

EXT. TRAIN STATION PLATFORM - MINUTES LATER

Claudette enters the train station office and through a window she can be seen talking to the Platform Manager who writes down what she tells him. Outside, the train that Long robbed has arrived, and the bodies are being carried off.

Sarah cries as she watches while clinging to Jimmy. FATHER ESPINOZA (50) performs last rites on the bodies as they're laid out on the station platform.

INT. JAIL - SUNSET

Long wakes, and his eyes shoot open. He screams--

LONG
(in Cantonese)
Bao! I'm here!

He sits up quickly, but pain reminds him to move slowly. Realizing, Long looks up at the cell walls and bars. He checks his wounds and inspects the bandages. He sighs.

After a moment, he looks through the bars and into the dark jail. The setting sun has made the shadows impenetrable. Long hugs his knees before speaking to the room.

LONG (CONT'D)
When my brother, Bao, was born, our mother wept, but not tears of joy. She could barely feed me after my father had died months before. Five years later, she followed my father, leaving Bao with me.

He shuts his eyes for a moment and breathes in deeply, steeling himself for painful memories.

INSERT FLASHBACK

INT. DIRTY SHACK - GUANGDONG PROVINCE - 30 YEARS EARLIER

An unkempt woman with dirt on her face and matted hair lies down on a pile of straw in a filthy shack. She has a wet dirty rag on her forehead. She looks up at a teenage Long who is dressed in rags.

LONG (V.O.)
Before my mother died, she said to me...
(MORE)

LONG (V.O.) (CONT'D)
(in Cantonese then
English)
Look after your little brother. He
is your only family now.

Teenage Long falls to his knees as his mother fades away, he buries his face in her bosom. After a few moments, he collects himself and stands. He turns to see a child Bao looking up at him with worried uncertainty.

LONG (V.O.)
I was fifteen.

EXT. DOCKS - GUANGDONG PROVINCE - 12 YEARS LATER

Adult Long and teenage Bao carry baskets full of fish from a boat to the fishery. They are still dressed in rags.

LONG (V.O.)
For years we lived like beggars,
working odd jobs where we could
find them. We slept little and ate
even less.

Long and Bao stop when they see a White businessman standing next to a Chinese man who is reading aloud from an official-looking paper. The businessman grins as a crowd forms.

LONG (V.O.)
So, when we had the opportunity to
come to America for work, I knew we
had to take it.

EXT. LARGE BOAT - OPEN SEA - LATER

The ship's deck is packed with Chinese men. Long and Bao hang over the side of the ship with the sea air blowing through their hair. They are grinning and laughing, looking forward to their new life.

LONG (V.O.)
I brought him here for a better
life. I didn't know this country
would take his life instead.

BACK TO SCENE

INT. JAIL - SUNSET

The impenetrable darkness is silent for a few moments, and then a match is struck, and the flame dips into a smoking pipe, revealing Everett's face. Then he lights a lantern on the desk where he's sitting. His eyes are cold and hard.

EVERETT

Yeah. We've all lost people. Just ask the four women whose husbands you killed today. I'm sure they have sad stories to tell, too.

Long shakes his head, frustrated at letting himself be vulnerable. He picks himself up and sits on the cell bench.

LONG

What now?

EVERETT

(puffs)

Now we wait. Tomorrow, assuming you'll survive the journey, I'll take you back up north to face a judge and jury.

(he puffs his pipe)

And then I will watch you die.

LONG

(scoffs weakly)

Is my death all you have to live for?

Everett doesn't answer for a long time.

EVERETT

I live for the law. And the law says you need to pay for what you've done.

LONG

The law. Your laws never protected me or my brother. Or my countrymen who died building your railroads. Where was the law when we were paid two-thirds of what a White man was paid? Where was the law when we were whipped by overseers and shackled when we tried to leave? Where was the law when we went on strike to protest our treatment, and the railroad companies stopped feeding us?

(beat)

(MORE)

LONG (CONT'D)

Finally, after eight days of starvation, the law came. But not to save us. The Sheriff came with his deputies to threaten us if we did not return to work. Your laws never applied to me.

Everett puffs on his pipe for a few moments.

EVERETT

Whatever injustices you've suffered, that's no excuse for killing men, women, and children.

(beat)

Life isn't fair. And you can't make it fair by taking life. Only the law makes life fair. Or as close to it as we can get.

(beat)

And that's why you have to die. To bring some fairness to this life.

The two men stare at each other in silence.

EXT. DOC MURPHY'S - MINUTES LATER

Petrov finishes closing up his cart as he concludes some last minute business with a townsman. He climbs onto the driver's seat and is about to ride off when Doc Murphy comes out of his office.

DOC MURPHY

Go on! Get out of here!

PETROV

You should spend less time worrying about me, and pay more attention to your wife.

(beat)

Ma'am.

He tips his hat at someone behind Doc Murphy. Doc Murphy turns around to see his wife in the door way staring wide-eyed at Petrov. Petrov rides off before Doc Murphy can reply.

DOC MURPHY

(to Claudette)

Just what did he mean by that?

CLAUDETTE

I...I...

Claudette is at a loss for words until she sees something over Doc Murphy's shoulder.

CLAUDETTE (CONT'D)
Oh my! A shooting star! Look!

DOC MURPHY
Ain't no such thing...

He turns to see a streak across the sky. Then another. And another. One streak leaves a long green tail that grows as it travels. It passes low overhead, whistling softly.

CLAUDETTE
Kiss me, darling. For good luck.

DOC MURPHY
Are you crazy, woman? I'm too old for all that school boy nonsense.

He goes inside. Claudette follows, disappointed.

INT. PROSPECTORS' STAKE - CONTINUOUS

The mine interior looks shoddy with hastily erected support beams and scant lanterns hanging. Rubble is piled up haphazardly. Bud is swinging his pickaxe wildly.

BUD
Goddammit! I know we're close. I know it. I can smell it.
(swings)
I can...taste it.

Bill shovels the rubble into a wheelbarrow.

BILL
Slow down or you'll be all in.

Bud throws the pickaxe down angrily.

BUD
Maybe if you spent more time working...

His jaw locks and he has to massage it to get it moving.

BUD (CONT'D)
...and less time running your mouth, we might be somewhere!

Bill looks back at him with genuine hurt and worry. He notices Bud scratch at his dog bite underneath the bandage on his arm. Bill puts more chewing tobacco in his mouth and grabs the wheelbarrow to cart out a pile of rubble.

EXT. PROSPECTORS' STAKE - MOMENTS LATER

Bill mutters to himself as he dumps the pile. He can hear Bud grunting like an animal inside as he swings. Someone chuckles, drawing Bill's attention. It's Old Man Profitt. He stands 40 feet away on his stake.

OLD MAN PROFITT

Another pile of rubble? I told you that stake was no good. When are you gonna take my offer and get on with your lives?

His cart pulls up beside him. He climbs aboard next to one of his men.

BILL

Your offer's no good here, Profitt. Not when it's a fraction of what we paid for this stake. Not when we're about to strike it rich!

OLD MAN PROFITT

Don't make me laugh. The only one getting rich around here is me. Go on, work yourself to death.

He rides away. Bill watches him go and spits. He's about to go back in the mine when he hears a whistling sound. He looks around and then slowly looks up as the environment around him lights up green. A meteorite hurtles down toward him.

Bill dives out of the way as the meteorite crashes through the rock face and into the mine, sending rubble and dust exhaling out. Bill collects himself and runs in.

BILL

Bud! Bud!

INT. PROSPECTORS' STAKE - CONTINUOUS

Bud is buried beneath some light rubble, and Bill runs in to pull him out. Once free, they both stare in awe at the hole in the mine wall and the giant glowing divot beneath them. They peer over the edge to see a green meteorite.

For a moment, they both just stare until Bill moves toward the meteorite, seemingly mesmerized by the pulsating glow. Bud looks on in fascination. When Bill is close enough, he reaches out to touch the watermelon-sized rock.

He lays his entire palm on it and howls in pain as he tries to pull his hand away. He's finally able to and clenches his fist agony.

BUD

Bill! Are you OK?!

Bill extends his fingers and sees a sticky green substance on his palm and fingers. It smokes, but then appears to be absorbed into Bill's skin. He grabs at his forearm as if to try to stop the substance from moving up his arm.

BUD (CONT'D)

Bill! Talk to me!

The look of horror on Bill's face fades away. He snaps his head toward Bud--

BILL

I'm fine! Leave me alone!

Bill's sudden aggression crows Bud who shrinks back. Bill takes off his shirt and swaddles the meteorite like a baby.

BILL (CONT'D)

I'm gonna be rich.

BUD

You mean...we're gonna be rich.

BILL

(beat)

Right. We.

(beat)

Let's put this somewhere safe.

His eyes are aglow in the pulsating green.

EXT. ARIZONA PLAINS - STREAM - CONTINUOUS

The sun has just dipped over the horizon, casting heavy shadows on the uneven desert. Petrov counts his money as he absentmindedly drives his horses. He chuckles to himself. Suddenly, the horses halt. There's a log in the road.

Petrov looks at it with puzzlement. He hears movement, but before he can react, Indian bandits leap from their hiding spots and spring their ambush. Riders appear from nowhere and whoop and shout as they surround Petrov. He's trapped.

PETROV

(no accent)

Now...whoa! Wait just a minute.
There's no reason to be violent.

The BANDIT LEADER separates himself from the others. He steps forward and grabs the petrified Petrov from his seat. The Bandit Leader draws a mean knife from its sheath.

PETROV (CONT'D)

Take whatever you want! I have
money! I have liquor!
(to all)
You know, fire water! You like!

He begins pantomiming drinking exaggeratedly. The Bandit Leader sneers and drives the knife up through Petrov's throat and into his skull. Petrov goes limp instantly and dies. The Bandit Leader lets him fall and mutters to a fellow bandit.

That man springs into action, unhooking the horses and commanding others to help him push the cart off the road. The cart rolls down an embankment and topples over into the stream. Petrov's bottles spill, crashing open into the water.

The stream turns into a pastiche of bright colors that mix into a ruddy brown that's swept away by the current. Following it, the water disappears underground.

EXT. EPITAPH - WATER PUMP - CONTINUOUS

The water comes out of a town water pump and into the bucket of MORTIMER CHARON (40), the undertaker, a slow-looking but well-meaning man. He finishes and takes his bucket to leave. He turns and is surprised to see MS. STAPLETON (20).

MS. STAPLETON

Mr. Charon! How's the undertaking
business?

MORTIMER

Please, call me Mortimer. Business
has been too good lately. If you
know what I mean.

They both look down at the ground for a moment.

MS. STAPLETON
(RE: bucket)
Washing up before supper?

MORTIMER
Oh, this? No, I need to clean up
the corpses before service
tomorrow.
(beat)
Well, I best get to it. You have a
pleasant evening.

Mortimer leaves, and Ms. Stapleton begins pumping water into her own bucket.

EXT. SALLY'S SALOON - SIDE - CONTINUOUS

Bill and Bud are arguing over who should carry the meteorite. They stop just outside Sally's on the side where beer kegs are standing. The two men look like they're about to come to blows. Bill spits some tobacco, and it lands on a keg.

Zeke comes out with an empty keg and surprises the men. They head off together. Zeke exchanges the keg he's holding for the one Bill spat on. The spit is strangely green and has seeped into the wood. Zeke brings the keg inside.

INT. SALLY'S SALOON - FRONT ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Sally taps the keg and pours beers for patrons. They cheer.