

"TEDDY ROOSEVELT IN THE BAD LANDS"

By

Josh Becker

3-12-97

A TITLE READS: "This is darn near a true story . . . "

ACT ONE

EXT. THE BAD LANDS -- DAY

A great herd of buffalo, numbering about a thousand head, roams the primordial landscape of the Bad Lands in North Dakota. The bison are big, shaggy, mean-looking creatures, chewing their cud, foam dripping from their mouths. A nameless COWBOY on a horse appears on the horizon. The cowboy pulls a rifle out of a holster and rides out among the buffalo. Galloping full speed down a hill, the cowboy rides right into the giant mass of bison, causing a stampede. The cowboy rides beside a specific buffalo, puts the horse's reins in his teeth, cocks his Winchester repeater rifle and shoots the running buffalo -- BANG! -- he quickly cocks and shoots again -- BANG! . . .

INT. THE NEW YORK LEGISLATURE -- DAY

. . . BANG! BANG! BANG! A gavel beats down on a desk.

A TITLE READS: "New York Legislature, Albany, 1884."

This is an enormous room with a vaulted ceiling, polished wooden benches, and a hundred whiskered politicians smoking cigars.

TEDDY ROOSEVELT -- twenty-five years old, slim, five-eight, with a wispy, drooping mustache, hair parted just off-center, and eyeglasses perched on his nose -- is daydreaming in his seat, a book about buffalo hunting with line drawings sits before him. Teddy jumps to his feet, waving his hand. He has a very forceful manner of speech.

TEDDY

Mr. Speaker! The Assemblyman from
Manhattan wishes to be heard.

The gray-bearded, elderly SPEAKER of the house, seated on the dias, looks up wearily.

SPEAKER

And what, per chance, is on your mind now, Mr. Roosevelt? I've barely taken my seat.

There is a collective chuckle from the audience. Teddy is undeterred.

TEDDY

(passionately)

But children as young as eight and nine years old are locked up in airless rooms for fifteen to eighteen hours a day, day in and day out, six and seven days a week, rolling cigars for mere pennies! This is an abomination! It's legal slavery! And it must be stopped!

A whiskered, older POLITICIAN rises to his feet.

POLITICIAN

And what, Mr. Roosevelt, do you actually know of these children? Have you seen them?

TEDDY

I have, sir. It was one of the saddest sights I have ever laid eyes on.

POLITICIAN

Indeed? And you feel that the employed children in our poor areas are worse off than the unemployed children?

TEDDY

What are you driving at, sir?

POLITICIAN

That you know not of what you speak, sir. The children rolling cigars have a job, money for food, shelter and clothing, and are off the city streets. We should be far more concerned for the homeless and

(continued)

POLITICIAN (cont.)

unemployed children first. You undoubtedly know nothing of these children, Mr. Roosevelt, having grown up as one of the wealthy elite, without a monetary care in the world.

TEDDY

(angry)

But I do know exploitation when I see it.

POLITICIAN

Do you? And so you would take the job of rolling cigars away from these needy children? And then how will they eat?

TEDDY

I'm saying that these children should be paid a fair wage, that's all.

POLITICIAN

If they were paid, as you say, a fair wage, they wouldn't get these jobs. Adults would get them. You are so eager to pass laws, Mr. Roosevelt, that you are not willing to forsee the possible ramifications of what these laws will bring. I rolled cigars in my youth and it did me no harm. And I was paid less than these children are paid now. Did you have a paying job in your youth?

TEDDY

I don't believe that that is the issue.

POLITICIAN

I'd say it is. And I would say further that it is wrong for a rich man who has never faced any real hardship in his life to take the food out of poor children's mouths to further his political career.

TEDDY

I take grave offense at that accusation, sir. Because I come from a wealthy family does not mean that I have never faced any hardships in my life.

POLITICIAN

Doesn't it?

The Speaker bangs his gavel.

SPEAKER

All right, enough. Mr. Roosevelt, please sit down. Obviously, you did not think your bill through.

(he lights a cigar)

All right. Moving on. The next subject up for debate is . . .

Teddy sits down looking dejected.

DISSOLVE:

INT. TEDDY'S APARTMENT IN ALBANY -- DAY

Teddy's apartment is huge (as are all Roosevelt homes). There are stuffed birds all around. There is a boxing ring set up in the center of his living room. Two other men with side whiskers are seated in plush chairs holding newspapers, coffee, and cigars. They are HENRY CABOT LODGE and ISAAC HUNT. Teddy strides between them wearing what looks like a Union suit (a one-piece long underwear outfit) with high lace-up boots and pulling on the smaller boxing gloves of that era.

TEDDY

We must stop the nomination of James G. Blaine, gentlemen, that is a certainty.

Henry Cabot Lodge speaks up.

LODGE

But how?

TEDDY

I'm not sure how, but the Republicans must come up with someone else. Mr. Chester A. Arthur is not our man, nor will he even run. Nor would we want him even if he would. Therefore, we must get someone else to throw in the path of Mr. James G. Blaine.

HUNT

Senator Edmunds?

They all grunt, highly unimpressed.

TEDDY

He's better than Blaine.

A BUTLER appears in the doorway.

BUTLER

There is a Mr. John L. Sullivan to see you, sir.

TEDDY

Ah! Show him in.

Lodge and Hunt look very impressed.

LODGE

The great John L.? Here?

TEDDY

The champion himself. He's fighting here in Albany tomorrow.

A big man with waxed, handlebar mustaches steps into the room. He is the great boxer, JOHN L. SULLIVAN. He has an Irish accent and carries a small valise.

SULLIVAN

Mr. Roosevelt?

Teddy strides up to the big man, grinning a toothy grin, and shakes his hand profusely.

TEDDY

Mr. Sullivan, a great pleasure. I've seen you fight many times.

SULLIVAN

Aye, have ya now? And seein' me fight made ya think ya wanted to get in the ring with me, eh?

TEDDY

(grinning)

As long as we both know we're sparring, Mr. Sullivan, I think I'll be all right. A great boxer doesn't waste knockout punches on sparring partners.

SULLIVAN

(nods)

Aye, ain't that the truth.

TEDDY

Mr. Sullivan, may I introduce Mr. Henry Cabot Lodge and Mr. Isaac Hunt.

John L. nods his head, impressed.

SULLIVAN

Well now, I've heard a great deal about both of you gentlemen.

LODGE

And we of you, sir.

SULLIVAN

Where can I change me duds, then?

TEDDY

(points)

Down the hall, the butler will show you.

Sullivan nods and takes his leave. Teddy turns to his awe-struck friends.

LODGE

So you're sparring with the World Champion now, is that it?

TEDDY

Who better to learn from, I ask you?

Teddy throws several punches at the air, ducking and swaying. Lodge and Hunt shake their heads in amazement.

INT. TEDDY'S APARTMENT -- A LITTLE LATER

Teddy and John L. Sullivan spar in the make-shift boxing ring. Henry Cabot Lodge and Isaac Hunt watch with rapt attention. Sullivan is huge and rather flat-footed; Teddy is a veritable fighting cock, bouncing around with energy and fancy footwork.

SULLIVAN

You box well, Mr. Roosevelt. Very fancy. You find boxing helps in your political career, then?

TEDDY

It certainly doesn't hurt.
(to Henry Cabot Lodge)
Henry, why don't you run for president?
We could use an intellect in the white house.

LODGE

Everyone detests me, Teddy, I'd never win.

TEDDY

But that doesn't mean you can't run.

LODGE

(shakes his head)
Bosh!

SULLIVAN

You jump around very nice, but can ya take a punch? Or throw one, for that matter?

TEDDY

Now Mr. Sullivan, you don't want to hurt me, do you?

SULLIVAN

(smiles)

No, but I would like to work up a sweat.

TEDDY

(to Lodge and Hunt)

It's a shame, gentlemen, that we live in a time when instead of endorsing a candidate, we are merely blocking another.

LODGE

One deals with the times at hand, Teddy.

TEDDY

Isn't that the truth.

SULLIVAN

I'll tell ya what we'll do, then, Mr. Roosevelt, you throw the hardest punch you can, but I won't punch ya back. I'll just block. OK?

TEDDY

All right.

Teddy starts to throw hard punches, but Sullivan deftly blocks them all. In a fancy flurry of combinations Teddy actually manages to land a glove on Sullivan's chin, snapping his head back -- WHACK! Sullivan shakes his head and grins.

SULLIVAN

Aye, so you can throw a punch then, eh? All right, that first deal's off. I don't need my head knocked off before a big fight.

TEDDY

All right, Mr. Sullivan, now I'll tell *you* what. I'll keep punching as hard as I can, and now you punch as hard as you can, too. I want to see how long I can last.

SULLIVAN

Do you now? Tired of living, are you?

TEDDY

Not at all. Just curious.

SULLIVAN

We all know what that did to the cat.

John L. Sullivan starts to throw punches -- big hard jabs. Teddy blocks any number of them before one connects with his gut, doubling him over, then an uppercut straightens him up and sends him sailing over onto his butt. Sullivan puts his gloves to his hips and looms over Teddy, shaking his head. Lodge and Hunt run over to see if Teddy's all right. He blinks his eyes and shakes his spinning head.

SULLIVAN

Your curiosity satisfied now, Mr. Roosevelt?

TEDDY

(confused)

Curiosity about what?

SULLIVAN

About how long you could last, remember?

TEDDY

(nods)

Ah yes.

(he unsteadily
rises to his feet)

The answer is: not long.

SULLIVAN

You want to keep going?

TEDDY

I'm not sure. That hurt.

Teddy rubs his head. Lodge and Hunt exchange an interested look.

SULLIVAN

Take my advice then. Keep going.

TEDDY

(nods)

All right.

(raises his fists)

Let's go another round, shall we?

SULLIVAN

Indeed we shall.

Sullivan raises his fists and the fight continues . . .

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. ROOSEVELT FAMILY HOME/ MANHATTAN -- DAY

A horse-drawn carriage pulls up in front of a large, ornate mansion. Dirty snow lines the sidewalks and street.

A TITLE READS: "The Roosevelt family home, 6 West 57th Street, Manhattan, 1884."

Teddy gets out of the carriage holding a leather briefcase and goes inside the house.

INT. ROOSEVELT FAMILY HOME -- DAY

A BUTLER steps up and takes Teddy's hat, coat and briefcase.

BUTLER

Welcome home, mister Roosevelt.

TEDDY

Thank you, Harold. Where is my wife?

BUTLER

In bed, sir.

A short, plain, slightly hunchbacked woman of twenty-seven -- ANNA (BAMIE) ROOSEVELT -- enters the foyer, sees Teddy, smiles and hugs him.

BAMIE

Teddy.

TEDDY

Bamie. How's Alice?

BAMIE

All right. First pregnancies have a tendency to be difficult, not that I'd know personally.

TEDDY

(nods)

How's Mother?

BAMIE

(shrugs)

Not well. You know, it's her usual winter illness.

TEDDY

That's not nice.

BAMIE

I'm here all the time, Teddy. You're gone quite a lot.

TEDDY

When the Legislature is in session, I must attend. That's my job. So, Mother is no worse than usual is what you're saying?

They put their arms around each other and walk up the large staircase.

BAMIE

The same. Since Papa died she just mopes around.

TEDDY

Since Papa died some part of me just wants to mope around, too. There's an emptiness in this big old house.

(Bamie nods; Teddy smiles)

Once Mother has a baby to play with I think she'll perk right up.

BAMIE

(smiles and nods)

I'm sure you're right.

Teddy opens a bedroom door and goes inside.

INT. ALICE'S BEDROOM -- DAY

ALICE ROOSEVELT is a pretty, blonde, twenty-four year old that is eight months pregnant. Alice lies in bed. Teddy goes to her, hugs her and kisses her.

TEDDY

Alice, my darling.

ALICE

Teddy, oh, thank God you're back.

They kiss some more.

TEDDY

How do you feel?

ALICE

(sighs)

Tired, but all right. We may not want to have a second child right away. This has been more difficult than I ever suspected.

TEDDY

Alice, my love, we will go about these matters in whatever order or fashion you prefer. I only want you to get back on your feet. Then you and I and our little baby will go out to Oyster Bay in the spring and see the birds come home.

ALICE

(smiles happily)

And you'll point them all out to baby and I and tell us all their Latin names.

TEDDY

(grinning)

Until you both fall asleep.

ALICE

Exactly.

(they both smile)

I miss you so much these days, Teddy. I really do wish you could be here.

TEDDY

Me, too, Alice. But the Legislature is not in session all that often. To do my job I simply *must* be there. Besides, how can I, a man, be of any use to you in having a child, I ask you? I know my sisters will be of more help than I ever can.

ALICE

(sighs)

And they are, too. I love them both.

Teddy stands and straightens his jacket. He points his thumb over his shoulder.

TEDDY

How's Mother?

ALICE

Well . . . Your Mother is a sad woman, Teddy. It's going to take her many years to not think of your Father all the time.

TEDDY

(sighs)

I know. I'll be back shortly.

Teddy gives Alice a peck on the cheek and exits.

INT. TEDDY'S MOTHER'S ROOM -- DAY

Lying in bed, propped up by pillows, is Teddy's mother -- MARTHA ROOSEVELT -- an attractive woman in her early fifties. She sees Teddy enter, smiles and raises her outstretched arms. Martha still has a southern accent.

MARTHA

Teddy.

TEDDY

Mother.

(he goes to her and gives
her a hug and a kiss)

How are you?

MARTHA

Fine. I bit under the weather, but that seems to happen to me every winter. I'm sure it's simply my southern upbringing. It's lovely in Georgia in February -- chilly, sometimes, but no snow.

Teddy seats himself beside the bed. He takes his Mother's hand in both of his.

TEDDY

You didn't seem to mind the winters when we were young.

MARTHA

(wistfully)

No, I didn't. But I was young then, too. Your age, Teddy. Beside, when I was with your Father I never felt cold. He was so big and strong, he could keep all of us warm.

TEDDY

(nods; sadly)

Yes, I miss him, too. He was the spirit of this family.

MARTHA

That's your job now, Teddy.

(Teddy nods again)

It's difficult, but I know you're up to it. If you just put your mind to it.

TEDDY

Meaning, I haven't done it yet?

MARTHA

Have you?

TEDDY

(looks away)

I suppose not.

MARTHA

It's good to have you home, dear. I think I'll take a little nap now.

TEDDY

(stands)

Will you be coming down to dinner?

MARTHA

I don't think so. Come up and see me after dinner, all right?

TEDDY

Of course, Mother.

Teddy gives his Mother a kiss on the cheek, then she rolls over and closes her eyes. Teddy sighs sadly, quietly leaving the room.

DISSOLVE:

INT. ROOSEVELT MANSION/ LIBRARY -- NIGHT

Teddy sits in the library, a spacious room, decorated in polished wood and leather, with hundreds of volumes of books on the many shelves. Teddy reads a book, his stockinged feet up on a footstool. The Butler enters.

BUTLER

Excuse me, sir. There is a gentleman here to see you. The Marquis de Mores.

TEDDY

(nods and stands)

Ah, yes, of course. Please show him in.

Teddy puts on his shoes, buttons his jacket and tightens his tie. The butler ushers in a tall, muscular man with very handsome, chisled features, a waxed mustache, and very erect, military posture. He is the MARQUIS DE MORES and he carries a fancy walking stick. Teddy shakes the Marquis' hand. The Marquis snaps his heels. He speaks with a slight French accent, but his English is perfect.

MARQUIS

Mr. Roosevelt, very good to meet you.

TEDDY

And you. How shall I address you, sir?

MARQUIS

(shrugs)

My full name is Marquis Antoine-Amedee-Marie-Vincent-Amat Manca de Vallombrosa de Mores, but most people in America simply call me Marquis.

TEDDY

(smiles)

Well, that's helpful.

MARQUIS

I am the direct descendant of King Louis the Fourteenth of France. If there had not been a revolution, I would now be king.

TEDDY

(nods)

You don't say? And you are married to Medora Von Hoffman.

MARQUIS

That is correct.

Teddy indicates an easy chair beside his.

TEDDY

Please, sit.

(they both sit down)

Medora is a good friend of my sister's.

MARQUIS

Yes, I know. She's the one that recommended I see you. She says that you are interested in both the west and the cattle business.

TEDDY

Yes, sir, I am. Very interested. I've often thought about starting my own cattle ranch in the west, if I should ever get a chance, that is.

MARQUIS

Mr. Roosevelt, I am here to give you the chance to invest in my cattle ranch. I have the largest spread in the Dakota Territories, over one hundred thousand head presently.

(Teddy whistles
through his teeth)

But that is not why I am here. I have an idea that will revolutionize the cattle business.

TEDDY

(interested)

Go on.

The Marquis rises to his feet, striding around the room, using his hands to gesticulate.

MARQUIS

The major costs in raising cattle are keeping them fed and watered until they are old enough to slaughter, then shipping them by train back to Chicago to be slaughtered. The cost of shipping live cattle on the hoof is exorbitant. But, what if the cattle were slaughtered in the west, then just the beef was shipped east?

TEDDY

Wouldn't the beef spoil on the train trip east?

MARQUIS

(his eyes light up)

Ah ha! It would if it were not refridgerated. I have had special, insulated train cars built that will do just that -- keep the beef cold until it reaches the east. I have tried it and

(continued)

MARQUIS (cont.)

it works.

(Teddy looks impressed)

By saving the shipping costs of the live cattle, plus the charges of the slaughterhouses in Chicago, my beef will be substantially cheaper to the consumer. I have made exclusive deals with stores in all the major eastern cities: Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Boston and New York. This cuts out yet another middleman, returning greater profits to both myself and my investors. Soon, we will open our own stores all over the country.

TEDDY

And you've gotten financing from your father-in-law, Louis Von Hoffman?

MARQUIS

Yes, as well as quite a bit of my own capital, and from investors like yourself. This is not a crazy scheme, Mr. Roosevelt, it's a reality. Whether you invest or not, this is all occurring as we speak. Shipments of my beef will begin moving east within months. This is the way of the future, sir, and you can be part of it. So, are you interested?

TEDDY

(considering)

Well . . . I am very interested in cattle-ranching in the west, and I'm quite interested to see how your idea pans out. As for investing in your company, I have to say no. I have my own plans which I will need my own money for. But I thank you for the very kind offer, Marquis, and I wish the very best of luck.

Teddy stands and offers his hand to the Marquis. The Marquis does not take Teddy's hand. Instead, he becomes furious, his eyes burning.

MARQUIS

You are turning me down? But this is a fantastic opportunity.

TEDDY

I'm sure it is, but, as I said, I have my own plans.

MARQUIS

Your plans? Nothing will ever come of your plans! *My* plan is already in action. You're starting too late.

TEDDY

(shrugs)

Perhaps. Nevertheless, that is my stance on this issue.

The Marquis grows very angry, pointing directly into Teddy's face.

MARQUIS

Is Roosevelt is a Jewish name? It is, isn't it?

TEDDY

Actually, no, it's Dutch. What's being Jewish got to do with any of this?

MARQUIS

Because the Jewish bankers don't want me to succeed. They're the ones with the greatest investments in the Chicago slaughterhouses. Well, *I'm* going to put them *all* out of business. And if you go into the cattle business, I'll put *you* out of business, too!

Teddy walks the Marquis toward the door.

TEDDY

Fair enough. I'll keep that in mind. Thank you for the kind offer, Marquis, and, as I said, I wish you the best of luck.

MARQUIS

You and all the rest of the Jews will be
sorry, I can assure you of that!

TEDDY

Give my best to Medora, will you?

The Marquis leaves in a huff. Teddy turns around and sighs deeply -- that fellow is certainly an odd one.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. THE BAD LANDS -- DAY

A TITLE READS: "The Bad Lands, The Dakota Territories."

Three frontiersmen ride along the Little Missouri River through the Bad Lands: the ground is scorched, the trees twisted, and red, flat-topped Buttes lie in the distance. The three men are: FRANK O'DONALD, RILEY LUFFSEY and "DUTCH" WANNEGAN, all bearded, dirty and drunk. They pass a handmade sign that reads: "Little Missouri Ranch, Proprietors: O'Donald, Luffsey and Wannegan. Private Property, Keep Out!" They drunkenly sing a song:

THE TRIO

(singing)

Yippee yi tiyay, move along little doggies/
It's your misfortune and none of my own/
Move along little doggies/ You know that
Wyoming will be your new home.

As the three men near their little shack they find a barbed wire fence with freshly cut posts blocking their path.

O'DONALD

What the hell is this?

LUFFSEY

Betcha it's that son of a bitch Marquis.

WANNEGAN

Well, who the hell does he think he is?

LUFFSEY

The King of France.

O'DONALD

Let him be the King of any damn thing he wants, that still don't give him no right to fence off our spread.

O'Donald jumps down from his horse, takes a hatchet from his saddle bag and proceeds to cut the fence down.

LUFFSEY

That son of a bitch Marquis is tryin' to jump our claim.

O'DONALD

Well, if he's trying to jump our claim, his next jump'll be straight into his grave.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. TRAIN STATION/ MEDORA -- DAY

The train pulls up to the small depot shack with a sign that states: "Medora." The small town of Medora lies in the background -- a couple of wooden buidlings, a few houses, and a huge mansion overlooking the whole town. The Marquis gets off the train and is met by four of his RANCH-HANDS. The burly FOREMAN speaks up.

FOREMAN

O'Donald, Luffsey and Wannagen cut down your fences again, Marquis.

The anger returns to the Marquis' crazy eyes.

MARQUIS

Oh, they did, eh? Well put them back up.

FOREMAN

And what happens if they cut 'em down again?

The Marquis climbs onto his horse.

MARQUIS

From here on out, anyone that cuts down
my fences will pay with their lives!

The Marquis spurs his horse and rides off toward his mansion. The ranch-hands all turn to the Foreman expecting an answer. The Foreman shrugs helplessly, then they all ride after the Marquis.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. THE NEW YORK LEGISLATURE -- DAY

Teddy stands in the crowded Legislature, pounding his fist and fighting strenuously.

TEDDY

. . . And that is why we must all join together right now to stop corruption in its tracks! Pay-offs, bribery, influence -- it's barbaric, gentlemen! Positively medieval!

At that moment a uniformed Western Union DELIVERYMAN enters the Legislature, holding a telegram and looking befuddled.

DELIVERMAN

(frightened)

Excuse me, gentlemen, but I have an urgent telegram for Assemblyman Roosevelt? Is he here?

Teddy, who is already standing, turns to the Deliveryman and waves his hand.

TEDDY

That's me.

The Deliveryman crosses the large room and hands Teddy the telegram. Teddy tips the boy, opens his telegram and silently reads. Everyone in the room is watching him. Teddy lowers the telegram, smiling mightily. The elderly Speaker asks in a distraught tone:

SPEAKER

And what, may I ask, Mr. Roosevelt, is so important that our session must be interrupted?

TEDDY

(grinning)

I apologize, Mr. Speaker, it will never happen again, I assure you.

SPEAKER

(annoyed)

Well, that's reassuring. Now, for heaven's sake, what is this all about?

TEDDY

Oh. Well . . . My wife gave birth to a baby girl last night. Our first child.

The Speaker nods his head.

SPEAKER

(smiling)

Congratulations, Mr. Roosevelt. That's fine.

Everyone bursts into applause, giving Teddy a standing ovation. He smiles proudly.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. THE BAD LANDS -- DAY

The Marquis rides up on a snorting stallion. He is now attired in boots, chaps, pistols, a cowboy hat, and carries a Sharps .45 caliber buffalo rifle. Twelve other armed RANCH HANDS accompany him on horseback. They come upon severed fence posts and cut wire lying in spirals on the ground.

MARQUIS

(shakes his head; his eyes
burning; outraged)

Again and again I am defied! As though I were some sort of mere jackanapes. Have I not properly claimed all of this land? Yet these nabobs cut down my fences with veritable impunity. Back in France I have killed men for much less.

(he looks to the other men)

Have I or have I not shown extreme unction in regard to these interlopers? I ask you?

Nobody has a clue what he's saying, so they all quickly agree.

FOREMAN

Yeah, sure.

HAND #1

'Course you have.

HAND #2

And plenty of it.

MARQUIS

(nods)

That's what I thought.

(waves his hand)

Now, let's put this fence back up.

INT. THE NEW YORK LEGISLATURE -- DAY

Teddy is standing, pounding his fist on the table, trying to be heard over the hubub.

TEDDY

Gentlemen, please! If we allow corruption within our own ranks to go unchecked, who are we to make laws for anyone else?

Then, like *deja vu* all over again, the same Western Union Deliveryman arrives.

DELIVERYMAN

Excuse me, urgent delivery for Mr. Roosevelt again.

Teddy waves his hand again, smiling meekly at the frowning Speaker.

TEDDY

Over here.

The Deliveryman crosses the large room holding the conspicuous yellow telegram while everyone watches. The elderly Speaker shakes his weary old head.

SPEAKER

What now, Mr. Roosevelt? More children so soon?

Teddy reads the telegram and suddenly looks horrified. He crumples the telegram and dashes out of the Legislature without a word or backward glance. Everyone in the Legislature shakes their head and mutters at Teddy's odd behavior.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. THE BAD LANDS/ RIVER ROAD -- SUNSET

O'Donald, Luffsey and Wannegan, once again drunkenly ride along the Little Missouri River singing a song.

THE TRIO

(singing)

In Dublin fair city/ Where the girls are
so pretty/ I set my eyes on sweet Molly
Malone . . .

The three men once again find their path blocked by barbed wire. They all shake their heads.

Meanwhile, hidden behind rocks, outcroppings, trees and shrubs are the Marquis and his men, their rifles out and ready.

The three frontiersmen are indignant.

O'DONALD

That frog just won't quit.

LUFFSEY

You'd think he'd understand by now that
we mean business.

WANNEGAN

Can't push folks like us around. It ain't
fittin', nohow.

They all jump down from their horses, retrieve axes and hatchets, then set about chopping down the fences. The Marquis' voice is heard from nearby.

MARQUIS

(O.S.)

Fire!

A volley of gunshots rings out. Men and horses drop to the ground in a murderous barrage of lead. One horse falls over dead, Riley Luffsey lands on his back with a bullet through his throat, yelling.

LUFFSEY

Wannegan, for God's sake, help me –

Luffsey chokes on blood and quickly dies.

Wannegan, whose clothes are shot to pieces, jumps on the one healthy horse and gallops off at top speed, his shredded clothes flapping.

O'Donald has been shot several times and runs around bleeding and screaming. He finally gets caught on the barbed wire fence, and hangs there moaning.

The Marquis and his men step out of their hiding places, their weapons smoking. Many of the men are wide-eyed and shaking in disbelief at what they've just done.

FOREMAN

(horrified)

Jumpin' Jesus Christ, we really gone and done it now!

The Marquis smiles for the very first time.

MARQUIS

Pestilent vermin! I am the Marquis
Antoine-Amedee-Marie-Vincent-Amat
Manca de Vallomrosa de Mores, and I
will not be trifled with!

The Marquis pulls a big Colt .45 from his holster and fires several shots directly into Frank O'Donald's back. Frank O'Donald, hanging on the barbed wire, spasms and dies. The Marquis' men all appear shocked. The Marquis spins the pistol on his finger, then slams it into his holster.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. THE ROOSEVELT FAMILY HOME/ MANHATTAN -- NIGHT

A horse-drawn carriage draws up in front of the Roosevelt mansion. Teddy bolts from the carriage and dashes inside the house.

A TITLE READS: "**February 12th, 1884.**"

INT. THE ROOSEVELT FAMILY HOME -- NIGHT

Teddy enters the house to find a crowd of people inside – his entire extended family, as well as

many family friends. They all turn and look at Teddy whose face is a study in panic.

TEDDY

Am I too late?

Nobody answers, nor knows how to answer. Teddy dashes past all of them, bolting up the steps two and three at a time.

INT. ALICE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Alice is in a coma. She surrounded by a DOCTOR, a nurse, and several other people. Teddy looks to the Doctor pleadingly.

TEDDY

Please, doctor, tell me she'll be all right?

DOCTOR

She's comatose, anything could happen.
Your Mother, however, I'm fairly certain
won't last the night.

Teddy could not look more stricken.

INT. MARTHA'S ROOM – NIGHT

Martha Roosevelt is awake in bed suffering the very last stage of Typhoid fever. Bamie is there, as well as another doctor, another nurse, and a few others. Martha sees Teddy and smiles.

MARTHA

I knew you'd be here, Teddy. I've been
holding on waiting for you.

Teddy kneels beside her, taking her frail, bony hand in his. Teddy is now crying.

TEDDY

Mother. What's happening? I don't understand.

Martha strokes her son's hair.

MARTHA

God's will is not for us to understand, dear.
He tests us with adversity.

TEDDY

For what? More adversity? I still can't face
a whole day without thinking of father.

MARTHA

I know. Me, too. Just try to be as good a
man as your father and you'll never lose
your way.

TEDDY

But father was a very great man. I fear
I'll never fill his shoes no matter how hard
I try.

MARTHA

Perhaps not right now, Teddy, but you
will. In time.

TEDDY

But father had you to help him.

MARTHA

And you have Alice.

Teddy looks up to Bamie and the others. They shake their heads, they haven't told her of Alice's condition. Teddy looks back down to his mother. Martha coughs violently, her frail body shaking. Finally, the coughing subsides and Martha Roosevelt dies. Teddy drops his face into his hands and sobs.

INT. ALICE'S BEDROOM – NIGHT

The comatose Alice is in Teddy's arms. Teddy rocks her gently. The Doctor's hand reaches in and feels Alice's pulse in her neck. There is none. The Doctor goes to his bag and retrieves a small mirror. Bamie and the others watch as the Doctor places the mirror to Alice's mouth. There's no breath. Alice is dead. Teddy won't let go of her, tears streaming down his face.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. ROOSEVELT MANSION – MORNING

Two horse-drawn hearses are parked in front of the house. It's a cold February morning. The horses snort, billowing clouds of steam.

INT. ROOSEVELT MANSION/ HALLWAY – MORNING

The door to Alice's bedroom opens and Bamie steps into the hall. In the room we can see that Teddy is still holding his dead wife and crying. Bamie speaks to CORINNE and ELLIOT, Teddy's twenty year old sister and nineteen year old brother. They have both been crying all night, too.

BAMIE

He is inconsolable. I don't know what to do.

CORINNE

Teddy has never been like this before.

ELLIOT

Never. Even after papa died.

BAMIE

He won't let Alice's body go. It's been hours.

The three Roosevelts stand in confusion.

A MORTICIAN wearing a black frock coat and top hat comes up the stairs. He is followed by two burly assistants.

MORTICIAN

Your mother is in the hearse. How shall we proceed here?

He points at Alice's bedroom door. Bamie looks to her brother and sister, then sighs.

BAMIE

Have your men take her from him – gently, if you please.

The Mortician nods.

MORTICIAN

Of course.

The Mortician turns to his assistants and nods toward the door.

INT. ALICE'S BEDROOM – MORNING

Alice's cold, blue body is wrenched from Teddy's grasping hands. His tear-streaked face twists in pain as his dead wife is taken from him. Teddy curls up in a ball on the bed and continues to cry, sobs racking his whole body.

DISSOLVE:

INT. ROOSEVELT LIBRARY – DAY

The immediate Roosevelt family is assembled in the library, which is fourteen people. Some of the men smoke cigars, many people have glasses of brandy before them. Nobody speaks. Suddenly, everybody looks up as Teddy enters the library. He is completely dazed, his clothes rumpled, his hair sticking up.

His sister, Bamie, steps up holding a swaddled newborn infant. Teddy looks down at the baby with an expression of total defeat.

TEDDY

Bamie, please raise my daughter for me.
Her name will be Alice.

BAMIE

(shocked)
Where will you be?

TEDDY

I'm going out west.

BAMIE

But what about your career?

TEDDY

I'm starting a new career. I'll be a cattle
rancher.

BAMIE

Teddy, this doesn't make any sense.

TEDDY

Certainly it does. The light has gone out
in my life. I will never be happy again. I
have nothing to live for.

BAMIE

But your child is alive, Teddy. Alive and healthy.

TEDDY

But her mother and father are both dead. She is an orphan, like we are.

BAMIE

But, Teddy, that's not true.

TEDDY

Oh, yes it is!

BAMIE

But what about what mama said to you? Try to be like father now.

TEDDY

(angry)

I am not father! He was a great man. I'm not, and dare say I don't have it in me. I'm sorry.

Teddy turns and walks out of the library. His entire family watches him go in overwhelming sadness.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. THE BAD LANDS/ MONTAGE -- DAY/ NIGHT

Teddy rides through the Bad Lands attired in buckskin, pistols on his belt, several rifles on his saddle, and a grim look on his face. He fights the elements:

EXT. RIVER – DAY

Teddy and his horse wade through a river. He looks like he might float away, but he doesn't.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. BOGGY LOWLAND – DAY

Teddy rides his horse straight into a pool of quicksand. The horse's front legs sink into the muck and Teddy is thrown forward off the horse.

TEDDY

Oh, dear God . . .

He is hurtled directly into the quicksand. Teddy flails, finally grabbing the horse around the neck. The two of them flail together until they pull themselves out of the quagmire. The horse shakes off the mud. Teddy crawls to solid ground and gasps for air.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. THE BAD LANDS – DAY

Teddy rides through a raging storm. He and his horse can barely keep their eyes open the rain is whipping so hard.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. CAMPSITE – NIGHT

Teddy tries to sleep in the rain, with no fire, soaking wet. He starts to laugh, then just keeps on laughing, waving his fists in the air.

TEDDY

(hollering)

Go on, work your worst! Drown me! Hit me with lightning! Kill me if you'd like! I really don't give a damn!

Teddy's laughter chokes up and becomes sobs.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. CAMPSITE – MORNING

It has stopped raining, but everything, including Teddy, is soaking wet. He sneezes as he tries to start a fire, but to no avail, everything's too wet. Instead, he eats hard biscuits and shivers.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. UNDERGROWTH – DAY

Teddy moves stealthily through some undergrowth, his Winchester rifle in hand. As he moves slowly past some foliage, we see a pheasant bobbing its head, pecking at the ground. Teddy aims in with his rifle, pulls the trigger and – BANG! The bird goes down.

Teddy then plucks the bird, starts a fire, cooks and hungrily eats it on the spot. It tastes good, really good.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. GRAVEYARD BUTTE/ MEDORA – DAY

Two new graves are being added to the cemetery overlooking Medora. This is Graveyard Butte. Wannegan watches as his two friends are interred. Wannegan then looks over at the Marquis' mansion and a deep frown creases his face. Wannegan shakes his fist.

WANNEGAN

You'll pay, you son of a bitch! Maybe not to me, but you'll pay!

As dirt is shoveled into the holes, Wannegan turns and walks away, a very frustrated man.

DISSOLVE:

INT. THE PYRAMID HOTEL & SALOON – DAY

The Marquis strides into the saloon in the hotel, bangs a beer mug loudly on the bar until he has everyone's attention. He then announces to the twenty people on hand . . .

MARQUIS

I have just returned from court, and as you see, I am not prosecuted. Your American courts know who is right. And now I will make it very clear for one and for all: I will not tolerate anyone else cutting down my fences. *This is my town!* I founded it and named it after

my wife. And this is my herd! And my slaughterhouse! And my refrigerated train cars! And this is my hotel! I will not be trifled with! Let it be known by all! I have spoken!

The Marquis smashes the beer mug on the floor, then strides out of the saloon as hastily as he entered.

Everyone stands there, silent for the moment. The BARKEEP speaks everyone's thoughts.

BARKEEP

Who the hell does that son of a bitch Marquis think he is? The King of France?

A SALOON GAL chimes in.

SALOON GAL

No, the King of the world. But he'll get his, you take my word. I just hope I'm around to see it.

Everybody nods.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. THE MALTESE CROSS RANCH – DAY

The Maltese Cross ranch is composed of a tiny cabin, a few head of cattle, some chickens and some goats. The owners of the ranch are, GREGOR LANG, a burly Scotsman, who presently chops wood on a stump, and his sixteen year old son, LINCOLN, a strapping, handsome kid who is feeding the chickens. Lincoln looks up and sees Teddy riding toward him. Gregor puts down his ax and picks up a rifle.

GREGOR

(Scottish accent)

And who might this be, I'm wonderin'?

As Teddy rides closer we see that he is a mud-spattered, soggy mess, but, nevertheless, he wears a pained smile.

TEDDY

Good morning, gentlemen. My name is Roosevelt.

A smile comes to Lincoln's young face for no apparent reason. Gregor lowers his rifle.

GREGOR

Aye. M'name's Lang, Gregor Lang.

TEDDY

A pleasure to meet you, Mr. Lang.

Teddy gets down from his horse, strides over and shakes Gregor's hand.

GREGOR

And this is me boy, Lincoln.

TEDDY

(smiles wider)

Lincoln. Capital name. Dee-lighted to meet you, Lincoln.

Teddy takes Lincoln's hand in both of his and gives it a good solid pump. Lincoln is amused.

GREGOR

And what sort of name is Roosevelt then?

TEDDY

It's Dutch, although I am the seventh generation of Roosevelts born in America. All on Manhattan Island, I might add

GREGOR

Dutch. They're a dependable people, the Dutch. Hard workers. What can I do for you, Mr. Roosevelt?

TEDDY

A chance to dry out would be much appreciated, Mr. Lang. I've been wet for over a week.

GREGOR

Then why don't you come inside, Mr. Roosevelt, and tell my son and I why an educated man like yourself is riding around by himself in the Bad Lands?

TEDDY

I would be delighted.

Gregor ushers Teddy inside. Lincoln takes the reins of Teddy's horse.

TEDDY

Thank you, Lincoln.

Lincoln Lang, unlike his father, has an American accent.

LINCOLN

My pleasure, sir.

Lincoln and Teddy exchange a smile.

DISSOLVE:

INT. THE LANG CABIN – NIGHT

Teddy, Gregor and Lincoln sit around the table, plates with chicken bones scattered about. Gregor smokes a pipe.

GREGOR

. . . There ain't much chance for a poor man to get ahead back in the old country. If you're not born into money, you'll no doubt die without it. So, since I was a young man I've been payin' close attention to the goings-on here in America. When President Lincoln freed the slaves, I knew America was the land for me. I named my boy here after Honest Abe. Then, when
(continued)

GREGOR (cont.)

his mother, my beloved wife, Anne, passed-on, I felt nothin' holdin' me back anymore. I packed up Lincoln and off we sailed for America. That was ten years ago. I took

every job I could get to save a few cents, but when I did, we picked-up and headed west. We been out here come two years now, and makin' a go of it, too.

TEDDY

And you believe, Mr. Lang, that cattle ranching will succeed here in the Bad Lands?

GREGOR

Most definitely. We wouldn't have stayed as long as we have if we didn't think we'd succeed.

LINCOLN

(nods)

Yes, sir.

TEDDY

And you have only one hundred head of cattle and no capital.

GREGOR

Aye. But with enough time and effort me and the boy will most certainly get ahead.

Teddy is thinking. He squints his eyes and cleans his glasses.

TEDDY

Well, sir, perhaps we can all get ahead together.

GREGOR

What are you sayin', then, Mr. Roosevelt?

Lincoln watches Teddy and his father closely.

TEDDY

I'm saying, Mr. Lang, that I have plenty of capital and that I, too, believe that cattle ranching here in the Bad Lands will be a

fruitful enterprise. What if I were to purchase, say, another nine hundred head of cattle, giving us a round one thousand head, would you consider going fifty-fifty with me on the Maltese Cross Ranch?

GREGOR

It's a first-class deal for me, Mr. Roosevelt, but what about you?

TEDDY

It's perfect for me, too. I get to be in the cattle ranching business immediately. You and Lincoln spared me all the preliminaries.

GREGOR

(concerned)

But what about your life back in New York?

TEDDY

Your wife died and you left your home for a new life. My wife died, too, Mr. Lang, and my mother, on the very same day. A black fog enshrouds me. I no longer have a life back in New York. I, too, have come here looking for a new life.

(they all look at
each other closely)

So, would you like to go into business with me, Mr. Lang?

Teddy proffers his hand. Gregor and Lincoln exchange a look. Lincoln nods.

GREGOR

Aye, indeed I would, Mr. Roosevelt.

Teddy grins his toothy grin. He and Gregor shake hands on the deal while Lincoln watches.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. THE TOWN OF MEDORA – DAY

Teddy, Gregor, Lincoln, and two other COWBOYS lead a herd of cattle through the town of

Medora. As she passes the small newspaper office of *THE BAD LANDS REGISTER*, Teddy turns to Gregor.

TEDDY

I'm going to pick up a newspaper, I'll be along shortly.

Gregor nods. Teddy veers off toward the newspaper office.

INT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE – DAY

Teddy enters the newspaper office and finds the Marquis standing there.

TEDDY

So, Marquis, we meet again.

The Marquis looks at Teddy, unable to place him.

MARQUIS

How do I know you?

TEDDY

You came to my home in New York trying to raise capital for your cattle business.

MARQUIS

(remembers distastefully)

Ah, yes, *Rosenfeld*.

TEDDY

(patiently)

Roosevelt.

MARQUIS

You turned me down. Now you see I knew of what I spoke.

TEDDY

I never doubted you. I've begun my own ranch just south of here. The Maltese Cross.

The Marquis waves his hand.

MARQUIS

There is only one person in the cattle business
in the Bad Lands – the Marquis de Mores –
me. You and the others are of no consequence.
Just don't get in my way, I warn you.

At which point the door opens and in steps the young and beautiful MEDORA, the *Marquise* de Mores. When she sees Teddy her eyes widen and smile creeps across her face.

MEDORA

Teddy Roosevelt?

Teddy grins and takes Medora's hand.

TEDDY

Medora Von Hoffman. Or should I say,
the *Marquise* de Mores?

The Marquis gives Teddy a dirty look.

MEDORA

Oh my goodness, Teddy. I see you and
remember my youth back in New York.

TEDDY

(nods)

Yes. You and Corinne and I were all in a
dance class together.

MEDORA

(smiles)

Oh, yes, that's right. You were very funny
then, Teddy. You couldn't dance a step.

TEDDY

(shrugs)

I'm still not much of a dancer.

Meanwhile, the Marquis' gaze is shifting between Teddy and his wife, a somewhat baffled expression on his face.

MARQUIS

(to his wife)
Time to go, my dear.

MEDORA
Yes, of course. Teddy you simply must
come up to the chateau for dinner tonight.

Teddy glances at the frowning Marquis and hesitates.

TEDDY
Well . . .

MEDORA
I absolutely insist. We both do, don't we?

She glances at her husband. There is a silent, tense moment between them.

MARQUIS
. . . Yes, of course.

TEDDY
(shrugs)
All right then. It would be my pleasure.

The Marquis sneers.

MEDORA
(smiles)
Oh, that's lovely.

The Marquis strains hard for the slightest edge of a smile.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. CHATEAU DE MORES – SUNSET

The imposing wooden structure of the "Chateau de Mores" looms over the town of Medora.

INT. CHATEAU DE MORES – NIGHT

The lamps are lit and SERVANTS scurry about clearing the dinner table and straightening up. The Marquis, Medora and Teddy relax in the study holding glasses of sherry and talking. Actually, just Medora and Teddy are talking. The Marquis puffs on a big fat cigar, his eyes

narrowed.

MEDORA

. . . So then we were sleighing through Central Park with my whole family all bundled up and singing a song, when a dead bird just dropped clean out of the sky and landed in Papa's lap.

(she and Teddy laugh)

Well, I've never seen my Father jump like that before or since. It was about the funniest thing I've ever seen in my life. Then you come running up yelling, "Have you seen my Ring-Tailed Warbler," or some such thing –

TEDDY

— It was a Bluebird.

MEDORA

(amazed)

You still remember?

TEDDY

Certainly. I stuffed that Bluebird and still have it.

MEDORA

So, my Father lifted the not-quite-dead Bluebird up and asked, "This wouldn't happen to be it, would it."

Medora and Teddy burst out laughing. The Marquis pensively puffs on his cigar, engulfed in a cloud of blue smoke.

TEDDY

Your Father was always very interested in my bird collection.

MEDORA

Yes, Papa loved birds, and butterflies, and insects of all sorts. He actually wrote a book about insects.

TEDDY

(nods)

I know. I read it.

MEDORA

(surprised)

You did?

Suddenly, the Marquis strides up to Teddy with his eyes burning.

MARQUIS

Enough of this folderol! It's time for you
to take your leave!

Medora jumps to her feet.

MEDORA

But dear, he is our guest.

MARQUIS

Not anymore! Go home, Rosenfeld!

Teddy calmly rises to his feet, brushes the wrinkles from his jacket and addresses Medora.

TEDDY

Thank you for dinner, Medora.

MEDORA

It was our pleasure.

MARQUIS

Not mine. Jews give me heartburn.

Teddy is about to correct him, but stops himself.

TEDDY

Perhaps we will meet again, Marquis.

MARQUIS

I hope not.

Teddy turns and leaves.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY/ TIMES SQUARE – DAY

This is the Times Square of 1884: horse-drawn wagons and streetcars.

INT. PHOTOGRAPHER'S STUDIO – DAY

Bamie Roosevelt, wearing a silk dress, holds the swaddled baby Alice in her arms. The PHOTOGRAPHER, with his head tucked under a black cloth attached to an old view camera, waves his hand.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Hold your breath and don't move.

Bamie sucks in her breath. The Photographer ignites the flash powder while releasing the shutter – POOF!! – there is a bright flash . . .

FLASH:

EXT. MALTESE CROSS RANCHHOUSE – DAY

Lightning flashes as rain pours down in buckets on the little log cabin that is the ranchhouse of the Maltese Cross Ranch. Smoke billows from the chimney.

INT. RANCHHOUSE – DAY

Teddy sits on a cot against the wall, an ink pen and a notebook in his hands, staring at a black and white photograph sitting on a ledge beside him – it's of Bamie holding baby Alice. Our view widens until we see that the small cabin is also occupied by Gregor Lang, sharpening an axe, Lincoln Lang, reading *Ben Hur: A Tale of the Christ* by General Lew Wallace, and three COWBOYS who are playing cards, swearing and smoking. Teddy looks annoyed, waving smoke away from his face, but doesn't say anything, just goes back to writing.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. THE BAD LANDS – DAY

Teddy and Lincoln Lang ride through the Bad Lands. It's a beautiful though very cold day. A black-bodied, brown-headed little bird on branch sings a squeaky song.

LINCOLN

What's that?

TEDDY

That's a Brown-headed Cowbird, *Molothrus ater*. It likes to lay its eggs in other birds' nests.

Lincoln nods, fascinated. He points at another bird on a limb, this one with a yellow chin and breast.

LINCOLN

How about that?

TEDDY

That's a Western Meadowlark, *Sturnella neglecta*.

Lincoln is impressed. He waves his hand at the surrounding landscape.

LINCOLN

So, what are you looking for?

TEDDY

I'm not sure, but I'll know it when I see it. It's a big country, there's no reason for six of us to be jammed into so small a cabin.

LINCOLN

We could build another cabin right near the first one. There's plenty of room.

TEDDY

(shakes his head)

No thank you. I'm from New York City, I don't need neighbors that close. That's why I'm out here. Did you know that they've just built an office building in Chicago *ten stories tall*. They're calling it a "skyscraper." Capital name, eh?

LINCOLN

(shrugs)

You can't scrape the sky. Besides, why do they need a building ten stories tall?

TEDDY

Because there's no room to build sideways. That's the problem with living in a city. But out here, well, there's room enough for everyone. Even in Medora it's getting a bit crowded for my taste.

Teddy and Lincoln ride down a hill and arrive at a small stream. They ride across the stream and come upon a flat open area with the skeleton of an elk reposing in the dirt. Teddy climbs off his horse and inspects the bones. Lincoln steps up beside him.

LINCOLN

That elk is dead.

TEDDY

No jest.

Teddy looks around, striding across the flat open area. He kneels before the stream, scoops up a handful of water and drinks it.

TEDDY

Good water.

(rises to his feet)

This is it. This will be the sight of my new ranch. Know what I'm going to call it?

LINCOLN

Skyscraper?

TEDDY

(shakes his head)

That's "*skyscraper*."

(Teddy steps over to the elk skeleton and lifts the skull by its horn)

No, I'll call it "*Elkhorn*." And this is where I'll live out the rest of my days.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. ELKHORN RANCH – DAY

Teddy begins building his new cabin with his own hands, as well as the help of Gregor Lang, the three Cowboys, and young Lincoln Lang, too. Teddy has made a sketch of the proposed ranch house. It is quite a bit larger than the other cabins around, more like an actual, low-lying ranch house, with a veranda. Gregor hands Teddy an ax.

GREGOR

Let's go get some wood.

Everybody hoists an ax to their shoulders and they all head off into the nearby woods.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. WOODS – DAY

Everyone begins chopping down trees. Each man has his own style of chopping, but they all seem to be quite experienced at the chore. Teddy, on the other hand, clearly has no experience and even less ability. What he does have, however, is sheer determination.

For each of the other men, including young Lincoln, trees begin toppling over at a regular rate. Teddy just keeps whacking away at the same tree, wood chips cascading around. Every time Teddy hits the tree incorrectly his entire body rattles, frequently sending his ax sailing out of his hands, occasionally causing his spectacles to fly off.

Teddy's performance is tremendously amusing to the others, but they all do their best to not laugh out loud at their boss.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. WOODS – SUNSET

As the sun sets through the forest, the woodsmen count the trees they've cut down that day.

GREGOR

Fifty-seven.

COWBOY #1

Fifty-three.

COWBOY #2

Forty-nine.

COWBOY #3

Forty-five.

LINCOLN

Thirty-seven.

Teddy's hands are a bloody mess, but there's good color in his cheeks. Teddy points his blistered finger at the downed trees, counting.

TEDDY

Seventeen.

Now the men can no longer help themselves, they burst out into hysterical laughter.

COWBOY #1

You really beavered those seventeen trees down, too, I'll tell you that much.

They all continue to laugh.

COWBOY #2

The beavers would be proud of you.

Teddy grins, taking the ribbing stoically.

TEDDY

People always said I had big teeth, perhaps
I'm part beaver after all.

Teddy snaps his big white teeth. This just makes them all laugh more. Lincoln has to sit down he's laughing so hard.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. MEDORA/ STOCKYARDS – DAY

The Marquis, Medora and a number of men walk beside the stockyards, jammed with mooing

cattle, and the stationary train. The refrigerated sidecars are being loaded with bloody red sides of beef and big blocks of ice. Medora pinches her nose while holding onto her husband's arm.

MEDORA

My goodness, but it stinks.

MARQUIS

(nods)

It certainly does. But that is a small price to pay for the amount of remuneration it will return.

Medora inspects the live cattle in the pens.

MEDORA

I spent a number of summers with my cousins in Chicago and parts of town smelled just like this.

MARQUIS

Effluvium is equally redolent the world over, my dear. Of that I can assure you.

MEDORA

Is it my imagination, or were those cows in Chicago *fatter* than these cows here.

MARQUIS

No doubt they were. Cows that stand around in the Chicago stockyards doing nothing but eating their entire lives are slovenly, disgusting creatures. Their meat is fatty. These cows here have roamed the range their whole lives, living as good a life as a cow can lead. Therefore, it must follow that the subsequent meat from these cows will be that much better. Don't you agree?

Medora nods, holding her husband's arm tighter.

MEDORA

Of course I do, dear. It's brilliant.

The Marquis nods in complete agreement. As the train car doors are slid shut, Medora looks away, unconvinced.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. ELKHORN RANCH – DAY

The elk skull and horns that Teddy found are now mounted above the front door. As our view widens, we see that the ranch house is completed, as well as the barn and corral. Teddy sits on the veranda writing.

Beside Teddy sits a thick stack of paper, held down by a rock as a paperweight. The title page reads, "*Hunting Trips of a Ranchman*," by Theodore Roosevelt. Teddy intently scratches away, creating line after line, dipping his pen, writing some more, blotting, then adding a new page to the growing pile. He looks up, removes his glasses and pinches the bridge of his nose between his squinting eyes. Teddy looks up to heaven.

TEDDY

Is this all you have in store for me?

God doesn't answer. Teddy sighs, replaces his glasses and continues writing.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. THE BAD LANDS – DAY

Teddy and his men herd cattle along a trail and come upon a brand new barbed wire fence blocking their path. A sign nailed to a fence post states: "KEEP OUT! PRIVATE PROPERTY! DE MORES CATTLE COMPANY." Gregor spits.

GREGOR

That son of a bitch Marquis!

COWBOY #1

Who does he think he is?

TEDDY

He thinks he's claiming this land, except that it lies between our ranches and the river. That won't do at all.

GREGOR

He don't need this land, he's just tryin'
to put us out of business is all.

TEDDY

(very serious)

Well, gentlemen, no one is putting *me*
out of business.

Teddy jumps down from his horse and retrieves a hatchet.

TEDDY

Let's see how many of *these* I can beaver
down in an hour.

The others look at each other silently asking, "Is this a good idea?" Teddy begins chopping away with the hatchet. Everybody else shrugs, jumps down from their horses and helps Teddy with his task. As long strands of barbed-wire are severed, they coil up with a loud *SPROING!*

EXT. THE BAD LANDS – DAY

The Marquis sits astride his white stallion overlooking a herd of cattle ten thousand strong; an endless flowing sea of beef. Cowboys ride around the herd shouting and snapping whips. A cowboy comes riding up. He is JOE FERRIS, a short stocky man, carrying a cut fence post which he drops on the ground in front of the Marquis.

MARQUIS

(exasperated)

Now who?

FERRIS

The Elkhorn. That four-eyed feller
from back east.

The Marquis' eyes light up, his lip snarls.

MARQUIS

Yes, that Jew, Rosenfeld. I dare say, we'll
have to pay him a visit. Right now! Get
the men together!

FERRIS

Yes, sir.

Ferris turns his horse around and gallops off. The Marquis looks down at the cut fence post.

EXT. ELKHORN RANCH – DAY

Teddy sits on his veranda, still writing away. Gregor, Lincoln, and the three Cowboys all do various chores in the corral and around the house. The Marquis and his men come riding up to the front of the house. Teddy puts down his pen and looks up.

TEDDY

Marquis, how nice of you to visit.

MARQUIS

Don't play games with me, Rosenfeld!
You cut down my fence. Anyone that
cuts down my fences is my enemy.

TEDDY

Really? How interesting. Anyone that
tries to fence me out of my own ranch
is going out of their way to make me
their enemy.

MARQUIS

(definitive)

I was here *long* before you. I claimed
all of the land around Medora. It's
mine!

TEDDY

And how, if I may ask, did you claim
this land? You aren't living here. You
have no cattle grazing here. How can
you substantiate your claim?

MARQUIS

When I first got out here, I had sheep
grazing on this land.

TEDDY

(perplexed)

Sheep? This is cattle country. Besides,

there's no sheep here now. What happened to them?

MARQUIS

They died.

TEDDY

(shrugs)

Then I'm afraid your claim died with them.

MARQUIS

I think not! And I'm clearly informing you that if you cut down my fences one more time, you are starting a war with me!

TEDDY

(shrugs nonchalantly)

So be it.

The Marquis and his men turn their horses around and ride away. Teddy looks to the others, who are all looking back at him. Cowboy #1 looks skeptical.

COWBOY #1

That son of a bitch already killed two fellers from around here for cuttin' his wire. He means business.

TEDDY

Well, I do too.

Teddy shakes his head, then sits back down to write.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. MEDORA/ TRAIN DEPOT – DAY

The train chugs up to the depot in Medora. The Marquis walks along the length of the train as workers from the slaughterhouse wearing blood-spattered aprons begin opening the sliding doors on the train cars. Water comes pouring out of each of the cars as the doors open, followed by disgusting stench. The Marquis looks closer and sees that all of the cars are loaded with rotting beef. The train CONDUCTOR comes walking up in his striped hat, pulling off his blackened

gloves. The Marquis is outraged.

MARQUIS

What on Earth is the meaning of this?

CONDUCTOR

The stores refused delivery, sir. They all said that they hadn't sold the last shipment.

MARQUIS

But I don't understand. Our prices are cheaper than everyone else's. How can this be?

CONDUCTOR

From what they told me, people just don't seem to want very lean beef, it's not as tasty as fattened beef.

MARQUIS

(furious)

How dare they! This is the finest beef in the world. Much better than fattened beef!

CONDUCTOR

(shrugs)

Maybe, but it's not what folks want, I guess.

MARQUIS

But they must! Don't you understand? I have a hundred train cars of slaughtered beef ready to be shipped. What do I do with that?

CONDUCTOR

(shrugs again)

Hey! You pay me to move it, I'll move it. But I've gotta bring it back if delivery is refused. Talk to the stores.

The Marquis' eyes burn with anger.

MARQUIS

It's a conspiracy by the Jewish bankers.
They want me to fail to save their invest-
ments. Well, I'll show them. I'll show
everybody!

(to his men)

Unload these cars. Remove the fetid beef,
and burn it, then load in the fresh beef.
I'll simply lower my prices further, then
people will *have* to buy my beef!

The men begin unloading the horrible, rotting beef. They wince, then cover their faces with handkerchiefs as they perform the ugly task.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. ELKHORN RANCH – DAY

Teddy and his men are busily branding cows in the corral. Simultaneously, everyone notices a terrible odor, followed by inky smoke filling the air.

COWBOY #1

What the hell is that?

COWBOY #2

Smells like burning garbage.

Gregor and Lincoln come driving up in a buckboard filled with supplies. Teddy asks them:

TEDDY

What's going on?

GREGOR

The Marquis is burning an entire train-
load of spoiled beef. The stores back
east refused shipment because they had-
n't sold the last lot.

TEDDY

(nods)

Really? Why?

GREGOR

The beef is too lean, is what we heard.

TEDDY

(grins)

It's a good thing we decided to ship our cattle east live, the old way.

LINCOLN

(adding in)

The Marquis says he's going to lower the price on his beef even more, that way it'll *have* to sell. I suppose that'll do it, too.

TEDDY

Let me teach you something I learned in Economics class at Harvard University. Price does not effect demand.

(everybody looks baffled;

Teddy goes on . . .)

If what you are selling costs a dollar and nobody wants to buy it; they still won't want to buy it at seventy-five cents, or fifty cents, or even twenty-five cents. What people don't want, they don't want at any price. And, conversely, what they do want, they'll pay for. Class dismissed.

Teddy goes back to branding. Everybody else is impressed; they just learned something. Gregor smacks his pipe in his hand.

GREGOR

By God, it makes sense, too.

EXT. CHATEAU DE MORES – NIGHT

The Chateau de Mores looms darkly over the town. We can just barely hear the sound of a fight between the Marquis and Medora. This is followed by the distinct sound of a face being slapped –

INT. CHATEAU DE MORES/ FOYER -- NIGHT

— Medora hits the hardwood floor of the foyer, holding her stinging red face. The Marquis stands over her, his fists clenched in anger and waving in the air.

MARQUIS

Damn you woman! I am the master in my own house! I am the Marquis Antoine-Amedee-Marie-Vincent-Amat Manca de Vallombrosa de Mores! The direct descendant to the throne of France!

Medora is also angry, but slightly frightened.

MEDORA

There is no throne in France, and hasn't been for over a hundred years! And it's not my fault people don't like your infernal beef. Both myself and my father have put a lot of money into your scheme –

MARQUIS

— Oh! So now it's a scheme, is it? Before I was brilliant; now I'm a schemer?

He looks like he's going to hit her again.

MEDORA

My dear, I thought it was as brilliant as you. So did my father, and he's made millions. We simply must be patient. People will learn.

MARQUIS

(calmly)

Be patient? People will learn?

(blows up)

I burned ten thousand pounds of spoiled beef today! If, in the next seven days, the people don't learn to like my beef, and the stores do not except shipment of my next ten thousand pounds of refrigerated beef,

I'll have to burn that, too! Then, my dear,
we will have taken a giant stride on the
road to ruin!

The Marquis grabs the sides of his throbbing skull and staggers out of the foyer. Medora sighs, shaking her head and touching her rosy red cheek. The Marquis climbs the wide staircase.

MARQUIS

It has all gone awry, all of my beautifully
conceived plans. All awry. We have hit
the nadir. There is no possible way events
could get any worse.

EXT. CHATEAU DE MORES – NIGHT

Ah, but he's wrong. A big fluffy snowflake floats to the ground in front of the Chateau de Mores, followed by another, then another, then another . . . all dramatically lit in the moonlight. Before you know it, it's a full-fledged snowstorm . . .

EXT. THE BAD LANDS – NIGHT

Cattle bay in the moonlight as snowflakes drift down on their heads. Soon, the snow is building up in drifts around the cow's feet . . .

All the animals inhabiting the Bad Lands seek shelter: birds go into holes in trees; squirrels hide under roots; coyotes huddle together.

Limbs of trees bend over under the weight of the wet heavy snow; dead limbs snap off under the pressure.

EXT. ELKHORN RANCH – NIGHT

Snow coats the roof of Elkhorn Ranch, floating down endlessly. Snow drifts have built up to the second of four horizontal posts in the corral fence.

EXT. MEDORA/ TRAIN DEPOT – DAY

It's still snowing profusely as Teddy and his frozen men drive wagons into Medora. They arrive at the snowy train depot, where the hissing train sits. The Marquis and his men are very busily unloading big sacks of feed onto their own wagons. Given the circumstances, Teddy tries to be

pleasant while he waits and speaks to the Marquis.

TEDDY

Lotta snow.

The Marquis doesn't feel any reason to be pleasant.

MARQUIS

Brilliant observation.

Teddy is not to be deterred.

TEDDY

Bad weather for cattle.

MARQUIS

Bad weather for everything.

TEDDY

It's a darn good thing this feed arrived
when it did, eh?

MARQUIS

It certainly is. My cattle are starving.

TEDDY

Mine, too

MARQUIS

Have you got something on your mind?
Or did you ride down here through the
snow to make chitchat?

Teddy points at the sacks of feed.

TEDDY

Two hundred and fifty sacks of that feed
is mine.

MARQUIS

Is it really?

TEDDY

It certainly is, all paid for, too.

MARQUIS

Sadly, though, I am commandeering all of the feed on this train. The feed *you* paid for simply hasn't arrived yet.

Teddy's pleasant demeanor vanishes.

TEDDY

That feed is all that stands between life and death for my cattle.

MARQUIS

I'm very sorry to hear that, Rosenfeld. But having set fire to over thirty-five thousand sides of my own beef, I am not losing another cow if I can bloody well help it! Certainly not because of you! Is that clear?

The Marquis waves his hands indicating his twenty burly RANCH HANDS, presently hauling big bags of feed, but watching this exchange closely. Teddy surveys the situation coolly. He looks the Marquis directly in the eye.

TEDDY

You, sir, are a thief!

The Marquis' crazy eyes light up. He points straight at Teddy.

MARQUIS

You and I will settle this like gentlemen on another day.

TEDDY

We most certainly will, *Monsieur Marquis*

de la Nothing!

Teddy and his men turn their wagons around and leave. The Marquis is beginning to look like a bona fide crazy man.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. BAD LANDS – DAY

It's still snowing like all get out. Teddy and his men ride the range looking for stray cows and herding them to the trees and shelter. They continually come across frozen cows covered with snow. Frozen cattle dot the landscape. Gregor Lang rides up beside Teddy.

GREGOR

The Marquis is a famous duelist, Teddy, he's supposed to've killed a number of men back in France. Ya don't want to be gettin' into any scrapes with him then.

TEDDY

I'd say it's too late for that now, Gregor. I insulted his honor. So be it. It's sad, but the Marquis is insane. And none of this –

(he indicates the landscape)

— Is making him any saner.

GREGOR

All I'm sayin' is, don't be gettin' into any duels with the man. He'll kill ya without thinking twice.

TEDDY

Thank you, Gregor, I'll keep it in mind.

Teddy spurs his horse riding after a stray cow stuck in the snow. Gregor watches, shaking his head.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. CHATEAU DE MORES – NIGHT

Snow continues to float down on the snow-covered Chateau de Mores. The sounds of the Marquis and his wife, Medora, having a huge argument and altercation, including glass throwing and physical blows can be heard coming from within the Chateau.

INT. CHATEAU DE MORES/ LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

Medora, now sporting a black eye, backs up to the fireplace mantel. Her hand goes around an ornate sculpture which she picks up. The Marquis sees this and his angry eyes widen.

MARQUIS

Be careful, that's a priceless heirloom that belonged to my Great-grandmother.

MEDORA

Oh, really?
(she smashes it)
Not anymore!

MARQUIS

You'll pay for that!

MEDORA

I already have! Remember, most of the money you're losing came from me and my father.

MARQUIS

(furious)
You'll pay for that, too!

MEDORA

I pay for everything around here! You bungle things, then come home and take it out on me! I am not the reason your business is failing.

MARQUIS

My business is *not* failing!

MEDORA

Oh, excuse me, I'm using the incorrect

tense – your *failed* business.

MARQUIS
My business has not failed!

MEDORA
(snotty)
That's right, you still have your fences,
and your branding irons, and your empty
hotel. If you call what you've done in the
cattle business a success, then you could
also say the south won the Civil War, right?

The Marquis advances on Medora with his fists clenched.

MARQUIS
I'm going to make certain that if those
are the thoughts you think, at least you
won't be able to speak them for a while.

MEDORA
And why is that?

MARQUIS
Because I am going to knock your teeth
down your throat!

The Marquis begins hitting Medora like she's a punching bag.

The SERVANTS watch this display of fisticuffs covering their eyes and wincing.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. CHATEAU DE MORES – NIGHT

Medora sneaks out of the chateau carrying a single valise. Her face is black and blue and swollen – she's had the hell beaten out of her. Medora quietly steps into the barn where she is met by a sympathetic GROOM who hands her the reins and helps her onto a waiting saddled horse.

MEDORA
Thank you, Ike.

GROOM

My pleasure, ma'am. No man should treat his wife the way the Marquis treats you. You can't treat a horse that way.

MEDORA

(nods)

But you be careful. The Marquis could very easily take this out on you as anyone.

GROOM

I will, ma'am. And someday he'll get his comeuppance, you'll see. I just hope I'm there to see it.

MEDORA

You and everybody else. If you ever get to New York City, Ike, contact me. I'll give you a nice dinner.

GROOM

Thank you, ma'am, I will. Be careful.

Medora snaps the reins and rides the horse away through the billowing snow.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. ELKHORN RANCH – NIGHT

Medora comes riding up to Teddy's ranchhouse, covered with snow and nearly frozen, and pounds on his front door. After a moment, Teddy answers the door, half asleep and pulling a warm coat around his shoulders. Teddy sees Medora bruised face and gasps.

TEDDY

Oh my God, Medora, what happened?

MEDORA

(shivering)

Can I come in?

TEDDY

Of course, come in.

Medora enters and Teddy shuts the door.

INT. ELKHORN RANCHHOUSE – NIGHT

Teddy shows Medora in, then he tosses a big log on the smoldering embers in the fireplace. Medora takes off her wet coat, drops into an easy chair and begins to sob.

MEDORA

Teddy, you've got to help me get away from here.

TEDDY

(shocked)

Did the Marquis do this to you?

MEDORA

(nods)

Who else?

Teddy shakes his head sadly, rubbing his chin.

TEDDY

I'm afraid to say this, Medora, but your husband is insane.

MEDORA

I agree. That's why I have to get out of here. The next time he'll kill me for certain.

TEDDY

The next time he sees me he intends to kill me, too.

MEDORA

Then you've got nothing to lose, right? Will you help me get out of here, Teddy?

TEDDY

(nods)

Of course, Medora. How can I help you?

MEDORA

There's an eastbound train in the morning. If try to get on board here he'll most certainly stop me. That's why I'd like to catch the train in Dickinson.

TEDDY

That's a good idea, but it's over forty miles away, Medora, and it's still snowing quite hard.

Medora begins crying again.

MEDORA

I don't know what else to do, Teddy. If he finds me, he'll kill me.

TEDDY

Then we'll get you to the train in Dickinson. It's going to be a long, cold ride.

MEDORA

My marriage has been a long, cold ride.

TEDDY

Well, here comes another one.

EXT. BAD LANDS – NIGHT

A buckboard bounces across the snowy landscape of the Bad Lands, lit by a cloud-enshrouded moon. Snowflakes continue to fall. Teddy and Medora are seated in front of the carriage, wrapped in blankets and covered in snow. They pass many frozen cattle carcasses. With steam billowing out of their mouths, Teddy and Medora sing Gilbert & Sullivan songs to keep their minds off how cold they are.

TEDDY & MEDORA

(singing)

. . . I polished that handle so carefully/ That
now I am the ruler of the Queen's navy/ And
when the cold winds blow/ I generally go below/
To seek the seclusion that my cabin grants/ And

so do my sisters and my cousins and my aunts/
 And so do my sisters and my cousins, whom
 I reckon by the dozens/ And my Aunts . . .

As cold as they are, they cannot help but laugh.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. THE BAD LANDS – NIGHT

It's still snowing and the buckboard keeps bouncing along in the moonlight. Teddy and Medora are still singing, through chattering teeth, but it's not very funny anymore, at least not to them.

TEDDY & MEDORA

(singing; teeth chattering)

. . . I am the very model of a modern Major-
 General/ I've information vegetable, animal,
 and mineral/ I know the kings of England and
 I quote the fights historical/ From Marathon
 to Waterloo in order categorical . . .

The buckboards keeps moving along . . .

DISSOLVE:

INT. CHATEAU DE MORES – MORNING

The Marquis comes stumbling down the wide staircase in his silk bathrobe, his hair sticking up. He sees a frightened-looking, female HOUSEKEEPER scurry past and calls to her.

MARQUIS

You there, have you seen my wife?

HOUSEKEEPER

(obsequious)

No, sir. Not this morning.

The Housekeeper exits hastily. The Marquis shrugs, calling after her . . .

MARQUIS

Bring me breakfast.

INT. CHATEAU DE MORES/ DINING ROOM – MORNING

The Marquis eats his breakfast. A SERVANT brings him more food.

MARQUIS

Have you seen my wife?

SERVANT

No, sir. I haven't.

The Servant exits. The Marquis looks befuddled, then it hits him. She's gone. The Marquis jumps to his feet knocking dishes on the table over.

MARQUIS

Where is she? Somebody tell me!

There's nobody there to tell him anything. The Marquis bolts out of the dining room.

INT. CHATEAU DE MORES/ KITCHEN – MORNING

The Marquis stomps into the kitchen, where all of his help are cowering – three SERVANTS and three HOUSEKEEPERS.

MARQUIS

Where is she? You!

(points in the face of
cute young housekeeper)

Tell me where my wife is or I'll have you
flogged!

CUTE HOUSEKEEPER

I don't know, sir. She was gone when I
looked in her room first thing this morning.
She must've left during the night.

All of the other Servants and Housekeepers quickly agree. The Marquis' jaw clenches, his eyebrows raise up as his nutty-looking eyes bug out.

MARQUIS

She thinks she can leave me? Me? The Marquis de Mores? No woman leaves me! Not now, not ever!

The Marquis bolts out of the kitchen. The help all sigh upon his departure.

EXT. THE BAD LANDS – DAY

The Marquis and his men ride the snow-covered range looking for Medora. It still snowing and doesn't look like it's ever going to stop. As the Marquis and his men ride over a rise who should they come across but Teddy by himself in his buckboard returning to his ranch. The Marquis eyes him suspiciously.

MARQUIS

What are you doing out here?

TEDDY

Seeing the sights, and you?

MARQUIS

Uh . . . None of your business. And you and I still have a score to settle.

TEDDY

Any time you say. How about now?

MARQUIS

Later.

The Marquis spurs his horse and rides away, his men following after. Teddy watches him go, then snaps his reins and continues in the opposite direction.

EXT. THE BAD LANDS – DAY

As the snow drifts down, a steam-powered locomotive chugs across the Bad Lands. As our view gets closer and closer, we finally see that Medora is seated within, looking pensively out the window at the passing buttes. Her breath steams up the window.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. THE BAD LANDS – DAY

Out riding the snowy range, Teddy and his men, all chilled to the bone, can only find frozen cattle; one frozen cow after another after another . . . As hard as they search, they can find no

living cattle. Teddy shakes his head sadly.

TEDDY

Well, I suppose that my days as a cattle rancher are officially over.

Gregor mutters beside Teddy.

GREGOR

At least we sold off nearly half of the herd before this bloody snowstorm came. It's not a total lose.

TEDDY

Close enough for me. When things go sour, they really go sour. What else could go wrong now, I ask you?

In answer to Teddy's question, he breathes on his glasses to clean them and the lenses crack. Teddy puts them back on his nose.

TEDDY

(sardonically)

Well, that's just bully.

(he looks up to heaven)

Anything else?

Just then, Lincoln Lang's horse slips on the ice throwing him to the hard frozen ground where he doesn't get up. Teddy and Gregor quickly ride over to him, jumping down from their horses and dashing up to him. Lincoln is half-buried in a snowdrift.

GREGOR

Are you all right, then?

Lincoln tries to sit up and can't.

LINCOLN

(gritting his teeth)

I think I broke something. I'm not sure if it's my leg or my hip, or both.

TEDDY

Don't move, we'll get you out of here.

(to Gregor)
Stay with him.

GREGOR
Where are you going?

TEDDY
I'm going to make a sledge. I'll be right
back.

Teddy takes his hatchet and chops off two long limbs of a tree. He ropes the poles together, stretches a blanket across the ropes, then attaches both poles to his saddle. The other Cowboys have ridden up and help load Lincoln on the sledge.

GREGOR
Should we take him home?

TEDDY
(shakes his head)
Too far. Let's take him into Medora.

They all ride away, Lincoln moaning every time the sledge hits a bump.

DISSOLVE:

INT. THE PYRAMID HOTEL & SALOON – DAY

Teddy and his frozen, snowy men enter the Pyramid Hotel & Saloon carrying Lincoln on the sledge. The Saloon Gal we met earlier comes over to tend to Lincoln. The rest of the men, including Teddy, all step up to the bar and have a drink to warm up.

TEDDY
It's on me, gentlemen.

Gregor and three Cowboys answer simultaneously to the Barkeep.

MEN
Whiskey.

TEDDY
Uh, beer, I suppose.

The Barkeep pours each man a shot of whiskey, then draws Teddy a beer. Teddy raises his glass

for a toast.

TEDDY

Well, they don't call them the Bad Lands
for nothing. Here's to the Bad Lands.

MEN

(mumble in response)

Bad Lands.

Just as they are all about to drink, the doors swing open in come the Marquis and his men, frozen from riding the range.

The Marquis shakes the snow off his hat, stating for one and all to hear . . .

MARQUIS

All of my cattle are dead. I am ruined.

Teddy adds in . . .

TEDDY

Me, as well.

MARQUIS

(looks sharply at Teddy)

Ah, you!

(points)

Did you help my wife get to the train last
night?

TEDDY

(nods)

I did. I saw her safely aboard the east-
bound train, you need have no worries
on that account.

MARQUIS

And what concern is it of yours, I'd very
much like to know?

TEDDY

(calmly)

It only became my concern, my dear Marquis, when your wife arrived at my door in the middle of the night with a black eye, a split lip, and Lord knows what other bruises, recently inflicted by *you*.

(everybody frowns hearing this new information, particularly the Saloon Gal)

I'm not certain where you hail from, sir, but where I come from, we don't hit women. And if one should arrive at our door in distress in the middle of the night, we help them.

Teddy casually sips his beer. The Marquis steps directly up to Teddy

MARQUIS

Do you now?

(announcing)

Then right this very minute, you and I shall settle our dispute. Choose your weapon. Swords? Pistols? Or knives?

Teddy can't see anything clearly through his cracked glasses, as everyone else in the saloon notices.

TEDDY

Whatever weapon you choose is fine with me.

MARQUIS

How gallant. Pistols!

TEDDY

(nods)

Pistols it is.

Nobody else watching seems to think this is a very good idea. They all look at one another in anticipated dread.

The Marquis pulls out two Colt .45 pistol from his holsters, holds them up, then slams them both down on the bar in front of Teddy. All of the onlookers in the saloon look horrified. The Saloon Gal speaks for everyone.

SALOON GAL

It ain't fair shootin' a man with busted spectacles. It's murder.

There is a chorus of "Yeahs" and "Rights."

MARQUIS

Well then, how about swords?

TEDDY

I'm not much with a sword, but that's fine with me, too.

The Marquis steps right up to Teddy – the Marquis is a much bigger man – and points at Teddy's broken glasses.

MARQUIS

You can't fight with a sword. That *would* be murder. And I'll be damned if I'll hang for killing *you!* Sadly, you Americans always have a some pathetic way out of defending your honor. It obviously doesn't matter very much to you.

TEDDY

It matters to me.

MARQUIS

Does it really? How amusing. Well, then, how about fisticuffs? Or are you too blind to defend yourself at all?

Teddy takes off his broken glasses.

TEDDY

I see well enough for that.

MARQUIS

Of course, I am much larger than you and I learned boxing in my years in the military, so, I suppose, this still is not fair.

Teddy takes off his coat.

TEDDY

I'll take my chances.

The Marquis is pleasantly surprised. He too removes his coat.

MARQUIS

(smiles)

Will you? Remember, Rosenfeld, Jews can't fight.

TEDDY

Is that a fact? Are you acquainted with the Marquis of Queensberry's rules for fisticuffs?

MARQUIS

He is my cousin. Three minute rounds and a ten-count, if I'm not mistaken.

TEDDY

(nods)

That's correct.

The tables and chairs are pushed back to set up an impromptu ring. Gregor steps up.

GREGOR

I can referee, I've done it before. Gentlemen, no biting, kicking or gouging. Find a corner.

The Marquis and Teddy each step into a corner of the ring. Joe Ferris steps up to be the Marquis' corner man. The Cowboys step forward to be Teddy's corner men. Gregor nods his head. Lincoln watches from on top of a table, his leg in a crude splint.

GREGOR

Keep it clean and commence boxing.

Teddy and the Marquis put up their dukes and proceed to box in the old style, with fists way up and out in front. The Marquis is taller, heavier, has a longer reach, and is clearly a competent boxer. Teddy, on the other hand, is short, compact, and highly energetic.

Immediately, it's Teddy on the offense circling the defending Marquis. They spend most of the

first round checking each other out, throwing punches that the other blocks. The audience, like any crowd at a boxing match, starts to get antsy right away wanting to see a good fight. Teddy's compatriots still look highly doubtful.

MARQUIS

(annoyed)

Enough of this sparring, Rosenfeld. Throw a punch.

TEDDY

(nods)

All right.

Teddy fakes a punch toward the Marquis' nose. The Marquis raises his guard to block it, then Teddy lets him have a quick combination of punches: a right and a left to the Marquis' gut, then an uppercut to his chin, snapping his head back. The Marquis is momentarily stunned.

TEDDY

(grinning)

Something along those lines?

The Marquis shakes his spinning head, then bares his teeth. That got him angry.

MARQUIS

So, you've boxed before, eh?

TEDDY

I have.

MARQUIS

Well, I was regimental champion three years running.

TEDDY

I'm very pleased to hear it.

MARQUIS

You will be.

The Marquis attacks. He pops Teddy three times in the face with left jabs, then follows through with a hard right cross to Teddy's nose. Teddy sails backward landing on his rear. He reaches up to find that his nose is now bleeding. Gregor stands over Teddy and starts to count . . .

GREGOR

One, two, three . . .

Teddy jumps to his feet and wipes his nose. As he moves back in for more, the Barkeep, with a pocket watch sitting on the bar in front of him, whacks a beer mug with a knife handle indicating the end of the first round. Teddy and the Marquis proceed to their neutral corners. Joe Ferris begins to massage the Marquis' neck. The Marquis turns to Ferris with a single raised eyebrow.

MARQUIS

Your hands are filthy, don't touch me!

Ferris hastily removes his hands from the Marquis' neck.

Meanwhile, the Cowboys are busily cleaning Teddy up. They wipe the blood off his face with a towel, grabbing the bridge of his nose to stop the bleeding.

Gregor looks to the Barkeep, who nods and clanks the knife on the beer mug.

GREGOR

Round two. Commence.

Teddy and the Marquis step out of their corners and approach each other warily. Once again, Teddy circles the Marquis, taking the offensive.

MARQUIS

I've fought little bantam cocks like you
many times before. All your dancing
around won't help you now.

The Marquis attacks. In a flurry of fast jabs he pushes Teddy back against a chair, where he then begins to pummel him in the face. Teddy blocks most of the jabs, but at least one connects with his nose, and the blood starts flowing again.

MARQUIS

You're a bleeder, Rosenfeld. That's a big
problem for a pugilist.

TEDDY

Luckily, I only box in my spare time.

MARQUIS

When I'm through with you, you won't even
want to box in your dreams.

The Marquis moves in on Teddy again, his fists flying. Teddy goes directly up between the Marquis' arms with a hard uppercut, slamming the Marquis' mouth shut, then follows through with a solid right to the Marquis' nose. He now sails backward onto his behind. Blood trickles from one nostril. The Marquis can't believe what's just occurred. Gregor steps up over him.

GREGOR

One, two, three . . .

The Marquis shakes his head, then rises to his feet with as angry of an expression as has ever crossed his face.

MARQUIS

You're dead! Now I'm going to annihilate you!

TEDDY

Well, bully for you.

The Marquis moves in, flailing away with his fists. Teddy suddenly looks like he's in trouble. The Marquis backs Teddy up against a chair and pummels him unmercifully in the face. With a mighty right cross the Marquis whallops Teddy in the side of the head, sending him sailing onto his face on the floor with a thunk. Everyone watching looks highly disappointed as Gregor steps over Teddy's body and starts counting . . .

GREGOR

One, two, three, four, five . . .

The Marquis starts to strut like a peacock, his fists raised over his head.

MARQUIS

I am the Marquis de Mores! Heir to the throne of France! No commoner can stand before me!

The Barkeep watches the sweep second hand near the twelve on the pocket watch.

GREGOR

. . . Six, seven, eight, nine –

The Barkeep rings the knife handle on the beer mug.

GREGOR

(grins)

Saved by the bloody bell.

The Marquis drops his fists, looking exasperated.

MARQUIS

Oh, for goodness sake!

The Cowboys haul Teddy into his corner and throw a mug of beer in his face. Teddy blinks his eyes, wiping beer off his cheeks. Teddy attempts to flex his right hand.

TEDDY

The Marquis is a fairly good boxer.

(Teddy leans over and
whispers to Cowboy #1)

I think I've broken a couple of my fingers.

COWBOY #1

You might wanna think about throwin' in
the towel there, Mr. Roosevelt. He's a
mean one.

MARQUIS

(calling out)

Perhaps you ought to consider it, Rosenfeld.
It shouldn't be too difficult for you, consider-
ing how good you are at quitting. That's why
your out here to begin with, isn't that correct?
As soon as you faced a hardship in your life
you fled. Well, you face a much more serious
hardship right now.

Teddy shakes his head, vainly trying to clear his vision. Everybody looks at him expectantly. Lincoln Lang, lying on a nearby table, holds his breath. Teddy gives his ringing head another shake. Gregor steps over him. Teddy looks up and there are two of Gregor.

GREGOR

Are you throwin' in the towel, then, Mr.
Roosevelt?

Cowboy #1 takes hold of Teddy's middle two fingers on his right hand. Teddy pulls away hard, snapping his two broken fingers back into place. His eyes open wide and he gasps. Teddy rises unsteadily to his feet.

TEDDY

No, Mr. Lang, I'll keep going, thank you very much.

The Barkeep smacks the beer mug. Gregor raises his hand.

GREGOR

Round three. Commence.

Teddy jumps to his feet and is out dancing around again, on the offense. The Marquis looks weary of the whole thing, but puts up his guard, stepping forward. They go around a few times, then Teddy unleashes a flurry of combinations and just won't stop: two in the gut, one in the jaw; two in the face, two in the gut. The Marquis is blocking a lot of them, but certainly not all. Teddy is indeed like a bantam cock.

Then, there it is, both the Marquis' fists are low as Teddy comes straight through with a good solid right cross. The Marquis spins around grabbing the back of a chair for support. He shakes his head, turns around and Teddy is right there with roundhouse into the Marquis' gut, followed by a left uppercut to the chin. The Marquis is momentarily stunned.

TEDDY

You are correct, my dear Marquis. I have fled my responsibilities in the past. I can assure you that it will never occur again.

Teddy steps right up to him and in the most perfectly systematic way, uses every possible combination of punches, everyone a solid connection. A right to the belly, a left to the belly, a right to the temple, a left to the temple, back to the gut, a right, a left, a right, a left – how the Marquis remains standing is anyone's guess, that military training, no doubt – another right, another left, blood is pouring from the Marquis' nose and eyebrow. The Marquis' head snaps back and forth, blood and sweat spraying. Teddy keeps switching from gut shots to head blows, yet somehow the Marquis remains standing, his fists dangling uselessly at his sides. The onlookers are getting very excited, hollering and waving their fists. Teddy drops back.

TEDDY

And now, my dear Marquis, this is for your abused wife, for all the maligned

Jews, and for myself because I simply
don't like you . . .

Teddy lets the Marquis have a mighty punch to the nose. The Marquis spins around and crashes down onto a table, destroying it. He doesn't get up.

Everybody cheers crazily, crowding around Teddy, raising his hands over his head.

GREGOR

The winner, by a knockout.

The Marquis, blood streaming from his nose and various other cuts, is hoisted into a chair and revived. He points unsteadily at Teddy.

MARQUIS

(trembling)

I'll get you and all the other back-stabbing
Jews! You hear me?!

One FROWNING COWBOY steps up to the Marquis and says . . .

FROWNING COWBOY

Y'know, I'm Jewish and I'm sick and tired
of hearing your damn slurs!

The Groom from the Marquis' house chimes in . . .

GROOM

Yeah! Me, too!

At which point everybody hoists the Marquis up over their heads, carries him to the door and tosses him outside. The Marquis lands headfirst in a snow bank.

Everyone turns back inside, cheers and crowds around Teddy. Gregor and the Cowboys pour beer on his head. The Barkeep passes out free drinks. The Saloon Gal hugs Teddy and gives him a big kiss. Lincoln Lang looks on, smiling. Teddy grins toothily, then puts on his cracked spectacles.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. ELKHORN RANCH – DAY

Teddy, sporting a bruised face and two fingers in splints, closes up the Elkhorn ranch. Gregor helps Teddy load his few belongings onto a mule tied behind his horse. The rest of his men, including Lincoln Lang, whose leg is in a splint, stand around silently watching.

TEDDY

Well, men, I suppose this is it.

The three Cowboys all crowd around Teddy, shaking his hand and slapping him on the back.

COWBOY #1

It was good workin' for you, boss.

COWBOY #2

A pleasure.

COWBOY #3

Yeah, it was.

TEDDY

No, no, it was entirely my pleasure. And I wish you fellows all the best of luck. Any of you ever get to New York City, stop by and I'll show you the town.

The three Cowboys all nod, wave and walk away. Teddy steps up to Gregor and Lincoln.

TEDDY

Well, my friends, this is goodbye. You've made my time here in the Bad Lands most enjoyable. I thank you.

Teddy shakes Gregor's hand. Gregor's eyes water up. He turns away quickly, wiping away the tears.

GREGOR

Aw, look at this.

Teddy steps up to Lincoln, who is balancing on homemade crutches. Teddy goes to shake Lincoln's hand. Lincoln drops his crutches and gives Teddy a big hug. Teddy hugs him back.

TEDDY

Take the world by storm, Lincoln. I know you can.

LINCOLN

Thank you, sir. I'll try.

Teddy goes to his saddlebag and removes a slim book. He hands it to Lincoln.

TEDDY

Here. This is for you. It will help you identify all the birds you don't know, which is all of them.

LINCOLN

Thank you.

(he looks at the title
page of the book)

Hey! You wrote this.

TEDDY

(nods)

When I was your age.

Gregor has regained his composure and steps up beside his son.

GREGOR

So, what will you do now?

Teddy climbs up on his horse, then throws his hands in the air.

TEDDY

I can't say for certain. I suppose I'll return to politics. But, before that, I have a few personal matters to clear up.

GREGOR

That was the best fight I've ever seen.

LINCOLN

It sure was.

GREGOR

Where did you learn to box like that?

TEDDY

I was a very sickly youth and spent a great deal of time in bed. My late father suggested that I attempt some sort of strenuous exercise everyday. Boxing is quite strenuous, so I've been practicing it for many years. My father was a great man. Also named Theodore. I'm junior. Or, I was, until he died. I believe that it is time for me to honor his memory and try living my life again. Thank you for your friendship, both of you. You saved my life.

Teddy climbs on his horse and rides off. Gregor and Lincoln watch him go.

Teddy is a small man on a horse with a mule trailing behind, quickly receding into the vastness of the Bad Lands.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. TRAIN STATION/ CHICAGO – DAY

The train chugs into the Chicago train station. Several REPORTERS wearing straw hats and holding pads stand in a group awaiting the arriving train. The Marquis, his face still cut, bruised and swollen, steps off the train onto the platform. The Reporters surround him.

REPORTER #1

Is it true, sir, that your enormous cattle venture, the largest ever attempted in this country, has gone completely bankrupt?

REPORTER #2

And that you are moving back to France?

MARQUIS

This was simply another small example of the the international conspiracy of Jewish bankers. The Jews have been hounding me unmercifully from the moment I embarked on this venture.

REPORTER #1

(confused)

But didn't the harsh winter kill many of the cattle?

MARQUIS

(shakes his head; emphatically)

No, no, no! That just exacerbated the problem. The Jewish bankers had already ruined me by the time winter came. You take my word for it, the Jews are taking over the world. That's why I must get back to my homeland, France, and help lead the fight against Jewish tyranny. Gentiles must unite! And don't change what I say! Print my words exactly as I have spoken them!

The CONDUCTOR hollers . . .

CONDUCTOR

All aboard!

The Marquis tips his hat.

MARQUIS

Gentlemen, I bid you adieu.

The Marquis turns and goes back into the train car.

The Reporters all stand there watching the train depart. Raising their eyebrows, the reporters all look at each other, shake their heads sadly, then tear that page out of their notebooks, crumple it up and throw it away.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. THE ROOSEVELT HOME – DAY

A carriage arrives in front of the Roosevelt family home in Manhattan. Teddy peers out the window, his complexion looks weather-beaten and healthy. As he gets out of the carriage, holding a blanket-wrapped rifle, it obviously pains him just to look at the house. Nevertheless, he proceeds inside.

INT. ROOSEVELT HOME/ FOYER – DAY

Teddy enters the foyer to find his sisters and brother and uncles and aunts are all there to greet him, as well as Medora. They all part to allow a little three year old ALICE, Teddy's daughter, to make her way through. When she sees this unfamiliar man she stops abruptly, grabbing her Aunt Bamie's leg. Teddy squats down, holding out his hands. With a nudge from Aunt Bamie, Alice hesitantly approaches her father. Teddy's outstretched arms close around his daughter. He hugs Alice tightly to him.

TEDDY

I'll never leave you again, my dear! I
promise! Never again!

Tears of joy stream down Teddy's ruddy cheeks. The entire Roosevelt family smiles happily.

EXT. THE ROOSEVELT HOME – DAY

As horse-drawn carts and wagons clip-clop past the Roosevelt mansion, a VOICE-OVER NARRATOR speaks.

V.O. NARRATOR

In the next fifteen years Teddy Roosevelt would become: Police Chief of New York City, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, the Rough Riding hero of the Spanish/American War, Governor of New York, Vice President of the United States, and then the youngest President of the United States ever. Teddy Roosevelt was the first American to win a Nobel Prize. He also wrote and published twenty-eight books in the course of his life.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. JUNGLE PATH – DAY

A path winds through the dense jungle. The steamy air is filled with the screams and caws of many birds.

A TITLE READS: "**Africa, 1896.**"

The Marquis, looking much older and distinctly crazy, leads a parade of AFRICAN NATIVES

along a jungle path.

V.O. NARRATOR

After ten years at the forefront of the French anti-Semitic movement, the Marquis de Mores went to Africa and personally attempted to incite a *Jihad* – a holy war – uniting Christians and Muslims against the Jews.

Many more African Natives holding spears appear out of the jungle, surrounding the Marquis and his parade. The Natives with the spears move in on the Marquis ominously.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. AFRICAN VILLAGE – DAY

African Natives dance around a huge cooking fire. A big barbeque is under way. Native Women slowly turn a big spit over a roaring fire. As the spit turns we see that it is the Marquis de Mores tied to the pole being roasted. He looks anything but pleased by the situation.

V.O. NARRATOR

The Marquis' holy war failed miserably and the Marquis was subsequently killed by African Natives.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. THE TOWN OF MEDORA/ PRESENT DAY – DAY

In the present-day town of Medora, North Dakota there is in fact a small statue of the Marquis reposing in an empty lot beside a grocery store and a gas station.

V.O. NARRATOR

In the present-day town of Medora, North Dakota there is actually a small statue of the Marquis de Mores, founder of the town of Medora, erected by his heirs.

EXT. THEODORE ROOSEVELT NATIONAL PARK/ PRESENT DAY – DAY

We are looking at the entrance to the Theodore Roosevelt National Park. The majesty of the Bad Lands stretching out in all directions.

V.O. NARRATOR

Outside Medora, North Dakota is the Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Teddy Roosevelt added over 125 million acres to the National Forests, and established the National Forest Service.

FADE OUT:

THE END