EXT. TRAIN STATION PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

A sign nailed to the wall of the train platform reads: "Welcome to Epitaph". The STATION MANAGER steps out, looks down the tracks, then pulls out a pocket watch and shakes his head. He whistles to a group of workers standing around.

The men grumble as they draw a handcar out onto the tracks and load it with new rail, spikes, and sledgehammers. The section crew then begins pumping the handcar down the tracks. The Station Manager goes back in the office.

Standing alone on the platform is U.S. Marshal EVERETT JAMES (45). His black duster is dusty, and weary eyes peek out from beneath the brim of his ridge top hat. His aggressively grizzled facial hair illustrates his time away from town.

The town sheriff STAN HOLDEN (35) approaches.

STAN Howdy, Marshal.

EVERETT

Sheriff.

They stay into the desert for a few moments.

STAN

Unless my eyes deceive, I don't see a train. So, you were right. The Long Fang bites again. (beat) Are you sure he's coming this way? (Everett doesn't reply) I mean, those boys we got posted all over town haven't seen hide nor hair of him. (Everett remains silent) C'mon Marshal, you've been riding those boys pretty hard for days. Let's call 'em in.

EVERETT He'll be here. I know it.

STAN Blazes Everett. We all know what this means to you. How long you been chasing Fang? What's one more day? Let these men see their families tonight.

Everett sighs heavily. He softens.

EVERETT Alright, Stan. Tell them boys to meet at Porter's to resupply. Then tell them to get some chow. We'll ride out tomorrow morning.

STAN Will do, Marshal! (he begins to leave)

EVERETT

Stan.

STAN

Yeah?

EVERETT

10 years.

STAN

What's that?

EVERETT You asked me how long I've been chasing Fang. 10 years.

STAN Dang, Marshal. Ain't there some kind of statute of limitations?

EVERETT Not for what he did. Not in this life. Not ever.

A stiff breeze blows past as Stan leaves to round up the posse. Everett pulls out his pocket watch and opens the clasp to check the time. There's a whisper of a smile on his face. Then it vanishes. Everett puts his watch away and leaves.

INT. SECRET PASSAGEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Long and Bao make their way through the natural separation in the earth. As they continue, the passageway becomes braced by wood boards and support beams. They arrive at a lantern illuminating the underside of heavy cellar doors.

Long tries the iron handles, but the sturdy doors won't budge. He bangs hard on them. After a moment, scraping is heard on the other side. Then the doors open revealing ZEKE BONNER (50) a portly man with a bushy beard and bowler hat.

> ZEKE Well, if ain't the Tooth Fairies!

Zeke laughs as he helps Long and Bao out of the passageway.

INT. SALLY'S SALOON - BACK CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

ZEKE Fang Brothers. Tooth Fairies. That never gets old!

Zeke slams the cellar doors shut and slides a lock in place.

ZEKE (CONT'D) Mighty fine to see you two again. It's been a while.

LONG Far too long.

He shakes Long's hand vigorously and slaps Bao on the back heartily. He begins walking them to the front room where the

din of saloon activity can be heard. LONG (CONT'D)

We'd stop in more often, but in case you haven't heard, we're wanted men. Outlaws.

ZEKE Yeah. I think I heard that rumor.

Zeke and Long chuckle, and Bao smirks.

ZEKE (CONT'D) Glad you still remembered to use the back door. Marshal's in town. Rounded up a posse. But I got eyes on those boys.

LONG Marshal? Which one this time?

ZEKE Everett James. Quiet type.

Long and Bao look at each other in recognition.

ZEKE (CONT'D) You know him?

LONG Let's just say he's very dedicated. ZEKE Well, no need to soil your britches. He and them boys are riding on tomorrow morning. He'll be none the wiser.

LONG That's what I like to hear. You still got those spare rooms?

ZEKE Fresh sheets. Just for you two.

LONG Ah. Looking forward to sleeping in a bed for a change.

ZEKE Want me to send some girls from the 9 Lives up?

Bao slaps the back of his hand into the palm of his other hand and shakes his head firmly. Then he pantomimes drinking.

LONG Maybe later. Right now, we drink.

INT. SALLY'S SALOON - FRONT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The large room is bustling with activity. Unsavory-looking people sit at most tables. Some play cards. Others compare scars and tattoos while the more dangerous types either arm wrestle or keep to themselves. An aging Indian man sweeps.

A man plays lively tunes on the upright piano by the stairs that lead up. Long and Bao saunter up to the bar. SALLY STRETCH (55), a woman whose obvious beauty has long since faded, mans the bar. She wears an old cabaret dress.

> SALLY Well, lookee here! It's the Sabre Tooth Brothers. Who's got a kiss for Sally Stretch?

When she speaks, her voice is hoarse. She offers her cheek to Long and absentmindedly scratches at the scar around her neck that could only result from rope burns. Long leans over the bar and kisses her cheek.

Sally offers her other cheek to Bao, but when he leans to kiss it, Sally quickly turns and kisses Bao on the lips. She grabs both sides of his head so he can't escape even though he struggles, wide-eyed. Sally finally releases him. SALLY (CONT'D) I know you missed that!

Long laughs as Bao wipes the slobber off his face.

LONG Careful, Sally. You'll make Zeke jealous.

ZEKE (lighting cigar, scoffs) Better him than me. It's like kissing a prune.

SALLY Oh, hon, better than kissing that briar patch of a face. (to Long) Now, what'll it be, sugar?

LONG

Gin.

Bao knocks on the bar top twice, then signals with two fingers to pour one for him as well. Sally does so then moves down the bar to two sullen-looking men. By their attire, they're prospectors.

> PROSPECTOR #1 We just have to keep digging.

PROSPECTOR #2 I'm telling you; we're digging in the wrong spot.

SALLY You boys want another one? (they nod) How about you show me your coin before I pour?

The men's shoulders slump and they slink out. They pass by the aged Indian man CHIEF RED FEATHER (55) sweeping the saloon. Chief is dressed in a poncho and his hair is long and unkempt as it hangs down the sides of his face.

Chief sets the broom down to clear an empty table of glasses and bottles. One of the bottles still has liquid. Chief eyes the room before quickly grabbing the bottle to drink from it.

> SALLY (CONT'D) (aiming pistol) Put that down, Chief! You know you can't drink that.

Chief looks like he's about to cry.

SALLY (CONT'D) Quit your bellyaching. It's for your own good. You know how you get. Remember what happened last time? All the damage you did?

Chief sighs indignantly.

SALLY (CONT'D) Once you work off what you owe me, you can have your silly tomahawks back.

Chief looks up longingly at the twin tomahawk axes displayed above the bar. He goes back to cleaning. Meanwhile--

LONG Well, Zeke, I got your message. You said this was worth my time.

ZEKE (puffing hard on cigar) Long, we've hit the mother lode. And I mean it.

INSERT MONTAGE

INT. PROFITT SILVER MINE - DAY

Chinese workers swing pickaxes against the mine wall.

ZEKE (V.O.) Them Chinamen been slaving away night and day in the silver mine. And there's been enough silver to draw prospectors from miles around. But not like this.

One weary worker looks like he's going to pass out, but gives one more swing. As the rock falls away from the wall, the worker's face illuminates from the silver revealed. The vein is so rich, other workers stop and marvel at the silver wall.

WORKER #1

Boss! BOSS!

EXT. PROFITT SILVER MINE - LATER

Cart after cart of silver ore is pushed out of the mine. Workers then load the ore onto a horse-drawn cart under the supervision of foremen.

> ZEKE (V.O.) The silver flowed like a river. Just cart after cart. All coming out of Old Man Profitt's mine.

OLD MAN PROFITT (65), a bespectacled man with a slight frame and with only a few fine strands of hair left on his scalp, watches from a platform and grins ghoulishly.

EXT. WELLS GREENE BANK - LATER

A large sign with the bank's name hangs over the entrance. A solitary guard stands outside by the door with a shotgun. The cart full of silver ore pulls up, and armed men spill off the back as another cart full of Chinese workers arrives.

ZEKE (V.O.) The closest smelter is in Bisbee, and the old man has already sent for a guarded transport. It'll take them a couple of days for them to get here.

INT. WELLS GREENE BANK - CONTINUOUS

Behind the teller stations and the Manager's desk, a giant vault dominates the rear of the room. The front door opens and Old Man Profitt approaches a CLERK and drops a giant silver ore at his station.

> ZEKE (V.O.) In the meantime, all of that ore is being stored under lock and key at the bank. And I've got a plan to take it.

END MONTAGE

INT. SALLY'S SALOON - FRONT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

LONG So, we're bank robbers now? ZEKE Sure. Why not?

LONG Why not just ambush the transport on its way to Bisbee?

ZEKE

Long, the men Old Man Profitt hired to guard his fortune are just some boys from around town looking for honest work. The men coming from Bisbee are professionals. Used to be in the army under Sherman. (beat) We're not gonna get the jump on them. And if things go south, we'll have real trouble. Get me?

LONG Alright, Zeke. I believe you. We'll need time to think about it.

ZEKE Sure. Sure. Just don't think too long. Tomorrow night's probably our only chance.

He leaves as Long and Bao huddle and discuss the idea.

EXT. PORTER'S GENERAL GOODS - CONTINUOUS

The general goods store is busy with all walks of life coming in and out with the necessities for their day. Everett approaches and stands outside with his back to the wall and his eyes on the street. Several of his posse file by.

They nod, tip their hat, or otherwise thank him with some small gesture, as if knowing better than to speak to him. Stan walks up after the last member enters the store.

> STAN The boys sure are grateful. I'm sure they all miss their families.

EVERETT Don't we all.

Stan and Everett stand in silence for a moment.

EVERETT (CONT'D) Where's the best place to get a drink around here? STAN Hey now! I never pegged you as the drinking kind. I always thought you were dryer than a snake's behind.

Everett gives him an expectant look.

STAN (CONT'D) OK, since you want the best there are only two places worth recommending. The 9 Lives or Sally's. 9 Lives is cat house but the girls also put on a decent show if that's the kind of entertainment you're looking for. Sally's is even more unsavory if you can believe that. Mostly the dregs of society and that includes Sally. Rumor is that they strung her up in Texas but that tough bitch wouldn't die. So, you won't like the clientele, but Sally pours 'em stiff.

Everett's attention is focused on an approaching horse-drawn cart. Riding on it are MAGGIE MILLER (30), her son BILLY (7), and her hired Negro help RAY (35). Stan realizes, gives Everett a knowing smile, and leaves into the store.

When the cart stops, Everett doesn't approach, but his eyes smile. Ray hops off and begins gathering sacks and containers from the cart. Maggie is the first to see Everett.

> MAGGIE Fancy seeing you here again, Marshal.

> > EVERETT

Ms. Miller.

MAGGIE Please, Everett. Call me Maggie. Are you chasing another dangerous outlaw?

EVERETT Yes ma'am, I am.

MAGGIE

There must be so many for you to be coming around as often as you do. (beat) Are you sure there's not another reason? Everett blushes, unsure of what to say. Then---

BILLY Howdy Marshal!

EVERETT Howdy Billy. You looking after your ma?

BILLY You bet! When I grow up I'm gonna be a marshal, too.

He pulls a piece of wood shaped like a crude pistol from his belt and pretends to shoot from the hip.

BILLY (CONT'D) Bang, bang, bang! You bad man! Don't shoot my daddy!

Everett smiles as if for the first time in a long time.

MAGGIE That's enough Billy. Go help Ray fetch what we came for.

Ray, a formidable black man dressed in field hand attire, nods at Everett as he approaches, containers in hand.

EVERETT Ray. Working hard?

RAY Yessuh, I am. If Ms. Maggie can't run that ranch of hers all by her ownself, I'm happy to work. (to Billy) C'mon now. Git.

BILLY Aw. Bye Marshal!

He gives a friendly wave before entering the store with Ray. Maggie moves closer to Everett.

> MAGGIE You'll have to excuse him. You've made quite an impression on him. (locks eyes with Everett) I wish you would stay longer this time.

EVERETT Maggie...I... MAGGIE It's alright. Just think about it.

She lays her hand on his chest over his heart then goes inside the store. Everett watches her go, then he dusts his hat off on his thigh.

> EVERETT Hell. Where's that drink?

He begins walking down the street.

INT. SALLY'S SALOON - FRONT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Long weighs the pros and cons of Zeke's plan with Bao.

LONG (in Cantonese) We'll have to deal with the sheriff. Not sure how many men are in the bank. But if Zeke is right about the silver, then that's plenty to split five ways.

Bao extends his fingers and thumb on one hand, then bends his thumb in. Then he makes a gun shape out of his pointer finger and thumb. He looks at Long expectantly.

> LONG (CONT'D) (in English) Yes, five of us are going in, but only four of us are shooting, if it comes to that.

Bao looks away and shakes his head.

LONG (CONT'D) I don't want you killing anyone. I never wanted that for you. (in Cantonese) You are my little brother. And I will always protect you. Even from yourself.

Bao slaps the back of his hand into his palm, then makes a jumping off gesture with both. Long looks away, and both men stare across the bar at the bric-a-brac lining the back wall. There are old photos. One of them is of a TRAIN.

LONG (CONT'D) (pause) That was a long time ago. (MORE) LONG (CONT'D) It was an accident. A mistake. It wasn't your fault.

Bao downs the rest of his drink and sets it down carelessly.

LONG (CONT'D) We don't need you to kill anyone. And once this job is done, we can go back home rich men. Where you'll never have to think about killing anyone again.

Long grabs Bao by the scruff and shakes him in a brotherly, cajoling way.

LONG (CONT'D) (in Cantonese) You've come this far without the stain of murder on your soul. Come with me a little longer.

Bao sighs and nods. Long grins and laughs. He turns to find Zeke in the room--

LONG (CONT'D) Zeke! You've got a deal.

Zeke and Sally approach. Sally pours them all shots.

ZEKE (toasting) To our good fortune!

SALLY

Hear, hear.

They drink and slam the shot glasses down on the bar.

ZEKE Bao, you still carry dynamite on you?

Bao looks around first before lifting his poncho to reveal two sticks of TNT tucked in his belt.

ZEKE (CONT'D) Perfect. That'll come in handy if we can't persuade Ol' Booney to open the vault.

LONG

Booney?

ZEKE Bank manager. George Boone. Lives above the bank. Likes to be close to the money. SALLY I don't blame him. LONG So what's the plan then? ZEKE Let's go over that in the morning. Right now, I owe you two a couple of girls. He begins to walk toward the front exit. LONG Oh, no you don't. ZEKE I thought you wanted--LONG I do. But let's just say your taste in women makes me question your eyesight.

eyesight. (beat) I'll pick the girls.

ZEKE Suit yourself. But hold on.

He cracks open the saloon door and signals to a man leaning against the wall across the street. The man looks around nonchalantly before nodding back to Zeke.

> ZEKE (CONT'D) Looks clear. Just be quick.

> > LONG

Mother hen.

He exits.

EXT. SALLY'S SALOON - CONTINUOUS

Long walks out into the bright afternoon. Across from him is the 9 Lives cat house where men practically jog toward and other men stumble out. Sultry women stand on a veranda above the entrance waving handkerchiefs and beckoning men. Long grins eagerly as he begins crossing toward the bustling activity. He pauses to let a horse-drawn cart ride past him, but as it does so, his attention is drawn to a figure standing in the street further down the road.

Everett stops in his tracks as Long is revealed by the horsedrawn cart riding past. His EYES squint, unsure of what he's seeing. Then a whisper spills over his lips--

EVERETT

I don't...

Long finishes his sentence --

LONG ...believe it.

An alien silence falls over the once busy street. Townsfolk quickly understand the situation and begin disappearing into buildings but peek out of windows and doorways. Long and Everett just stare at each other.

The men stand roughly 50 feet apart and speak loudly to ensure each other is heard.

LONG (CONT'D) Marshal Everett James. Fancy meeting you here. How long has it been? Five years? We must do this more often.

EVERETT Fang Long. You are under arrest for the crimes of--

LONG I know my crimes, Marshal. Your last deputy read them to me right before I shot him in the face. What was his name?

EVERETT (quieter) Charlie Wright. From Missouri.

LONG And the one before that? Outside of Benson.

EVERETT (to himself) Preston Hughes. From Kansas.

LONG (pauses) What's the name of the next one? And the one after that? How many more men have to die for your cause? (beat) None. No one else has to die. Turn around and go home. For a moment, Everett looks like he might consider it. LONG (CONT'D) Don't you miss your wife? Your children? How many years have you wasted chasing me? How long have I separated you from your family? Everett's eyes flash, and he hooks the length of his duster around his holster to make access to his gun easier. LONG (CONT'D) Oh, shit. Simultaneously, Long hooks his coat around his holster.

EVERETT My cause is the law, and those deputies died in service to it. And, God willing, their families will see justice is done.

INT. PORTER'S GENERAL GOODS - CONTINUOUS

The men of the posse are spread out, resupplying. Stan is eating an apple as he casually steps to the window and looks outside. He sees Everett just down the street.

STAN

(to posse) Get your guns. Get in position!

The posse look at each other for a moment, but jump into action when they see Stan running up stairs to the roof.

EXT. SALLY'S SALOON - CONTINUOUS

EVERETT Fang Long! You are under arrest for the crimes of robbery and murder, including Deputy Marshals Wright and Hughes. Surrender or I will kill you.

INT. SALLY'S SALOON - FRONT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bao stares sullenly at the train picture on the wall before he downs another shot. Long's voice turns him around.

> LONG Touch that gun and I will send you to hell!

Bao instinctively grabs his rifle and rushes to the door.

EXT. SALLY'S SALOON - CONTINUOUS

EVERETT I'll see you there.

The air turns electric as the eyes of both men scan each other for movement. Hands slowly inch toward grips. Heels dig into the dirt. Weight is shifted.

EXT. PORTER'S GENERAL GOODS - ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Stan reaches the roof and shoulders a rifle. He kneels down behind a low wall and aims at Long. Suddenly, Bao explodes out of Sally's, rifle on shoulder. He lets out a muted cry as he aims blindly down the street.

LONG

No!

EXT. PORTER'S GENERAL GOODS - ROOF - CONTINUOUS

INSERT STAN'S RIFLE SITE

At the last moment, Stan changes targets and aims at Bao.

BACK TO SCENE

EXT. SALLY'S SALOON - CONTINUOUS

A rifle shot hits Bao in the chest just as he squeezes the trigger. His bullet grazes Everett across the side of his head, sending him to the ground. Long is stunned momentarily as he watches his brother fall, but becomes aware quickly.

He senses attackers moving into position around him.