

1 EXT. LAKE - MORNING 1

Long pan of a spectacular early morning sunrise, across a frozen snowy lake.

2 EXT. BIGSTONE YARD - MORNING 2

A large old dog comes out of his unpainted plywood doghouse and sniffs around an empty dish - then looks out into the distance over the lake.

CUT TO:

3 INT. TRAILER HOME - MORNING 3

JACOB FOX, 15 year old native boy is laying on a sofa in the living room of a rather dark and messy trailer home. He is awake and staring at the ceiling, wearing boxer shorts and a tee-shirt. He sits up and rubs his face, looks down the empty hallway. He gets up, steps over the rubble, pulls back a blanket that is serving as a curtain, and looks out the front window.

4 INT. MARTIN FOX HOME - MORNING 4

MARTIN FOX, 70ish native man is sitting on the only chair at his chrome-legged kitchen table. Near the wall, on the table, is the standard assortment of essential condiments, along with a gallon jar of pickled eggs. Before him is a small plate with toast crumbs and a single table knife. MARTIN is sitting back in his chair, reading a National Enquirer reporting an Elvis spotting. An old Harmony Guitar with one string missing is propped up in the corner next to a 30-30 rifle. An 8x10 framed photo of Hank Williams hangs on a wall.

5 EXT. BIGSTONE YARD - MORNING 5

HUEY BIGSTONE, 17 year old native boy, stumbles out of the house with severe bed-head. As he goes by the old dog we see him stepping into a pair of sneakers and pulling on a winter coat. He walks a short distance, and starts to urinate in the snow - staring out at the lake and up at the sky. He shakes twice and turns to go in.

6 EXT. TRAILER HOME - MORNING 6

JACOB FOX comes out of the pale yellow trailer home. He struggles to get the door closed properly.

(CONTINUED)

2.

6 CONTINUED: 6

The step has several inches of tramped down snow and ice on it. He comes down the steps and starts walking out the driveway - out onto an empty road. Head tucked down. Upon reaching the main road he puts his hands over his ears.

7 INT. FOX KITCHEN - MORNING 7

VIVIAN FOX (KOOKEM), 55ish native woman, is preparing dough at the kitchen counter in her fuzzy pink housecoat. Her cupboards are solid oak. The counter top is clean and new-looking with an assortment of stainless steel cookware. CLOSE UP on a large wooden spoonful of lard landing on a hot cast iron fry pan.

8 INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - MORNING 8

CLOSE UP on an alarm clock that reads 7:13. In semi-darkness we see seventeen-year-old SARAH FOX. SARAH has long dark hair and pretty features - a clean and innocent look to her. She is sleeping in her bed under a large duvet. The room is neat and girlish. She rolls over and in semi-consciousness wipes a bit of drool from her face.

9 EXT. FOX YARD - MORNING 9

ADELARD FOX peeks out of his rather large home in a pair moccasin rubbers, long underwear, and a winter coat. From the front steps he points his key-chain at a new heavy-duty 4x4 Ford crew-cab sitting in the driveway. Tail light flashes and it starts. He checks the thermometer attached to the outside wall of his house and then hurries back in.

10 EXT. CAFE - EARLY MORNING 10

A slim CHINESE MAN in his sixties and wearing an apron is sweeping snow from the front entrance of his little café. From outside we see him go in and change the sign from "CLOSED" to "OPEN".

11 INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - MORNING 11

CLOSE UP on alarm clock that reads 7:14. (beat) Changes to 7:15. Radio comes on with an older announcer's voice carrying a heavy Cree accent, saying:

(CONTINUED)

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V/O)

... someone is comin' over with
some booster cables so
'xpectin' to have her goin' ...
real soon...

So once again, Nerald's bus is
running late this morning...
she's a little frozen up... So
you got a extra few minutes to
do whatever it is you got to
do... but not too many... yessir...

so... that's it fer
announcements this morning on
Cree Nation Radio... Once agen'
Nerald's bus is runnin' a bit
late... runnin' on Indian time...

okay... we're going to go back
to the music... here on Cree
Nation Radio... and remember;
that's Cree-Nation Radio, Not
cremation radio...

(Laughs at his own joke)

...lets see... comin' up is an
oldie but a goodie from Hank
Williams... little number...

SARAH's hand slaps the radio. Silence.

THREE SCHOOL KIDS, under-dressed for the weather, stand
waiting at end of a snowy driveway. They look intently
down the empty road. The boy, obviously the middle
child, looks back at his house. We see a reservation
house painted bright blue with an assembly of junk
laying around outside. No sign of life except for the
smoke meandering out the chimney.

BOY

I'm going in.

Boy walks out of screen. YOUNGER SISTER looks at OLDER
SISTER with a frown.

12 CONTINUED:

Seeing that OLDER SISTER is not going to do anything about her brother's departure she takes matters into her own hands.

YOUNGER SISTER
(yelling)
Clinton!
(beat)
Wussie!

13 INT. FOX KITCHEN - MORNING 13

CLOSE UP on VIVIAN'S hand dropping dough into hot greasy fry pan. The grease sizzles and pops as we see the edges of the dough turn to bread.

14 EXT. NERALD'S YARD - MORNING 14

NERALD is a 40-something native man with a cleft pallet. He is trying to get his bus started. An old car is running and parked nose to nose with his large yellow school bus. Both hoods are up. Heavy exhaust coming from the old car. We hear the starter turning over and over. It fires. Again. Again. Finally it starts. NERALD scrambles out the bus door, unhooks the cables and throws them in the back seat of the car. He lets down the hood of his bus and then slams down the hood of the old car; waving and nodding at the driver.

15 EXT. KID'S YARD - MORNING 15

TWO SISTERS still remain waiting for their bus; standing as though frozen in position. YOUNGER SISTER, still frowning, looks back at the house.

16 INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - MORNING 16

SARAH now sitting on the side of her bed in flannel pjs, feet over the side. Her beside lamp is now on. She sits completely still and motionless for a few extended moments. Then collapses back down onto her pillow.

17 INT. FOX KITCHEN - MORNING 17

Off-screen we hear ADELARD FOX enters the house from having been outside. Door shuts, feet are stamped. He now enters the kitchen and approaches the table to sit. Looks down at the table as he pulls his chair out. The table is set for three.

ADELARD

Are they up?

VIVIAN

Your grandson stayed at
Donovan's last night -
remember? Sarah is in the
shower.

ADELARD

Yes. Showering. This
showering is getting to be an
everyday activity. When did I
haul water?

VIVIAN

Yesterday.

ADELARD

Yes. Good thing too.

ADELARD gets his plate of eggs and fry-bread and bacon
delivered to him by VIVIAN. He digs in.

ADELARD (CONT' D)

Thank you mother... Did my
brother call?

VIVIAN (O/S)

Wouldn't I have told you if
your brother called?

VIVIAN walks into screen and rubs his head playfully.

ADELARD

(jokingly)

Who knows. Maybe you'd think
he had found girlfriends for
the both of us again.

VIVIAN brings her cup of coffee to the table and sits
down beside him

VIVIAN

If that is what you think
maybe you should call him!

ADELARD makes a smiley face. ADELARD eats, VIVIAN pulls
out her crossword puzzle.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (2)

VIVIAN (CONT' D)
(with concern)
You think our grandson is up
for this?

ADELARD
We'll see.

18 EXT. KID'S YARD - MORNING 18

NERALD'S yellow bus picks up the two girls. Starts off from driveway and then stops abruptly, waits a few moments, the door opens and CLINTON runs on screen and scrambles up the steps of the bus. Bus drives away, past a home-made sign nailed to a tree that says "Re-elect Gordon Yellowknee - For Our Future."

19 INT. FOX BATHROOM - MORNING 19

SARAH dries her hair with a towel and dreamily puts on some makeup. She is wearing a white tank top and shorts. She stops and looks at herself in the mirror for an extended moment. Puckers her lips. Touches her cheek. Her trance is broken when she hears her Kookem (grandmother) call;

VIVIAN (O/S)
Sarah? Astam

SARAH takes a deep breath, and looks back into the mirror.

SARAH
Comi ng Kookem

20 EXT. CAFÉ - MORNING 20

Pickup trucks are assembling and idling outside the café. Men in work clothes carrying plastic coffee cups are holding the door for one another.

21 EXT. KEATING HOUSE - MORNING 21

Teacher, MRS. KEATING, attractive thirty-something white woman, comes out her front door carrying too much to carry. Hers is one of a dozen or more identical teacherages that are surrounded by a chain link fence. She locks door from the outside with a key.

21 CONTINUED:

She drops a book or two. Picks them up. Continues on toward school.

22 EXT. ROAD-TO-SCHOOL - MORNING

22

SARAH is bundled up and walking alone. Hurriedly. Packing books. An old snowmobile comes up from behind her. Starts driving beside her at the same speed Sarah is walking. The driver, HUEY BIGSTONE, is sporting a big smile and pretending not to notice SARAH. He then looks across and feigns surprise. Nods cordially at SARAH. Smiles and glances exchanged. They continue walking and driving at same speed aside one another.

HUEY

(yelling over the motor)

You wanna' ride Sarah Fox?

No response from SARAH. Now she is pretending not to notice him

HUEY (CONT' D)

Bell has already rung you know.

SARAH

I'm almost there Huey.
Thanks.

HUEY

Maybe you need the exercise.
Like Mrs. Thompkins.

SARAH stops and gives a smiling scowl.

HUEY (CONT' D)

Come on then. Get on.

SARAH gets on the skiddoo behind him without really holding on to him. HUEY opens the throttle full, bolting ahead. SARAH almost falls off. In the panic to stay on she grabs hold around the waist with both arms. HUEY lets off the throttle. SARAH regains her balance and hits him playfully on the back of the head. They continue on at normal speed.

23 EXT. FOX YARD - MORNING

23

ADELARD leaves the house. Climbs in his nice new big pickup truck. Begins to drive away. Stops.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

Gets out and takes a broom out of the back of his truck and sweeps some snow off a Caterpillar bulldozer parked in the yard.

24 EXT. SCHOOLYARD - MORNING

24

Ski-doo comes to a stop outside school with HUEY and SARAH riding on it. HUEY stops the engine. SARAH gets off. HUEY remains seated on the snowmobile but turns so both feet are now slung over the side facing SARAH. CLOSE on HUEY;

HUEY

Where's that ugly brother of yours this morning Sarah Fox?

SARAH is a few steps toward the school door. Turning as she talks.

SARAH

He stayed at Donovan's last night - and if you think he is so ugly why are you always at our house Huey?

HUEY

I thought you'd have figured that one out by now Sarah Fox.

SARAH looks down at the snow. After a moment HUEY breaks the silence with:

HUEY (CONT' D)

Alrighty then.

SARAH

Aren't you coming?

HUEY now getting up and preparing to start the ski-doo.

HUEY

Doesn't seem like a good day to go to school today Sarah Fox. My horoscope said to stay away. Stay away from school. Stay away from school and pretty girls, I think it said.

24 CONTINUED:

HUEY pulls the starter cord on the ski-doo. Doesn't start.

HUEY (CONT' D)
But I only believe in half of
my horoscope.

SARAH
Alright Huey. Thanks for the
ride.

HUEY pulls the cord again and this time it starts. Over the engine he calls;

HUEY
Ask Mrs. Keating if she still
wants to be my grad escort.

HUEY revs the engine, lifts the back-end up so he can open the throttle and let the track spin a few times. Puts the machine back down, throws a leg over and slowly pulls away.

25 EXT. BIGSTONE YARD - MORNING 25

Dog now gnawing on a piece of frozen meat. Looks up across the lake for a moment and then resumes eating.

26 INT. CHIEF'S HOUSE - DAY 26

CHIEF GORDON YELLOWKNEE is sitting at his kitchen table cluttered with papers and dishes, talking into a cordless phone.

CHIEF
Ee-hee.

Ee-hee.

How mutch for them fancy
signs... the letters s'ine
when the light hits 'em?

Ee-hee.

Two colours...

CHIEF winces.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

CHIEF (CONT' D)
How about just one colour?

Ee- hee.

27 I/E. ADELARD' S TRUCK - DAY 27

ADELARD driving in his truck. Reaches over and turns on the radio. We hear the same announcer.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O/S)
... so that there is the
forecast. Cold today. Cold
tomorra... probably getting
colder the next day... But
this here is February, so what
did yous' expect here... on the
Cree Nation..
(dead air)
okay... doesn't look like much
for news today... so we'll get
back to some music... what are
we a goin' ta listen to now...
yes... here are some local young
fellas from Chip Lake who call
themselves Red Stone... singing
"tradis'onal native music set
to a modern rap beat" ... so I
guess we call it... Red Rap...
hopefully it is not Red Crap...
(laughs at his own joke...)
...here they is...

ADELARD picks up the receiver of his truck phone and turns the radio off.

28 INT. CLASSROOM 28

SARAH sits near front of class. Taking notes. We can hear chalk writing on a black board. She looks to the side. Sees NATASHA - the pretty new girl fumbling with a little case of some kind. SARAH resumes note taking. Raises an eyebrow.

29 INT. CHIEF' S HOUSE 29

CHIEF still talking on telephone. Alone at his kitchen table...

CHIEF

Ee-hee.

No... that's it... "For the Future"

I don't know...

Well what do you sug'est?

Okay, well jus' do it like that.

For the Future.

Ee-hee.

No... I'll pay you cas'.

Tomorra' when I pick it up.

Ee-hee. Good. Goodbye.

Hangs up. After a moment he repeats to himself:

CHIEF (CONT' D)

(questioningly)

For the Future.

ADELARD is sitting down for a meeting with MR. GRANICH.

MR. GRANICH

Hello Adelard. Been awhile since you've been in the principals office I bet. Ha ha.

ADELARD

Well Mister... one thing about never goin' to school... never had to see the principal.

MR. GRANICH

Yes. I suppose. I forget... successful man like you never going to school.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

MR. GRANICH (CONT'D)
Can't advertise that can we?
Have student dropping out left
right and center. Ha ha.

ADELARD
(abruptly)
Mr. Granich you know my
Grandson...

MR. GRANICH
Yes. Jacob. Of course. He's
doing-

ADELARD
I want to take him out of
school for a few weeks.

MR. GRANICH
I see. Wh-

ADELARD
An chance has come up for him
to make a rather long trip.

CLOSE on ADELARD.

31 EXT. MARTIN'S YARD - DAY

31

MARTIN comes outside his little trailer home. White
aluminum with brown trim. A chainsaw is sitting on the
step. He walks over to an old car and starts brushing
several inches of snow off the hood with his hand and
arm. He opens the hood. Looking in we see an old big
block V8. There is no battery where the battery should
be.

32 INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

32

MR. GRANICH
(unsure)
I suppose we could give him
some kind of Career and
Training credits for it.

ADELARD
(taking that as a yes...)
Good. You write it up however
you need to.

(CONTINUED)

MR. GRANICH

(uncomfortable)

So, you figure about two weeks though right Mr. Fox? They can get down there and back in that time?

ADELARD

(non-committal)

Yes about that. And who is it be looking after your graduation this year?

MR. GRANICH

That would be me Adelard.

ADELARD

Good. Come see me when you're out hitting us poor working men up for money. Have a grand-daughter graduating this year don't I?

MR. GRANICH

You do. Quite likely the valedictorian too.

ADELARD

Vala... whatever. Take it that's a good thing.

MR. GRANICH

Very good thing Adelard.

ADELARD

Yes. Good. Good-day Mr. Principal. I better get to work. Pay some taxes. Keep you educated bums employed..

MR. GRANICH's smile drops at this. ADELARD is stone faced and dead serious. Then breaks the tension by letting out a laugh. GRANICH tries his best to do the same.

CLOSE on JACOB working at his desk. Silence in the room is broken by the crackle of an intercom.

INTERCOM VOICE(O. S.)
Mrs. Keating?

MRS. KEATING (O. S.)
Yes?

INTERCOM VOICE (O. S.)
Is Jacob Fox in your class?

MRS. KEATING (O. S.)
Yes.

INTERCOM VOICE (O. S.)
Could you send him down to the
office.

MRS. KEATING (O. S.)
Yes.

INTERCOM VOICE (O. S.)
He'll be going for the day.

Without anything further JACOB begins packing up his things. A few students make "ooo ooo" noises, as though he is in some kind of trouble.

ADELARD and JACOB ride along silently in the pickup. They drive to a lookout-like spot on the lake. He puts the truck and shuts off the loud diesel engine.

ADELARD
My boy, I need to ask you a
question.

JACOB braces.

ADELARD (CONT'D)
Do you think Elvis is really
dead?

JACOB
(blind-sided)
Yeah, I guess.

ADELARD
But you don't know that for
sure!

JACOB

What?

ADELARD

Yes. That's what I thought.
Do you know how he is supposed
to have died?

JACOB

Pills and booze?

ADELARD

Yes - and banana sandwiches.
Now you've heard about them
who think that he's still
alive haven't you?

JACOB

Yeah.

ADELARD

Yes. People been seeing this
joker all over the country.
Pancake houses, filling
stations. Watched it on
Discovery Channel. Heard once
he was selling Cad'lacs in
some place called Wichita... I
like that name - Wichita...
must be an Indian name.
Anyway lots believe it. You
should read up on it sometime.

JACOB

Okay.

ADELARD

Now let me ask you about
another one. Ol' Hank
Williams. Do you think he is
really dead?

JACOB

(amused)

I don't know.

ADELARD

That's just it boy. You don't
know do you?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: (2)

ADELARD (CONT' D)
How was it that he supposedly
died? Do you know?

JACOB
I don't know. Pills and
booze?

ADELARD
Sounds a bit suspicious don't
it?

JACOB
(further amused)
Not really.

JACOB frowns and looks out on the lake.

ADELARD
You know your old Uncle
Martin. Well Jacob... your
old Uncle Martin wants to make
a trip (beat) to Nas'ville
Tennessee.

JACOB
(incredulously)
Nashville!

ADELARD
Nashville. Don't know where
it is myself. (beat) Figure
you can find it.

JACOB
Me? Wha...

ADELARD
I won't let you's go in his
old car - don't worry. Good
old Greygoose. (beat)
Greyhound boy! You can go
anywhere on Turtle Island on a
Greyhound.

JACOB
(incredulously)
Go to Nashville - with Uncle
Martin - on a Greyhound!

(CONTINUED)

ADELARD

That's the deal. See you're Uncle Martin ain't quite convinced the old cowboy is dead like everyone says. He's been reading up that Elvis might still be alive... thinking maybe the cowboy did the same thing. Two of them pumping gas somewhere, livin' on old age pens' ons.

JACOB

Mosem . .

ADELARD

Jacob your uncle is determined to travel to Nas'ville, to see if this Ol' Williams is really alive or dead. If he's dead, all he wants is his picture taken at the gravestone.

JACOB is overwhelmed, worried, and a little stunned..

If he's alive, who knows but I haven't been losing too much sleep over that happenin'. (beat) Now I can't send him there alone grandson. And I sure as hell ain't going to Nas'ville Tennessee. Young book-writer-wanna-be like yourself, I thought it might be a good fit for you to go with him. Help him with the navigatin'. The getting' around. On and off the right bus. Into a decent motel. So he don't get lost. You're smart - you can read good. What do you think?

JACOB

I can't just take off on a bus for Nashville. With Uncle Martin? How long would it take?

(CONTINUED)

ADELARD

Got no idea. I told your principal two weeks but who knows. You'll know - when you get back.

JACOB

Uncle Martin smells like moose fat.

ADELARD

(chuckling)

Well we'll wash him up good before he goes. Use some of them expensive fruity soaps of your Grandmother's.

JACOB

I'm supposed to be writing mid-terms next week.

ADELARD

I fixed a deal with that bearded principal of yours. You keep a diary everyday, logbook of sorts, you hand it in when you get back... and you have to write a letter to one of us at home ev'ry day your away. You do that and he is going to let you off your tests and you'll keep your good marks.

JACOB

Moosem This is nuts. Hank Williams is... even if he didn't die of booze and pills, he's like back in black and white days - he'd be like a hundred and ten years old.

ADELARD

Yes Jacob-son. This here is a little nuts. But tell me, what have you got to lose boy? (beat) Jacob this is important to me. So this is what I am willing to do.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: (5)

34

ADELARD (CONT' D)

You make it there and back alive, you two, and when you get home I'll buy you a fancy-shmancy computer - all the bells and whistles. The real deal, colour screen, IBM - no Jap clones.

This interests JACOB. He looks out the window.

JACOB

Do we even have a map?

ADELARD

(Knows he's got him now)

Let's go home and find a map.

35 EXT. FOX YARD - EVENING

35

JACOB comes out of the house to meet HUEY who is sitting on his idling skiddoo.

HUEY

(yelling over the engine)

Get on you bum. Guess who made sixty-bucks today peddling recycled home heating products.

JACOB

Get outta here...

HUEY

Get on picklehead. I'm taking you for pizza.

JACOB

I had pizza last night.

HUEY

Get on.

36 EXT. BURGER BARON - EVENING

36

JACOB and HUEY pull up to the front door of an old run down looking building with a sign outside that reads Burger Baron. No cars parked outside. Wind is howling.

37 INT. BURGER BARON - EVENING

37

HUEY and JACOB are eating a pizza by a window table.

HUEY

Nas'ville Ten-nes-see. Take me with you Jacob Fox. You know what? You should forget Hank Williams... see if you can find Shania down there. I hear her husband is some old guy, like Fifty something... might like a young buck like you.

JACOB

You think? Sure! (beat) We could move into that trailer next to Wapstagwan.

HUEY

(Laughing)

What about Dolly Parton? I saw her on CMT last night. She's like sixty - makes Tomb Raider chick look flat. Or that new one - supposed to be from up here somewhere - Deadwood.

JACOB

Carolyn Dawn Johnson.

HUEY

Yeah yeah. Look her up for me would you? See if she's coming home for Christmas.

JACOB

You got it Elmo.

HUEY

I thought George Jones was the one all the elders were in love with. (croons awfully) "He stopped lovin' her today"...

(CONTINUED)

JACOB
(Laughing)
Shut up.

HUEY
I think I should come with
you. Seriously. I'm a
songwriter you know. I know
all three chords on the
guitar.

JACOB
There's more than three you
dork, and besides you sing
like a coyote.

HUEY
I used to be a coyote...

JACOB
(Laughing)
No. Don't.

HUEY
But I'm all right
nnnnnoooooowwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwww.

A pretty Lebanese WAITRESS looks up toward their table.

JACOB
(Giggling hysterically)
Shut up you freakin' idiot.

JACOB and HUEY are sitting on wood blocks around a small
fire. It is a clear and starry night. HUEY's skiddoo
is parked nearby. They sit quiet for several extended
moments.

JACOB
What are you going to do Huey?
I mean... you know... if you
ever grow up?

HUEY
After I marry Dolly?

JACOB

Yeah, after that.

HUEY

Who knows. Maybe work for your Moosem someday.

JACOB

He doesn't hire locals.

HUEY

Why not?

JACOB

Cause he says they can't get up in the morning.

HUEY

Well there's where I'll be different.

JACOB

You ever think about getting out of here?

HUEY

Everyone thinks of getting out of here.

JACOB

So why don't they?

HUEY

I don't know. No where else to go I guess.

They continue eating.

JACOB

You're lucky you left when you did last night.

HUEY

Really? What happened?

JACOB

Donovan and I play X-Box until about midnight.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JACOB (CONT' D)

He goes to bed and I fall asleep on the couch. Couple hours later his mom comes home all tanked. Digs him out of bed and drags him off to town. Yelling and screaming and swearing at her boyfriend the whole time. I just lied there still. Guess they forgot I was there.

How come you don't party... like practically everyone else up here?

HUEY

I don't know Jacob Fox. Maybe its in the jeans (*sic*). Not my style. (beat) Besides, look who's talking. Bit of a nerd yourself ain't you...

JACOB makes a face at him, and looks away.

HUEY (CONT' D)

Lets go home Hemmingway. You have a long bus ride to figure out why people are the way they are. (beat) You in Nashville. (beat) Forget Carolyn Dawn who-ever- she-is. I'll take one of the Dixie Chicks.

HUEY gets up and starts kicking snow on the fire. JACOB does the same.

JACOB

Which one? The little one? Just so I know...

HUEY

Any one of them'd be fine. You can have the other two if you like.

JACOB kicks a large gust of snow past the fire and all over HUEY.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (3)

HUEY (CONT' D)
HEH! Relax. (laughing)
Savage!

HUEY grabs a double handful of snow and chucks it at JACOB. The two start throwing snow at one another across the flames.

CUT TO:

39 EXT. MARTIN'S YARD - MORNING 39

ADELARD's pickup pulls up with ADELARD, VIVIAN, JACOB, and SARAH. ADELARD gets out but before he gets to the door of the trailer, MARTIN is out the door with his small bag. ADELARD takes the bag from him and puts it in the back of the truck. The far door opens and SARAH moves over for MARTIN to get in. ADELARD gets in and the pickup pulls out. As they are pulling out, Huey pulls up on the skiddoo. He gets off and comes up to the window.

40 I/E. ADELARD'S TRUCK - MORNING 40

HUEY comes up to the opening window, where JACOB is sitting.

HUEY
So you're off now are you?

JACOB
I guess so.

HUEY
Here.

HUEY hands Jacob a school atlas of North America.

HUEY (CONT' D)
I marked the pages where Nashville is. Bring it back by the end of June or I'll have to pay for it you know.

JACOB
Thanks Huey.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

40

HUEY turns and goes back to his skidoo. ADELARD takes note of the conversation as he pulls away. HUEY gives a big wave.

41 EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

41

Greyhound is pulling away. ADELARD and VIVIAN and SARAH are standing outside waving at the bus.

ADELARD

(to Sarah)

You're sure you can keep track of what they spend on my credit card?

SARAH

Yes Mosem. It's called Internet Banking. I can tell you where they are and what they are buying all along the way.

ADELARD

Good. (chuckles) Wonder if they know that...

ADELARD gives one last wave. They all get in the truck to leave.

42 EXT. BIGSTONE YARD - DAY

42

HUEY is sitting on his skiddoo, near the chained dog. Looking off at the sun beginning to set across the lake. He's eating something. After a moment, throws the last little bit toward the chained dog, then gets up and goes in.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

43 EXT. CAFE - DAY

43

CHINESE MAN puts up a hand made lunch special sign. "Today's Special: Pork Chops \$6.95."

44 EXT. SCHOOLYARD - NOON

44

Kids coming out the doors slowly. Hanging around outside the doors. SARAH and friend MARIA come strolling out. We pick them up in mid conversation. CLOSE on MARIA.

MARIA

She was at Lloyd's on Friday.

MARIA looks up at SARAH as they stroll. Looks away again and takes a deep breath.

MARIA (CONT' D)

(knowingly)

You should have been there.

CLOSE on SARAH.

SARAH

Pleeease!

(hesitating)

Was Larcis there?

MARIA

Of course.

MARIA looks up into the distance. We see NATASHA, the new girl, standing by herself, not knowing what to do.

MARIA (CONT' D)

I think her mom works for the band.

SARAH

She has a long neck.

SARAH looks away and reaches her nose around and sniffs her shoulder.

SARAH (CONT' D)

I still smell like ski-doo.
Huey gave me a ride this morning.

MARIA

That is why you were late.
Cha...

(CONTINUED)

SARAH

Aren't we supposed to have a grad meeting today?

MARIA

Mr. Granich says he's too busy. Cancelled it.

SARAH

Why is he looking after it anyway? Why can't we have Mrs. Keating looking after our grad?

The new girl, NATASHA, walks by. She looks up briefly at Sarah and Maria and continues on alone. No acknowledgements are made to one another. SARAH stares after her.

SARAH (CONT' D)

(quietly)

What's her name again?

MARIA

Natasha.

The bell rings and the two of them turn to go in.

In another corner of town CHIEF YELLOWKNEE and HELPER are putting up another hand-painted sign. CHIEF is standing on a chair with hammer in hand nailing sign to tree while helper is holding it from the ground.

CHIEF

Come on... hurry up before someone comes. You s'ould be doing this without me. How many do we have?

HELPER

Three in the truck. There's a couple more at the house. Dayla said she could paint some more tonight.

(beat)

(MORE)

45 CONTINUED: 45

HELPER (CONT' D)
But she wants to get paid for
these ones.

CHIEF
(annoyed)
She'll get paid.

HELPER nods, raises an eyebrow, and continues getting a sign out of the truck.

46 EXT. BRIDGE - DAY 46

A tandem oil-field tanker truck is parked just off the bridge sucking water out of the river and into its tank.

47 EXT. ROADSIDE 1 - DAY 47

ADELARD'S pickup drives by a home-made sign reading, "Vote for Change - Vote Chucky Cardinal for Cheif" (spelled wrong).

48 EXT. BUSH - DAY 48

Snow on the branches. Sun shining through.

49 EXT. CAMPGROUND - DAY 49

HUEY driving his ski-doo comes up to a provincial campground with a sign reading "CLOSED". He goes around the gate and continues down the closed road, towing an empty toboggan.

50 I/E. GREYHOUND - MORNING 50

In a parked Greyhound, MARTIN is writing a handwritten list of Hank Williams Greatest Hits. CLOSE on the paper:

Your Cheating Heart
I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry
Kaw-liga
Cold Cold Heart
Lovesick Blues
There'll Be No Tears Tonight
Wedding Bells
Mind Your Own Business

To this we see MARTIN add with pencil;

50 CONTINUED: 50

I'll Never Get Out Of This
World Alive

51 EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY 51

KIDS pouring out of school more hurriedly this time. School is out for the day. SARAH comes out. She stands and looks through the crowd of kids. MARIA walks up.

MARIA
I'm taking the bus Sare...

MARIA continues on. SARAH stands alone, watching the doors carefully, taking note of everyone coming out, and trying not to look like she is taking note.

52 EXT. LAKE - DAY 52

HUEY pulling his toboggan behind his skiddoo, but this time it is loaded with wood - he's driving slowly. The load is precarious and threatening to come undone at any moment.

53 EXT. KID'S YARD - DAY 53

Yellow bus stops and CLINTON and his TWO SISTERS tumble out of it. They start walking toward the house.

54 INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - EVENING 54

MR. GRANICH is at his computer looking very busy. We pan around to see him playing solitaire.

DISSOLVE TO:

55 EXT. LAKE - MORNING 55

Another brilliant sunrise begins.

56 EXT. BIGSTONE YARD - MORNING 56

The ugly dog is up and pacing again. Sniffing and pacing on his chain.

57 I/E. NERALD'S BUS - MORNING 57

NERALD is driving his empty bus. He reaches over and turns on the radio;

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V/O)

Yessir... and Happy Birthdays
 this morning go out to Joe
 Bearegard in Paddle Creek,
 Shaylee McLeod in Bigfish
 Lake, and Cindy Willier at the
 North End... Oh and one more,
 Martin Fox on Reserve D turns
 75 years young today. So a
 big happy birthday to Martin
 and all the rest of you from
 the me the Old Man On The
 Mountain and all of us on the
 Cree Nation.

The bus meets a loaded log truck.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (CONT' D)

And you young ones remember to
 respect your elders today...
 especially if they's havin' a
 birthday... So here is a
 favourite for Martin, his
 sister-in-law in Driftpile
 phoned in and asked us to play
 Hank Williams for him today...
 so here it is for you Martin...
 something to wake you up this
 morning... some Honky Tonk
 Blues...

(beat)

And also, remember to get your
 radio bingo cards today... cause
 it is Radio Bingo tonight on
 the Cree Nation Radio Station...
 so get your cards... you can
 pick them up at Northern
 Supply or at Pete's Gas Bar in
 Vermillion... so pick up your
 radio bingo cards or tonight
 someone will be havin' the
 Bingo Blues...

NERALD shuts off the radio, pulls a cell phone out of
 his pocket and dials.

NERALD

(cleft pallet)

Hi.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED: (2)

NERALD (CONT' D)

(beat)

You want me to pick up Bingo
Cards on the way home?

(beat)

How many?

(beat)

K.

(beat)

K.

(beat)

Bye.

58 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

58

HUEY enters. GRANICH walks by, and stops at the sight
of HUEY.

MR. GRANICH

(sarcastically)

Huey. So nice you could come.
That flu of yours getting
better finally?

HUEY

(playing along)

It comes and goes Mr. Granich.
Comes and goes. Say, do you
need some firewood Mr.
Granich?

MR. GRANICH

Huey you know I don't have a
wood stove.

HUEY

It would support our hockey
team We need to buy...

MR. GRANICH

You're not on the hockey team
Huey. Now get to class -
pronto.

HUEY

Yes sir Mr. Granich. Right
away sir. Have a good day Mr.
Granich.
Let me know if you change your
mind about the wood.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

58 CONTINUED:

HUEY (CONT' D)

You know you could just build bonfires in your backyard. Bonfires are nice... I get some of my best ideas staring at little bonfires...

MR. GRANICH

Huey!

HUEY

Yes sir Mr. Granich.

HUEY turns to go down the hall. Stops and turns back.

HUEY (CONT' D)

Say. Any idea what class I am supposed to be in?

GRANICH is gone.

59 EXT. TOWN WATER WELL - DAY

59

Someone is hauling water with a 500 gallon tank in the back of his pickup truck. The driver is sitting in the cab reading a newspaper when water starts flowing over the tank and splashing on the ground. He notices this in his mirror and scrambles out of the truck to shut off the pump.

60 EXT. OUTDOOR HOCKEY RINK - EVENING

60

Three boys are skating and chasing a puck around with hockey sticks. The rink is only half shovelled off and a few shovels are laying around the edges. Some young girls, thirteen-going-on-twenty, are watching them in the cold.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

61 EXT. KEATING HOUSE - EVENING

61

HUEY pulls up outside MRS. KEATING's house with a load of wood on his toboggan. Just beginning to get dark. Knocks on the door. MRS. KEATING opens.

MRS. KEATING

Heh Huey. What are you doing out here in this cold weather.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

HUEY

Hi Mrs. Keating. It is cold isn't it? I was just home wondering, it being so cold and all, if my favourite teacher might be in need of some good dry firewood. I split it myself this morning before school.

MRS. KEATING

I didn't see you at school today Huey. Come in.

62 INT. KEATING HOUSE - EVENING

62

HUEY

Yes. No. That's right. Actually I had to get this done. I'm raising money for the Community Betterment and Enhancement Committee.

MRS. KEATING

Really! I've never heard of it.

HUEY

It's new. Just formed in fact. Maybe you would like to buy a membership. Only five dollars.

MRS. KEATING

I think I'll wait.

HUEY

Did you know that burning wood can save up to seventy percent on your gas bill every month Mrs. Keating.

MRS. KEATING

You don't say. I suppose if that's all you burned you could save up to 100%.

(CONTINUED)

HUEY

That's right Mrs. Keating.
Seventy to a hundred percent.
There-abouts.

MRS. KEATING.

Huey I haven't burned the last
wood I bought from you. I'm
afraid I don't have much
talent when it comes to
starting fires.

HUEY

Maybe you would like a small
bottle of fire starter... I
happen to have some on my ski-
doo. It's environmentally
friendly and only costs five
dollars.

MRS. KEATING

Today is five dollar day.

HUEY

Oh no. The wood is twenty.
But for you today Mrs.
Keating, fifteen. For a big
armful. Some of the proceeds
going to the Community
Betterment and ...

MRS. KEATING

...enhancement society.

HUEY

Commi ttee.

MRS. KEATING

Commi ttee.

HUEY

Yeah. The... CBEC.

MRS. KEATING

Al right Huey.

MRS. KEATING goes off-screen leaving HUEY at the door
for a moment. She comes back with a small wallet and a
twenty.

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED: (2)

MRS. KEATING (CONT' D)
Here's a twenty. Bring me a
bottle of your fire-starter
and leave a big armful of
firewood in the back.

HUEY
Thanks Mrs. Keating.
Be right back.

HUEY goes out the door.

63 EXT. KEATING HOUSE - EVENING 63

HUEY goes to the toboggan and gets a big armful of wood
and takes it around back. He then comes back to the ski-
doo, unstraps a red gas-can from the back. Under the
hood of the skiddoo he gets an empty one-litre oil
container. He takes the label off the oil container and
pours fluid from the gas-can into it. He tightens the
cap, and wipes the container clean on his coveralls,
then takes it back to MRS. KEATING's door.

64 INT. KEATING HOUSE - EVENING 64

HUEY
There you go Mrs. Keating.
You'll never have trouble
getting fires started again.

MRS. KEATING
Huey, this smells like
gasoline.

HUEY
Not gasoline Mrs. Keating.
Its fire-starter. A special
blend of unleaded petroleum
condensates and two-stroke
engine oil.

MRS. KEATING
Huey this is snowmobile gas!

HUEY
Snowmobiles don't run on gas
Mrs. Keating.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED:

HUEY (CONT' D)

They too run on a special
blend of unleaded petroleum
condensates and two-stroke
engine oil.

MRS. KEATING

So snowmobiles run on fire-
starter?

HUEY

You could say that Mrs.
Keating.

MRS. KEATING

Get out of here - you. I
can't have this in the house.
Just leave it on the step.

HUEY makes a motion for the door. He stops before he
opens it.

HUEY

Just make sure you pour it on
the wood *before* you start the
fire.

MRS. KEATING

You give all your customers
such good advice.

HUEY

I do what I can to help Mrs.
Keating.

MRS. KEATING

You sure do Huey.

HUEY

Thank you Mrs. Keating.
Thanks for your business.

HUEY makes another motion for the door. Again he stops.

Did you know this is how John
G. Rockefeller started Mrs.
Keating?

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED: (2)

MRS. KEATING

Actually Rockefeller, and his initial is "D" Huey, got his start by inheriting a grain company from his father Huey.

HUEY

Oh - maybe it was his father then. Someone up-there got their start by selling firewood to their school teachers.

HUEY again goes for the door. This time he opens it and walks out. MRS. KEATING puts on some slippers and grabs a coat and follows him out onto the step.

65 EXT. MRS. KEATING'S HOME - EVENING

65

MRS. KEATING

There you go. Someday they'll be teaching students about how *the* Huey Bigstone and how he got his start. I wonder if they will leave out the part about the firewood being on loan from the Forestry Campsite?

HUEY proceeds to close the hood on his skiddoo.

HUEY

(smiling)

Hard to say Mrs. Keating. History is written by the survivors you know.

MRS. KEATING

The *winners* Huey. Karl Marx. Said that history is written by the winners. It's on your test.

HUEY

Yeah... but he got it wrong.

HUEY straps the gas-can back onto the back of his skiddoo.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

HUEY (CONT' D)

I been thinking about it. I think he meant survivors. History was written by the survivors Mrs. Keating - just think about it. Maybe got mixed up in the translation. Him being French and all.

MRS. KEATING opens her mouth; smiles; decides to lets it go.

HUEY (CONT' D)

And besides, think of this as recycled heating products Mrs Keating. Would otherwise be rotten by spring. Gotta do what we can for the environment right Mrs. Keating?

HUEY is readjusting his remaining load.

MRS. KEATING

Go home Huey. It's getting cold. Come to school tomorrow.

HUEY

I have half a load left. Any referrals for me?

MRS. KEATING

I thought you knew everyone in town.

HUEY is poised to pull the starter cord.

HUEY

Actually there's a woman and her long necked daughter living in the old nurses residence. Who's she?

MRS. KEATING

Oh, I think her name is Savard. Her daughter's name is Natasha. She seems nice Huey, you should introduce yourself to her.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (2)

MRS. KEATING (CONT' D)
I think she could use a
friend. Mbm's a social
worker.

HUEY
Perfect.

HUEY pulls the starter cord and the snowmobile starts.

HUEY (CONT' D)
(over the engine)
Social workers pay double.

HUEY drives off with a wave and a half a load of
firewood precariously balanced on his toboggan.

HUEY (CONT' D)
(yelling back)
And thanks from the CBEC.

MRS. KEATING watches from her front step as HUEY drives
off.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

66 INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - MORNING

66

MRS. KEATING is seated in front of her principal's desk.
MR. GRANICH is seated behind his desk. Arms folded,
head down.

MRS. KEATING
(upset)
Then what do they want us to
do David? What... what is our
objective here? We have
eighteen kids in Grade Seven.
Seven of them can't read.
Another seven are at grade-
three level.

MR. GRANICH
I know Jane. You know I know
these things. But the Board
doesn't want us suspending
kids. Besides... (beat) it
becomes a funding issue.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MR. GRANICH (CONT' D)

These behaviour-cases are coded. They come with extra funding. If we expel them it affects our budget - then we have to start laying off aides. Most of whom are related to board members.

MRS. KEATING

(getting agitated)

Okay fine. So what do we do? I mean. Just keep trying to be everything to everyone? I can't spend all class baby-sitting behaviour-cases and still teach another fifteen kids to read!

Dustin and Faron are here for the free lunch David. For the fun they have in mixing it up all day. They don't want to go to school. It's just a big joke to them

And why not... they're not the dumbies here. (beat) I get paid the same either way - but what does your Board want to do about the other fifteen? Huh?

MRS. KEATING leans in and gets quiet and personal.

Someone has to be sacrificed here David. Who is it going to be? Dustin or Kayla C? 'Cause you know I can't teach Kayla C. and Kayla D. and Travis and Shayleen and Joey - those kids - I can't teach them to read and write as long as I have to spend all my time dealing with Faron and Dustin and ... their obscenities.

MR. GRANICH

Dustin's mom is going to school full time.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED: (2)

MR. GRANICH (CONT' D)
There is no one home. If I
suspend him - what is he going
to do? Where is he going to
go?

MRS. KEATING
(very upset)
I know that!

MRS. KEATING gets up and turns toward the wall in
frustration.

MRS. KEATING (CONT' D)
(quietly)
You know I know that. Damn it
David. I am more than aware of
what will likely happen to
Dustin - and don't you think
for a moment that I don't care
about him. But at some point
we have to decide. There is
no way everyone is going to
win here. I don't care what
they teach at University - not
everyone is going to win here.

So who's it going to be David?
Answer me that one? Who is it
going to be? Who are we going
to sacrifice?

MR. GRANICH picks up a piece of paper on his desk and
puts in a pile off to the side. He plays with his pen.

MRS. KEATING (CONT' D)
(with some disgust)
We both know who is going to
be sacrificed. Don't we...

MR. GRANICH
(quietly)
Jane...

MRS. KEATING
I just want to say one more
thing. I know why we choose,
you choose, you and your board
choose; I know the reason you
choose the way you do.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MRS. KEATING (CONT' D)

It's because its a hell of a lot easier to run a half-way house than it is to run a school. Isn't it?

MR. GRANICH

You're not being fair...

MRS. KEATING

(cutting him off)

Fair! Fair? FAIR? You want to talk about fair?

MRS. KEATING is flushed and near tears now, all stops have been pulled.

MRS. KEATING (CONT' D)

I became a teacher because I want to teach. Because I believe in learning. Because I thought I could do good things by helping kids find an education. Now I'm sitting there with eight kids in front of me who genuinely need a teacher - who *need*, and *want*, and are *capable* of learning to read - and you and your stupid board are telling me;

"Oh don't worry about the reading levels, just keep Dustin and Faron entertained and off the streets - they are more important"...

Well you and your stupid board can fall on your heads. I'm a teacher - I'm not a social worker. And I can handle rowdy kids but there is a line - and these two, and their obscenities, and their assaults, their violence...

I am not going to let them get in the way of me doing my job.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED: (4)

MRS. KEATING (CONT' D)
And regardless of what you and
your blessed board think my
job is... my job is to teach!
And if you don't like it you
and you can fire me right now.

MRS. KEATING wipes her nose and collects herself a
little.

MRS. KEATING (CONT' D)
You sacrifice the good kids
David. You sacrifice the good
kids because it is easier...
because they make less noise.

Well, I'm just not going to do
that. I'm just not.

MRS. KEATING takes a good long look at MR. GRANICH, and
gets up and aggressively leaves the office.

67 INT. FOX KITCHEN - MORNING

67

VIVIAN is doing her crossword puzzle. The phone rings
She answers.

VIVIAN

Hello?
(beat)
No he just left...
(beat)
No... He went to check on a job.
(beat)
He'll be back after lunch.
(beat)
Yep.
(beat)
I'll tell him you called.
Yeah. Bye.

68 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

68

LARCIS and a couple buddies are walking down the
hallway. They meet SARAH. LARCIS nods. SARAH smiles
and does a half turn after they have gone past one
another.

69 I/E. ADELARD'S TRUCK - MORNING

69

Truck phone rings; ADELARD answers.

(CONTINUED)

ADELARD

Hello.

Howdy mother... checking up on me are you?

Is that a fact...

Yes...

Yes...

Okay... I'll be home by... about 2:30. Might be a good day to make some chicken wings heh mother? (laughs)

Did he say what time?

Yes, good,

... goodbye.

ADELARD hangs up the phone receiver.

ADELARD (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Yes.

Chief Chicken-wings.

CHIEF YELLOWKNEE is eating a large plate of chicken wings as he talks. Only he and ADELARD are at the table.

CHIEF

My main ad'genda Adelard, is economic devel'pment. You know? Me and Leonard we been goin' to meetin' after meetin'. Tryin' to get increased fundin'. We're gettin' there...

Fundin' for inferstructur' things... ee-hee... get young people jobs.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED:

CHIEF (CONT' D)

That's the terms of reference
for trying to get a handle on
our social problems. Solve
our social problems with
economic devel'pment. Went to
a big conf'rence about it...

We need jobs and fundin' and
infer' structure.

ADELARD listens without expression. CHIEF continues
eating chicken wings.

CHIEF (CONT' D)

More infer' structure means
more construc'sen - makin'
work for... you know... local
contractors... I'm thinking
maybe a truck stop like
Sawridge has... or one of them
strip malls...

Get control over our
resources. Forestry. An' oil.
Maybe build a chop-stick
factr'y like the one they have
in Driftpile.

CHIEF takes a drink of water. Wipes his face with a
paper towel and continues eating and talking.

CHIEF (CONT' D)

Oh its a lot of work Adelard.
Tough work. People don' know.
As I see it, that's my main
job as Chief of the Nation -
is to get the fundin'. That
is my ad'genda.

And tell the federal
government we don't take "no"
for an answer. Whatever it
takes... 'f it takes a
roadblock; then that's what
we'll have to do. Just hired a
Director of Com'unications -
that is what I told him he
better look into.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHIEF (CONT' D)

If they won't listen to us
we'll get the newspapers.
Look at Ominiyak, s' got
colle'dge studints mart' ching
in the city for him, putting
up posters all over - rock
stars doin' tv commercials.
That is what we need cousin.

I have a lot of meetin's lined
up already. I'm in the city
nearly every week going to
meetin's. Of course I'd rather
stay home - but... it's all
for the people. The
members'ip. If the members'ip
wants me to go to all these
meetin's then that's where
I'll be. That is my djob...
my mandate.

Chicken wings are done now. Wipes his hands and face and
continues.

CHIEF (CONT' D)

So. Cousin. We met with some
of the elders.. an' the
members'ip wants me to stay
on.. I guess finish all that I
got started. I thought maybe
I should quit let someone else
be chief, but the members'ip
just won't let me.

But - (beat) the young people
cousin... They don't
understand. You know? All
they want is t' change.
T' change! And Chucky has many
relatives. So I have to
campaign very hard. We've been
puttin' signs all around town.
"For the Future". You know.
You prob'ly seen them. Trying
to get people to understand
why they should vote for me.
"For the Future".

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED: (3)

CHIEF (CONT'D)

But at the bridg' I want to
put up a fancy sign. You
know... one that shines when
the head lights hits it. I
ordered it yesterday. Should
be done today. Two colours.

ADELARD recognizes his cue and finally cuts in.

ADELARD

What's a fancy sign like that
cost cousin?

CHIEF

Three Hundred. Plus we have
to put up some posts in the
ground. Might need a backhoe.
There are no trees or nothin'
there to nail to.

ADELARD

Gordon I'd like to help you.
Help you with that sign.
Getting it bought and in
place.

ADELARD reaches for his wallet and pulls out five bills.
Puts them in an envelope and tosses it over to the
chief's side of the table. The CHIEF doesn't touch the
envelope but his eyes take a good look.

CHIEF

Thank you cousin. I'll
remember this.

ADELARD

I know you will Gordon.

CLOSE on a plate full of chicken bones.

71 INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - MORNING

71

Close up on a 7:14 alarm clock again. SARAH is snoring
a bit. The alarm changes to 7:15 and the announcer
starts his slow droll;

(CONTINUED)

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V. O.)
 ...last nights winners were Marg
 Calahasen from Beaver Creek
 and Simon Houle from Salt
 Prairie.

SARAH starts stretching and rubbing her eyes and slowly
 waking up as the radio announcer continues.

So if you's friends of these
 two you might want to be nice
 to them, for a day or two
 anyway... the payout again was
 \$687 bucks... that they'll be
 splitting between 'em.. that
 should keep them in Bingo
 Cards for a month or two...

SARAH gets up and walks out of the room

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O. S.) (CONT' D)
 Next week's jackpot is
 estimated to be over \$1000 so
 don't miss it...

We hear SARAH start to brush her teeth;

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O. S.) (CONT' D)
 Okay... what else... okay... this
 here... remember we did a
 birthday greeting to Martin
 Fox last week, and even played
 him a Hank Williams song...

The brushing stops... after a moment we hear water run
 and a spit.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O. S.) (CONT' D)
 ...well I got a fax here from
 someone from the Community
 Enhancement and Betterment
 Committee, saying Martin Fox
 is taking part in a
 fundraisin' trip to Nas'ville...
 on a Greyhound bus... to visit
 the grave of his hero Hank
 Williams, - raising money for
 the CEBC... or CBEC...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: (2)

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O. S.) (CONT' D)

The letter says if anyone on the Cree Nation wants to sponsor Martin, it is \$1 per mile... and the money will go to the CEBC... okay... so there you have it I guess...

SARAH walks back into the room and tying her hair back, dumbfounded at what she is hearing...

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O. S.) (CONT' D)

A buck a mile... Nas'ville... we'll measure in miles I guess... no kilo-mudders on this one... Trudeau is dead now anyway ain't he?... (laughs at his own joke)... so there you have it... So, you can phone your pledge in to us at the station - someone from the CBEC will come and pick it up later...

SARAH

(flabbergasted)

Huey!

SARAH sits on her bed and listens to the radio intently. She gets up to leave and then sits back down, glued to what she is hearing.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O. S.)

So happy trails to Martin Fox, from the Old Man on the Mountain, and all of us here on the Cree Nation. We wish you safe travels and hope you took along an extra pair of moccasins, cause that there is a long way... and we'll try to keep the pledges coming in here while you're away... and for all the Hank Williams fans who are left here on the reservation... cheering you on... here is some Heh Good Looking - for Martin...

SARAH slams the radio off and gets up calling;

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: (3)

SARAH
Moosem!

CUT TO:

72 INT. HUEY' S BEDROOM – MDRNING 72
CLOSE on HUEY snoring peacefully in a very messy bed.

73 EXT. LAKE – DAY 73
Pretty shot of snow falling in the trees.

74 EXT. HIGHWAY – DAY 74
Greyhound bus flies by.

75 EXT. BIGSTONE YARD – DAY 75
Ugly dog is panting in his house while it is snowing outside.

76 EXT. POST OFFICE BOX – DAY 76
JACOB is dropping letters in a US post office box.

77 EXT. HIGHWAY 2 – DAY 77
Greyhound bus flies by in a different direction.

78 EXT. SCHOOLYARD – DAY 78
LARCIS is talking to NATASHA, the new girl.

79 EXT. URBAN BUS DEPOT – NIGHT 79
Greyhounds pulling in and out.

80 I/E. GREYHOUND – DAY 80
JACOB staring out the window, watching the countryside fly by. He traces with a pen a line along the atlas indicating he is leaving Montana and entering Idaho.

DISSOLVE TO:

81 EXT. POST OFFICE YARD – DAY 81
ADELARD is coming out of the Post Office with mail. Gets into his truck and drives off.

82 EXT. ROAD-TO-SCHOOL - DAY 82

SARAH is walking home from school alone. ADELARD pulls up and stops to let her in.

83 I/E. ADELARD'S TRUCK - DAY 83

SARAH climbs in the truck.

ADELARD
Know where I can find an
educated person?

SARAH
Hi Mosem

ADELARD
Just comin' from the mail
Sarah dear. Looks like that
grandson of mine finally got a
letter to me.

SARAH
He's only been gone a few days
Mosem

ADELARD
Lets get home. Your
Grandmother is boiling moose
eyes for supper.

SARAH's head whips around in alarm

ADELARD (CONT'D)
Tchaaa... lets see what our
pioneers have to tell us.

84 INT. FOX KITCHEN - EVENING 84

ADELARD, VIVIAN, and SARAH sitting at the table. SARAH opens the envelop with her Mosem's jack-knife and starts reading. CLOSE on ADELARD.

SARAH (O.S.)
Today we crossed the border
into Montana. There are
hardly any trees here and the
land is very flat.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED:

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

Little patches of snow but nothing like we are used to. The people talk a little different. We stopped and rented a motel for the first time since we left. Up to now we have been just sleeping on the bus. It was good to have a shower and sleep in a bed.

It was the first time we used your credit card Moosem. Up to now uncle Martin has been paying cash for everything.

ADELARD raises an eyebrow and nods in approval. CLOSE on VIVIAN who is smiling, she has a pen in her hand and her crossword book before her. She looks up often at toward SARAH as she reads.

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

I like the names they give things here. We stayed at a little motel called the Huckleberry Inn, in a town called Hungry Horse Montana. I'm always seeing names of things that look like they should be in movies or poems.

It's kind of touristy. Everywhere you go they are selling little carvings of hungry-looking horses. And everywhere you eat serves things that somehow get huckleberry in the name.

CLOSE on SARAH now as she reads from the letter.

SARAH (CONT' D)

Huckleberry pie with vanilla ice cream is very good.

SARAH looks up and smiles. Continues.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH (CONT' D)

At first I thought they were just raspberries but they are a little different. Darker - almost black. Last night we had pork chops with huckleberry sauce.

The reading of the letter continues - JACOB's voice. UNCLE MARTIN is sleeping in a reclined seat to himself. His big nose jiggles with every bump. He is coughing a bit and has an afghan pulled up around him.

JACOB (V. O.)

Uncle Martin seems to be doing okay. You know he doesn't say much. Seems to be cold all the time. The people take an interest in him everywhere we go. We are the old-Indian-from-Canada-with-his-nephew-traveling-to-Nashville-to-visit-the-grave-of-Hank-Williams. Uncle Martin doesn't bring up the idea of him being alive like Elvis.

JACOB is absent-mindedly using his finger to track water-droplets that are running sideways-and-downward across the outside of his bus window. It is rainy and grey outside the bus.

The old lady who runs the motel took our picture yesterday and asked if she could hang it on the wall with all the other photos she has of strange or famous people passing through. I think it is safe to say that we fit more into the strange category. She was quick to point out that she had a picture of Willie Nelson on the wall.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

85 CONTINUED:

JACOB (V. O.) (CONT' D)
He didn't really stay here but
stopped for water for his bus
or something.

UNCLE MARTIN continues to sleep. JACOB looks over at
him

JACOB (V. O.) (CONT' D)
Uncle Martin didn't have a
clue who Willie Nelson was,
but she didn't pick it up.

There was another picture of a
man driving through with a car
that looked like a hot dog. I
think we'll be hanging beside
him in a month or two.

Back to JACOB starring out the window watching the cars
and fields go by.

JACOB (V. O.) (CONT' D)
Uncle Martin wants to stay
another night here at the
Huckleberry Inn. A reporter
from the newspaper in Helena
is coming in the morning to
take our pictures and write a
little story about us. How
about that! Just barely into
the USA and already we are
famous.

Say hi to Huey for me.

86 INT. FOX KITCHEN

86

Back to SARAH reading the letter.

SARAH
(slowly)
Love,

Jacob.

SARAH looks up from the letter. No one says anything.
She smiles, and starts folding it back up. VIVIAN holds
out a hand indicating that she would like to see it.

(CONTINUED)

SARAH gives VIVIAN the letter and VIVIAN begins unfolding it and looking at it. ADELARD is sitting at his place at the head of the table.

ADELARD

(chuckling)

Well, I'll be damned. So far so good eh mother?

Sarah, go to the photocopier and make two copies of this letter... when your Grandmother is through. Keep the original at our desk, in an envelope... and the other one is to give to the school, and the other one we'll give to Little Bigstone.

(beat)

Dark raspberries. Hmmp.

VIVIAN

I think we had them once. They were selling them at Lac St. Anne.

ADELARD

Yes. I think you're right mother.

(beat)

Hungry Horse Montana.

ADELARD shakes his head and lets out another chuckle. He kicks VIVIAN under the table. She looks up at him and smiles.

ADELARD (CONT' D)

I'll be damned.

87 EXT. HIGHWAY 3 - DAY

87

A greyhound bus pulls out onto the highway and we watch it till it disappears.

88 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

88

SARAH enters tentatively.

MRS. KEATING

Hi Sarah

(CONTINUED)

SARAH

Hi .

MRS. KEATING

How was your weekend?

SARAH

Was alright.

MRS. KEATING

Have you heard again from Jacob?

SARAH

You read the Hungry Horse letter right?

MRS. KEATING

Yes. Quite an adventure.

SARAH

We haven't got another one yet but I heard Huey got one yesterday and Mosem is hoping to get another one today.

MRS. KEATING

Come in. Sit down. I'm just going through some of these papers. How's your family.

SARAH

Good. Mosem wants me to take a picture of his new cat - bulldozer - with the digital camera, and make some business cards for him with it on.

MRS. KEATING

Oh yes. I just gave the camera back to Mr. Granich. Ask him I'm sure he'll give it to you. If he doesn't - come back and see me.

(beat)

So what's up with you Sarah?

SARAH

My mom is supposed to be coming today.

MRS. KEATING

Oh. I wondered when that was happening. You mentioned a few weeks ago that she might be coming. How do you feel about that?

SARAH

Good I guess. Kinda' nervous.

MRS. KEATING

Jacob is going to miss her. She'll be amazed at how grown up and pretty you are Sarah. Has Jacob met her before?

SARAH

Not really. Not since he was born I guess.

MRS. KEATING

There's no way to even let him know is there? He can write us but we can't write him

SARAH

How long have you been up here Mrs. Keating?

MRS. KEATING

Yikes - ahh... long time. Thirteen years I guess. You're making me feel old.

(beat)

How are things with you and Larcis?

SARAH

(Unconvinced)

Okay I guess. He's been really busy with volleyball lately.

(beat)

Did you know her? My mom?

MRS. KEATING

(Hesitatingly)

I knew of her ... but I don't think I really met her. She had left school when I got here so...

(beat)

I know your grandparents though. They were good to me when I first got here. Your Moose had the gas station still then. Good people.

SARAH

Yeah. They are.

MRS. KEATING

You've never talked about your dad much. Do you know much about him?

SARAH

I heard he lives in a place called Taber. He's got other kids. Like his regular family.

MRS. KEATING

Is he Jacob's father too? I mean - you two have the same father.

SARAH

I think so. He's white... used to send some things at Christmas, when I was younger.

MRS. KEATING

Well... he's missing out Sarah.

MRS. KEATING gives Sarah a hug.

MRS. KEATING (CONT'D)

You just hang in there. You can do this Sarah. Remember that.

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED: (4)

SARAH
(Emotional)
I don't know.

MRS. KEATING
Yes you can.

Somehow we can all do the
things we have
to do.

89 INT. HUEY'S BEDROOM

89

HUEY is opening a tightly wrapped and taped package. Struggling to get past the packing tape he sets the parcel down on a stereo speaker in his messy room. He leaves the room and comes back in a moment with Hickory butcher knife and resumes opening the parcel. Once inside he finds two CDs of Hank Williams III and a note from Jacob reading; "Ask Sarah to read you her letter."

HUEY turns his attention to the CDs - using the butcher knife again to open the shrink wrap. He opens them up and takes out the inlay cards and scans the photographs and liner notes of the Hank III CDs.

90 INT. FOX KITCHEN - DAY

90

ADELARD is sitting at his spot at the kitchen table. The phone rings.

ADELARD
Hello.

Yes.

Yes.

ADELARD looks up at a clock on the wall to his left - we don't see the clock.

ADELARD (CONT' D)
We're home now if you want to
come over.

Yes.

Goodbye.

(CONTINUED)

ADELARD pushes a button on the cordless phone to hang up. To VIVIAN who is not on screen but evidently standing somewhere behind him.

ADELARD (CONT' D)

Social Worker wants to come visit. (beat) Hasn't been six months yet has it? (beat) Are you going to go get the mail mother or am I?

VIVIAN

I'll go.

ADELARD

Yes. Pick up some 649 for me too.

ADELARD gets out his wallet and pulls out a red \$50 bill.

VIVIAN

How many?

ADELARD

All they'll give you for that little red piece of paper.

VIVIAN

Feeling lucky?

ADELARD

Always. That's how I got you ain't it?

ADELARD winks at his wife.

HUEY is sitting on his bed with headphones on, plugged into a walkman. He places the CD in the Walkman, closes it up and presses "play". Nothing happens. He turns the player over and opens the compartment at the back to find that there are no batteries.

92 INT. FOX KITCHEN

92

ADELARD sitting at the kitchen table doodling on a pad of paper. The phone rings again. ADELARD picks up his cordless, takes note of the call display.

ADELARD
3961, 3961, Ah... wannabe.

ADELARD pushes the button and brings the receiver to his ear.

ADELARD (CONT' D)
Tansi Chucky.
Manantow.
Yes. I heard.
Yes.
Come by my job-site tomorrow
Chucky - 'bout two o'clock.
Yes.
Okay. Bye.

ADELARD pushes the button again to hang up and sets the phone down on the table in front of him as VIVIAN is heard coming back from the mail.

ADELARD (CONT' D)
Mother! We are important
people today. Social workers,
newspaper reporters,
politicians. I need to hire a
secretary. (beat) Did we get
a letter from the boy?

VIVIAN enters the kitchen and slaps down a thick letter on the table in front of ADELARD.

ADELARD (CONT' D)
Ho-ho. Look at that. Thick
one. We'll wait till our girl
gets here.

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED:

92

ADELARD is looking out the window. Looks like here comes our social worker now.

ADELARD (CONT' D)

I don't know what social workers eat, do you mother?

93 EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

93

SARAH and MARIA are walking out of the front doors chatting as kids are flowing out in all directions. The conversation stops abruptly as SARAH sees something of considerable alarm in the corner of her eye. LARCIS and NATASHA (new girl with long neck) are having a rather animated and intimate looking conversation, full of flirty smiles and eye-batting. LARCIS reaches over and touches her face intimately. MARIA also sees what is taking place.

MARIA

(Protective)

Come on Sarah. Lets go.

SARAH who looks away abruptly - stunned. She looks back toward the two and then away again. She quickly starts walking away - then running. Maria follows behind trying to keep up.

MARIA (CONT' D)

Sarah!

94 INT. FOX KITCHEN - DAY

94

ADELARD and VIVIAN and FIONA SAVARD (social worker) are sitting at the kitchen table. FIONA is a 40ish non-native woman with dark features. She is professionally dressed with a gold pen and an assortment of files and papers. A cup of tea sits untouched before her. There is a long period of silence during which FIONA does some shifting in her seat. She reaches for the tea and then decides against it. Finally:

ADELARD

Do we know who the father is?

FIONA

No, we don't.

(CONTINUED)

ADELARD

And where is my daughter now?

FIONA

That is the other thing Mr. Fox... we had scheduled an appointment for her to maybe come and visit today, but she is not going to be able to make it. Rachel is...

FIONA checks her notes.

FIONA (CONT' D)

...in the Kapown Treatment Center at Grouard Mission.

VIVIAN looks up to ADELARD knowingly.

ADELARD

Yes. (beat) And where is the baby now?

FIONA

The baby is in an emergency care home - like a temporary foster home.

VIVIAN gets up and leaves the room

ADELARD

Yes.

(beat)

My wife and I are old Miss...

FIONA gives a fake smile to ADELARD.

FIONA

(feigned sweetness)

I know, I know. It's just our policy to always try to place children with family. I thought I'd ask you. Of course you are under no obligation Mr. Fox.

(beat)

(MORE)

94 CONTINUED: (2)

FIONA (CONT' D)

You would, though, be entitled to regular foster parent benefits, along with an additional incentive we offer to keep children from the same family together...

ADELARD cuts her off;

ADELARD

We don't take money from anyone to look after our own grandchildren.

FIONA bats an eye.

ADELARD (CONT' D)

Are there people who would adopt this baby? Normal people. White people, yellow people, whatever people...

FIONA

(sweetness gone)

The first step is to have the child moved from emergency care to temporary care. After that we do a thorough evaluation and assessment of the parties needs, to see if Permanent Placement is an option. In-home assessments have to be completed and approved by the head of the department. If all that happens we then assess the birth-mother's progress, and see if she approves the placement. If she doesn't approve it, we have the option of asking the minister to review the assessments and consider getting a court-order for the department to attain proxy guardianship.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

94 CONTINUED: (3)

FIONA (CONT' D)

Of course there is also the chance that she will appeal and then we will have to make a defense, it all requires considerable documentation and that is why we have to be so careful to follow the procedures. It all takes time.

ADELARD

Yes. (several beats) Yes.

ADELARD sits like a stone. His breath is quick and shallow. He doesn't look at Miss Savard.

FIONA pick up her briefcase off the floor, sets it on the table to her side, and snaps open the clasps.

FIONA

We will do whatever is in the best interests of all parties Mr. Fox, I assure you.

FIONA opens the briefcase and starts putting her files and papers back in.

FIONA (CONT' D)

Is there something wrong?

ADELARD

Yes, Miss. There is something wrong.

FIONA

Is there something you'd like to share with me?

ADELARD looks past FIONA and out the window. After an extended moment. He chuckles to himself.

ADELARD

I remember the first of your type. Name was Jones. Came here on a float plane... I was on the lake, setting a net with my dad.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ADELARD (CONT' D)

He went around for the next two days asking people if they had any money. Said if they sign his papers, they'd get a little cheque every month.

First time he came no one signed.

Second time he came one person signed.

Third time he came everyone signed.

Next year the Hudson's Bay moves in with their store. Now none of our boys can set a net since.

FIONA

These are complicated issues Mr. Fox.

ADELARD

No! They're not really.

FIONA slowly starts putting paper in her briefcase and watching ADELARD cautiously out of the corner of her eye.

FIONA

(quietly)

I'll leave my card, you can contact me if...

ADELARD

My wife will phone you in the next few days. She will have a home found for that baby. I'd appreciate it if you listened to her.

FIONA gets up, takes up her case, and adjusts her suit. ADELARD still sits there like a stone looking out the window. Finally:

(CONTINUED)

FIONA

Okay, well I'll look forward
to her call. Thank you Mr.
Fox. I'll show myself out.

Awkwardly FIONA leaves the house. ADELARD takes no notice of her. Just stares out the window, elbows on the table, hands folded in front of him. CLOSE on his face. The longest moment goes by. His eyes are watering. Finally a tear breaks over his lid and trickles down his worn, expressionless face. He blinks and several more follow in silence.

CUT TO:

95 EXT. ROAD-TO-SCHOOL - DAY 95

SARAH is walking home alone and fast. Her face is flushed and her eyes are red. She wipes an angry tear from her cheek, lets out a sob, stumbles, and continues walking.

96 INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - DAY 96

SARAH comes in and throws her self on the bed crying. Deep hurting convulsions. Beating the pillow with her fist. She grabs a photograph of Larcis from her night table and rips it to a million pieces, throwing the shreds on the floor. She sees the new letter from Jacob on her night table. This one is addressed to her. After a long moment and some more crying she reaches for the letter and opens it.

JACOB (O. S.)

Dear Sarah,

Thought I'd write this one to
you. I expect everyone is
reading everyone else's
letters up there, but you can
pick and choose I guess what
you want to share.

SARAH pauses, gets a Kleenex and blows her nose, dries her eyes and continues.

JACOB (O. S.) (CONT' D)
I included a newspaper clipping that was in the local newspaper here about us. I guess it must have been a slow news day because the little story they did in Montana about these two Indians from Canada making a trip to Nashville to visit the grave of Hank Williams, has somehow gotten to be a national "human interest" story.

SARAH gets more comfortable and pulls her duvet over her. Continues reading.

JACOB (O. S.) (CONT' D)
When we arrived in Rapid City South Dakota the lady at the Motel 8 said; "Are you those two from Canada on your way to Nashville to look for Hank Williams, I read about you two." The next day we had more reporters calling our room.

CUT TO:

JACOB is riding in a small car. MARTIN is in the back. We don't see the driver, but JACOB keeps looking in the driver's direction and nodding.

JACOB (V. O.)
This one reporter asked us if we would like to go see Hank William's grandson sing. I didn't know, but turns out Ol' Hank has a grandson who is following his footsteps - sorta.

(MORE)

97 CONTINUED:

JACOB (V. O.) (CONT' D)
Surprisingly Uncle Martin went
right along with it and the
reporter drove us to another
little town not far away and
took us to see his concert.
Only it wasn't really like a
concert.

CUT TO:

98 EXT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

98

A makeshift looking underground establishment with a
marquee reading "Hank 3 - One Night Only". We PAN down
a lineup of assorted punk rockers, seeing various
tattoos and piercings.

JACOB (V. O.)
More like a weird kind of bar.
Most of the people there were
like, I don't know what you
call them, punks I guess.

Going down the line in slow motion we see mohawks died
blue, along with a few retro-cowboy types. As we get
down to the end of the line there is a very wide eyed
and stiff JACOB. Right behind him is a very out of
place looking UNCLE MARTIN.

JACOB (V. O.) (CONT' D)
Lets just say that it wasn't
what we expected.

CUT TO:

99 INT. NIGHTCLUB

99

We see a CLOSE UP of old-big-nosed UNCLE MARTIN standing
in the midst of a small mosh-pit. HANK III is on stage
with his band thrashing through some country-punk music
while the kids are going nuts.

JACOB (V. O. CONT.)
But Uncle Martin stayed and
stood there through the whole
thing. Never said a thing.

100 EXT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

100

Young punks are leaving the building and dispersing on the streets. JACOB and MARTIN are standing still under the sign.

JACOB (V. O.)

After the show the reporter tried to introduce us to Hank III and get our picture with him, but I take it he was too busy to see us.

We see a backstage door slam shut. Back to MARTIN and JACOB on the street.

JACOB (V. O.) (CONT' D)

Instead they just gave us a couple of his CDs they were selling.

CLEO, the attractive-in-an-odd-way young reporter comes up to them, gives the two CD's to JACOB, smiles ironically, and motions for the three of them to go.

JACOB (CONT' D)

I sent them to Huey.

CUT TO:

101 INT. HUEY'S BEDROOM

101

We see a TV remote sitting on HUEY's messy bed with the battery compartment cover removed and the batteries missing. PAN along to the Walkman. PAN up the jiggling headphone cord to see HUEY; who is jumping around and doing a punk version of the funky-chicken.

102 I/E. GREYHOUND - DAY

102

JACOB is again watching the world go by from his seat in the Greyhound.

JACOB (V. O.)

I can't wait to see the Mississippi. I like it down here. Feels different.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED:

JACOB (V. O.) (CONT' D)
Sometimes I get worried that
it is all going to be over too
soon. I'm not ready to start
back home yet.

That last newspaper reporter I
was telling you about - she
was actually pretty cool. She
just finished college last
year and this is her first job
so they send her on all the
stories no one else wants -
like checking up on the two
crazy Canadian Indians on
their way to Nashville.

CLOSE on JACOB in his Greyhound seat.

JACOB (V. O.) (CONT' D)
Something alive and dangerous
about it down here. Everybody
seems to be on a trip
somewhere. Everyone has a
plan.

CUT TO:

103 INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM

103

We go back to a more composed SARAH reading her letter
on her bed.

JACOB (V. O.)
This reporter again, Cleo her
name is, wants to be a
novelist. I told her I write
poems. She told me there was
no money in poetry. I thought
that was kind of funny. Still
she asked me for one of my
poems. She gave me her card
so I could send her one by
email. I think she kinda
wishes I was older, if you
know what I mean. She said
she has lots of contacts down
here if I ever want to come
down and find a job. I think
you'd like her. Anyway...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED:

JACOB (V. O.) (CONT' D)
Be good big sister.
Love,
Jacob

CLOSE on the handwritten letter. There is an arrow in the bottom corner indicating to turn over the page. SARAH turns over the page and reads.

JACOB (V. O.) (CONT' D)
PS.

Speaking of poems here is one
I wrote just for you.

Roseballs (by Jacob J. Fox)

Rosebuds are red
And roses are redder
Larcis is a dick
You can do bedder...

SARAH laughs briefly. In a moment her laugh turns into a cry. She clutches the letter to her breast, and flops down on the bed sobbing.

104 INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - MORNING

104

CLOSE on the alarm clock that reads 7:14. Quickly changes to 7:15.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O. S.)
So all the buses seem to be
running this morning, 'cept
for Walter Ghostkeeper in
Enilda. Seems someone broke
into the bus last night and
stole Walter's brand new CD
player... And if you's
wonderin' why he needs a CD
player to go pick up your
kids... its not that... seems the
little buggers went in through
the front windshield... so agin'
Walter Ghostkeeper's bus in
Enilda will not be running
today 'til they get a new
windshield...

(CONTINUED)

PAN over to SARAH still in her same clothes curled up on the bed. Looks like heck. Eyes puffy. Makeup running. Jacob's letter still laying beside her. She opens her eyes, rubs her face, grabs the duvet and pulls it up around her neck and closes her eyes again.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (CONT' D)

...and Walter says if anyone just returns his CD player he won't press charges... Okay...

Neestows to Nas'ville... so far we have collected \$368 worth of pledges on the Neestows to Nas'ville funding drive. Thanks to Eliza Alook... Eliza hit the jackpot last night... won a little over twelve hundred buckaroos on the satellite bingo - she was so happy about it... she made a generous donation... of \$100 to the boys headin' south. Says she's a big Hank Williams fan too. Wants to hear Tear In My Beer this morning... but first...

SARAH reaches over to shut off the radio but stops when she hears:

RADIO ANNOUNCER (CONT' D)

An' speakin' of that... we have a representative from the C. B. E. C. here in the studio this morning to tell us about the Neestows to Nashville trip and why they are trying to raise all this soneeow... and what they plan on doin' with it... and who knows what else he's gonna tell us about... So let me introduce to you young Hubert G. Bigstone of the CBEC... Tansi Hubert...

SARAH sits up in amazement.

HUEY (O. S.)
Manantow Old Man From the
Mountain. And how are you?

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O. S.)
Manantow.

HUEY (O. S.)
Should I call you Old Man or
Mr. Mountain?

SARAH
(Whispering to herself)
Huey!

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O. S.)
(laughs) uh... either one I
guess... just don't call me late
for bingo... (tries to laugh at
his own joke)

HUEY (O. S.)
I don't play Bingo. My
friend, Jacob, his Moose says
Bingo is a tax on the stupid.

SARAH laughs a little, and moves over and turns up the
radio. Listening intently.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O. S.)
Is that right? Well... I
thought I wasn't supposed to
pay taxes... (tries to laugh)
So tell us how our Neestows to
Nas'ville are making out. Are
they lost yet.

HUEY (O. S.)
No they aren't lost Mr.
Mountain. They were eating
Huckleberries in Montana, and
apparently they went to a Hank
Williams III concert in Rapid
City South Dakota, where some
of the people have blue hair.

SARAH
(Astonished)
Huey!

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O. S.)
Hank Williams III. You mean
Hank Williams Jr? Never much
liked Hank Williams Jr.

HUEY (O. S.)
No. I think it is the son of
Hank Williams Jr. But I'm not
really too up... you know...
on the Williams family tree.
But he sent me two of his CDs
and I brought them with me
today if your listeners would
like to hear a sample.

SARAH laughs again.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O. S.)
Hank Williams III. Yes. Well
we might have to give that a
listen. So anyway... Hubert.
You've raised nearly four-
hundred dollars so far... for
the ...

HUEY (O. S.)
Community Betterment and
Enhancement Committee.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O. S.)
Yes that... tell me what are you
planning on doing with the
money. Give our list'ners a
good reason to phone in and
pledge some money.

HUEY (O. S.)
Well. The CBEC executive has
decided to use the money to
open a Middle-Aged Recreation
Center.

NERALD leans over and turns up the radio. Listening
attentively to the dialogue as we see the community
panning by.

105 CONTINUED:

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O. S.)
A Middle-aged ...

HUEY (O. S.)
Recreation Center. You see
Mr. Mountain, Old Folks have
Old Folks Homes, and young
people have Youth Centers.
But middle-aged people don't
have anywhere to go. We feel
that is why they are always
wind up at the bars and bingo
halls.

106 INT. KEATING HOUSE - DAY 106

MRS. KEATING is in the kitchen in a house coat listening
to a radio on the fridge. She too turns it up and
smiles excitedly.

HUEY (V. O.)
We need a place for middle-
aged people to go. We feel the
number one thing we could do
to make the community a better
place would be to get the
parents and grandparents out
of the bars and bingo halls.

107 INT. NATIVE-FAMILY HOME - MORNING 107

A previously not seen NATIVE FAMILY is listening to the
radio very attentively. Taking it all very serious.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O. S.)
I see. Well that is very
interstin... What are these
middle-aged people going to do
at their new recreation
center.

HUEY (O. S.)
Well we actually want to set
it up in the back of the Youth
Center, that way we think that
the middle-aged people might
start getting to know their
kids better.

108 INT. FOX KITCHEN - DAY

108

ADELARD is listening with a smile.

HUEY (CONT. O. S.)

Our ultimate hope at the Community Betterment and Enhancement Committee Mr. Mountain, is that someday, once the middle-aged people and their kids get to know each other better, we can close both centers down and they can all go home.

109 INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - MORNING

109

SARAH has pulled on a sweater now and is putting on some socks. She remains highly-tuned to what she is hearing.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O. S.)

Yes. Well. That is a big idea. Okay... (dead air) ... Well that was Hubert G. Bigstone of the ... the Better Community Committee... so... If you like what it was he said... phone in your pledges... it is one dollar a mile to sponsor our Neestows on their trip to Nas'ville... raisin' money to build a middle-aged drop in center... okay... So thanks for coming on the show the morning Mr. Bigstone.

HUEY (O. S.)

My pleasure Mr. Mountain. And on behalf of the CBEC we'd like to invite you to cut the ribbon at our grand opening sometime this spring.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O. S.)

Yes. Well thank you for that.
(beat)
So here is Tear in My Beer...
Naw, Eliza you can wait
another day for that...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED:

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O. S.) (CONT' D)
lets hear some of this new
Hank 3 music... What do you
suggest Hubert?

110 EXT. HIGHWAY 4 - MORNING 110

Greyhound goes roaring by. We hear one of Hank III's
more mellow songs play through the next few scenes until
FADE OUT.

111 I/E. GREYHOUND - MORNING 111

JACOB is staring out the window. He grabs his Atlas and
begins marking the latest leg of his journey. He sees
UNCLE MARTIN sleeping in his own seat across the isle.
He goes back to what he was doing, then stops, gets up
and goes and reclines Martin's seat for him and then
puts his coat over him as a blanket.

112 EXT. ROADSIDE MOTEL - DAY 112

JACOB and MARTIN are walking up to a motel office.

113 EXT. PARK SOMEWHERE - EVENING 113

MARTIN is sitting on a bench watching the world go by.
Taking short breaths. MARTIN gets up with some labour
and begins walking away.

CUT TO:

114 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY 114

SARAH is sitting in her desk doodling on a paper, while
a students around her are working. She is deep in
thought. She puts up her hand.

SARAH
Is Huey here today Mrs.
Keating?

STUDENTS look up in a mocking attitude wondering what is
this all about.

MRS. KEATING
I haven't seen him Sarah.

SARAH
Mrs. Keating I have to excuse
myself.

(CONTINUED)

114 CONTINUED:

SARAH begins getting up and getting her things.

MRS. KEATING
Sarah is everything alright?

SARAH
I think so. Maybe. I'm not
feeling well. Can I go now?

MRS. KEATING
Of course Sarah. Make sure
you sign out at the office.

SARAH leaves the room.

115 EXT. LAKE - DAY 115

SARAH is walking alone across the lake in deep snow.
She falls through the crust and loses her balance. Gets
up and continues on.

116 EXT. BIGSTONE YARD - DAY 116

SARAH sees smoke rising from a little grove in the
trees. As she walks further we find HUEY chopping wood
beside a small fire, a pile of wood, and his SKI-DOO.
She gets a little closer but HUEY is busy and doesn't
see her.

SARAH
(Determinedly)
I don't want to be your
girlfriend.

HUEY jumps out of his skin and drops his axe. He is
lost for words, staring at her dumbly.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I don't want to be your
girlfriend. I don't want to
make out with you. I don't
want to marry you and get a
trailer home and start having
kids.

HUEY still completely dazed.

SARAH (CONT' D)

But I am the valedictorian at my graduation and I have to give a speech and I want to have a grad date. And Larcis Noskey is a dick and I deserver bedder - better.

HUEY is beginning to compose himself and smiles that last bit.

SARAH (CONT' D)

And believe it or not Huey you are the most gentlemanly-like guy at our school, and...

(beat)

Huey will you be my grad date.

HUEY sets down his axe and grins. He gets a large block of wood and sets it down near the fire, indicating to SARAH to sit down. After a moment SARAH accepts the offer and sits. HUEY takes another block and sits down. Gets up to put some more wood on the fire, then sits back down. A long moment goes by.

HUEY

Did you know Sarah Fox that you can tell what kind of wood people are burning by the smell of the smoke?

SARAH stares into the flames.

HUEY (CONT' D)

Poplar has a barky, bitter smell to it. And if it is a little bit green it smokes like crazy. Spruce has a more mellow smell, and doesn't smoke so much.

(beat)

Did you walk here?

SARAH nods.

HUEY (CONT' D)

Do you have a dress yet Sarah Fox?

(CONTINUED)

SARAH

(quietly)

No. Kookem was going to take me to town next week to try some on.

HUEY

(Genuinely)

Sarah Fox I've considered your proposal - and would like to say I would be honoured to be your grad date.

SARAH smiles.

HUEY(CONT'D)

Are you sure that is what you want?

SARAH

Yes.

HUEY

You're not going to change your mind tomorrow or next week or a week before?

SARAH

I promise Huey.

HUEY

Alrighty then.

I one condition.

SARAH shows some sign of apprehension at this.

HUEY(CONT'D)

I want to pay for your grad dress.

SARAH

Oh Huey. You don't have to do that, the dress I mean. My Kookem will pay for the dress.

(CONTINUED)

HUEY

That's my condition. I have saved up in my little tin can \$642.00, plus some change. And that is not CBEC money. That's workin' money. I don't know how much they are but can't be that much.

SARAH

(Touched)

Thank you Huey.

HUEY

Right then.
(beat)
You let me know what colour... I'll try to find something that sorta matches for myself.

SARAH

You're a good guy HUEY.

SARAH moves her block over closer to him and sits shoulder to shoulder, gives him a hug and rests her head on his shoulder.

HUEY

(smiling)

All-right then.
(beat)
So you want to go back?

SARAH

Na. Not a good day to go to school today. My horoscope said to stay away from school. Stay away from school and charming guys, but...

HUEY smiles. He sits with his stick in the fire watching the flames.

ADELARD is watching Discovery Channel. Out the window a ski-doo is pulling in. It's dark out now. A moment later SARAH comes in the front door.

ADELARD
Well... look who decided to come
home. Hot date?

SARAH
Hi Mbosem.

SARAH comes in and sits down in the living room with
ADELARD. The television is muted.

SARAH (CONT' D)
I asked Huey to be my grad
date tonight.

ADELARD
Is that right! What happened
to young Noskeye?

SARAH
He's being a dick.

ADELARD
Ah. That happens.
(beat)
And I take it that young Huey
agreed.

SARAH smiles.

ADELARD (CONT' D)
Well there you go. I heard
him on the radio this morning.
I like that kid. I phoned in
and pledged fifty bucks
myself.

SARAH
No way.

ADELARD
Yessir I did. I like it
anytime I see some kid with
ambition, as long he's not a
thief.
(beat)
Your grandmother has been
keeping some supper for you.

SARAH

Okay.

SARAH is silent for a few moment. She stares blankly at the wall.

SARAH (CONT' D)

Felt good Mbosem. Felt good to go do that. Go ask him, like that. I just got the idea and then went and did it.

ADELARD

Yes. That's good.
(beat)
And it turned out.

SARAH

Yeah.

ADELARD

Good for you.

SARAH

Do you believe in God Mbosem?

ADELARD

Very strongly.

SARAH

Do you pray... like?

ADELARD

I talk to Him. Not like the priests, I just, talk to him. Man to God.

SARAH

Does he talk back?

ADELARD

He ahhh... He lets me know He's there - and sometimes He lets me know which way to go.

SARAH

How does he let you know?

(CONTINUED)

ADELARD

You just get so you know.
After a while you get to
recognize it. Have to be
willing to listen.

SARAH

I just had this idea like from
out of nowhere, and it felt...
it was crazy - but at the same
time it felt right, you know?
Different. And I just went
and did it. Just did it...
and it worked. Felt powerful.

ADELARD

Come here girl.

SARAH comes over and sits on the arm of his chair and
give him a hug.

ADELARD (CONT' D)

She gets rough sometimes
Sarah. Always does. You
gotta find something that
works for you, really works
for you. Not just
painkillers. Then stick with
it. All I can say is, the Old
Man never let me down, and
there's been times I've leaned
on him pretty hard. Other
people will tell you different
- but that is your Moosem's
believin'.

SARAH

Thanks Moosem

SARAH hugs him some more and then kisses him on the top
of the head. She sits up, looks back at her
grandfather, looks down.

SARAH (CONT' D)

I better go eat.

SARAH gets up and gives him a kiss on the head. She
leaves the room. ADELARD turns on the TV again and
watches a muted screen. We don't see the screen.

(CONTINUED)

We can hear SARAH in the next room using the microwave. After a long and uneventful moment a phone rings. ADELARD gets up and goes to a desk off in the corner of the living room.

ADELARD

Fax!

Mother who would be faxing us
at this time of night.

INT. FOX KITCHEN

SARAH is at the table eating. She is thumbing through a magazine. We hear the fax machine buzzing off-screen. ADELARD enters the kitchen with a few sheets of fax paper in his hand. He hands them to SARAH.

ADELARD

That's your brother's
handwriting I think. What's
he say?

SARAH takes the fax and looks at it for just a moment with a mouthful of food. Her body freeze up. She looks up at ADELARD slowly and doesn't speak.

ADELARD (CONT' D)

(seriously)

Read it to me girl.

VIVIAN enters the room and stands to the side.

SARAH

(Reading)

Dear Mosem,

I didn't feel like phoning and
I knew this couldn't wait for
a letter.

Uncle Martin died today.

SARAH chokes and her body quivers. She looks up at ADELARD who stands behind his chair. She looks back to the fax and continues.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARAH (CONT' D)

(reading)

I got up this morning and went to breakfast alone. When I came back to our room he was still sleeping. I knew something was wrong.

The lady at the front desk called the police and an ambulance. He was taken to hospital but they said he must have died in his sleep.

I spent most of the day with the police filling out forms and at the hospital. I gave them all the information they needed and put your name down as next of kin.

Uncle Martin's body will be on a plane in Edmonton tomorrow at 3:20 pm. You need to make arrangements for someone to pick it up and take it back home for a funeral, or you can pick it up yourself. I am in a small town in Missouri. I have checked out of our motel and am getting back on the bus tonight.

I have decided to continue on and finish the trip Mooseem. I hope you understand.

I'll cross the Mississippi river sometime tonight and tomorrow morning I will be in Tennessee. Uncle Martin's wallet had a little over \$1100 dollars in it. I'm going to use that to continue my trip. I'll only use your credit card if I get in a bind.

Love,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SARAH (CONT' D)

Jacob.

CUT TO: ()

119 EXT. HIGHWAY 5 - NIGHT 119

A GREYHOUND pulls away from a station and down the road.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

120 INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - MORNING 120

CLOCK again reads 7:14. Turns to 7:15 and we hear the announcer saying;

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O. S.)

So... where does that leave us?
 No more monkeys jumping on the
 bed. (Forced laughter) Okay.
 Its time for the Old Man on
 the Mountain to give you your
 daily bus reports. And all
 buses are running as far as we
 know. No one has phoned in
 any problems yet.

But we do have new numbers to
 report on the Neestows to
 Nas'ville fundraiser. We now
 have pledges for \$1476. The
 phones here have been ringing
 off the hook ever since that
 fella yesterday told us what
 they were plannin' on doing
 with the money. Yessir.
 Ringing off the hook.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED:

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O. S.) (CONT' D)

I don't know how much of them pledges we're ever goin' to collect but even half of that would add up to quite a bit of loot wouldn't it... so all you middle-agers... looks like you might be getting your own drop in center... got to keep mom out of the bingo hall... keep her at home where she can play radio bingo... (hee hee) on Cree Nation Radio...

CAMERA pans around to see that Sarah's bed is made and was not slept in last night.

121 EXT. MARTIN'S YARD - MORNING 121

Snow is accumulating on the steps of Martin's little house. The hood is still up on the old car.

122 EXT. BIGSTONE YARD - DAY 122

OLD DOG is sleeping on the roof of his doghouse.

123 EXT. INTERSECTION - DAY 123

Cars are spinning and driving to and fro on icy frozen streets.

124 EXT. HIGHWAY-TO-TOWN - DAY 124

ADELARD'S pickup speeds by on the highway.

125 EXT. GRAVE YARD - DAY 125

PAN past an assortment of homemade grave markers and ornaments, all covered in snow. We see a narrow path and a burial spot shoveled out in the snow. A door-shaped grave marker laying on the snowbank. Several men are carrying old tires and piling them up on the spot shovelled off. A can of gas sits off to the side along with half a dozen shovels.

DISSOLVE TO:

SARAH stands from her place on the front pew. She shyly goes up the few steps and starts in the direction of the pulpit. A priest hold out his hand and guides her to her position, then he sits down on one of three throne-looking chairs. ADELARD and VIVIAN are dressed nicely and sitting in the front pew. The church is full of locals. The CHIEF and his opponent are sitting on opposite sides of the isle. CLINTON and his sisters are there. MRS. KEATING and her husband. SARAH sees MRS. KEATING give her a smile. SARAH clears her throat and begins.

SARAH

My Uncle Martin was born in 1923, the same year as his hero Hank Williams. Mr. Williams was born in Alabama and Uncle Martin in Athabasca.

As a young man Uncle Martin worked in lumber camps around Lesser Slave Lake. He enjoyed camp life, and working in the outdoors. When my Moosem was 12 years-old Uncle Martin got him a job at Camp Seven. My Moosem says that he is forever grateful to Uncle Martin for those years. They worked together at Camp Seven for six years until it was closed.

It was in Camp Seven that Uncle Martin learned to play the guitar. He only played Hank Williams songs. In the evenings after supper Uncle Martin would get out his guitar and sing to the other men and cooks in camp.

While Hank Williams died an early death at age 30, Uncle Martin just died on Thursday, in a small town in Missouri.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SARAH (CONT' D)

He was on his way to visit the grave of his hero in Nashville Tennessee.

My brother Jacob Fox, who was on the journey with Uncle Martin, continued on to Nashville Tennessee and found that Hank Williams wasn't buried there at all. He found out instead that Hank Williams is buried in Montgomery Alabama.

Since then, my brother Jacob has gotten a small job at a newspaper in New Mexico, and won't be coming home till summer.

Together the two of them raised \$2600 on their trip to go toward a Family Recreation Center here in our community.

I'd like to close with a poem, which my brother Jacob wrote while on his trip with Uncle Martin. It was published Sunday in the Santa Rita Times in New Mexico where he will soon begin working as a press cleaner.

It is called Buffalo Tracks.

Buffalo Tracks by Jacob Fox.

I saw a buffalo track
Deep in the hardened ground
I tried to follow it
But it wasn't going anywhere
It was just there
Collecting rain
In the spot where the hoof had
been

I called to the buffalo
(MORE)

SARAH (CONT' D)

But no buffalo returned my
call Only the buffalo's track
Said "Here I am"

I asked the buffalo track
Where is the animal
Who's heel was bruised
On your head?
Again the track said "Here I
am" And said no more.

I took the track in my hands
I placed it in my sack
And took it home
To make soup with it
But you can't make soup
With a buffalo track
I've since learned

Where do we put our buffalo tracks?
Where now do we put our trust?
We may not be through with the past
But the past, is through with us

SARAH pauses and looks up, choking back tears, takes a deep breath and continues:

SARAH (CONT' D)

After the internment, at St.
Theresa Cemetery, everyone is
invited back to my Moosem and
Kookems for some cake and
visiting.

Looking beautiful and teary-eyed, SARAH snuffles,
smiles, and looks straight into the camera.

FREEZE FRAME

THE END