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To Arlene and Kim.

Cast of Characters

MRS. BLAINE
PLENTY HORSES
NED CASEY
ELDER MRS. BLAINE
J.J. McDONOUGH
ATTORNEY NOCK
GENERAL MILES
JUDGE
ATTORNEY STERLING
JAMIE BLAINE
WHITE MOON
LIVING BEAR
RED CLOUD
SPOTTED BIRD
GUARD
SOLDIERS
INDIANS
TOWNSPEOPLE
SECRETARY OF STATE
PHOTOGRAPHER
FACULTY
JURY FOREMAN
WAITERS
REPORTERS

HUMAN EAGLE*
HUMAN BUFFALO*
HUMAN WOLF*

**Not actors on all fours, or pairs of actors in four-legged costumes—
more like walking puppets, as described in script.)*

All the actors—except those depicting Mrs. Blaine, Plenty Horses, and Casey—are intended to play multiple parts.

Setting

South Dakota, 1891

Acknowledgements

Ghost Dance received its world premiere at River Stage (Frank Condon, Artistic Director) in Sacramento, California, on November 19, 1997. It was directed by Frank Condon; the production supervisor was Trefoni Michael Rizzi; the technical director was David Fulk; set design was by Ron Smith; lighting design was by Tim Anderson; costume design was by Beth Mallette-Anderson; animal costume construction was by Kim Simons; the stage manager was Jack McDowell. The cast was as follows:

MRS. BLAINE	Michelle Armstrong
PLENTY HORSES	Bernardo Pena
NED CASEY	David DiFrancesco
J.J. McDONOUGH	Roger Hudson
DEFENSE ATTORNEY NOCK.....	Steve Mackenroth
GENERAL MILES	Richard Russ
JUDGE.....	Michael Beckett
PROSECUTOR STERLING.....	Ray Tatar
WHITE MOON	Eric Burnyea Burnett
LIVING BEAR.....	Dennis Wilkerson
RED CLOUD	James H. Rowe
GUARD.....	Ed Gyles, Jr.
ELDER MRS. BLAINE	Judy Radu
SECRETARY OF STATE.....	Mark Hoffman
JAMIE BLAINE	Chris Wall
SPOTTED BIRD	John L. Gong
PHOTOGRAPHER	Drazen Mirsirlic
ENSEMBLE	John Catching, Heath Chaney, Rena Lopez, Lora Weekes-Cataviela, Natalie Wells

Two items from the *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader*, April 26, 1891...

J.J. McDonough, who is in Sioux Falls reporting the trial of Plenty Horses, telegraphs his paper, the *New York World*, the following interesting interview with the Indian. [...] “I do not deny that Lieutenant Casey came to his death at my hands, and whatever fate the court decrees, I am ready and willing to suffer.”

When the big drop curtain at the opera house was rolled into the skies last night, a large audience was present to enjoy “Mr. Barnes of New York,” as put on by Frank W. Sanger’s Broadway Theater company. [...] Every individual in the audience went home more than satisfied.

GHOST DANCE

by Mark Stein and Frank Condon

ACT I

Scene 1

(White Clay Creek. A landscape of rolling hills, blanketed in brown. MRS. BLAINE stands before or among these hills. She is 26 years old. Intelligent, energetic, and, as women were in 1891, completely buttoned.)

MRS. BLAINE. Between the two trials, I went to the place where the killing had happened. Quite a few of the women took the trip, though they were going to see the site of Wounded Knee. Only I went to White Clay Creek. To make them real, perhaps. By seeing if there was still blood anywhere. Or any sign of what had happened here. There wasn't.

What I found, in fact, seemed *unreal*. I saw no foliage, no fertility. Even the so-called creek was just a rut. What, I wondered, brought them to this place? And what, for that matter, had brought me?

Was it the Ghost Dance? That was what he was up against, in terms of a jury, according to his attorney. A dance. Having to do with the Messiah coming back...and destroying all white people.

(Dimly at first, a chant is heard. A man's voice, far off. This will become two men, then three, then three men and a woman, as:)

Not that folks out here were actually afraid of that. But rather, their *faith* in that. That and the fact that the faith began to spread. Fast. Like a prairie fire. One tribe teaching it to the next, until it covered the entire west.

And if you lived here, so I'm told, you could hear them. Somewhere in the hills. Continuing into the night, and sometimes *through* the night. And even, as the troops began to gather, they'd go on for days on end. And because unseen, the hills themselves felt dangerous.

(The hills, which until now have been but scenery, begin to come alive. Slowly rising up to reveal INDIANS beneath the blanketing of brown terrain.)

...As if the *earth* were the enemy. Maybe because of the belief, which this dance celebrated, that we whites were destined, by God, to be buried beneath new forests and prairies and streams.

(The INDIANS now stand, cold and hungry, their blankets over their shoulders. Not so much threatening as silent. The distant chanting dissipates.)

Scene 2

(Jail house, Sioux Falls. PLENTY HORSES sits in a chair. He is 22, dressed in a faded shirt, worn out trousers, and unadorned moccasins. He has long hair. He stares at the floor. A GUARD stands nearby.)

MRS. BLAINE. My name is Mrs. Blaine.

(She awaits some acknowledgement. None comes.)

I know a lot of women have come by to...view you. I'm not one of them. I think it's very rude, in fact, to say the least.

(No reaction.)

God, I sound like my mother-in-law. No wonder you're not responding. *(Approaching him:)* I'm here because your attorney was hoping you might talk to me. Or, more to the point, that I might convince you to talk to *him*.

(Her little jest gets nothing.)

The reason being...my father-in-law is James Blaine.

(No response.)

James Blaine, the Secretary of State? I don't know if Indians read newspapers.

(No response.)

(To the GUARD:) Does he speak English?

GUARD. When he wants.

MRS. BLAINE. I only mention my father-in-law because your case, Mr. Plenty Horses , has aroused considerable interest.

(No response.)

Maybe not from you, but from others.

(Still nothing.)

If you want me to leave, just say so.

(Nothing.)

Or don't.

(He doesn't.)

How about this? If you say nothing, I'll take that as a sign that you want me to go. And I will.

(Nothing.)

MRS. BLAINE. *(A bit miffed:)* Okay.

(MRS. BLAINE gathers whatever she may have with her in the way of purse or parasol, and starts to leave. But stops.)

Oh all right, maybe I *am* like all the others, but good God, man, the Secretary of State! Does that mean *nothing* to you?!

(Nothing.)

(Becoming unexpectedly interested:) Why did you shoot the lieutenant?

(No answer.)

Do you even know?

(No answer.)

I suppose even if you did, why would you tell me when you won't even talk to your attorney. But if it was connected, in some way, with what took place at Wounded Knee, my father-in-law, perhaps, can help. Behind the scenes, of course. A word here, a favor there. I don't know if that makes any sense to you or not. Politics? I find it fascinating but I know it's not everyone's cup of tea.

(Nothing.)

My mother-in-law, though never to my face, says I'm an opportunist. That's why I married her boy, y'see. And maybe she's right, in a way, I don't know, who *isn't* an opportunist?!

(She stops, realizing she is becoming unhinged.)

I'll be frank with you, sir. I don't know why it should make any difference to me whether or not you hang. For all I know, you deserve to. But I can't help but tell you *I think you have a chance!* *(Confidentially now:)* When I arrived at my hotel, and saw all the spectators gathering for your trial... Do you even know about that? Women especially. Which, no one wants to admit it, but when women show an interest... *(Realizing she's starting to get unglued again:)* Well, that's another matter.

(PLENTY HORSES is watching her now.)

Why did you shoot the lieutenant?

(PLENTY HORSES does not reply. A pause.)

(Disappointed:) Well. Good day.

(MRS. BLAINE takes her things and starts to leave.)

PLENTY HORSES. Mrs. Blaine.

(Startled, MRS. BLAINE stops and turns.)

PLENTY HORSES. I wish to say, it is well.

(MRS. BLAINE waits for more. None comes.)

MRS. BLAINE. What is well?

PLENTY HORSES. I shot the lieutenant. Your people will have a trial. Your sense of justice will be satisfied. And I will be hanged. My people will bury me as a warrior. I *too* will be satisfied.

(MRS. BLAINE finds she has no response.)

Scene 3

(Sioux Falls. TOWNSPEOPLE go about their business. Included among them are an ELDERLY VICTORIAN COUPLE, FURNITURE MOVERS, some SOLDIERS.)

MRS. BLAINE. *(As if walking along the main street:)* I wasn't entirely truthful when I'd told the Indian why I'd come.

ELDERLY VICTORIAN WOMAN. Suppose we just say you were not entirely who you presented yourself to be.

MRS. BLAINE. Who of us ever is?

ELDERLY VICTORIAN WOMAN. Yes, well, perhaps that's best left to the philosophers.

MRS. BLAINE. *(To us:)* It was for a divorce.

(The FURNITURE MOVERS have set down a chair in which the VICTORIAN WOMAN sits, posed with her husband. They are, we come to realize, the SECRETARY OF STATE and his WIFE.)

ELDER MRS. BLAINE. Which, I'm certain you can understand, we would prefer to keep hush-hush.

MRS. BLAINE. Does Jamie know?

ELDER MRS. BLAINE. Well of course he knows! It isn't *that* hush-hush.

MRS. BLAINE. Then why hasn't he come to me? *(To us:)* That was what hurt the most. Not so much the failure of our marriage...but my feeling of being ousted.

ELDER MRS. BLAINE. I'm sorry if you think that.

MRS. BLAINE. *(Angry, to her mother-in-law:)* You think that... *(Catching herself:)* ...I'm too crude to be in your company.

ELDER MRS. BLAINE. I think, my dear, that you two were never suited.

MRS. BLAINE. *(To us:)* I went home that afternoon and made a list. Perhaps out of anger, I'll admit. Or perhaps to demonstrate that, even in defeat, I too had strength.

ELDER MRS. BLAINE. *(Holding up a list:)* Well, this sets you up quite nicely doesn't it?

MRS. BLAINE. *(Just now realizing:)* Maybe that was why the Indian shot that soldier. To show some muscle, even in defeat. And why I was—and I was, I realized, from the moment I left the jail—so curiously drawn to him.

ELDER MRS. BLAINE. Suppose we have our attorneys contact yours?

MRS. BLAINE. *(To her mother-in-law:)* If you wish. Though, should this end up in court, lots of facts will become quite public.

(The ELDER MRS. BLAINE realizes she is checkmated. She stands and, as she exits, flings the list in her husband's hand. The SECRETARY OF STATE reads it. He too is a bit set back. He then says to her:)

SECRETARY OF STATE. Agreed.

MRS. BLAINE. *(To us, somewhat sadly:)* He always did like me. *(As the SECRETARY OF STATE exits:)* Hence I'm here. His idea.

(TOWNSPEOPLE return. The chair from the previous sequence gets put to other use.)

The old man's plan was, in case someone knew me, I could say I was merely observing the trial. Like a lot of others were.

(One of the pedestrians, McDONOUGH, notices her. He carries a newspaper.)

McDONOUGH. Say, excuse me, aren't you Miss McKinley?

MRS. BLAINE. No.

McDONOUGH. Cleveland?

MRS. BLAINE. No.

McDONOUGH. You're somebody's daughter.

MRS. BLAINE. I hope so.

(McDONOUGH, still wondering, ambles off some distance, amid the other pedestrians, as:)

Sort of like the disappearing coin trick, the master of world diplomacy explained. They watch this hand...while the coin's in that one.

McDONOUGH. Blaine! (*Returning to her:*) New York World. I knew I knew you. You used to live in New York, right? You and your hubby. Daughter-in-law, now I got it. Say! Can I infer, by your presence, an interest in this case on the part of the Secretary of State?

MRS. BLAINE. I'm only here to observe the trial.

McDONOUGH. Oh? You were over at the jail just now, weren't you?

MRS. BLAINE. Was I?

McDONOUGH. Easily ascertainable. Is there a deal in the works?

MRS. BLAINE. You're a very progressive man, Mr. McDonough, to think a woman would be entrusted with such a mission.

McDONOUGH. Yeah, well, I pride myself on being ahead of the pack. What's the scoop?

MRS. BLAINE. I'm sorry to disappoint you.

McDONOUGH. I don't disappoint that easily. What'd the Indian have to say?

MRS. BLAINE. Really now, Mr. McDonough...

McDONOUGH. Oh okay, okay. How 'bout I guess?

MRS. BLAINE. (*Starting on:*) If you'll excuse me...

McDONOUGH. Fifty cents says he didn't speak. Then at the end, right when you were about to leave, all of a sudden he pipes up.

(*MRS. BLAINE has paused in her exit.*)

McDONOUGH. (*Reeling her in:*) Something to do with the white man's justice? And how he would be buried as a warrior? Almost as if that was what he wanted. And you—now don't tell me, let me guess!—were speechless.

(*MRS. BLAINE is speechless.*)

Forget the four bits. He did the same to me. But I got the lowdown.

MRS. BLAINE. You did?

McDONOUGH. Yup. Paid his old man ten bucks to tell the tale.

MRS. BLAINE. Is that ethical?

McDONOUGH. I dunno. Never thought about it.

MRS. BLAINE. And?

McDONOUGH. And what?

MRS. BLAINE. And...well...what...did his father have to say?

McDONOUGH. Ha! You know something? I like you.

MRS. BLAINE. Okay, I'm curious! Did the father say why his son did it?

McDONOUGH. You betcha. And for a nickel, you can read all about it in the paper.

(McDONOUGH cackles, handing her his newspaper, then exits.)

Scene 4

(A restaurant in Sioux Falls. In the previous scene, WAITERS brought out a little cloth-covered table and a chair. One now seats MRS. BLAINE, while the other serves her coffee in fine china, as:)

MRS. BLAINE. The local papers took the liberty of picking up McDonough's stories.

(As MRS. BLAINE glances at the article, PLENTY HORSES appears in a separate space.)

Mr. McDonough, I discovered, took the liberty of putting his interview with the father into *Plenty Horses' mouth*.

PLENTY HORSES. *(To us:)* I was with Red Cloud's camp, in the vicinity of White Clay Creek. The army was advancing. There was much excitement. Many of us danced the Ghost Dance.

MRS. BLAINE. It made the story more thrilling.

PLENTY HORSES. We had heard what we thought must be thunder from the direction of Wounded Knee. But later, as they came limping, and crawling even, into our camp, we learned of what had happened. Of the army shooting everyone. Whether fighting or not. Every Indian in sight.

(CASEY enters. He wears the uniform of a cavalry officer. He is accompanied by two INDIANS IN ARMY UNIFORMS—one of whom we will come to know as WHITE MOON.)

After that, I went each morning with a group to see that no harm came to Red Cloud and our camp. The man I now know to have been Lieutenant Casey came upon us with two of his scouts, who were Cheyenne. Through them, he spoke with my uncle, Bear Lying Down.

CASEY. I have a message for Red Cloud from General Miles.

PLENTY HORSES. My uncle asked what his message was.

CASEY. I wish to deliver it personally. Take me to him.

PLENTY HORSES. My uncle said he could not do that.

CASEY. Then I shall find him myself.

PLENTY HORSES. My uncle said it would be wise to let him take the message and return with the response.

CASEY. *(Considers the situation, then:)* Tell Red Cloud that General Miles wishes to speak with him. And that I have come to take him there.

PLENTY HORSES. My uncle took this message and left, though all of us knew Red Cloud would never consent. After the murder of Sitting Bull, we knew the word of the white man regarding even the safety of a chief was worthless. When my uncle returned, he was with Pete Richard, Red Cloud's son-in-law, who spoke excellent English, and told the lieutenant that, respectfully, Red Cloud declined.

CASEY. Declines? This is from General Miles! Did he understand that?

PLENTY HORSES. *(Still to us:)* Yes.

CASEY. The General is requesting a communication with Red Cloud. When there is no communication, that is when we have misinterpretations, mistakes, distrust. Which is what happened at Wounded Knee. And if your chief will not communicate with a General of the United States Army it could damn well happen here! Do you understand?

PLENTY HORSES. Aside from the disrespect, there was the threat. Yield or die.

(A beat, then:)

Pete Richard answered Red Cloud wished to warn him. It was unsafe for Casey to be where he was. There were many angry Indians about. Red Cloud sent word, leave at once; return to your camp. As the lieutenant and his henchmen turned to go, I raised my rifle.

(A shot is heard.)

Scene 5

(A local law office. MRS. BLAINE is with her attorney, NOCK, who holds a document.)

NOCK. You realize, of course, if this reporter uncovers your reason for being here, before the divorce is final, this settlement goes right out the window.

MRS. BLAINE. That's why I'm telling you about him.

NOCK. So wouldn't it be better, Mrs. Blaine, to have him thinking you *are* up to something with the case?

MRS. BLAINE. How?

NOCK. Well... You might pay a call on General Miles.

MRS. BLAINE. What?

NOCK. Ever met him?

MRS. BLAINE. Once or twice.

NOCK. There you are. A social visit. In the course of which, when it comes up, if he'd be willing to testify that Wounded Knee was an act of war, I think I could get the Indian off.

MRS. BLAINE. Why don't you contact the General yourself?

NOCK. I've tried. No response. But you he might assume to be your father-in-law's proxy.

MRS. BLAINE. Mr. Nock, it was one thing to pay a visit to the Indian. But to play politics with General Miles—let alone the *New York World!*—and put my father-in-law in that position...

NOCK. What position? *He's* Mr. Disappearing Coin Trick! I'm just saying, since you've got the coin, why not spend it?

MRS. BLAINE. That isn't why I came here.

NOCK. Isn't it?

MRS. BLAINE. What are you talking about?

NOCK. What do you think led to your divorce? Lots of women have husbands like yours. And lots of husbands have mothers like his.

MRS. BLAINE. Are you blaming me??

NOCK. Ma'am, I'm an attorney. I don't know the meaning of the word "blame." It's just a tool we use.

MRS. BLAINE. I'm confused.

NOCK. And so is my other client, sitting over in the jail. And from what I understand, like you, he's also something of a misfit. Fact is, no one really likes him all that much. Well, except for everyone who doesn't know him. Forgive me, if I...

MRS. BLAINE. No no.

(A moment, then:)

How will you defend him?

NOCK. I wish I knew.

MRS. BLAINE. What about what he said in the paper? Or his father said he said. Isn't that a defense?

NOCK. Sure, if it's true. But it isn't. Even his own comrades don't corroborate that story.

MRS. BLAINE. What do they say happened?

NOCK. Well for starters, all the others agree, when the lieutenant arrived, he shook their hands.

MRS. BLAINE. So?

NOCK. Try to imagine yourself a man, Mrs. Blaine, sitting in a jury box. Being told over and over, Plenty Horses shook this man's hand, then later when the lieutenant turned to go, shot him in the back of the head.

MRS. BLAINE. Maybe he misunderstood his English.

NOCK. He was educated at a boarding school.

MRS. BLAINE. He was?

NOCK. But...if the Indian viewed Casey as a spy. Someone who, if he got back, could report their position. In war, y'see, you're allowed to shoot a spy.

MRS. BLAINE. Was this war?

NOCK. If it wasn't, what was Wounded Knee? Shouldn't all those soldiers have to stand trial, too? At least for the women and children?

MRS. BLAINE. Interesting logic.

NOCK. Forget interesting logic, Mrs. Blaine, it is a *defense*. One that not only justifies his action, but keeps public interest! Which is far more effective than logic.

(MRS. BLAINE *is speechless.*)

Now, shall we talk about *your* case?

Scene 6

(Pine Ridge Reservation. GENERAL MILES is having his photo taken by a PHOTOGRAPHER. The PHOTOGRAPHER deferentially positions MILES, even as:)

MILES. Are you serious?

MRS. BLAINE. Why not?

MILES. Christ God Almighty.

MRS. BLAINE. I don't see what's wrong with it. In fact it seems to me, General, to work for you as well. Simply testify that you were at war with the Sioux. That gets the army off the hook as well as Plenty Horses.

MILES. Does your father-in-law know you're out here?

MRS. BLAINE. Yes.

(Then:)

Though not necessarily...about this.

MILES. I'll bet.

(The PHOTOGRAPHER now positions MILES for a seated pose. As he does:)

MILES. You can tell the old man I have nothing to apologize for. What went on was not what the press says. We were deceived and we were provoked.

MRS. BLAINE. So you killed them? Women and children included.

MILES. The women were hiding the weapons! Under their skirts. Where, so as not to offend their men, we refrained from searching. I'm not happy about what went on, but they were warned. They, in fact, fired first. Just as this Indian fella did. Unprovoked. In the back of the head. *(Batting away the PHOTOGRAPHER:)* Would you get—?! Enough. Take the damn camera away. *(To MRS. BLAINE:)* It's been so long since I smelled the Potomac, Mrs. Blaine. I was beginning to think I missed it.

(The PHOTOGRAPHER has taken up his equipment, and is exiting.)

MRS. BLAINE. Is it different here, General?

MILES. *(Putting on his overcoat:)* Maybe not. I don't know. Maybe it's just that the west is so large, you can forget.

MRS. BLAINE. Maybe that's the first step.

MILES. Toward what?

MRS. BLAINE. Change.

MILES. *(Preparing to leave:)* Yes, well...

MRS. BLAINE. Will you testify?

MILES. No.

MRS. BLAINE. Why? Because you want Wounded Knee forgotten?

MILES. Good afternoon, Mrs. Blaine.

MRS. BLAINE. It won't be. And you won't get elected to the White House, no matter how flattering the photo, unless you find a better explanation!

MILES. You have some gall, young lady!

MRS. BLAINE. *(Less than steady:)* Yes, well, take it or...or...or...

MILES. *(Dismissively:)* Take what? That we were at war? Without congressional authorization? Say, there's a real vote getter. Tell your father-in-law he'd better tutor you a lot more before sending you out on business!

(What courage MRS. BLAINE was holding onto disappears. MILES sees this. He has offended his own sense of gallantry.)

MILES. Forgive me, I...

MRS. BLAINE. *(Struggling to bear up:)* No... No need.

MILES. No, truly. I'm...not accustomed to having women talk like... Well, other than my wife, that is.

MRS. BLAINE. It's all right. I invited it.

(Still, MILES sees she is in pain. After a moment:)

MILES. You know, I knew Ned.

MRS. BLAINE. Who?

MILES. Casey. The lieutenant. Knew him personally. Knew the family.

MRS. BLAINE. I'm sorry. I didn't realize.

MILES. You needn't be. He was a soldier. He knew the risks.

MRS. BLAINE. But still. That he was special to you.

MILES. Oh, he wasn't really. Or at least, I didn't think of him that way. Ned was kind of a loser, truth be told. Right up to the end.

MRS. BLAINE. I beg your pardon?

(CASEY appears in the shadows, on foot, hat in hand. He wears a long winter coat. A very different bearing from the man we saw before.)

MILES. I knew him through his father. General Casey. Who rewrote the book on tactics. Every West Pointer—Ned included—has to practically memorize Casey's Tactics. And his brother Tom I know. Chief of the Army Corps of Engineers. Never have met the oldest one. Junior. He flew in the face of family tradition. Became a rear admiral in the Navy.

CASEY. *(Nervous:)* General Miles?

(MRS. BLAINE takes in CASEY, as:)

MILES. Then there's Ned. Forty years old. A lieutenant.

MRS. BLAINE. Why only a lieutenant?

CASEY. *(Taking a step or two forward:)* I was hoping to discuss an idea I had, sir?

MILES. He just never found a place for himself. His niche.

CASEY. *(Proceeding uncertainly:)* I've been thinking, sir. About the Indians?

MILES. Not that he didn't have ideas. Christ, he was always coming up with one thing or another. But he never quite got the hang of how things work. Really work. Tactics.

CASEY. About what contribution they could make.

MILES. He came to me, about a year or so back, with an idea for enlisting Indians into the Army.

CASEY. As scouts, sir.

MILES. An ideal opportunity, he said, for them *and* us.

CASEY. (*Awkwardly referring to notes:*) Number one, knowledge of the land. Two, they're expert trackers. Three, ability to communicate with other Indians. Four, appeals to their sense of bravery and love of the outdoors. Five...

MILES. Not that it was a bad idea. In fact, hell, I let him give it a go. And he took a handful of Cheyenne and turned them into a crack outfit. With uniforms, their own insignia, discipline. But what did it get him? Other than killed, as it turned out. I'd told him, right from the get-go, it's over out here. There aren't going to be any more wars.

CASEY. Still, there's so much left to do.

MILES. (*Now to CASEY:*) For bureaucrats, Ned! The Indians are beat. There's no percentage in what's left. Here's what I'd suggest. Why don't you come to Chicago with me?

CASEY. Chicago?

MILES. I'll put you on staff. Could be a hot spot. Lot of labor unrest. And it's a good place to perch. Be among the first to learn of any opportunities. Not to mention, a lot of pretty women in Chicago.

CASEY. Could I think about it?

MILES. What the hell's to think about? Christ Almighty, man, you know who I am?

CASEY. (*Intimidated:*) Of course, General—

MILES. I am offering you a staff slot and you want to think about it?!

CASEY. It's only that...I like it here.

MILES. (*A beat; can't believe it:*) You what??

CASEY. (*Meekly:*) I do.

MILES. Why??

CASEY. I don't know, entirely. At first, I admit, I felt like I'd been exiled. For some crime I'd committed, or affront to mankind. Maybe that's why the Cheyenne, when I met some, who truly were—I hope you won't take offense, General—in exile.

MRS. BLAINE. (*To MILES:*) Go on.

CASEY. What, I wondered, was their transgression? Simply the way they lived? And then I thought, for me, though different, in a way perhaps it was the same.

MILES. Well I think you get the drift. Family anxiety, that sort of thing. It was obvious he was not military material. But he did have this idea. And if he was all fired up to undertake it, what the hell, I gave him the go ahead. Then came this. And now you're asking me to testify on behalf of his attacker?

MRS. BLAINE. His attacker paints a very different picture.

MILES. God damn his attacker. Ned was a nice young man.

(MILES exits...leaving MRS. BLAINE turning to look, with some wonder, at CASEY.)

Scene 7

(The courtroom. A JUDGE presides. PLENTY HORSES, dressed as before, is seated next to NOCK. MRS. BLAINE is seated among the SPECTATORS, including McDONOUGH. STERLING, the district attorney, questions WHITE MOON, one of the Indians we saw earlier, accompanying CASEY. WHITE MOON wears his army uniform, though his hat is off.)

STERLING. Tell us your name.

WHITE MOON. White Moon.

STERLING. And your occupation?

WHITE MOON. Corporal, U.S. Army, Twenty-second infantry.

STERLING. On the seventh of January of this year, who was your commanding officer?

WHITE MOON. Lieutenant Casey.

STERLING. Were you with him on that day?

WHITE MOON. Yes sir.

STERLING. What took place?

WHITE MOON. We went out in search of Red Cloud to deliver a message from General Miles.

STERLING. Did you know what was in the message?

WHITE MOON. Yes. (*Just a bit rehearsed:*) General Miles wished to confer with Red Cloud, to avoid any repetition of the unfortunate event which had recently occurred.

STERLING. Lieutenant Casey stated that the army did not want bloodshed?

WHITE MOON. Yes sir.

STERLING. What happened then?

WHITE MOON. We were refused passage. One of the Sioux took the message for us, and returned with a half-breed, Pete Richard, who was Red Cloud's son-in-law. He told us Red Cloud refused.

STERLING. And then?

WHITE MOON. We turned to leave. I heard a shot. Then saw the lieutenant fall from his horse. I then saw smoke coming from the rifle of that man.

(WHITE MOON *points to* PLENTY HORSES.)

STERLING. Did you know this man by name?

WHITE MOON. When we'd arrived and introduced ourselves, he'd said his name was Plenty Horses.

STERLING. When you introduced yourselves, did Lieutenant Casey offer to shake hands?

WHITE MOON. Yes sir.

STERLING. Did Plenty Horses shake Lieutenant Casey's hand?

WHITE MOON. Yes sir.

STERLING. And you recognize him today, this man, Plenty Horses, as the man from whose rifle you saw smoke?

WHITE MOON. Yes sir.

STERLING. Thank you. *(To NOCK:)* Your witness.

NOCK. *(Simply stands:)* What'd you do next?

WHITE MOON. I beg your pardon?

NOCK. Your commanding officer had just been killed; I asked what you did next.

WHITE MOON. *(A bit flustered:)* There was nothing to do.

NOCK. Nothing?

WHITE MOON. I...I was shocked. I...remember I looked to see if Big Nose was dead.

NOCK. Big Nose?

WHITE MOON. *(Embarrassed:)* Lieutenant Casey. His Indian name.

NOCK. And?

WHITE MOON. It was obvious he was.

NOCK. Well didn't anyone say anything?

WHITE MOON. No. Not at first. Then Pete Richard shouted at us, "Why don't you shoot the son-of-a-bitch?"

NOCK. And what did you do?

WHITE MOON. I answered back, "Why don't you?"

NOCK. But you didn't shoot the son-of-a-bitch?

WHITE MOON. *(Hesitates, then:)* No.

NOCK. Why not?

WHITE MOON. *(Uneasy now, uncertain:)* We were outnumbered.

NOCK. I see. You were at war then?

WHITE MOON. Sir?

NOCK. You were at war?

STERLING. Objection. The question calls for a conclusion of the witness.

NOCK. It goes to motive, your honor.

JUDGE. *(Considers a moment, then:)* I'll sustain the objection.

NOCK. *(Momentarily stymied:)* Corporal White Moon, you testified that your unit, on that day, was trying to find Red Cloud?

WHITE MOON. Yes.

NOCK. Casey didn't know where he was?

WHITE MOON. No sir.

NOCK. So Casey was a spy.

STERLING. Objection!

JUDGE. Sustained.

NOCK. It's merely a matter of interpretation, your honor.

JUDGE. You made a statement, Mr. Nock. If you want, you can rephrase it as a question.

NOCK. *(Thinks, then:)* Thank you, that'll be all.

(All rise and exit except: PLENTY HORSES, who remains seated alongside NOCK; LIVING BEAR, who takes the stand up near the JUDGE; and McDONOUGH, who approaches MRS. BLAINE.)

McDONOUGH. Do I detect a defense? We were at war, therefore it was not murder?

MRS. BLAINE. Why are you asking me?

McDONOUGH. 'Cuz from what I hear, you met with General Miles.

MRS. BLAINE. A family friend.

McDONOUGH. Did he agree to be a witness?

MRS. BLAINE. (*Enjoying the joust:*) Mr. McDonough, I am not the Indian's attorney.

McDONOUGH. No. But if I were on trial, you'd be good enough for me.

(*He exits, as LIVING BEAR, an aging Indian, seated very nervously in the witness stand, begins to speak.*)

LIVING BEAR. (*Anxious, uneasy:*) My name is Living Bear. My son is Senika-Wakan-Ota. Plenty Horses.

(*MRS. BLAINE remains at the periphery.*)

He is 22 years old. When he was a small boy, we moved with Two Strike's band to Rosebud Reservation, where we were told to become farmers. No longer could we live and hunt as before. Missionaries came with smiling faces, and asked me to give them my son. They wanted to teach him the white man's magic. The agency man came too and said it would be well for me to let my son go and be taught. Because I was a relative of Two Strike, they would send him to a place in Pennsylvania called Carlisle. The finest Indian Academy.

I asked Plenty Horses what he wanted. He said he wanted to stay home. I said to him, the buffalo are gone. Our farming is no good. All you have, I told him, is an opportunity. So he agreed.

But I am his *father*. I should have been wise and strong! So if someone must be hanged for what he's done, hang me!

PLENTY HORSES. (*Standing:*) No, Judge, hang *me*. Hang *me*!

JUDGE. (*Overlapping:*) Sit down. *Sit down!*

LIVING BEAR. (*Overlapping:*) The fault, my son, is *mine*.

PLENTY HORSES. (*To the JUDGE:*) I did this thing.

NOCK. Move to strike, your honor!

JUDGE. (*Overlapping:*) The jury will disregard the defendant's remarks.

PLENTY HORSES. *(Defying the JUDGE; proudly; in the clear:)*
I...did...this...thing!

(PLENTY HORSES remains standing. A pause.)

LIVING BEAR. The day the children left, there was much weeping. His mother, I remember, tore her clothes, and placed a medicine bag inside his shirt, to protect him from evil. He was thirteen.

(The CARLISLE FACULTY enter from different directions. Three or four or five of them. They approach PLENTY HORSES as:)

LIVING BEAR. At Carlisle, he wrote, he was taught carpentry and blacksmithing. Arithmetic and discipline. Hygiene and songs. He wrote in English. And the man from the agency read to us his letters.

(The FACULTY now surround PLENTY HORSES.)

PLENTY HORSES. Dear Father.

LIVING BEAR. Only later did we learn of his arrival. Of how they took the children's clothing and they burned it.

PLENTY HORSES. *(Growing uneasy:)* Father?

(From inside the circle, native garments are tossed out. We see a scissor raised.)

LIVING BEAR. Even his medicine bag they took, and threw into the fire. And then his hair—even that!—they cut. And flung upon the flames.

PLENTY HORSES. FATHER!!

(We see glimpses of struggle. We hear a slap. Two braids of hair are tossed away. During this:)

LIVING BEAR. These things we did not know until one day when he returned. And told of how the children all were crying and afraid. Of how, if they spoke their language, they were slapped. Everything was taken from them! Even his name. Which, he'd written, now was changed to Jack. With his carpentry and name came clothes he had to wear. He sent to us a photograph. For five years, he wore the ways of the white man. And was Jack Plenty Horses.

(The FACULTY withdraws, revealing PLENTY HORSES. His long hair is gone. He wears a black jacket with a bow tie and a bowler hat.)

NOCK. No further questions.

(LIVING BEAR gets up from the witness stand and goes to his son. He looks at PLENTY HORSES. He touches his face, as if trying to recognize him. PLENTY HORSES holds a moment, then, shamed and humiliated, runs off. LIVING BEAR crosses to NOCK, who is joined by MRS. BLAINE.)

LIVING BEAR. Will they kill him?

NOCK. I hope not.

LIVING BEAR. Tell them not to, Mr. Nock.

NOCK. Well, that's what I'm trying to do.

LIVING BEAR. But that is not what you have said. All you've done is ask questions!

NOCK. Because that's the way a trial is conducted.

LIVING BEAR. Why don't you sit in a circle with the jury and discuss this?

NOCK. *(Amused:)* For lots of reasons. This system, Mr. Living Bear, is the one we've evolved as the best way to arrive at the truth.

LIVING BEAR. But every time someone starts to speak the truth, someone else objects!

(NOCK and MRS. BLAINE watch as LIVING BEAR stomps away.)

Scene 8

(The jail. PLENTY HORSES, his hair and clothes as they were at the outset, enters, furious. MRS. BLAINE is there with NOCK.)

PLENTY HORSES. How could you do that!? Who gave you the right?!

NOCK. Do what?

PLENTY HORSES. You dishonored him!

NOCK. He wanted to testify!

(PLENTY HORSES faces away from them.)

Can I tell you something? What went on today in that courtroom moved the jury. Difficult as I can appreciate you may have found it.

(Still no response.)

I watched those jurors while he was on the stand. Your father may have got us what we need.

PLENTY HORSES. You tricked me.

NOCK. How did I trick you?!

PLENTY HORSES. You said our defense would be that it was war!

NOCK. And it is! In part. But whether or not we were at war isn't going to sway twelve Dakota jurors! A Judge maybe. An appeal perhaps. But so far the army isn't saying one way or the other. And the prosecutor has to show the voters red men can't kill whites. So I have to fight, if I can, for the sympathy of two or three...

PLENTY HORSES. I don't want sympathy!

NOCK. ...or one. Just one!—don't you see?—is all we need for a hung jury. And hope that, after that, they'll lose interest and let the charges go away.

PLENTY HORSES. I don't understand.

(PLENTY HORSES sits on the floor.)

NOCK. *(Fatigued and exasperated; to MRS. BLAINE:)* Maybe you can explain it to him.

(NOCK exits.)

MRS. BLAINE. I don't understand, either. It seems to me that you would want your story told.

PLENTY HORSES. *(Equally baffled:)* Why?

MRS. BLAINE. So that, hopefully, we can make things better.

PLENTY HORSES. Yes, that is what you whites do best, isn't it? Make things better.

(MRS. BLAINE absorbs this. She finds him unsettling...and yet intriguing. She takes a chair and sits before PLENTY HORSES, still seated on the ground. He does not look up.)

MRS. BLAINE. To my way of thinking, what your father did today was very brave. To speak of his shame, and admit his weakness, takes courage. The kind of courage that few men—believe me, so few men—have.

(JAMIE enters. He is drunk.)

MRS. BLAINE. I can understand if you feel that you were tricked.

JAMIE. *(Plopping down into a chair:)* Was I ever.

MRS. BLAINE. *(Still to PLENTY HORSES:)* But Mr. Nock needed you to plead Not Guilty. Otherwise, it's over. You lose. And die. That's the way the game is played.

JAMIE. *(Pulling off his boots:)* God damn royals.

MRS. BLAINE. *(More to herself now:)* Sometimes, I feel tricked too. And wonder why I even play.

JAMIE. You feel tricked? That's rich. Given the way we met.

MRS. BLAINE. *(To JAMIE:)* I was speaking in a context a little larger than some stunt I pulled on a weekend in New Haven.

JAMIE. Well forgive me, but my contexts are more down to earth. God, I wish I'd never heard about that mine!

MRS. BLAINE. Did you really think the Prince's interest in it, and you, was divorced from who your father is? If you feel tricked, you have only yourself to blame!

JAMIE. I don't think *anyone's* interest in me is divorced...as you put it...from who my father is.

MRS. BLAINE. That's not true. I love you.

JAMIE. Because of him.

MRS. BLAINE. No!

(Then:)

Or if so... Maybe it's that when we met, because of who your father is, you hadn't any real concept of the word "no." And that captivated me.

JAMIE. *(Stands, unsteadily:)* Oh, please.

MRS. BLAINE. You were so brash and optimistic!

JAMIE. Seventeen years old...is what I was.

(JAMIE takes up his boots and starts to go.)

MRS. BLAINE. Jamie? What next?

JAMIE. Keep looking for investors, I suppose.

MRS. BLAINE. Would you like for me to talk to your father?

JAMIE. *(Hesitates, then with difficulty:)* Would you?

(MRS. BLAINE nods. JAMIE leaves.)

PLENTY HORSES. Why are you telling me this?

MRS. BLAINE. We were speaking of weakness. And courage.

PLENTY HORSES. Where is your husband?

(The question puts her on the spot, given her deal.)

MRS. BLAINE. I don't know.

PLENTY HORSES. Why are you not with him?

MRS. BLAINE. *(Again she hesitates, then ventures:)* Because I'm here.

PLENTY HORSES. But why are you here? Did your father-in-law send you?

MRS. BLAINE. Yes.

PLENTY HORSES. I don't understand. Why did he not send his son?

MRS. BLAINE. It's complicated.

(PLENTY HORSES eyes her cautiously for a moment, then:)

PLENTY HORSES. Are you him?

MRS. BLAINE. What?

PLENTY HORSES. (*Stepping back, on guard:*) I have been fooled by you before!

MRS. BLAINE. Who?

PLENTY HORSES. (*Frightened:*) *Shunk-Manitou!*

MRS. BLAINE. No, I'm not... What did you call me?

PLENTY HORSES. (*Hesitant to answer; very wary:*) Coyote.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Puzzled:*) Why coyote?

PLENTY HORSES. The trickster! Who can appear in *any* form!

(*MRS. BLAINE sees he is truly afraid.*)

MRS. BLAINE. I'm just...me. As far as I know.

(*PLENTY HORSES, breathing heavily, says nothing.*)

Scene 9

(*A hotel room, at night. MRS. BLAINE sits at a vanity.*)

MRS. BLAINE. That night at my hotel, I thought about my marriage. Wanting, for reasons I could barely understand, to go back. Not so much to the marriage, but to Jamie.

(*JAMIE appears, carrying a folded map. An energetic young fellow, very different from the one we saw before.*)

JAMIE. You mean to say you *like* the idea?

MRS. BLAINE. To when we met.

JAMIE. (*Unfolding the map:*) My parents think I'm nuts. Or actually, not nuts so much as...I don't know. A child.

MRS. BLAINE. Which he was. But wonderfully so. And so unlike me. Who was...a little older.

JAMIE. (*Struggling with his map, which is huge:*) It's more my friends who think I've lost a screw. Here, look. I'll show you where the mine is!

(*She goes to him and looks at where he points.*)

Smack dab in the middle of nowhere! And with the profits I could purchase cattle! And since I'd have bought the land, it could then become a ranch! With, incidentally, a view of the Rockies! Oh, Marie, it's wide open out west! A clean slate! Where a man can test his mettle! God, isn't it wonderful?

MRS. BLAINE. (*Gazing at him:*) Yes.

(*There is a pause as JAMIE realizes how incredibly strong her attraction is to him.*)

JAMIE. You know, you're the only woman I've talked to who didn't think my ideas were... Well not just women, men too, but...of the women... (*Really wants to kiss her, but:*) Where is it, again, you go to school? I know I asked but I can't seem to—

MRS. BLAINE. (*Wanting to kiss him too:*) What difference does it make?

JAMIE. Um, none, I suppose.

MRS. BLAINE. What if I worked in a factory?

JAMIE. Well, no, as far as I'm concerned that's... Do you?

MRS. BLAINE. Or maybe I'm the daughter of a clerk.

JAMIE. *Are you?*

MRS. BLAINE. (*Batting the map out of his hands:*) Oh, you and your talk about the west!

JAMIE. No no!—I mean yes!—but—

MRS. BLAINE. A clean slate, you say? Yet you're still concerned with my pedigree?!

JAMIE. I just—!

MRS. BLAINE. You'd better forget mining, Mr. Blaine, if you don't know the difference between dross and ore!

JAMIE. I...I...I...

MRS. BLAINE. *(To us:)* We eloped. Knowing that his family would object, ostensibly to our marrying so soon, and he so young. But really it was I they were opposed to.

(The ELDER MRS. BLAINE appears. JAMIE gathers and folds up his map.)

MRS. BLAINE. I was not connected. And even more they objected—rather ironically, I thought—to my marrying to get connected.

ELDER MRS. BLAINE. You misunderstand, my dear.

MRS. BLAINE. I must admit, I *didn't* understand. I didn't fit.

JAMIE. Why do you say that? Christ, you make us sound so damned patrician! What bunk! After all, you and dad get along swimmingly! How do you account for that?

MRS. BLAINE. Two scoundrels, I suppose?

JAMIE. You said it, not I. And I resent, by the way, your calling him that!

MRS. BLAINE. That night in my hotel, I thought about the battles. Which came to acquire names—akin, in their way, to Gettysburg or, for that matter, Wounded Knee.

JAMIE. Oh God, please don't begin the recitation.

MRS. BLAINE. There was, for instance, the Wedding Gifts Incident. The Skirmish With The Women's Club. The British Debacle—that was a big one, ultimately resulting in the Retreat to New York.

ELDER MRS. BLAINE. It seems to me we're getting a little far afield here.

MRS. BLAINE. *(To her mother-in-law:)* I think not! *(To us:)* That night in my hotel, I realized that the marches onto reservations, and denial of livelihood, happened, in a sense, with me.

ELDER MRS. BLAINE. Don't you think you're being a bit melodramatic? This is simply about a relationship that did not work out, and the subsequent division of property.

MRS. BLAINE. Yes. Exactly.

ELDER MRS. BLAINE. All right, I won't argue the point.

MRS. BLAINE. *Blood!!*

ELDER MRS. BLAINE. *(Startled, and a bit shocked:)* Goodness.

MRS. BLAINE. Us and them. That's what this is about! The preservation of the tribe. Or don't you believe in forces more powerful than any individual?

ELDER MRS. BLAINE. Perhaps you should discuss this with a minister.

MRS. BLAINE. What do you think, Jamie?

JAMIE. About talking to a minister?

MRS. BLAINE. About *us!* *(As the ELDER MRS. BLAINE exits:)* Is this what you want?

(A pause. JAMIE is conflicted. Finally:)

JAMIE. I don't know, Marie.

MRS. BLAINE. But once upon a time you did!

JAMIE. Yes, but...that was a fairy tale.

(JAMIE exits.)

MRS. BLAINE. *(To us:)* He was not, and I knew this from the start, a strong man. Nor was he, as it turned out, my ally. Yet neither was he my foe. *(Faltering now:)* Which is what makes it so hard. Being here. Losing him. We have the same enemy! If only he could see.

(MRS. BLAINE begins to unfasten the front of her dress.)

That night in my hotel, my thoughts drifted more and more to Plenty Horses. For we too had, in certain ways, the same enemy. Yet even he, I knew, wished deep down that God would make me disappear.

(Distant chanting begins, as before.)

And then... Perhaps I began to doze, I don't know. I sensed something. A presence. *(Calling out, frightened:)* Who is it?! Who's there?!

(Somewhat undressed, MRS. BLAINE anxiously awaits a response. None comes.)

Maybe it was being in Dakota. Where whites feared the hills could come alive, and dead Indians were on the verge of resurrecting. I found myself listening.

(Upstage, out of the shadows, unseen by her, steps CASEY.)

Not to the noises of the night. But to my pounding heart.

And then I knew.

(MRS. BLAINE turns and faces upstage. She and CASEY look at each other—he calmly, she with alarm. After a moment, MRS. BLAINE quickly closes up her dress.)

Scene 10

(Red Cloud's house. Pine Ridge Reservation. MRS. BLAINE, her dress refastened if not her psyche, is seated at a table with RED CLOUD, the elderly chief of the Oglala Sioux. He does not wear a headdress full of feathers. In fact, he's sipping coffee with her as his WIFE sweeps up.)

MRS. BLAINE. You won't remember this. We met once. In Washington. You were with a delegation of chiefs. It was at a huge reception, very lavish, at the Willard. The point of which, I think, was to pick your pocket. Anyway, I don't mean to go on about it, other than that I shook your hand when my father-in-law introduced you to my husband and me. Or, no, now that I think about it, my husband, that night, wasn't there. Which I remember because my mother-in-law was quite perturbed when I showed up on my own. But I'm babbling. I apologize. All I'm trying to say is I don't wish to misrepresent myself. I'm not here on my father-in-law's behalf.

RED CLOUD. Why are you here?

MRS. BLAINE. To ask you to testify.

RED CLOUD. To what? I wasn't there.

MRS. BLAINE. To whether or not you considered your people at war. Did you?

RED CLOUD. (*Sips his coffee, then:*) Suppose you answer my question first.

MRS. BLAINE. If I can. What is it?

RED CLOUD. Why are you here?

MRS. BLAINE. (*Hesitates a moment, then confesses:*) Because I love politics.

(Another beat, then:)

I don't know why exactly. Maybe because back east, I could never participate. It was considered unseemly. But when I came west, and met Plenty Horses—I don't know if I can explain this in a way that will make sense to you—I felt something. Call it a kinship, perhaps. Or more on the order of...something all its own. Something having to do with possibility. Which then I realized is *why I love politics!* That it has to do with *possibility!*

(Then:)

I'm babbling again. I'm sorry. I haven't been sleeping very well.

(She stops.)

RED CLOUD. I love politics, too.

MRS. BLAINE. Were you at war?

RED CLOUD. Why not ask your government?

MRS. BLAINE. We have.

RED CLOUD. What do they say?

MRS. BLAINE. So far, they haven't said. Which, it occurs to me, might mean...maybe they're waiting for you.

(RED CLOUD contemplates, then says:)

RED CLOUD. More coffee?

MRS. BLAINE. No thanks. That's the last thing I need.

RED CLOUD. (*Standing:*) Do you know why I was at White Clay Creek?

MRS. BLAINE. No.

RED CLOUD. I was abducted.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Surprised:*) What?

RED CLOUD. By the hot heads. The young men, who wanted to fight on. Politics. They took me as a symbol of support. And I went, rather than cause our people to fight each other. Which would have been the worst.

MRS. BLAINE. I understand.

RED CLOUD. Now we have this business, thanks to this hot head Plenty Horses.

MRS. BLAINE. Chief Red Cloud, I can understand your reluctance to justify his actions. Nor am I asking you to. But can't he at least count on you to testify that, just in your opinion, you were at war?

(RED CLOUD *does not answer this. Instead, after a moment or two, he says:*)

RED CLOUD. How do you like my house?

MRS. BLAINE. Very nice. Will you testify?

RED CLOUD. Two stories. With a stairway and front porch. The government gave it to me. Furniture too. They even threw in a porcelain pot to... *kajo* in.

MRS. BLAINE. Are you saying you're afraid of losing this?

RED CLOUD. I'm saying, Mrs. Blaine, that this is it for us. That there will be no more wars. And that somehow, I must find a way to lead my people. To help *them* find a way to feel at home in America.

MRS. BLAINE. And Plenty Horses?

RED CLOUD. He, I'm afraid, must find his own way.

(MRS. BLAINE *holds a moment, then gets up to go. Then turns:*)

MRS. BLAINE. By any chance, did you know Casey?

RED CLOUD. (*Surprised:*) Why do you ask that?

MRS. BLAINE. I was wondering what he was like.

RED CLOUD. I never met him.

MRS. BLAINE. Had you heard of him though? Did he have a reputation?

RED CLOUD. No.

(MRS. BLAINE nods acceptance, then turns to go.)

RED CLOUD. Mrs. Blaine?

MRS. BLAINE. *(Hopeful:)* Yes?

RED CLOUD. Get some sleep.

Scene 11

(The jail. PLENTY HORSES and NOCK await the arriving MRS. BLAINE.)

NOCK. Did you get to see Red Cloud?

MRS. BLAINE. Yes.

NOCK. And?

MRS. BLAINE. He sends Plenty Horses his greetings. And mentioned his affection for your father.

PLENTY HORSES. *(Perking up:)* Yes?

MRS. BLAINE. But he won't testify.

(This hits PLENTY HORSES like a punch in the gut. MRS. BLAINE sees this.)

MRS. BLAINE. It has nothing to do with you. Though that, I can understand, may hurt even more than if it did. Not mattering.

(PLENTY HORSES finds a place on the floor and sits.)

He's as shrewd a politician as they come. He's not about to give up chits from Wounded Knee.

(A pause.)

NOCK. *(To PLENTY HORSES, consolingly:)* Well, I've been working on a couple alternate ideas.

(PLENTY HORSES preoccupies himself.)

One is we waive a defense, and instead challenge the court's jurisdiction, based on the involvement of the army. Or another way to go is get a writ of certiorari. Which I know, all of this, is a lot of legal mumbo jumbo, but we can go over the ins and outs.

PLENTY HORSES. Suppose I take the stand?

NOCK. What?

PLENTY HORSES. Can I be my own witness?

(NOCK, startled, shares a look with MRS. BLAINE.)

MRS. BLAINE. I thought you didn't want sympathy.

NOCK. No no, don't discourage him. Maybe there's something to this. *(To PLENTY HORSES:)* You're willing to testify?

PLENTY HORSES. If my own people will not bury me as a warrior...at least, before I hang, let the truth be known.

NOCK. How will you explain what happened?

PLENTY HORSES. He threatened us.

NOCK. That won't wash. None of the others who were there confirms your version of events.

(PLENTY HORSES falls silent.)

MRS. BLAINE. *(Kneeling alongside him:)* Plenty Horses, why did you kill Lieutenant Casey?

(A pause. But he's clammed up.)

MRS. BLAINE. *(To NOCK, as she stands:)* I guess forget it.

NOCK. No, wait. I'm getting another idea. Suppose he testifies through an interpreter?

MRS. BLAINE. What?

NOCK. That way we can pick not only what he says, but also what he says he understood!

MRS. BLAINE. But they know he went to school.

NOCK. And came back, and let his hair grow long, and could as well have let his English lapse! (*To PLENTY HORSES, seated on the ground:*) How's that sound down there?

PLENTY HORSES. I want to tell my story.

NOCK. And you will! Through an interpreter. Whose purpose will simply be to...refine it. Make it comprehensible to white men. Fair enough?

PLENTY HORSES. (*Considers, then:*) If I must.

Scene 12

(Sioux Falls at night. Saloon Music is heard. Laughter too. The streets are filled with joy seekers. An AMOROUS COUPLE. DRUNKS. An INDIAN. SOLDIERS. MRS. BLAINE explains:)

MRS. BLAINE. From all over now, more people came. Crowding the courtroom. Filling the hotels. It was, in a way, one big party. Though what they were celebrating, I couldn't say. The end of the century maybe? The end of the Indians? The last mad brave?

(The number of joy-seekers dissipates as MRS. BLAINE crosses away, seeking some more isolated place. The music too begins to fade, as:)

I took to walking after supper. Alone. Something else that, in the east, wasn't done by proper women. I'd roam to where the town came to an end, giving itself up to the prairie. To nowhere, I suppose.

(The last joy-seekers are now leaving, with the exception of a soldier who has entered and remains. It is CASEY. The music continues, but very far away.)

That was where I found him next.

(She turns, once again startled and scared.)

Why are you here?

CASEY. You tell me.

MRS. BLAINE. What does that mean? That you're my delusion? Or maybe...my deluded sense of men?

CASEY. You need more than a man, Mrs. Blaine. Not to minimize the importance of men but...they're only human. And life consists of so much more, don't you agree? May I come closer?

(MRS. BLAINE looks around, careful that no one is watching. Then, eyeing him warily as he approaches:)

MRS. BLAINE. Are the Indians onto something? About the dead returning? Or am I, like them, that desperate?

CASEY. Interesting question. The Israelites, you know, were desperate too, in the days of the Romans, the time of Christ. I don't know if you want to get into an intellectual conversation or not. We could. Or we could just take a walk. Gaze at the sky. Have you ever seen so many stars?

MRS. BLAINE. Not until I came out here.

CASEY. Sure beats the shit out of Chicago. Oh, excuse me!

MRS. BLAINE. It's okay.

CASEY. I'm not accustomed to being around women. Or rather, as you put it, proper women.

MRS. BLAINE. I'm beginning to wonder just how proper I am.

CASEY. No no, the word you want is "appropriate." Two different things. I'm of the opinion that no one's appropriate. In fact, the whole notion of fitting in, it seems to me, fails to fit since... You do like philosophy, don't you?

MRS. BLAINE. Up to a point.

CASEY. Would you like to dance? We can do that, too.

(CASEY extends his arms to her.)

MRS. BLAINE. I...don't think I'm quite ready to dance on the prairie with a...ghost.

(A moment, then:)

CASEY. I understand. I'm a patient man, Mrs. Blaine. *(Holding up a pouch of tobacco:)* Care for a smoke?

(MRS. BLAINE, a bit shocked at the offer, shakes her head no. CASEY shrugs and puts away the pouch, as:)

MRS. BLAINE. You know, you're completely different from the way General Miles described you. Or the reporter's description, too.

CASEY. Everyone's got their axe to grind.

MRS. BLAINE. General Miles says you spoke of feeling exiled.

CASEY. For a while, yes.

MRS. BLAINE. But he said you grew to like it here.

CASEY. I did. A lot. I liked the isolation. It enabled me to get to know myself.

MRS. BLAINE. And who did you turn out to be?

CASEY. What difference does it make?

MRS. BLAINE. What difference does it make??

CASEY. I'm dead, Mrs. Blaine.

MRS. BLAINE. Oh. No, I know that.

CASEY. And besides, my answers aren't yours.

MRS. BLAINE. Yeah, okay, I know that too! Look, is that what this is going to be? One of these one-way conversations? Because frankly, Ned—may I call you Ned?—I've had seven years of that kind of dead-end dialogue with my mother-in-law—and for what?! I am not the problem, I don't think, and if you do, why don't you just amble off into the sunset right now, all right?

CASEY. All right.

(He no sooner starts to amble than:)

MRS. BLAINE. I tried so hard back east! I made mistakes, I know. Marrying Jamie—that was a doozy. There, I admit it, the old bitch was right. But I tried! I tried to be the wife he needed. I would have

supported whatever he wanted to do! God, the advantages he was born into!

(A beat or two, as she realizes:)

Like you.

CASEY. Yes.

(Another beat, then, recognizing another tie:)

MRS. BLAINE. He too went west once. Early on. Investing in a mine he called "Small Hopes." Sunk a bundle of his old man's money into it. It failed.

(A beat or so, then:)

Like you?

(No answer.)

MRS. BLAINE. Ned, were you a failure?

Scene 13

(The courtroom. Filled to capacity with SPECTATORS. Also the JUDGE, NOCK, STERLING, PLENTY HORSES, MRS. BLAINE.)

NOCK. Your honor, the defense calls Plenty Horses to the stand.

(PLENTY HORSES approaches the witness stand.)

JUDGE. Raise your right hand.

(PLENTY HORSES looks at the JUDGE.)

JUDGE. *(Demonstrating:)* Raise your right hand?

(PLENTY HORSES does.)

Do you swear the testimony you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

(No answer.)

NOCK. Your honor, the defendant's command of English is such that we request that an interpreter be used.

STERLING. Your honor, we object. This is clearly a ploy by the defense to present this witness as incapable of understanding the victim's words. He attended school for five years. His own father has testified to his sending letters in English.

NOCK. He has not lived with whites for three years, your honor. He has long since lost those skills.

JUDGE. *(To PLENTY HORSES:)* Do you understand English?

PLENTY HORSES. *(After a moment:)* Some.

JUDGE. How well can you speak?

PLENTY HORSES. *(After a moment:)* Some.

JUDGE. Well for instance, can you understand this sentence? I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God?

PLENTY HORSES. *(After a pause:)* I think.

JUDGE. And will you tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

PLENTY HORSES. *(After a pause:)* I think.

JUDGE. No, you need to say yes.

NOCK. Your honor, I believe this bears out what I—

PLENTY HORSES. Yes.

(The JUDGE thinks, then:)

JUDGE. I'm gonna let him testify.

NOCK. But your honor—

JUDGE. We'll see how it goes, Mr. Nock. If it looks like he's not understanding, we'll take up the issue again. *(To PLENTY HORSES:)* Take the stand.

(PLENTY HORSES starts toward the stand, but NOCK takes hold of him.)

NOCK. Under the circumstances, your honor, I cannot allow my client to testify.

STERLING. And that, I think, proves my point.

NOCK. And *that* is a remark that borders on misconduct!

JUDGE. All right, all right. Enough.

PLENTY HORSES. I wish to speak.

JUDGE. Well, young man, if your attorney advises against it, then that's that. He doesn't have to call you.

PLENTY HORSES. I *wish* to speak.

JUDGE. You can get another lawyer if you like. But at this point in the proceedings, that would almost certainly be unwise.

PLENTY HORSES. I wish to *speak!*

JUDGE. I know. I'm sorry.

Scene 14

(The jail at night. Saloon music plays in the near distance. MRS. BLAINE is with PLENTY HORSES. His GUARD stands in the shadows.)

MRS. BLAINE. I was out walking.

PLENTY HORSES. At this hour?

MRS. BLAINE. I had something on my mind.

PLENTY HORSES. Alone??

MRS. BLAINE. Why not?

(PLENTY HORSES holds his tongue.)

I thought I'd drop by. To apologize. Not for what happened today in court, so much. Though that as well involved you in a lie.

PLENTY HORSES. That as well?

MRS. BLAINE. When we met, it was at Mr. Nock's request, to urge you to talk. And nothing that I said to you was false. My father-in-law *may* have pulled some strings, for all I know—and still might,

even—depending on what cards he holds. But my real reason for seeing you was to disguise why I was here.

(PLENTY HORSES *does not ask what that is.*)

Which is for a divorce.

(*No response.*)

I'm telling you this because I want to give you something, as a token of my regret. Something of value. That piece of information, if you choose to use it, could buy you a lot.

(*No response, or so it seems, then:*)

PLENTY HORSES. Your apology is not needed. Nor your information. I am the one who was the fool.

MRS. BLAINE. I don't see how.

(PLENTY HORSES *searches for an explanation. Then:*)

PLENTY HORSES. One day, *Shunk-Manitou*—the trickster—came upon a bear. He pulled out his knife, slew it, cut it into pieces, built a fire, and roasted the flesh. All of this he did with his right hand. (*Demonstrating now, as he speaks:*) But as he went to eat, his left hand grabbed at the food. "Give it here!" the left hand said. "It's as much mine as yours!" The right hand slapped the left hand. "Why should I share with you? I did all the work!" The left hand formed a fist and struck the right hand, which fell to the ground, where it grabbed the dagger. Before it was finished, both hands were battered and bloody. "Oh, now look what I've done to myself!" the trickster cried.

MRS. BLAINE. (*Amused, but:*) I'm afraid I still don't follow.

PLENTY HORSES. All I could think today was what have I become? Standing before your Judge like some cigar store redskin! And then the worst of it...to find myself bound and gagged by my own action! Hoisted on my own petard! What have I become?

MRS. BLAINE. Hoisted on your own petard?

(PLENTY HORSES *falls silent.*)

So...you've been engaging in a little charade of your own, is that it?

(No answer.)

Your command of English. Evidently, you did quite well at Carlisle.

PLENTY HORSES. *(After a moment:)* So what?

(To that, she has no answer.)

Scene 15

(The edge of town. That same night. The saloon music continues, though now more distant. CASEY is picking up stones and throwing them into the empty prairie. MRS. BLAINE watches.)

MRS. BLAINE. *(To CASEY:)* What *has* he become? You claim to know so much about Indians. Who is he?

(CASEY continues to pick up and throw stones.)

Who are any of us, for that matter? So many things—so many of them conflicting... What do we add up to?

CASEY. Hey, look.

MRS. BLAINE. Yes?

CASEY. *(A kid holding out the stone:)* Hematite. I'm gonna polish this one up when I get back.

MRS. BLAINE. What? Wait a minute.

CASEY. Oh. I'm sorry. My fault. I'm listening.

MRS. BLAINE. Who *are* you? Every time I turn around you're someone else!

(CASEY just smiles.)

You're not, by any chance, that trickster fella. Shunk what's-his-name?

CASEY. *Shunk-Manitou.*

(A moment, then:)

MRS. BLAINE. Why'd I just get the shivers?

CASEY. Perhaps it's time we had that dance?

(As before, he extends his arms.)

MRS. BLAINE. *(Backs off a step, herself a little wary:)* I got to wondering these last few days...if you'd ever been in Washington. As part of your army experience? I got to thinking, if you had—perhaps to secure support for your idea about the scouts?—at some event we may have seen each other!

CASEY. Possible.

MRS. BLAINE. I keep looking at your photograph. I've tried to place the face.

CASEY. And if we'd met at some event... *(Taking her into a dancing hold:)* ...and, making conversation, I spoke of my ideas...

(The distant music already has or soon will become a waltz.)

MRS. BLAINE. *(Dancing with him:)* I'd probably, typical of me, have mentioned who my father-in-law was, and suggested I put in a word.

CASEY. Would you?

MRS. BLAINE. Yes.

CASEY. And write me the result?

MRS. BLAINE. Yes.

CASEY. Think of it! We could have begun a correspondence! Strictly on the up-and-up, of course.

MRS. BLAINE. *(The proper woman:)* Of course. I wasn't suggesting... Though, in passing, I might have commented, how interesting to me you wear a uniform. You who are so unique.

CASEY. And maybe signed your name, that time, "Marie"?

MRS. BLAINE. *(After a moment:)* Perhaps.

CASEY. But I'd still call you Mrs. Blaine.

MRS. BLAINE. Oh, you'd have been extremely circumspect. But needn't have been. He was back again in England, gallivanting with the Prince of Wales.

CASEY. Nevertheless.

MRS. BLAINE. Yes, I suppose. Still, what if we had, and obliquely I made reference to the disintegration of my marriage. That, after all, was real enough.

CASEY. That's true. So that, using the pretext of coming here for a quiet divorce...

MRS. BLAINE. ...we could arrange a rendezvous! I'd make my deal with the old man, and board the train—heading west *to* something, instead of *from*!

CASEY. And arrive to find excitement in the air! Hearing word, as you alight, of a massacre at a place called Wounded Knee. And realize, by my absence, that I am with my men. And then comes word from White Clay Creek.

(Their waltzing has stopped.)

MRS. BLAINE. *(Separating from him:)* I know, Ned. I know. Not possible.

CASEY. Marie... You must continue to believe.

(MRS. BLAINE reacts—puzzled.)

Scene 16

(The Courtroom. Filled, as before, to capacity. This time, the jury is suggested by the presence of its FOREMAN. LIVING BEAR is also in attendance, as is McDONOUGH.)

JUDGE. Has the jury reached a verdict?

MRS. BLAINE. *(To us:)* Word came to us at nine o'clock next morning. The jury had returned.

(The FOREMAN stands.)

FOREMAN. We have not, your honor. We are deadlocked.

(A beat.)

MRS. BLAINE. Everyone was shocked. You could feel the wave of disbelief washing over even his supporters. Someone on the jury—maybe more than one, for all we knew—was holding out!

JUDGE. Well, go back and keep on trying.

(The JUDGE and FOREMAN exit. REPORTERS hurry over to NOCK. The others mill about excitedly. PLENTY HORSES, remains seated, impassive.)

MRS. BLAINE. *(Kneels alongside PLENTY HORSES:)* Perhaps there's hope!

(PLENTY HORSES says nothing.)

You realize, don't you, if the jury can't agree, the trial's over!

PLENTY HORSES. They'll find a way to convict me.

MRS. BLAINE. Maybe. But why look on the bright side? Maybe they'll decide that you're not worth it...and let you go.

(Her irony is not lost on him.)

PLENTY HORSES. And then?

MRS. BLAINE. *(Now finding herself at a loss:)* I don't know. Return to your people, I suppose.

PLENTY HORSES. My people want no part of me.

(The GUARD appears. He takes hold of PLENTY HORSES to lead him away.)

MRS. BLAINE. *(Knowing they have only another moment:)* I met someone here who says that *anything* is possible.

PLENTY HORSES. Maybe for you.

MRS. BLAINE. For you too, maybe. If you believe.

(PLENTY HORSES looks at her, startled. And continues to look at her as he is led off by the GUARD while... The lights fade.)

End of Act I

ACT II

Scene 1

(The courtroom. Everyone, as before, is milling about, abuzz. MRS. BLAINE, off by herself, stares into space.)

LIVING BEAR. *(Crossing to where NOCK is chatting:)* Mr. Nock, how's it going with the jury?

NOCK. How would I know?

LIVING BEAR. What are the chances they will remain unable to agree?

NOCK. Impossible to say.

MRS. BLAINE. *(To us:)* At eleven, the jury asked to have the charges against Plenty Horses read again.

LIVING BEAR. *(To NOCK:)* Is that good or bad?

NOCK. I don't know.

LIVING BEAR. Good, I think. I think good.

MRS. BLAINE. At noon, they returned.

(PLENTY HORSES is led in by the GUARD as the JUDGE and FOREMAN return and the others take their places. During this:)

McDONOUGH. *(Approaching:)* So, Mrs. Blaine.

MRS. BLAINE. Mr. McDonough.

McDONOUGH. What will we be doing after the trial?

MRS. BLAINE. We?

McDONOUGH. Not going home, I don't think.

MRS. BLAINE. I beg your pardon?

McDONOUGH. You know how it is, hanging around, waiting for a jury. I got to watching you and thinking: no General Miles, no Red Cloud... What the hell was she selling if she didn't have the goods? So, call me crazy, I trotted upstairs to the civil section. Checked out the recent filings for divorce.

(A pause. MRS. BLAINE is silent. Caught.)

So like I said...what will we be doing after the trial?

JUDGE. Has the jury reached a verdict?

(McDONOUGH takes his seat.)

FOREMAN. *(Stands; then:)* Your honor, we have not.

JUDGE. Then go back again and work until you do.

FOREMAN. *(Fatigued, resigned:)* It's no use, your honor. We can't agree.

(A beat.)

MRS. BLAINE. Not one muscle moved on Plenty Horses' face.

(Another beat, then:)

JUDGE. Will the attorneys approach the bench, please?

(As NOCK and STERLING cross to the JUDGE, and confer there in whispers:)

MRS. BLAINE. Everyone knew, yet in a sense none believed, what was about to happen. No one in the courtroom breathed. With one exception. *(Meaning PLENTY HORSES.)* How he could sit there, with his life in the balance, so calmly, almost as if unconcerned. Seemingly, at least. I wondered if he was the warrior he spoke of being. Or was it simply that his wars had ended well before the Judge sat back and said...

JUDGE. Gentlemen of the jury, I want to thank you for your service. You are hereby discharged, and this court is adjourned.

(As the JUDGE gets up and exits:)

MRS. BLAINE. He was free.

(The courtroom erupts in pandemonium. Some with joy; some with outrage. Amid the shouting, LIVING BEAR runs over to his son, pumping NOCK's hand... PLENTY HORSES, during this, turns and faces MRS. BLAINE—a look of astonishment on his face.)

MRS. BLAINE. *(To us:)* For less than a minute.

(The GUARD takes hold of PLENTY HORSES.)

MRS. BLAINE. They had every intention of trying him again.

(PLENTY HORSES is led away. The courtroom clears except for McDONOUGH and other REPORTERS jotting down remarks from NOCK.)

MRS. BLAINE. Still, it was a great victory. Though the fight was far from over, Mr. Nock—the papers said—had drawn first blood.

(NOCK approaches MRS. BLAINE. The REPORTERS remain, chatting, laughing... Eventually they too will exit, except for McDONOUGH.)

NOCK. Mrs. Blaine.

MRS. BLAINE. Congratulations.

NOCK. Thank you. And to you too! You share in this as well.

(She smiles. He starts off.)

MRS. BLAINE. Mr. Nock? I was wondering if you and your wife would be my guests tonight for dinner. A small celebration?

NOCK. Oh, we'd love to but, unfortunately, we've been invited elsewhere.

MRS. BLAINE. I see.

NOCK. To be honest, I'd much prefer we dine with you. But, entre nous, I think my career is about to take a major leap.

MRS. BLAINE. Oh! I'll keep my fingers crossed then.

NOCK. Thanks. Well. Good day.

(NOCK exits.)

McDONOUGH. *(Approaching:)* Are we free for dinner?

(A pause. Then:)

MRS. BLAINE. Why, yes.

(WAITERS bring out a small table and two chairs, on which they set out food as:)

MRS. BLAINE. *(To us:)* At least it was *someone* to dine with.

McDONOUGH. *(Leading her to the table:)* I've found a few pretty fair eateries in this burg.

MRS. BLAINE. Have you? *(To us:)* All I had to do was lead him on till my divorce came through. Since, once I had my settlement in hand, what did I care what he wrote?

McDONOUGH. *(Eating:)* You know, I remember you now from New York. Not that I knew you but...there was a reporter, Waters, used to cover your husband. Well, what he covered was the cops and courts. But he used to talk about you.

MRS. BLAINE. Oh?

McDONOUGH. The things you'd pull to keep the stories out of print.

MRS. BLAINE. It was one of the few aspects of my marriage, Mr. McDonough, I actually enjoyed.

McDONOUGH. Ha!! *(Gesturing with his chicken drumstick:)* Y'know, I've got a feeling we're a lot alike. You strike me as scrappy and smart. I can see you play the angles. And I get the sense you've taken your lumps?

(He waits for an answer. None comes.)

Oh, do go on, Mr. McDonough. Okay I will. How 'bout I guess? Once upon a time...there was a girl who was not a debutante. But who met Prince Charming somehow. So let's see, what did she do? Some charade, no doubt—since, as we now know, that's what you do so well. Based on his age—listed in the divorce documents, incidentally, along with length of the marriage—I'd say something when he was in college, how 'bout you?

(She's not saying.)

But the scheme had to have the seeds of its own failure since, if things were gonna work out, eventually he'd have to know that you were just a poor girl. Or no, not that! Too dime novel. That you were... I know! Worse than a poor girl! Run of the mill. That's it. That your old man was a clerk or worked construction. Your brothers were headed for much the same. You don't have any sisters.

MRS. BLAINE. What makes you say that?

McDONOUGH. Why else would Mom confide so much in you? Her secret sadness and dissatisfactions. How'm I doing?

MRS. BLAINE. *(After a moment:)* Keep going.

McDONOUGH. The climax to this tale was his reaction. Would he, when you removed the mask, take pity on an ordinary Jane? Geez, y'know something? You'd make an interesting article for the Sunday supplement. May I interview you sometime?

MRS. BLAINE. Why bother?

McDONOUGH. Ha!!

MRS. BLAINE. Is there more?

McDONOUGH. What else do you want to know? You weren't a virgin. Shall we delve into that?

(The WAITERS reappear.)

McDONOUGH. Dessert?

MRS. BLAINE. No thank you.

McDONOUGH. A little walk outdoors?

MRS. BLAINE. Perhaps another night?

(He stands as she is helped out of her chair by one WAITER; the table is whisked away by the other.)

McDONOUGH. I must say, Mrs. Blaine, I have found our conversation scintillating. I hope your—what shall we call it?—current unpleasantness?—won't prevent our getting to know each other better.

(She smiles. He too. Then leaves.)

MRS. BLAINE. He was the most offensive man I'd ever met. And yet, returning to my room, over and over, I heard his words.

(A beat.)

A lot alike.

Scene 2

(Her hotel room. CASEY, reclining on the floor, is barefoot, with his suspenders down and army shirt off, though underneath he wears one-piece long johns.)

MRS. BLAINE. *(Entering:)* Oh! Have you been in here all this time?

(CASEY looks at her, but says nothing.)

MRS. BLAINE. Is something wrong?

CASEY. In case you'd forgotten, Mrs. Blaine, I was murdered.

MRS. BLAINE. *(Sensing trouble:)* I hadn't forgotten.

CASEY. Oh? I was beginning to wonder. With all your jubilation.

MRS. BLAINE. Wonder what?

CASEY. What our relationship is, that's what.

MRS. BLAINE. What our *relationship* is?? Are you nuts?!

CASEY. I'm not the one having hallucinations.

MRS. BLAINE. *(Taken aback, but only briefly:)* Is this because of my dining with McDonough?

CASEY. You mean the most offensive man you've ever met?

MRS. BLAINE. Oh for crying all... Don't tell me even my *fantasies* act like every other male!

CASEY. No, it isn't because you ate with him. It's because he's right. You *are* like him. Everything's about winning. For him, it's getting his story. For you, it's getting this Indian kid acquitted. But for what?

MRS. BLAINE. I don't know exactly.

CASEY. Horse shit.

MRS. BLAINE. We have a certain kinship.

CASEY. Well, that's a cute name for it. You're in love with him is what you are!

(MRS. BLAINE gasps.)

CASEY. Oh Christ, don't gasp. Don't you see? It's all that damned propriety that drove you here in the first place!

MRS. BLAINE. I am not in love with him, lieutenant.

CASEY. Why do you say that?

MRS. BLAINE. Because he's an *Indian*, for God's sake!

(A pause.)

And not...just that. There's all sorts of...differences between us.

CASEY. So then what was all that in court this morning about anything is possible? What'd you have in mind? That he could open a dry goods store?

(A pause, as MRS. BLAINE absorbs this.)

MRS. BLAINE. Am I going a little nuts out here?

CASEY. That depends.

MRS. BLAINE. On what?

CASEY. Structure. What's holding you up. Who you are underneath.

MRS. BLAINE. Me and Plenty Horses??

CASEY. I remember, one time, White Moon came to me. Looking a lot like you are now.

(WHITE MOON enters, in his uniform.)

WHITE MOON. Ned?

CASEY. Come in. What's on your mind?

MRS. BLAINE. *(Looking, with considerable alarm, at WHITE MOON:)* Wait a minute. What's he doing here?

CASEY. *(A bit defensively:)* He's my friend. *(To WHITE MOON:)* Come in, come in.

MRS. BLAINE. What I mean is...am I making this up? Or did this really happen?

CASEY. What difference does it make? So long as the structure holds.

WHITE MOON. It's about Private Spotted Bird. My cousin.

CASEY. What about him?

WHITE MOON. He is missing.

CASEY. Do you think he's hurt?

WHITE MOON. No.

CASEY. So where is he?

WHITE MOON. I don't know.

CASEY. Well where do you think?

WHITE MOON. I am concerned.

CASEY. About what? Out with it.

WHITE MOON. One night last week, after taps, Spotted Bird awakened me.

(SPOTTED BIRD scurries in. He too is in uniform, though bare-foot.)

SPOTTED BIRD. *(Quietly:)* White Moon. White Moon.

MRS. BLAINE. Now hold on! He gets to have *his* friends too?

CASEY and WHITE MOON. Shh!

MRS. BLAINE. I *must* be losing my mind.

SPOTTED BIRD. White Moon.

WHITE MOON. What are you doing up? And dressed.

SPOTTED BIRD. Do you remember, during winter, once when on patrol, the old man who talked about that dance?

WHITE MOON. Yes.

SPOTTED BIRD. I saw it.

WHITE MOON. When?

SPOTTED BIRD. Last night. He snuck into our camp, and told me if I wished to see it, follow him.

WHITE MOON. And you went?

SPOTTED BIRD. I saw it! In the moonlight.

WHITE MOON. *(Skeptically:)* So did God show up?

SPOTTED BIRD. I'm not sure.

WHITE MOON. *(Sobering:)* What did you see?

SPOTTED BIRD. Fifty people, maybe more, when I arrived. Joined in a circle. Men and women. Children even. Holding hands. Their faces painted. With circles like the sun, crescents for the moon, and crosses. All wore white sacks as shirts, decorated like their faces and with feathers.

(In the distance, softly, chanting is heard. Sung by many.)

They sang songs at first. And danced in their circle—as others arrived and, in a tepee, purified themselves, then added to their number. Maybe eighty or a hundred now! Dancing! Singing!

(The song has built in intensity and volume, sounding nearer.)

Some falling down in spasms! Some as if dead! And still they danced, the others. Except the children, who by now had gone to sleep, or broken off in groups and played.

(The chant subsides, as:)

Later, they rested. Those on the ground, in time, sat up. And told of visions. Who they saw. And then they began again.

CASEY. Then what happened?

WHITE MOON. *(To CASEY:)* I asked him what he made of this.

SPOTTED BIRD. I don't know.

WHITE MOON. *(To SPOTTED BIRD:)* Do you think the things they say they saw were true?

SPOTTED BIRD. How could so many people make it up? Not just this group, but everywhere, I'm told! All the nations speak among

themselves of this! Bands of believers are growing into swarms!
How could so many make this up?

WHITE MOON. I don't know.

CASEY. Why is he missing?

(WHITE MOON stays focused on SPOTTED BIRD for a moment, then turns to CASEY.)

WHITE MOON. For the rest of the week, he was troubled. Everything caused him complaint.

(SPOTTED BIRD moodily unbuttons and removes his army jacket, then tears off his shirt, as:)

The food we ate. His barracks bed. His uniform, he said, chafed at his skin.

CASEY. Are you trying to tell me he deserted?

(SPOTTED BIRD, bare-chested now, removes his army pants, under which he is wearing a breech cloth.)

WHITE MOON. I am trying to tell you, I'm concerned.

(WHITE MOON exits.)

CASEY. White Moon had been the first to join. The one who was my friend. Who told the others they could trust me. Who brought his cousin, Spotted Bird.

(SPOTTED BIRD is now applying paint to his face. A circle and a crescent on his cheeks. Then, on his forehead, a cross.)

Structure, Mrs. Blaine! That is what the army had to offer them! Or so I thought. Discipline and purpose! Words I'd lived with all my life! But were they structure?

(SPOTTED BIRD now stands still. A Ghost Dancer.)

Who were my men underneath? Which is why I ask. Who, underneath, are you?

Scene 3

(The courtroom. Filled to capacity. WHITE MOON is on the witness stand.)

WHITE MOON. When we turned to leave, I heard a shot. Then saw the lieutenant fall from his horse.

STERLING. Was he dead?

WHITE MOON. Yes. It was obvious.

STERLING. And did you see smoke coming from any of the rifles?

WHITE MOON. Yes.

STERLING. Whose?

WHITE MOON. The Sioux who had introduced himself, when we shook hands, as Plenty Horses.

STERLING. And is that man in the courtroom today?

WHITE MOON. He was in war paint.

STERLING. *(A bit tripped up:)* Yes, but...is he in the courtroom today?

WHITE MOON. *(Pointing:)* That man is Plenty Horses.

STERLING. Thank you. Your witness.

NOCK. *(Crossing to WHITE MOON:)* He was in war paint?

WHITE MOON. Yes.

NOCK. So you're saying you remember someone introducing himself, in war paint, as Plenty Horses, and this man's name is Plenty Horses, and that is your basis for saying they're the same man?

WHITE MOON. *(Hesitant:)* Yes.

NOCK. Thank you, that's all.

STERLING. Redirect! Just for the record, Corporal White Moon, do you recognize this man as the man from whose rifle you saw smoke?

WHITE MOON. He says he shot Lieutenant Casey, does he not?

NOCK. Move to strike!

JUDGE. Sustained. The jury will disregard that last remark.

STERLING. Let me put it this way. Do you remember, at the previous trial, that you testified that you recognized the defendant as the man from whose rifle you saw smoke?

WHITE MOON. Not exactly.

STERLING. Are you aware of the penalty for perjury?

NOCK. Objection. The prosecution is attempting to intimidate the witness.

JUDGE. I think, Mr. Nock, the witness is entitled to know what's what. *(To WHITE MOON:)* Do you know what perjury is?

WHITE MOON. Perjury?

JUDGE. Lying under oath. Just now, before you took the stand, you raised your right hand and promised to tell the truth. If it can be proven that you have knowingly not told the truth, you can go to jail. Do you understand?

WHITE MOON. *(Absorbs this, then:)* I have taken many oaths.

JUDGE. *(Tries to absorb this, then:)* Mr. Sterling?

STERLING. *(Thinks a moment, then:)* Corporal, what was your opinion of Lieutenant Casey?

WHITE MOON. I liked him.

STERLING. Would you say he was your friend?

WHITE MOON. Yes.

STERLING. Corporal, is this the man who shot your friend?

(STERLING points to PLENTY HORSES. WHITE MOON, clearly conflicted, says nothing.)

JUDGE. Answer the question.

WHITE MOON. I don't know how.

(A pause.)

STERLING. I'm finished with this witness.

(The courtroom clears. WHITE MOON remains, sitting limply in his chair.)

Scene 4

(The mind of MRS. BLAINE. NOCK is in his office. WHITE MOON remains seated in his chair. MRS. BLAINE, in her own nowhere, stares into space.)

NOCK. *(To MRS. BLAINE:)* What I'm wondering is why. His conscience, you think? Or some underlying sense of solidarity? Or was he told? By the army maybe.

MRS. BLAINE. *(To us:)* This much is known. At the recess, White Moon told two of his friends that he was tired and did not wish to go to lunch.

(Saloon music commences in the distance.)

They left him at his hotel, and continued on to eat. He, however, did not go in. For later it was learned that White Moon had gone into a store looking to buy a jackknife.

(WHITE MOON removes his boots, loosens his tie, opens his shirt.)

NOCK. Of course, we could subpoena General Miles. Ask him outright if we were at war. But if he says no, we're way out on a limb! White Moon, for all his fancy footwork on the stand, still didn't exactly exonerate our boy.

MRS. BLAINE. The merchant, however, had no knives.

(WHITE MOON now opens up a jackknife.)

NOCK. Which is maybe why we have to take the chance.

MRS. BLAINE. Nevertheless, someplace, he obtained one.

(CASEY enters, upstage and unseen by MRS. BLAINE. But she senses his presence. She faces him. All during this:)

NOCK. Obviously, the army's scared. The trial's attracted too big a crowd! Too much publicity! *(Indicating WHITE MOON:)* So they

threw us this guy as a bone! But should we content ourselves with that, do you think? Or is now the time to attack? Subpoena the General! Or is that too risky? (*Seeing she's focused on something else:*) Mrs. Blaine?

MRS. BLAINE. (*To CASEY, almost accusingly:*) Structure, Ned? Is that what he lacked? Or what we destroyed? Certainly he, as much as any, tried to build anew.

NOCK. (*Exiting:*) Aw, what am I asking a woman for?

MRS. BLAINE. Oh, White Moon!

(WHITE MOON *plunges the knife into the base of his neck.*)

White Moon.

(CASEY *takes hold of her. WHITE MOON remains seated upright, waiting to die.*)

CASEY. He was my closest friend. If I could have foreseen this...

(*He stops.*)

MRS. BLAINE. What?

(*He does not answer.*)

Tell me! What?

(*Two INDIANS enter and see WHITE MOON. They lift him up and rush him off, as:*)

Would you still have made the effort, if you knew? Do you still believe in the possibility?

CASEY. Yes!

MRS. BLAINE. (*Startled:*) Despite what became of White Moon? And of you?

CASEY. What else is there?

MRS. BLAINE. Madness.

(CASEY *reacts, but says nothing.*)

It too has its attractions.

(CASEY considers her, then says:)

CASEY. I still believe, Marie.

Scene 5

(The jail. Two chairs, left haphazardly. MRS. BLAINE sits in one, holding a parcel. PLENTY HORSES is brought in by the GUARD.)

PLENTY HORSES. Any word?

MRS. BLAINE. Not yet.

(PLENTY HORSES paces.)

MRS. BLAINE. Perhaps there was a miscommunication.

PLENTY HORSES. Mr. Nock said they sent a deputy!

MRS. BLAINE. Where do you think your father is?

PLENTY HORSES. (Still pacing:) I wish I knew.

MRS. BLAINE. (Standing:) But you must have *some* thoughts on it! Why won't you ever tell me what you think?!

(PLENTY HORSES stops pacing, seeing MRS. BLAINE unexpectedly upset.)

PLENTY HORSES. I think about Sitting Bull.

MRS. BLAINE. (Baffled:) What?

PLENTY HORSES. Who, while in government custody, was killed. I think about the elders at Wounded Knee, who fell with the women and children. I think about your people's disrespect—if not *abhorrence!*—of innocence. Those are my thoughts.

(MRS. BLAINE, understanding, says nothing. PLENTY HORSES sees this. Nevertheless, he takes his worry with him and crosses away. There is a pause.)

MRS. BLAINE. I got my documents. They came this morning. I'm now divorced.

(PLENTY HORSES does not respond.)

Jamie sent a lovely note. The well-bred boy. It contained just the right soupçon of sarcasm. (*Struggling not to become upset:*) Along with his first alimony check.

(PLENTY HORSES *looks at her, sensing her emotion.*)

I'll miss him. His mother always called him J'aime. French for "I love." When I read his note, all I could think was, "Adieu, J'aime."

(PLENTY HORSES *says nothing.*)

Then I cashed his check and went shopping.

(*A beat, then extending her parcel:*)

For you.

PLENTY HORSES. Me?

MRS. BLAINE. Why not?

(PLENTY HORSES *says nothing for several moments, then:*)

PLENTY HORSES. What is it?

MRS. BLAINE. Something that caught my eye. Go ahead, take it.

(*He does, but that is all.*)

Well, open it! It's just a shirt, for crying all night.

(PLENTY HORSES *now unwraps the parcel, removing from it a bright red shirt and yellow scarf.*)

MRS. BLAINE. (*Going to him, placing it against his chest and arms:*) I hope the size is right. I thought for the jury—and I checked with Mr. Nock on this, and he agreed—rather than wear the same old thing each day, it might help...humanize you.

(*They find themselves standing closer to each other than they ever have before.*)

Is the color too bright?

(PLENTY HORSES *looks at her but doesn't answer.*)

I noticed a lot of the Indians in town go about in quite vivid colors. But I wasn't sure.

PLENTY HORSES. Thank you.

MRS. BLAINE. It's okay then? You like it?

(PLENTY HORSES, *almost imperceptibly, nods.*)

MRS. BLAINE. Try not to worry about your dad. He'll be there today.

PLENTY HORSES. How old are you?

MRS. BLAINE. What?

PLENTY HORSES. I've never been able to guess the age of white women.

(*A pause.*)

MRS. BLAINE. I'm 26.

Scene 6

(*Sioux Falls. TOWNSPEOPLE bustling. MRS. BLAINE encounters McDONOUGH.*)

McDONOUGH. Have they found the father?

MRS. BLAINE. We're awaiting word.

McDONOUGH. We? Well, that's an admission. Coffee?

MRS. BLAINE. Perhaps another time. If you'll excuse me...

McDONOUGH. What other time?

MRS. BLAINE. I beg your pardon?

McDONOUGH. Your divorce was entered today.

MRS. BLAINE. Yes.

McDONOUGH. Quite a settlement.

MRS. BLAINE. Was it?

McDONOUGH. I smell a hell of a story there. Based on its being uncontested.

MRS. BLAINE. And how is that?

McDONOUGH. No woman gets that much...uncontested.

MRS. BLAINE. Then dig it up and print it if you want!

(She starts off.)

McDONOUGH. Maybe I don't want.

(She stops.)

How 'bout it, Mrs. Blaine? You and me. Any chance?

(MRS. BLAINE, seeing him vulnerable, is speechless.)

Look, forget about the story. I know how to add two and two. You won. You even outfoxed me!

MRS. BLAINE. *(Smiles.)* Not I, Mr. McDonough *Shunk-Manitou.*

McDONOUGH. Who?

MRS. BLAINE. The coyote.

(With that, she turns and goes.)

McDONOUGH. Coyote?

Scene 7

(The mind of MRS. BLAINE. NOCK and STERLING stand before the JUDGE in court. PLENTY HORSES, now in his red shirt with the yellow scarf worn around his neck, sits in jail.)

JUDGE. Where is your witness, Mr. Nock?

MRS. BLAINE. *(To us:)* It's possible that something unavoidable had happened.

NOCK. Your honor, I don't know. When he didn't appear in town earlier this week, we asked that a deputy be dispatched to the reservation.

MRS. BLAINE. Or that the state did something.

JUDGE. Mr. Sterling?

STERLING. I'm at a loss. We complied with the defense request. Deputy Marshall Bartlett was sent at once. But for some reason, Living Bear apparently isn't at the reservation.

NOCK. I think it's pretty obvious, your honor, the state does not want Living Bear to testify.

STERLING. That is patently false!

NOCK. Then where is he, Mr. Sterling?

MRS. BLAINE. Or maybe he *had* run away.

STERLING. The fact is there's very bad feelings on the reservation towards Plenty Horses. Living Bear may well have decided to go into hiding.

MRS. BLAINE. He was, after all, up against some very strong forces.

NOCK. Well I can't complete my case without this witness.

JUDGE. You may have to. Meanwhile, I'm issuing a bench warrant for the arrest of Living Bear.

(The three of them exit, as:)

MRS. BLAINE. Mr. Nock decided then to subpoena the General. To roll the dice on the army's saying it was war. In the absence of the father, he said, he had no choice. In the absence of the father, Plenty Horses had no *one*. Which is what I thought he was referring to when he told me...

PLENTY HORSES. I was lonely.

MRS. BLAINE. What?

PLENTY HORSES. You keep asking why I shot the lieutenant.

(A pause. Then, startled:)

MRS. BLAINE. You shot him because you were *lonely*? I don't understand that.

PLENTY HORSES. When I came home from Carlisle, at first I thought it was my looks. And so let my hair grow long again, and took back the Indian ways. But still I was distrusted. My old friends

now had wives. But I knew no woman wanted me. (*Stands, going to her:*) In the old days, a brave would display his courage in war, or his skill at hunting, and lay his wealth outside the tepee of the young girl he adored. What wealth had I to offer? There were no buffalo. There were no wars. My new skills were suspect. My courage unproven.

MRS. BLAINE. And so...you killed him to make a place for yourself?

(PLENTY HORSES *nods.*)

And still you were rejected.

PLENTY HORSES. What I did was not, I later learned, the Indian way.

(MRS. BLAINE *holds for a moment, then:*)

MRS. BLAINE. And the Ghost Dancers? Is that why you joined them? (*Affectionately:*) To meet girls?

PLENTY HORSES. (*Shocked:*) No!

MRS. BLAINE. To find a wife, is what I mean. A soul mate? At least in part?

PLENTY HORSES. You are speaking of a sacred ceremony!

MRS. BLAINE. Yes, I am.

(PLENTY HORSES *says nothing for a moment, then, turning from her:*)

PLENTY HORSES. I remember one time. She came with her brothers and her mother. I never knew her name. She was young. Fourteen or so. In my head, her name was Two Braids. That night, I danced better than I ever had before. All my many feelings I put into my steps and chant.

Some fell into trances, as often happened. And later, spoke of what they saw. One had seen her husband. Who told her it was well, and that soon he would return. It was, I realized, the girl's mother. And secretly I looked, and saw Two Braids listening. The mother said she'd asked her husband what he did all day. And that he an-

swered, "Fishing. Every day I catch so many." Again I stole a glance. And saw Two Braids smiling.

So many women I would have taken for a wife. But this one, I knew then, more than any other, was the one I wanted.

(His story ends.)

MRS. BLAINE. Did you ever speak to her?

PLENTY HORSES. No. They came just once. I had hoped she and her family would return. I danced each time with more and more fervor. Late into the night. Once right through to morning. Resting only when the others told their visions. I spent my daytimes thinking about the miracle of faith. Even more than wanting Two Braids, I wanted to participate! To have a vision. To know that the way of my people was true!

(A pause. MRS. BLAINE says nothing.)

Not once. No visions came. My faith was inadequate. My years with the white man had left me impotent...in my soul.

(MRS. BLAINE, for the first time, touches PLENTY HORSES.)

Scene 8

(The edge of town at night. Saloon music in the distance. MRS. BLAINE is there.)

MRS. BLAINE. That night, I went again to the end of the town. Ned, after our last encounter, had kept his distance. Well, in point of fact, he'd stayed away. Some hallucination he was—scared off by the thought of insanity. If, in fact, that's what he was. I knew, if I had any hope of finding him, it would be here. In my own nowhere. And sure enough.

(CASEY enters with WHITE MOON, who is in native dress. CASEY's coat is gone and his pants and sleeves are rolled. He holds a line of recently caught fish.)

CASEY. So what do you think?

WHITE MOON. About what?

CASEY. My idea!

MRS. BLAINE. (*Annoyed:*) But why was White Moon with him? Christ, was it too much to ask for a little time alone?

CASEY. Have you even thought about it? Talked it over with your wife and friends?

WHITE MOON. Yes.

CASEY. And?

WHITE MOON. Would we get to wear a uniform?

CASEY. (*Startled:*) Would you want to?

WHITE MOON. My wife likes them.

MRS. BLAINE. (*To CASEY:*) Excuse me. Ned?

WHITE MOON. She likes the buttons. And that stripe along the leg. She says it's like the white man's feathers.

CASEY. Huh.

MRS. BLAINE. Ned?

CASEY. (*To MRS. BLAINE:*) In a minute. (*Back to WHITE MOON:*) I'm certain something could be arranged.

WHITE MOON. And rations?

CASEY. You bet!

WHITE MOON. Families too?

CASEY. (*After a beat:*) I'll look into it.

MRS. BLAINE. Ned.

CASEY. (*Irritably:*) What?

(A beat or two.)

MRS. BLAINE. I'm sorry. Go ahead and finish.

(CASEY turns back to WHITE MOON.)

WHITE MOON. How about rifles?

MRS. BLAINE. *(To us:)* It was yet another side to him I'd never seen. As if his aspects were endless.

CASEY. White Moon?

WHITE MOON. Yes?

CASEY. Is it true, what you said? That your wife likes our uniform?

(WHITE MOON looks over at him.)

WHITE MOON. Army rations for the family were higher on her list.

CASEY. What about the other women?

WHITE MOON. *(Grins:)* Are you on the prowl?

CASEY. I've been thinking. Wondering if maybe I could live here.

WHITE MOON. And be known as Big Nose?

(CASEY reacts to that.)

WHITE MOON. You might as well know. That's what they call you. They find you funny. And I don't just mean your face.

CASEY. Big Nose?

WHITE MOON. Take a look sometime!

CASEY. Do they like me?

WHITE MOON. *(After a moment:)* Those that know you. You're an odd one, but I think they can accept that.

CASEY. I ask because I'm trying to decide.

MRS. BLAINE. *(To CASEY:)* So am I, Ned! Now I understand why you brought White Moon! I too am trying to decide. That is, if he's acquitted.

(CASEY looks at her now.)

Would it be all right with you? Since he is, after all, your murderer.

(CASEY says nothing.)

WHITE MOON. Come. My wife will cook our fish. And we caught so many, we can invite some friends!

(WHITE MOON starts off. But CASEY remains.)

WHITE MOON. *(Stopping and turning:)* What are you waiting for?

CASEY. This is Mrs. Blaine.

WHITE MOON. *(Aware of her now:)* Oh. Yes, of course.

(WHITE MOON now waits patiently for CASEY.)

CASEY. *(To MRS. BLAINE:)* I have to go before the fish start to stink.

MRS. BLAINE. I understand.

CASEY. I'm having dinner with... Well, you heard. I'm hoping he'll invite his cousin, Spotted Bird, and his family. He has a widowed sister who's very appealing.

MRS. BLAINE. I hope it all works out.

CASEY. For you, too. Goodbye, Marie.

(CASEY waits a moment for her response, but she finds she can't bring herself to say goodbye. In the absence of a response, CASEY gives her a little wave. As he goes to join WHITE MOON, she feebly returns the wave.)

WHITE MOON. All set?

CASEY. Yup. Let's get going!

MRS. BLAINE. Ned?

(CASEY stops and turns.)

One last dance?

(CASEY remains a moment, then returns to her. They dance as the next scene begins, and continue into the next scene until indicated.)

Scene 9

(The courtroom. GENERAL MILES sits in the witness chair. Also present are the JUDGE, NOCK, STERLING, and PLENTY HORSES in his red shirt and yellow scarf.)

MILES. Lieutenant Casey organized and subsequently commanded the first enlisted corps of Indians in the United States Army.

NOCK. And he did so, General, under your orders?

MILES. That's right.

NOCK. And what were their duties?

MILES. To explore the terrain, roads and paths of any given territory, and to report that back, along with the location, size and movement of enemy forces.

NOCK. So Lieutenant Casey was a spy?

(CASEY and MRS. BLAINE end their dance from the previous scene. She watches as he now leaves. Meanwhile:)

MILES. I wouldn't say that.

NOCK. What would you say?

MILES. I would say he and his men...reconnoitered.

NOCK. I see. And was he *reconnoitering* on the seventh of January of this year?

MILES. He was attempting to deliver a message from me to Chief Red Cloud.

NOCK. Had he returned alive, would he have reported the location, size and any movement of Red Cloud's forces?

MILES. If he knew them.

NOCK. General, after the death of Lieutenant Casey, did you issue an order for the arrest of Plenty Horses?

MILES. Yes.

NOCK. And upon his arrest, where was he detained?

MILES. In the guard house at Fort Meade.

NOCK. So he was a prisoner of war?

STERLING. Objection. Calls for a conclusion.

NOCK. Your honor, I think we can consider the General an expert on military matters.

STERLING. We have correspondence, your honor, between the War Department and the Attorney General, disputing who had the authority to arrest and detain the defendant.

JUDGE. (*Thinks, then:*) I'll sustain the objection.

(*NOCK pauses, his first foray stymied, then blurts:*)

NOCK. General, how many Indians did we kill at Wounded Knee?

STERLING. Objection. Irrelevant.

JUDGE. Sustained.

NOCK. Your honor, the question goes directly to the issue of whether or not we were engaging in war!

JUDGE. Not the way it's worded, Mr. Nock.

(*NOCK pauses, thinks.*)

NOCK. On December 29th of last year, General, did the army participate in activities at Wounded Knee?

GENERAL. Yes.

NOCK. Would you characterize the day's events as acts of war?

GENERAL. Well, it was no damn dress parade, that's for sure.

NOCK. So your answer is yes.

GENERAL. (*A moment, then:*) My answer is: in my opinion, yes.

NOCK. Thank you. Your witness.

(*STERLING approaches.*)

STERLING. Had there been a declaration of war?

MILES. No.

STERLING. Thank you. (*Turns to sit back down, but:*) Oh, by the way, what was the ultimate disposition of the prisoner Plenty Horses?

MILES. (*After a moment:*) He was turned over to your people.

STERLING. So he was *not* a prisoner of war.

MILES. I couldn't say.

STERLING. But your action did.

NOCK. Objection!

STERLING. Withdraw the question. That's all I have.

NOCK. Redirect. (*Approaches MILES:*) At the outset of November of last year, how many troops were there in South Dakota?

MILES. Four thousand or so.

NOCK. By the end of that month, had other forces been added?

MILES. Yes.

NOCK. And did those forces assemble in the vicinity of the Pine Ridge reservation?

MILES. Yes.

NOCK. Do you recall what forces were sent to South Dakota?

MILES. Let's see... From Nebraska, we transferred the Second Infantry out of Omaha, the Eighth Infantry from Fort Robinson, and the Twenty-First Infantry from Fort Sidney. The Ninth Cavalry was moved in from Fort McKinney, Wyoming. The Twenty-Second Infantry arrived from Fort Keogh, Montana. The Seventh Cavalry from Fort Riley, Kansas. And the Sixth Cavalry from New Mexico was brought up and positioned in reserve.

NOCK. Quite a gathering.

MILES. Yes sir.

NOCK. Why so many?

MILES. It was our hope that a significant show of force would deter the Sioux from taking aggressive action.

NOCK. By aggressive action, do you mean start a war?

MILES. Yes.

NOCK. What led the government to think that the Sioux were contemplating war?

MILES. The Ghost Dance.

NOCK. A dance, General?

MILES. More of a mania, you might say. Emanating from this...dance, yes. That had spread very rapidly among a great number of the western tribes.

(In the distance, the chant is heard, as:)

But among the Sioux, it had taken on a particularly virulent form, and the government was concerned this might turn into insurgency, which might in turn ignite not just the Sioux but other Indians as well.

(Other voices have joined in the chant, which now grows in intensity, as:)

NOCK. In what way was this dance virulent?

(A magnificent VISION OF AN EAGLE appears with its wings slowly and gracefully flapping, as if in flight. This is not a Ghost Dancer nor an authentic Indian costume. It is more along the lines of a walking puppet—a huge, colorful, eclectically created bird, whose wings, when spread, are vast and fantastic. It is adorned with fabrics, feathers, beads, and small mirrors that catch and flash the light. During this:)

MILES. According to our reports, every version of the dance centers around a belief in the imminent arrival of a Messiah, known as Wovoka. On that day...

EAGLE. ...the ground will tremble! As a signal that the time has come to fix in your hair two feathers—one from the eagle, the other of a magpie—so that when Wovoka covers the world with new earth, you may fly into the air and save yourselves.

(The chanting increases in intensity.)

MILES. The various hardships of the Indians would then vanish. The main hardship being...well, *us*.

(A magnificent BUFFALO appears. Again, it is more a fantastic puppet, walking upright—covered with an abundant coat of fur, and a large and noble head. Beads and mirrors also adorn it. During this:)

EAGLE. When you land, you will find all the Indians who ever lived wandering about. Old friends will find each other and embrace, and families reunite with lost loved ones. Ancestors from long ago will introduce themselves, and tell of the old ways.

(The BUFFALO becomes an INDIAN ANCESTOR—its buffalo head and coat folding back to become a warm and wonderful kind of cape, under which, an Indian man stands. His face is painted. During this:)

MILES. Among the Sioux, this began to be interpreted to mean that the living will not die. Or at least the faithful. Making them, they reasoned, invulnerable to bullets.

ANCESTOR. Over the hill, there is a village. Like the ones we used to have before the *wasichu* came.

EAGLE. If you'd like to see, I'll fly you there.

ANCESTOR. You will find tepees made of buffalo hide. And they use the bow and arrow. Nothing of white manufacture.

MILES. Apostles went from tribe to tribe, some going so far as to predict the exact date on which the Messiah would appear. And while those dates differed, all centered on the Spring of 1891.

(A magnificent WOLF appears. Again a walking puppet. Sleek and terrifying. Adorned only with little mirrors, flashing in the light. During this:)

ANCESTOR. With the return of the buffalo, will also come the trees and streams. Fish and elk will live in abundance. And with them will return the wolf. And with the wolf, bravery. And with bravery, great men. From among whom, a chief will arise!

(The WOLF now becomes that magnificent CHIEF. His head, like that of the buffalo, folding back to reveal a headdress of feathers. His

face is regally painted and his clothing richly decorated. He wears a necklace of bear claws. During this:)

MILES. Throughout last fall and into the winter, the Ghost Dance grew—increasing in frequency, intensity, length and participants.

CHIEF. I am He.

MILES. Attendance at Indian schools began to dwindle. When their families' huts were checked, often they were found to be abandoned.

EAGLE. I...

ANCESTOR. ...am...

CHIEF. He.

MILES. The Indians were disappearing.

CHIEF. Have faith...

ANCESTOR. ...and you shall...

EAGLE. ...live forever.

MILES. Only on ration day did they return.

EAGLE. I...

ANCESTOR. ...am...

CHIEF. ...He.

MILES. Once, while lined up to get their monthly dole, a rumor that troops had entered the reservation caused all the men to rush to their horses, smearing on war paint, and ride off, brandishing weapons.

CHIEF. Behold Wovoka!

(The CHIEF reverses his headdress, covering his face with a messianic mask that had been hidden behind his head; he becomes THE MESSIAH. During this:)

MILES. After that, the government agent, in his ineptitude, told the Indians that the Ghost Dance must cease. And that until it did, there would be no more rations.

EAGLE. Behold!

ANCESTOR. Behold!

MILES. Cattlemen began reporting an increase in slaughtered carcasses.

THE MESSIAH. I have come to lead you home.

MILES. Farmers and their families became fearful.

EAGLE / ANCESTOR / MESSIAH. Behold!!

(The INDIAN MESSIAH raises his arms, revealing severed heads, limbs, and torsos attached to the lining of his robe.)

MILES. The army was called in.

(For one frightening moment, this landscape of death is presented to us. Then, end of scene.)

Scene 10

(The edge of town, that afternoon. MRS. BLAINE is there alone.)

MRS. BLAINE. After that, we went to lunch. And when court reconvened, the Judge whispered something to the lawyers, then turned to the jurors and said he was directing them to return with a verdict of Not Guilty. The evidence was overwhelming that a state of war, or its equivalent, existed. Therefore, Lieutenant Casey's killing was not murder.

(PLENTY HORSES enters, in his red shirt and yellow scarf.)

And so it ended. He was free. In a manner of speaking.

PLENTY HORSES. I came to thank you.

MRS. BLAINE. No need. I did very little, actually, as it turned out. Not that I didn't try, I don't mean, but my efforts, if you think about it...

(Stops; then:)

God, I'm starting to babble again. I do that. As you know.

(PLENTY HORSES says nothing.)

What will you do now?

PLENTY HORSES. I don't know. Maybe nothing.

MRS. BLAINE. Do you plan to return to your people?

PLENTY HORSES. I don't know.

(MRS. BLAINE says nothing.)

Will you be going east?

MRS. BLAINE. I don't know either. I can't decide. Maybe I'll do nothing too, for a while.

(PLENTY HORSES says nothing.)

Would you believe it possible, Plenty Horses, if I told you that I've danced the dance? That I myself have had the visions? Visited with people from the past...and glimpsed the future? Would you believe me?

PLENTY HORSES. What future did you see?

MRS. BLAINE. One where *anything* is possible.

PLENTY HORSES. Truly you've seen such a thing?

MRS. BLAINE. I have.

(PLENTY HORSES is silent for several moments, then speaks.)

PLENTY HORSES. Mrs. Blaine, forgive me. I have nothing to set before your tepee.

(She recognizes this as a marriage proposal.)

MRS. BLAINE. Well, I don't have a tepee. But you could set *yourself* before me.

PLENTY HORSES. How do I do that?

MRS. BLAINE. By telling me the truth about Casey.

(A pause. Then, as PLENTY HORSES turns from her, CASEY enters, in uniform, upstage of PLENTY HORSES, out of his line of sight.)

PLENTY HORSES. We were awaiting the reply from Red Cloud. Casey, with his interpreter—that man White Moon—had been making small talk with some of the Sioux. There was a cow we'd found, and had been butchering when Casey first arrived. Some went back to that. The others were here and there, mostly horsing around. I was minding my own business.

CASEY. (*Approaching PLENTY HORSES:*) I understand that you speak English.

PLENTY HORSES. (*To CASEY:*) Who told you that?

CASEY. Oh, some of your friends back there. Where did you learn it?

PLENTY HORSES. (*Hesitates, then answers:*) At Carlisle.

CASEY. Oh! So you went there, did you?

PLENTY HORSES. Five years.

CASEY. Well, I've heard good things and bad. How was it coming back?

PLENTY HORSES. What do you mean?

CASEY. Were you able to find work?

PLENTY HORSES. (*Doesn't answer at first, then:*) This is my work.

CASEY. Yes, for now, I know, but...there won't, I don't think, be any more wars. How's your carpentry?

PLENTY HORSES. Why do you ask?

CASEY. Well, I tell ya. Where we're based, we live in barracks. Which we build ourselves. The ones who know teach those that don't. But most times we're outdoors, out scouting. Even hunting some. We have horses, rifles, rations. You get paid.

PLENTY HORSES. Are you asking me to join?

CASEY. Let me put it to you this way. I think you're the future.

(PLENTY HORSES *says nothing.*)

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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