goes still.

As Cole pulls a new clip from his pocket --

A SCREAM.

BUZZY (O.S.)

Cole! Help!

Cole spins to see Buzzy stumble as he tries to fend off Ernie's corpse. Ernie has broken the spear off -- part of it protrudes from his chest.

At the treeline, Taregan and Kitchi watch, knives drawn.

Taregan hurls his hunting blade.

FFFFFFFFTTTT!

The knife buries itself in Buzzy's arm. Buzzy lets out a sharp CRY, gripping the wound.

Cole slams the clip in place, and fires -- BAM! BAM! BAM!

Taregan collapses.

Cole races to Buzzy, grabs him by the arm.

COLE

Come on!

BUZZY

We can't go out there!

COLE

We'll last longer in the open than
in here!

They move fast, retreating toward the foundation line --
and cross over.

Ernie tries to follow. He reaches the redbud trees --

Freezes.

His body shudders violently. He collapses.

Behind them, Jim steps forward, watching as Ernie's body
decays before their eyes.

Nothing remains but clothes, rotting flesh, and a pool of
blood.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE SITE - NIGHT

Cole and Buzzy push forward... Buzzy struggling with
every step.

COLE

We need to get to the overlook!
It's almost sunrise!

Buzzy glances over his shoulder -- his eyes go wide.

BUZZY

Cole! Behind us!

Taregan rushes toward them.

Cole and Buzzy spin. Cole fires the Beretta --

CLICK.

Empty.

Without hesitation, he hurls the pistol at Taregan and rips out the Glock.

BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM!

Taregan collapses.

Jim emerges. Machk and Kitchi sprint forward, knives drawn, WAR CRIES piercing the air!

Cole aims -- pulls the trigger!

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK!

Empty.

Cole drops the gun. The Warriors halt mid-charge, standing motionless.

BUZZY (CONT'D)

What the hell?

COLE

Let's keep going.

They turn --

THUMP!

They slam into Kwah-Nooh-Tah. Buzzy's expression twists in pain.

Cole looks down -- a knife is buried deep in Buzzy's chest, up to the hilt.

Kwah-Nooh-Tah yanks it out slowly.

Buzzy doesn't scream. He just stares. Like he didn't even feel it.

Then -- collapses.

Cole, unarmed, meets the Vampire Warrior's gaze.

Kwah-Nooh-Tah raises his arm to strike --

And pauses.

His eyes shift toward the horizon --

The first glow of sunrise pushes through the night sky. His head snaps back to Cole -- he drives the knife into his shoulder.

EXT. THE SITE - EARLY MORNING

The bodies are gone.

The video camera remains untouched, standing upright on the ground. Its red light still blinks.

CAMERA VIEWER - P.O.V.

Distant FOOTSTEPS crunch through leaves.

STATE POLICEMAN 2 (O.S.)
What the hell happened here?

STATE POLICEMAN 3 (O.S.)
John, let's fan out. The kid
called an hour ago -- somebody has
to be here.

STATE POLICEMAN 2 (O.S.)
Looks like a goddamn warzone.
Glock mags. Holy Jesus...

STATE POLICE 2 (O.S.)
Hey, check this out.

STATE POLICE 3 (O.S.)
Indian statue. Silver...

The low battery icon blinks. A hand reaches into frame -- lifts the camera.

The lens blurs, then autofocuses -- on Cole.

Lying on the ground, soaked in blood. A knife still jammed into his shoulder. His eyes flutter.

He looks past the lens, toward the policemen -- mouth opens to speak...

The camera dies.

BLACK.