

YELLOWSTONE

Episode 102

"Kill the Messenger"

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First Draft 03/03/2016

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EXT. ARENA -- YELLOWSTONE RANCH -- DAY.

THE BLUE-GRAY STALLION Cory gave John Dutton, LEAPING THROUGH THE AIR -- JOHN DUTTON on his back. He spins and bucks and swings his head in a fury around an arena as John Dutton fights him. FINALLY gets the thing to stop. Looks back at RIP, sitting on the arena railing.

JOHN DUTTON
Think I got him settle --

The horse sucks in, then leaps BACKWARDS in the air -- ass over tea kettle -- with the intent of crushing John Dutton by pancaking him into the arena dirt.

John Dutton recognizes what's coming and pushes off the saddle horn to the side --

Horse and rider slam the Earth at the same time, mere inches from each other. John Dutton rolls away from the flailing hooves as the stallion scrambles to its feet and runs in the opposite direction.

John Dutton stands. Retrieves his hat and knocks the dust from it ...

JOHN DUTTON (CONT'D)
(To himself) *Goddam* that boy.

RIP
Some gift. That's one rank son of a bitch right there.

John Dutton walks toward the stud.

RIP (CONT'D)
Oughta take him chest-high in the river. See how much buck he's got in him then.

JOHN DUTTON
This one might surprise you.

John Dutton approaches the stud, its wild eyes watching him.

JOHN DUTTON (CONT'D)
Easy ...

Grabs the reins. Boot in the stirrup. SLOWLY swings into the saddle.

JOHN DUTTON (CONT'D)
We're going to take this real slow.

Starts walking him around the arena. Nudges him into a trot. Then a lope. Then all hell breaks loose -- The stallion leaps 6 feet in the air, hits and bucks like's being paid to do it.

John Dutton yanks with all his might on the left rein, forcing the horse to fall forward and roll on it's side. As it does, John Dutton steps off in a huff and walks to Rip.

JOHN DUTTON (CONT'D)

Goddam that boy ...

RIP

Want me to give him a go?

JOHN DUTTON

I need you healthy. This is a job for a young man. With rubber bones.

RIP

That horse'll make a hand out of someone.

John Dutton looks toward a terrified JIMMY HERSTROM, as he scoops manure from a horse-filled corral. Jimmy recoils at every twitch of a horse's tail.

JOHN DUTTON

I know the someone who needs it.

EXT. ARENA -- YELLOWSTONE RANCH -- LATER.

John Dutton walks Jimmy to the arena.

JIMMY

I don't know nothing about horses.

JOHN DUTTON

You're getting the crash course.

They reach the arena. The stallion stands tied to the fence. Paws the earth as they approach. Jimmy looks at Rip.

JIMMY

Should I pet him?

RIP

I don't think that'll make much difference with this one.

JOHN DUTTON

Get up there.

A terrified Jimmy climbs into the saddle. Rip attaches DRAW REINS to the bridle, run them through the rigging on the breast collar. Hands the reins to Jimmy.

RIP

These keep his head down so he don't flip over on you. He's gonna hate the shit out of them. Whatever you do, don't let go.

JIMMY

Can we just ... talk about this for a second?

John Dutton and Rip literally strap Jimmy to the saddle with latigos and rawhide as wranglers RYAN(24) and COLBY(26) walk up to watch the show ...

RYAN

I got 20 on the horse.

COLBY

I got 40 on the wall.

JOHN DUTTON

Walk him out. Let's go.

RIP

I'd expect some resistance.

JIMMY

... Define resistance.

JOHN DUTTON

Resistance is the kind of thing that defines itself, Jimmy.

John Dutton and Rip step back. Jimmy stares at them, terrified to the point of tears. Looks down at the horse.

JIMMY

Okay. Let's just. Real slow --

The stallion leaps into the air. Finds it can't raise it's head and goes batshit berzerk. Jimmy shrieks in terror.

RIP

PULL THOSE REINS IN ...

Jimmy does, forcing the horse's head down. It bucks and squeals, rears up and launches itself forward into a dead-run around the arena ... Rip and the wranglers watch.

RIP (CONT'D)
Goddam that thing's a freight
train.

RYAN
Whoeee, I don't miss being low-man.

JOHN DUTTON
Low-man's what made you cowboys.
It'll make him one too.

EXT. CORY AND MONICA'S HOUSE -- DAY.

Cory sits on an old tractor, a LOGGING CHAIN attached to the back and wrapped around an enormous TREE STUMP. He guns the engine -- SMOKE plumes from the tractor as it lurches forward.

The tractor gains speed until the chain pulls tight and jerks the tractor backward ... Cory guns it again. Same result. Cory grits his teeth.

CORY
You son of a bitch.

Guns it even harder. So hard, in fact, that when the tractor reaches the end of the chain, the tires grip earth and spin the tractor backward in a violent somersault into the ground.

The ROLL BAR is the only reason Cory wasn't killed, but he is trapped under the weight of the tractor.

Cory sucks air, collects his senses, and assesses the situation -- which ain't great. Tries to shove his way out, but he's wedged in pretty good. Tries harder. Uses all of his might.

Then some unseen switch flips inside him and he goes absolutely berserk ...

Pushing, kicking, AND EMITTING SCREAMS that sound more animal than human as he wills himself out from under the tractor ...

On his feet in an instant, he picks up an axe and swings furiously into the base of the stump over and over. As quickly as he started swinging the axe -- he stops. Drops it to the ground and walks up the side of the embankment toward the barn ...

ANGLE ON --

TATE. As he walks up looking for his father. No dad in sight, just an upside down tractor. Stares at it, little mouth warped into a little ball of confusion.

He hears all sorts of CHAOS in the barn, then sees Cory walking out carrying a 10 pound brick of TANNERITE.

TATE

What happened to the tractor?

CORY

I flipped it.

TATE

Why'd you do that?

Cory doesn't answer. Walks to the stump. Crams the Tannerite under the stump so that one side is still visible. Marches toward his truck. Tate watches with a wary fascination.

TATE (CONT'D)

What's that for?

CORY

Go in the house.

Cory opens his truck, grabs a rifle, levers in a round.

TATE

I think the tractor's already dead.

Cory looks at him, still filled with fury for the stump.

CORY

Get in the goddam house.

Tate's lip is instantly at full quiver. He turns and marches to the house -- now just as mad as his dad. Sits on the step, crosses his arms, and scowls.

Cory looks at his son.

CORY (CONT'D)

Porch ain't inside.

TATE

I DON'T CARE.

CORY

Suit yourself ...

Stares at his son -- so much like him, and softens.

CORY (CONT'D)

Hey.

Tate's eyes look to his father.

CORY (CONT'D)

Do exactly what I tell you: cover both ears.

Tate does.

CORY (CONT'D)

Now open your mouth like you're at the dentist.

Tate opens his mouth wide.

CORY (CONT'D)

Stay just like that. You hear me?

Cory looks down the sights of the rifle at the Tannerite beneath the stump and opens his mouth wide ...

INT. BATHROOM -- CORY AND MONICA'S HOUSE -- CONT.

Through frosted plastic, the rough outline of Monica can be seen in the shower. Only sound is water hitting the shower floor and the scrunching sound of fingers working shampoo until --

THE SINGLE-WIDE TRAILER shakes like an earthquake hit right beneath it. A concussive BOOM attacks the room.

MONICA

AAAAAGHH!!!

A frantic blur of caramel skin spills out of the shower to the ground, then shoots out of the room with the speed of a bullet ...

EXT. TRAILER -- CONT.

Tate stares in disbelief at the crater now blasted into the ground as the sky rains shreds of stump. Looks up at his father like a god ...

CORY

You can close your mouth now.

Cory walks toward the stump. Tate hurries behind.

TATE

Why didn't you do that in the first place?

Monica erupts from the front door in a towel, half expecting to see an army tank in her front yard firing rounds at the house. Sees instead a flipped tractor and a burning field.

MONICA

WAS THAT YOU?!?! ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR FUCKING MIND?!?!?!?!?

Cory Looks at his son.

CORY

That's why. (Looks back in Monica's direction, waves) It's okay!

She shakes her head, steps back inside and slams the door so hard she almost pulls it through the frame.

TATE

Mama owes me a dollar.

CORY

Have fun trying to collect it.

TATE

You're gonna be on a big time-out.

CORY

Already on a time-out, son.

Cory and Tate reach the edge of the little hill and look down on the empty crater ...

The explosion did many things -- removed the stump, terrified a wife, and uncovered the enormous skull of a dinosaur.

Tate stares at it, amazed. Looks at his father.

TATE

You found a dinosaur.

Cory looks down at his awestruck son and wonders just long everything he does will seem like a miracle ...

EXT. -- CAPITOL BUILDING -- DAY.

JAMIE DUTTON walks down the steps of the capital, giant briefcase in tow. A YOUNG GOVERNOR'S AIDE runs after him.

GOVERNOR'S AIDE

Mr. Dutton?

He turns to the voice.

GOVERNOR'S AIDE (CONT'D)

The Governor wants to see you.

Back up the steps ...

INT. GOVERNOR PERRY'S OFFICE -- MOMENT LATER.

Jamie is led in to find Governor Perry and Attorney General Stewart.

GOVERNOR PERRY

Heard you did well before the Land Commission.

A.G. STEWART

There's things we'd like to talk to you about.

GOVERNOR PERRY

Things like your future.

JAMIE DUTTON

I'd like that.

GOVERNOR PERRY

So would we. But first, we have something else to talk about.

A.G. Stewart hands Jamie A FILE.

JAMIE DUTTON

What's this?

A.G. STEWART

Nothing. Because you never saw it.

JAMIE DUTTON

Okay.

He opens the file. LEE DUTTON'S AUTOPSY PHOTOS STARE BACK. Jamie fights the pain of seeing his brother laid out naked on a slab, finds the MEDICAL EXAMINER'S REPORT, starts reading.

A.G. STEWART

The bullet wound inflicted on Lee Dutton severed his spinal column at C8, which would leave him paralyzed from the chest down, including his arms from the elbow to his fingers. It would have been impossible for him to fire a pistol. Which means there was a third shooter.

JAMIE DUTTON

What does it matter. Self defense is still self defense even if someone else pulled the trigger. We're okay not knowing if you are.

GOVERNOR PERRY

Isn't that simple, Jamie.

Stewart hands him another file. Jamie opens it -- ROBERT LONG'S AUTOPSY PHOTOS STARE BACK. A TIGHT GROUP of bullet holes in the chest. A single bullet hole through the forehead.

A.G. STEWART

No matter who pulled the trigger, it wasn't self defense. It was an execution.

Jamie's jaw tightens as he studies the photo.

A.G. STEWART (CONT'D)

Medical examiner hasn't released his findings yet. But when he does, it goes to BIA, FBI, State Police -- all of whom will want their own forensic pathologist to have a look at the body.

GOVERNOR PERRY

Then this starts screaming 'cover-up', and it's screaming it at your father.

A.G. STEWART

The real concern is who it screams at next. Two B.L.M. Agents stated seeing another rider on the horse with Lee when he arrived at the Yellowstone.

JAMIE DUTTON

Did they identify him?

Perry's eyes say yes.

GOVERNOR PERRY

They're friends. Friends forget things. But some of this ... Starts adding up real quick, Jamie. This is already national news. Add a racially motivated killing by an officer of your father's agency ...

A.G. STEWART

I'll have to start chopping heads or it's mine on the block.

JAMIE DUTTON

... What are you saying?

GOVERNOR PERRY

He's saying don't put us in that position.

JAMIE DUTTON

Okay ... I just ... Give me some time here. How long can you hold that report?

US ATTORNEY

A week. Maybe.

Jamie stands.

JAMIE DUTTON

I'll get into it.

GOVERNOR PERRY

Do it fast, Jamie. This is the kind of ship that sinks everyone.

JAMIE DUTTON

That's the only ship I ever find myself on.

Jamie turns and walks out ...

INT. BETH'S BEDROOM -- YELLOWSTONE LODGE -- DAY.

Beth lays in her bed staring at the ceiling. A LARGE FRAMED SOMETHING sits on the floor, picture-side facing the wall.

Stares at the clock -- almost noon. Every conceivable PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION is on the night stand -- ZOLOFT, VALIUM, XANAX, OXYCODONE, AMBIEN ...

She looks at the bottle, picks her poison -- Xanax -- and pops, swallows them without water.

BETH DUTTON

Yeah.

Jamie pops his head in. Looks at her buried under the covers.

JAMIE DUTTON

You sick?

BETH DUTTON

Do I look sick?

JAMIE DUTTON

In bed at noon. A dozen pill bottles beside you, I'd say, yeah. You look sick.

She looks at him.

BETH DUTTON

I'm on vacation.

JAMIE DUTTON

That what you're calling it now?

BETH DUTTON

What do you want.

JAMIE DUTTON

Can I come in?

She doesn't say no. He walks in, closes the door behind him. Sits on the edge of the bed.

BETH DUTTON

This feels very serious.

JAMIE DUTTON

I could use some advice --

BETH DUTTON

Yes, I know you're gay. And no, daddy will not still love you if you tell him.

He shakes his head. Stands.

JAMIE DUTTON

Wasting my fucking time asking you for help.

Looks at the picture on the floor. Walks to it, hangs it up.

JAMIE DUTTON (CONT'D)
 If being here's that painful for
 you, Beth ... Go back to Chicago.

BETH DUTTON
 You asked for advice. I gave it.

JAMIE DUTTON
 I'm not gay. I'm celibate. Because
 I'm terrified of getting someone
 pregnant and passing on the gene
 that made you.

Beth can't decide if she's more surprised by his words or how
 bad they hurt.

BETH DUTTON
 Good one ...

Jamie walks out. Beth looks at the photo now hanging on the
 wall --

AN 11 YEAR OLD BETH SITS -- ALL SMILES -- ON A HORSE. ON
 ANOTHER HORSE SITS EVELYN DUTTON(40), A SOPHISTICATED BEAUTY
 WHOSE LOOKS NOW RESEMBLE THE RUGGED MOUNTAINS IN THE
 BACKGROUND. HER SMILE IS EASY. RELAXED. HER FACE IS CRISS-
 CROSSED WITH WRINKLES FROM LONG DAYS IN THE SUN. BUT NOT A
 ONE WAS CAUSED BY WORRY ...

Beth whips off the covers and marches to the picture, flips
 it around and lets it drop to the floor. The sound of
 breaking glass fills the room as Beth walks to the bathroom.

EXT. ARENA -- YELLOWSTONE LODGE -- LATER.

John Dutton, Rip, and the other wranglers watch as the
 stallion does everything it can think of to rid the boy from
 his back. Runs straight for the wall and uses it to rake
 Jimmy off -- but the leather straps and Jimmy's death grip on
 the saddle horn keep him mounted. One of the wranglers looks
 at Colby.

WRANGLER
 You was almost a winner.

COLBY
 Day ain't over.

John Dutton watches with a smile. Enjoys watching Jimmy
 become a man against his will. Finds himself laughing at the
 wranglers' banter.

JAMIE DUTTON (O.S.)
We have a problem.

John Dutton looks back at Jamie and the smile disappears.

JOHN DUTTON
Does it have a solution?

JAMIE DUTTON
This one requires a few. And you
won't like any of them.

John Dutton steels himself for today's crisis then climbs off the fence and walks toward the barn, Jamie following ...

INT. BREEZEWAY -- BARN -- DAY.

A DOZEN HORSES stick their heads out stalls and watch John Dutton and Jamie like old women at the beauty parlor, eager for the day's gossip.

JOHN DUTTON
Did they identify Cory?

JAMIE DUTTON
Not yet.

JOHN DUTTON
... Who are the agents?

JAMIE DUTTON
Tom Reynolds and Aaron McReary.

JOHN DUTTON
Reynolds I can deal with. I don't
know McReary.

JAMIE DUTTON
Lives in the south end of the
valley. Word is he likes his
religion.

John Dutton looks at him.

JAMIE DUTTON (CONT'D)
As in, 'won't tell a lie' likes it.

JOHN DUTTON
Find out where he goes to church.

Jamie looks at John Dutton. Doesn't know how to say what he's thinking.

JOHN DUTTON (CONT'D)

What.

JAMIE DUTTON

The Medical Examiner.

JOHN DUTTON

Who's seen the report?

JAMIE DUTTON

The only people who have seen it want it to change.

JOHN DUTTON

Then it'll change.

JAMIE DUTTON

M.E.'s are *doctors*. Which means he took an oath. And it wasn't to you.

Jamie Dutton draws a breath. Holds it. Lets it out and says --

JAMIE DUTTON (CONT'D)

No matter what we do, the photographs won't change. The Body won't either. They'll tell the same story to anyone who looks.

JOHN DUTTON

The body's buried.

John Dutton reads Jamie's worried eyes.

JOHN DUTTON (CONT'D)

Relax, Jamie. You think I'm going to let them dig up my son?

JAMIE DUTTON

When they see the report they won't ask, Dad. They'll just do it. I think ... We should ...

Jamie closes his eyes as he says --

JAMIE DUTTON (CONT'D)

We should beat them to it.

John Dutton grabs him by the lapel and thrusts him backwards. John Dutton's wild eyes laser into Jamie.

JOHN DUTTON

DON'T EVEN THINK IT.

JAMIE DUTTON
Cory shot him in the forehead.
While he laid on his back. He was
executed.

John Dutton let's Jamie go. Leans against the wall.

JOHN DUTTON
We don't *know* it was Cory.

Jamie forms his hands into a circle the size of a plum.

JAMIE DUTTON
Five bullets in a circle like this.
Name the Livestock officer who can
do that ...

John Dutton deflates as he chews the reality of that
statement.

JOHN DUTTON
I need to hear him say it first.

John Dutton walks out of the barn ...

INT. WHITE PLAINS MIDDLE SCHOOL -- RESERVATION -- DAY.

Monica walks down an empty hallway. Reaches her classroom,
opens the door and looks in. ALICE WAHL(30), is walking the
other way.

MONICA
I know. I'm sorry. Rough morning.

Alice looks at her, smiles sympathetically. Walks with her.

ALICE
You'll have your share of those.
Don't apologize.

MONICA
That's not it ... Maybe it is, I
don't know.

ALICE
If you need someone to talk to, I'm
always here.

MONICA
Thanks.

ALICE
How's Cory dealing with it?

Monica withdraws a bit.

MONICA

I don't know ... We don't talk about it.

ALICE

We're friends, so I'm going to say something I shouldn't: you both lost brothers. Not talking about it will NOT make that go away.

MONICA

We didn't lose anything, Alice. They killed each other. How do you talk about that?

ALICE

Better find a way. Secrets are like a disease. And it just takes one to infect everything.

They reach a door. Monica opens it -- the classroom is empty.

MONICA

Where's my class?

Alice's eyes narrow a bit.

ALICE WAHL

Remember the Department of Education initiative to boost student resources?

MONICA

Yeah?

ALICE WAHL

Funding came through.

MONICA

What does this have to do with my class?

Alice lets out a heavy breath.

ALICE WAHL

You have to see this to believe it.

Alice leads her further down the hall ...

INT. GYMNASIUM -- MOMENT LATER.

Monica and Alice push through the gym doors to find 90 STUDENTS SITTING CROSS-LEGGED ON THE FLOOR. In front of them - - THREE MEN DRESSED LIKE THE FOUNDING FATHERS. Monica walks to a gaggle of teachers watching with angry arms crossed. Monica makes a beeline for PRINCIPAL LITTLEFIELD(50), jolly, round face that isn't jolly at the moment.

She looks at Principal Littlefield.

MONICA

Thought they were sending us iPads.

PRINCIPAL LITTLEFIELD

Sent us these bozos instead ...
Wonder if they send actors in
blackface to teach history in
Compton.

MONICA

(Dry) That would be racist.

PRINCIPAL LITTLEFIELD

What do you call this?

MONICA

We're not a minority. We're
prisoners of war ...

Monica marches toward the students as a man dressed like GEORGE WASHINGTON talks to them --

GEORGE WASHINGTON

But I refused to run for a third
term for fear America would become
a monarchy just like the one we
fought so hard to --

Monica steps in front of George Washington, looks at the students.

MONICA

My class. Let's go.

GEORGE WASHINGTON

The presentation just got started.

MONICA

(motions with her hands) Up.

Twenty students stand.

GEORGE WASHINGTON

The story of our Presidents is important. To all Americans, regardless of --

MONICA

Let me stop you right there, buddy. Even though you're right -- they should know all about the Presidents. Let's see how far you've gotten ...

She looks at the students.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Who can tell me how many slaves George Washington owned as an eleven-year old boy? Ten. How many did he own when he died? One hundred and twenty-three.

GEORGE WASHINGTON

And he gave every one their freedom in his will.

MONICA

After he had no use for them, how noble ... Who can tell me the first public works project enacted by President Washington? He hired his own company to dam the Potomac after he SOLD the land he owned on both sides of the river to the government. Land he took from Native Americans ... Land that made him the richest man in US history. Can anyone tell me the value of George Washington's estate in today's economy? 15 trillion dollars.

She looks back at 'George'.

MONICA (CONT'D)

You covered all that, right?

George is wise enough to keep his mouth shut. Monica turns her fierce eyes on the next 'FOUNDING FATHER'.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Who are you supposed to be?

JACKSON

Um ... Andrew Jackson.

Her eyes narrow even more, if that's possible.

MONICA

I don't even know where to start
with you ...

She looks at 'ABRAHAM LINCOLN' standing sheepishly to Jackson's right.

MONICA (CONT'D)

You were okay.

Looks back at her class.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Let's go.

She marches off, her class following ...

INT. BATHROOM -- CORY AND MONICA'S HOUSE -- DAY.

Cory stands before the mirror rubbing BETADYNE on the myriad of cuts and scratches from the tractor flip. Stops. HEARS SOMETHING OUTSIDE WE DON'T HEAR. Hears a trace of Tate's voice and relaxes. Hears the deep timbre of A MAN'S VOICE answer back. Is out the door in an instant ...

EXT. ARROYO BEHIND CORY'S HOUSE -- DAY.

DINOSAUR EYE SOCKETS PEER FROM THE DIRT. A MAN'S HAND gently wipes soil away, exposing more dinosaur with every swipe.

WIDEN TO REVEAL -- John Dutton and Tate sit in the dirt, freeing the dinosaur from the earth.

JOHN DUTTON

There was a time when most of
Montana was under the ocean.

Tate looks at John Dutton, eyes wide.

JOHN DUTTON (CONT'D)

Mhmm. And right here was the
beach. See this?

John Dutton shows Tate a fossilized shell.

JOHN DUTTON (CONT'D)

These washed up on the shore, and
your buddy the dinosaur was
probably walking the shore looking
for dinner.

TATE
Then what happened??

JOHN DUTTON
Hard to say. Maybe something made a
dinner out of him.

TATE
Like what?

JOHN DUTTON
Maybe a sea shark.

TATE
... How big were those?!

JOHN DUTTON
From here to the barn.

Tate looks back at the barn -- thirty yards away.

TATE
That's a big fish.

JOHN DUTTON
Big fish.

TATE
Don't want to catch that fish.

JOHN DUTTON
Me neither.

TATE
You think some day an explorer will
find our bones and wonder what
happened to us?

JOHN DUTTON
I think after us, the exploring's
all done.

Cory walks up, looks down on them from the top of the arroyo.
John Dutton looks up at him then back at Tate.

JOHN DUTTON (CONT'D)
Keep it up. I'm going to talk to
your daddy a bit.

John Dutton walks up and sits on the edge of the arroyo. Cory
sits beside him.

JOHN DUTTON (CONT'D)
Monica at school?

Cory nods.

JOHN DUTTON (CONT'D)
Gotta pace myself with that one.
She likes me less every time she
sees me.

CORY
Yeah. That's going around.

JOHN DUTTON
I understand why she hates me ...
She got a reason to hate you?

CORY
No way to talk about the thing we
need to talk about ...

John Dutton looks at Cory, sees A GASH on the side of his
head. Looks back at the flipped tractor.

JOHN DUTTON
Only you could win that fight.

CORY
It was more of a draw.

JOHN DUTTON
(Laughs) Whatever it was, it's a
fight I would have never started.

John Dutton's statement does something almost nothing can do:
make Cory smile. For a moment, they forget the gulf between
each other and enjoy a comfortable silence. But comfort isn't
why John Dutton is here.

JOHN DUTTON (CONT'D)
Need to ask you something.

CORY
Okay.

John Dutton looks at his son. Really looks at him.

CORY (CONT'D)
What.

JOHN DUTTON
Something you want to tell me?

CORY
'Bout what.

JOHN DUTTON
What do you think.

Beat.

CORY
I already told you.

JOHN DUTTON
This time I need the truth.

CORY
I told you the truth..

JOHN DUTTON
You're such a boy. This ain't
checkers, son. This is chess. And
you're about to play it with
masters. These people will twist
you into so many knots you won't
know where the truth begins and
your future ends. Brothers get
their secrets, but he was my son. I
deserve to know.

Cory looks at his own son playing with bones in the dirt.

CORY
What happened that night stays
where it is.

JOHN DUTTON
Not a thing on this planet stays
where it is.

John Dutton points to the dinosaur Tate uncovers.

JOHN DUTTON (CONT'D)
Not one.

Cory steps away. John Dutton stands.

JOHN DUTTON (CONT'D)
At least tell me this: did he get
to see it coming?

Cory looks at his father, then out over the prairie.

CORY
He saw it coming.

John Dutton closes his eyes.

JOHN DUTTON
I'll help you through this, Cory.

CORY
Don't want your help.

JOHN DUTTON
You've made that clear. But you
need it, son.

John Dutton climbs down to Tate.

JOHN DUTTON (CONT'D)
Once you dig him up. Hide him. And
hide him good.

TATE
What for?

JOHN DUTTON
So no one steals him from you.

TATE
Why would someone steal him??

John Dutton rubs the top of Tate's head, stands.

JOHN DUTTON
No reason at all. It's just what
people do.

John Dutton walks by Cory, kisses the top of his head, then
climbs out of the hole and walks to his truck ...

EXT. YELLOWSTONE RANCH -- AFTERNOON.

John Dutton's truck pulls up. Stops in front of the arena.
Jamie is by the truck door before he can even open it.

JAMIE DUTTON
What'd he say?

John Dutton looks tired. Somehow older. Looks at Jamie.

JOHN DUTTON
We need that medical examiner to
take a new oath.

Studies Jamie's face -- can see more bad news written on it.

JOHN DUTTON (CONT'D)
What.

JAMIE DUTTON

Asking the medical examiner to sit on the report didn't go over very well. He released Long's autopsy to tribal police.

JOHN DUTTON

Goddammit ... What do we know about this son of a bitch.

JAMIE DUTTON

Used to be the Medical Examiner in Chicago. Quit in protest over corruption in the mayor's office. Seems they asked him to bury something too ...

John Dutton closes his eyes, draws a calming breath.

JAMIE DUTTON (CONT'D)

What do you want to do?

JOHN DUTTON

Working on it ...

Then walks to the arena, climbs the wall and sits beside Rip. Watches Jimmy and the stallion suffer their way around it.

RIP

It's an even bet on who quits first.

John Dutton studies Jimmy's face as they run past.

JOHN DUTTON

That boy quit hours ago. If you hadn't strapped him to the saddle he'd be laying in the dirt.

RIP

He'll be a cowboy by sundown.

JOHN DUTTON

He's just a favor, Rip. And I'm afraid that's all he'll ever be.

INT. CHIEF RAINWATER'S OFFICE -- AFTERNOON.

ROBERT LONG'S AUTOPSY PHOTO FILLS THE FRAME ...

WIDEN TO REVEAL --

Rainwater sits at his desk staring at the photo. Police Captain Ben Waters looking over his shoulder.

RAINWATER
Pretty good shot.

WATERS
I'd say.

Rainwater studies the bullet hole in Long's forehead.

RAINWATER
Hard to call that self defense.

WATERS
If the Dutton boy was alive I'd
press charges.

Rainwater nods. Wheels turning.

RAINWATER
We sure it was the Dutton boy who
did it?

WATERS
As we can be. Not sure what
difference it makes at this point.

Rainwater looks at him.

RAINWATER
I'll tell you what difference it
makes: right now we have a tragedy.
If there's even the hint of a third
shooter we have Ferguson, Missouri
on the prairie.

Rainwater stabs his finger into the photo.

RAINWATER (CONT'D)
We have the end of John Dutton.
Right here. No witnesses, right?

Waters shakes his head.

WATERS
Only person near the scene was
Cory. He may be on our side with
cattle but this is different.

Rainwater looks back at the photo.

RAINWATER
Cory Dutton ...

WATERS

The hero.

Rainwater looks back at Waters. Says with meaning --

RAINWATER

The soldier.

Rainwater holds up the photo as CAMERA PUSHES IN ON THE BULLET HOLES clumped together in a tight group. Like a soldier might make ...

EXT. ARENA -- SUNSET

Both Jimmy and the stallion have dropped their heads to their chests in surrender. John Dutton and Rip leap from the railing. Rip holds his hand up to the horse's face.

RIP

Whoa.

Like an obedient dog, the stallion stops. CAMERA PUSHES IN ON THE HORSE'S EYE -- glassy. Defeated. They untie the rawhide and free Jimmy from the saddle -- soon as his boot hits the ground, he drops to a knee, gripping his side in agony.

Rip climbs in the saddle, spins the exhausted horse, and kicks him into a lope, then a run, then faster ... FASTER. The stallion snorts with every labored step. Rip stops him, backs him up, spins him around and runs off the other way. Stops him in front of John Dutton.

RIP (CONT'D)

Sombitch is broke now.

Rip dismounts and hands Jimmy the reins.

RIP (CONT'D)

Give him a bath. Tie him in his stall. No hay 'till he cools down.

JIMMY

Yes sir.

Hard to say who walks slower to the barn, the stallion or Jimmy. After a few painful steps, Jimmy leans over and vomits in the dirt then keeps walking. With a little something new in every labored step -- pride.

JOHN DUTTON

Maybe there's a little cowboy in him after all.

John Dutton fights the tiniest of smiles as he walks to the lodge.

Rip walks toward his cabin, stops in his tracks when he sees Beth standing in front of it.

RIP

I don't have the energy for you today.

BETH

Never thought of energy as something you lacked.

Rip walks past her.

BETH (CONT'D)

Take me anywhere but a music festival.

He stops. Looks back.

RIP

You used to like music. That's why I suggested it.

BETH DUTTON

Still like music. It's the festival part that bothers me. Pick something more suited to my personality.

RIP

Wanna get drunk and watch wolves kill elk in the park?

She stares at him hard then turns and walks off.

BETH

I'll drive.

INT. CHURCH -- PARADISE VALLEY, MONTANA -- SUNSET.

JOHN DUTTON sits alone in the front pew, staring at a wood carving of Christ that is older than him by decades. He stares in Christ's eyes -- looking up to the heavens. John Dutton looks up as well -- sees nothing but rotting support beams, looks back at Christ.

JOHN DUTTON

I've seen too much bad in my life to believe you exist, but just in case ...

John Dutton slides from the pew to his knees, folds his hands in prayer --

VOICE

Strange way to start a prayer.

Turns to the voice. The PRIEST(75), ambles toward him. Sits.

PRIEST

I remember when you were a boy,
standing on a scaffolding and
hanging those beams (points up),
right there. Questioning the house
you built, John Dutton?

JOHN DUTTON

Just the world we built it in.

The priest looks at him kindly.

PRIEST

It's not uncommon to doubt one's
faith in the face of tragedy.
That's when you need it most. Faith
is where you find comfort.

JOHN DUTTON

I'm well past seeking comfort. I'm
here for something else.

PRIEST

Any sins you've committed are
forgiven, John. You know that. All
you have to do is believe it.

JOHN DUTTON

To tell you the truth, I don't
regret one sin I've committed. It's
the one I'm about to commit that
worries me. It should worry you
too, father. 'Cuz you're gonna help
me commit it.

John Dutton leans close, whispers --

JOHN DUTTON (CONT'D)

I'm collecting old debts, Bob. And
you owe me a big one.

John Dutton's hard eyes peer into PASTOR BOB, who looks in dire need of a prayer himself ...

INT. METRAPARK ARENA -- BILLINGS, MONTANA -- NIGHT.

CHUTE OPENS and 2000 pounds of screaming bovine hurls itself into the arena -- a BULL RIDER clinging to its back for dear life ...

6000 people cheer, just like they've cheered watching man against beast for three thousand years. Only the hats and the loud speakers are different ...

ANGLE ON --

The audience. Screaming and clapping and secretly wishing something terrible would happen.

CAMERA FINDS --

John Dutton sitting beside CARL REYNOLDS(55), his weathered, worried face watches every twitch and spin.

CARL
COME ON TOBY!!!!!!

A Buzzer signals the rider made it eight seconds. The rider bails off the bull, lands head first in a clump. RODEO CLOWNS charge the bull and tease it away from the crumpled body in the center of the arena as doctors rush to his aide.

The bull is coaxed out of the arena. The rider sits upright to an ocean of relieved applause.

CARL (CONT'D)
Shaves a year off my life every
time he rides.

JOHN DUTTON
Shaved a year off mine and he's
your kid.

CARL
How you kept your boys out of rodeo
I'll never know ...

JOHN DUTTON
Taught them young, Carl: the only
reason to ride a bull is meet a
nurse.

Carl laughs as his son walks to the back gate, doctors watching his every step.

CARL

Wouldn't be surprised if nurses was behind he whole goddammed thing. Lord knows it ain't the pay.

JOHN DUTTON

You know exactly what it is.

John Dutton looks at the pie-plate sized buckle Carl wears that reads -- NATIONAL FINALS RODEO 1986.

CARL

Told him a thousand times I'll give him the damn buckle.

John Dutton chuckles.

JOHN DUTTON

That's the difference between raising a son and a daughter. All you do with a daughter is try to keep her from getting screwed, and all you do with a son is try to keep him from screwing himself ... And that's a whole lot harder.

Carl laughs. John Dutton leans close.

JOHN DUTTON (CONT'D)

That's why I'm here. I need your help to unscrew something.

Carl looks at him.

JOHN DUTTON (CONT'D)

Your oldest boy said he saw someone bring Lee to my house.

CARL

(nods) That's what he told me.

JOHN DUTTON

He's gotta stop telling people that.

CARL

That not what happened?

JOHN DUTTON

It's exactly what happened. And it's going to cost me another son if he keeps telling it.

Carl looks at him.

CARL

You tell me what Tom needed to see
and by tomorrow that's all he ever
saw, John. You got my word.

JOHN DUTTON

Thank you.

Another bull explodes from the chute. Crowd roars as the massive animal does all in it's power to rid its back of a rider.

CARL

I never want to meet the first man
who thought it was a good idea to
ride a bull.

JOHN DUTTON

I don't know, Carl. The first man
might be worth meeting. It's the
second one I wonder about.

The two men laugh as they watch a bullrider risk life and limb for a little money and a lot of pride -- every person in the audience cheering, knowing exactly which is worth more.

INT. MERCEDES -- YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK -- NIGHT.

THE LAMAR VALLEY is bathed in moonlight. The sound of hundreds of hooves pounding earth filters in through open windows.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD a herd of elk can be seen running in a furious, panicked circle as a pack of wolves searches for the weak one ...

Rip takes a swig from a bottle of whiskey, passes it to Beth. She swallows a gulp. Hears the painful moan of a BULL ELK succumbing to the wolves' attack.

BETH DUTTON

I've done some morbid shit on first
dates but this takes the cake, Rip.

RIP

Far from our first date.

BETH DUTTON

The statute of limitations on our
first date ran out years ago.

She looks at him.

BETH DUTTON (CONT'D)

When something dies in the city
it's roped off, zipped into a bag,
and carried away before anyone
bothers to notice.

RIP

Pretending it don't happen don't
make it not happen.

BETH DUTTON

Very astute, Rip. I should
embroider that on a pillow ... It
makes you *think* it doesn't. That's
almost the same thing.

RIP

(Laughs) Well, sorry to be the
bearer of bad news. But everyone
you know and everything you see
everywhere you go is gonna die ...

She lays her head back, closes her eyes, takes a swig from
the bottle.

Rip stares at her, studies every curve of her jaw, her nose,
her cheek ... She opens her eyes, looks at him ...

BETH DUTTON

You got old.

RIP

You haven't aged a day. Might just
cheat death yet ...

She traces the wrinkles of his face with her finger. He leans
close. Closer ...

As his lips almost reach hers, she opens the car door and
disappears outside.

She starts waking toward the pack of wolves devouring the
carcass 100 yards away ...

RIP (CONT'D)

Beth ...

Keeps walking. Walk turns into a run ...

RIP (CONT'D)

BETH!!!! Goddammit ...

Rip swings open the car door and takes off after her -- as
she runs -- screaming like a savage -- at the wolves.

The wolves scurry into the night as she reaches the carcass. She stands over it and roars ...

Rip runs up. Stops beside her, heaving breaths. Beth looks at him ...

BETH DUTTON

You should try Zumba. Get that cardio up.

RIP

(Sucking air) What the fuck are you doing?

BETH DUTTON

Cheatin' death. Like you said ...

RIP

(sucking air) You're the craziest person I ever met in my life.

BETH DUTTON

It's only the things I love that die, Rip. Never me.

She turns and walks back to the car.

BETH DUTTON (CONT'D)

Come to think of it ... I'm surprised you're still standing.

He stands upright, looks back at her.

BETH DUTTON (CONT'D)

Guess God isn't done punishing you either ...

She climbs in the car, closes the door. The pack of wolves howls it's frustration as Rip stares at the vehicle -- unsure whether the night or the car holds more danger.

INT. BUNKHOUSE -- YELLOWSTONE RANCH -- NIGHT.

SIX SINGLE-BEDS WITH FOOT LOCKERS BEFORE THEM LINE THE WALLS. TEN PENNY NAILS HAMMERED ABOVE EACH BED are littered with coats and shirts and jeans ...

The bathroom door opens. Ryan walks out -- hair wet, towel wrapped around his waist.

CAMERA FOCUSES ON RYAN'S CHEST -- NO BRAND.

In fact, everyone is in some state of undress. Combing hair, flossing teeth. Lots of bare chests -- not one Yellowstone brand.

RYAN

Next up.

Jimmy lays on his bunk -- every muscle in misery, watching Ryan as he goes to his bunk.

On the bunk beside Jimmy is FRED MYERS(35), permanent scowl carved into his face. He stares hell at Jimmy.

FRED

That's you.

JIMMY

I'll wait for the water to warm.

FRED

You keep saying that and keep not doing it. I'm the one who's got to sleep next to you. TAKE A FUCKING SHOWER.

ANGLE ON --

LLOYD PIERCE(70) his body is lean and twisted, like barbed wire. Cloud-white mustache and hard eyes, braids a set of ROMELS -- rawhide reins. He looks up at Fred.

COLBY

Cold showers is your future 'till they hire someone new. Might as well get used to it. We did. Better than being dirty.

JIMMY

I'll give it an hour.

FRED

You'll be asleep in an hour. You smell like a goat. GET UP.

Jimmy doesn't move. Fred stands in a fury, yanks off one of Jimmy's boots.

JIMMY

HEY.

Fred grabs the other, yanks it loose.

COLBY
(laughs) Looks like you're
showering now, Jimmy.

The men laugh as Fred grabs at his shirt and tears at the
pearl buttons.

JIMMY
I'M GOING --

FRED
THEN FUCKING GO!!!

Fred yanks the shirt open and everyone freezes. They all
stare at the festering Yellowstone brand -- red and oozing
and swollen, on his chest. Jimmy heaves heavy breaths, eyes
cast to the floor.

LLOYD (O.S.)
You take my shower in the morning,
Jimmy. It's plenty hot then.
Besides ...

Jimmy looks up as Lloyd stands, removes his shirt --
displaying a yellowstone brand older than every man in the
room, burned into his chest. Looks Jimmy dead in the eye.

LLOYD (CONT'D)
Cold water don't worry me none.

As Lloyd's eyes move over the other men, they move to their
bunks in silence. Lloyd walks to the bathroom, closes the
door. Fred's eyes find Jimmy.

FRED
Sorry.

Fred moves to his bed. Everyone else focuses their attention
on anything but Jimmy, who eases back on his bunk, feeling a
little less low-man than he did a moment ago ...

INT. JOHN DUTTON'S OFFICE -- YELLOWSTONE LODGE -- DAWN.

John Dutton sits at his desk, staring at DOZENS OF PHOTOS
spread out like a deck of cards. Each one carries a memory
that pushes John Dutton down a roller coaster of emotions.

His door creaks open, Beth peaks in -- still dressed from the
night before.

JOHN DUTTON
Where you been?

BETH DUTTON
The park. What are you doing?

JOHN DUTTON
Trying to make another decision a
father shouldn't have to make.

She walks in.

JOHN DUTTON (CONT'D)
What's your thoughts on Judgement
Day?

BETH DUTTON
That's every day in my experience.

JOHN DUTTON
Bible says a cremated body can't
rise.

BETH DUTTON
Fortunately, that isn't a decision
you have to make today.

JOHN DUTTON
Yes, it is.

Beth starts doing math.

BETH DUTTON
Something Lee did?

JOHN DUTTON
Something he didn't do.

BETH DUTTON
Okay ... Who did?

John Dutton looks up at her. She reads his eyes.

BETH DUTTON (CONT'D)
You sure?

John Dutton answers by not saying a word.

BETH DUTTON (CONT'D)
Then the decision's easy. Cory was
her favorite. And we promised to
protect him.

JOHN DUTTON
I've done a piss-poor job of that.

BETH DUTTON

He's still standing. We haven't
broken it yet.

She kisses him on the forehead and walks out of the room.

INT. CHURCH -- PARADISE VALLEY, MONTANA -- MORNING.

Pews are full with the faithful. In the front row sits AARON MCREARY(35), beside him sits his wife and two children -- all as handsome and earnest as Aaron. Pastor Bob stands at the podium, looks out over the congregation.

PASTOR BOB

False. Witness. It seems odd that God would find it necessary to have two commandments that instruct us not to lie. But the 9th Commandment has nothing to do with lying. It's about your neighbor. The men and women sitting with you today. It's about your flock. And your shepherds.

Pastor Bob looks at JOHN DUTTON sitting among the faithful. McReary's eyes find him too. McReary gives him a respectful nod. John Dutton returns it.

PASTOR BOB (CONT'D)

And one of our shepherds is suffering. The pain of his loss reverberates throughout this congregation. But his suffering is not over. Because Satan has found an open window. And he is climbing through ...

McReary hangs on every word.

PASTOR BOB (CONT'D)

The 9th Commandment forbids speaking out against your neighbor in any manner. It forbids you from damaging his reputation or threatening his position or the sanctity of his family. Because his family is your family. His flock is Your flock. But Satan doesn't attack the flock, he attacks the shepherd. He attacks him by tricking your mind. By making you see what he wants you to see.

(MORE)

PASTOR BOB (CONT'D)

And when he destroys the shepherd
we are a flock no more. Then we are
merely lambs. Awaiting slaughter.

PUSH IN ON MCREARY --

Every word the pastor speaks hits him like a mallet. Affects his breathing and tightens his muscles as he endures a catharsis of understanding.

EXT. CHURCH -- LATER THAT MORNING.

The service is over. The faithful mingle. Children run and laugh. Pastor Bob shakes hands and smiles. Then finds McReary standing beside him.

PASTOR BOB

Hello, Aaron.

MCREARY

Sometimes your sermons feel like
they're meant just for me.

PASTOR BOB

Sometimes they are. I don't choose
the sermon or who it speaks to. My
job is just to deliver it.

MCREARY

Could we talk? I'm having ...

PASTOR BOB

Let's go inside.

Pastor Bob leads McCreary up the steps to God's house for a conversation that has absolutely nothing to do with God ...

ANGLE ON --

John Dutton, standing among the faithful, watching the wayward sheep being led home ...

EXT. CORY AND MONICA'S -- DAY.

Cory looks back at the house as he walks behind the barn, pulls out his cellphone and dials ...

INTERCUT WITH --

EXT. SOCOM STAGING AREA -- DJIBOUTI, AFRICA -- CONT.

RYAN JENNINGS(35), built like an NFL safety, dressed in desert camo pants and an assault vest, M-4 assault rifle strapped to his chest, answers his cell as he walks among palette after palette of MILITARY GEAR.

JENNINGS
CAPTAIN JENNINGS.

CORY
Hey, Cap.

Takes him a second to recognize the voice.

JENNINGS
CORY DEE! Fuck are you doin'??

CORY
Just ... trying to keep one foot in front of the other.

JENNINGS
Easier said than done, ain't it?

CORY
How's the team?

JENNINGS
A little light right now. We leave for Riyadh in a week. Don't believe the hype on CNN, brother: Syria ain't shit. Yemen is the domino. Sure wish we had you here. This shit's gonna get salty.

CORY
Well, that's why I called. I'm ... Thinking about jumping back in --

JENNINGS
Don't fucking tease me, Cory.

CORY
Wouldn't do it, sir. Can you get me back on the team?

JENNINGS
You're not a year from discharge, are you?

CORY
Just under.

JENNINGS

Then hell yes I can. Pack your
shit, sailor.

CORY

Never unpacked it.

JENNINGS

Stay by your phone. Keep your
powder dry and get ready to fly.

CORY

Roger that.

Cory hangs up, turns around and sees:

MONICA STARING RIGHT AT HIM. Look on her face is like he
shoved a dagger through her heart. She shakes her head, says:

MONICA

We're going to be late.

She turns and walks off. Cory watches her go, then walks
after her ...

INT. CORY'S TRUCK -- A LITTLE LATER.

They both stare straight ahead. Silence so thick you could
cut it with a knife. Without looking at him, she says --

MONICA

What did I do?

CORY

Didn't do anything.

MONICA

Okay ... What did you do?

He looks at her. Then looks out the windshield and lies --

CORY

It's what I can't do. Can't provide
for a family selling horses.

MONICA

Maybe you could if you'd actually
sell them and not give them away.

CORY

I got two skills and only one of
them pays. I won't have my wife
providing for my family --

Monica whips on him like a snake --

MONICA

Don't you dare invent a way to make this my fault. You had no problem being a broke horse trainer a week ago. And neither did I ... You let your father back in and of a sudden going to war is your best option??

Cory looks at her, says with meaning --

CORY

I'm no good at this, Monica.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD --

A rundown house is visible in the distance. Junk yard of cars in the front yard surrounding a rusted swing set.

MONICA

Ain't that the truth. You might be the worst liar I've ever met. So stop lying and tell me why you're leaving us.

CORY

I'm just ...

Rundown house gets closer ...

MONICA

The truth, Cory. We've always told it. Don't stop now.

Cory looks at his wife: the only thing he's ever loved until she gave him something to love even more. Draws in a breath. A big breath. Big enough to tell the truth.

CORY

I'm the one --

As they pass the crumbling house IT EXPLODES IN AN ORANGE FIREBALL. A SWIRLING CLOUD OF COAL BLACK AND MUSTARD YELLOW RUSHES TOWARD CORY'S TRUCK LIKE A WAVE.

The concussive blast hits the truck and sends it weaving and skidding across the road until it is thrust into the bar ditch across the road ...

Cory shakes off the explosion and looks at his dazed wife.

CORY (CONT'D)

You alright?

She manages a nod.

MONICA

What was that??

CORY

Meth lab is my guess. Call 911.
Stay here.

Cory gets out and runs across the street toward the burning house -- or what's left of it.

Runs around to the back. Gets hit by the toxic fumes and drops to the ground. Yanks off his shirt and uses it a gas mask as he moves through the smoke behind the burning house.

First thing he sees is A DOG. It's back is broken. The dog runs on front legs -- its useless rear legs dragging behind in a furious circle, like a broken toy ...

Cory looks past the dog, sees the smoldering body of a person. A small one. A child. Goes to it -- nothing to save. Sees MOVEMENT further up the yard. Rushes to that --

A MAN. Hard to say how old, his body is charred beyond recognition. His clothes melted to his body. He is propped up by an ALUMINUM-LEGGED BARSTOOL, it's legs perforating his body like a pin cushion.

Cory looks down at what's left of the man -- his foot is still on fire, thought the man doesn't feel it. Just stares at Cory -- whites of his eyes seem neon against the black char of his skin.

The man's mouth makes a sound. A desperate, unintelligible gasp. Cory turns and walks off ...

BACK AT THE TRUCK --

Monica leans against the truck, cellphone to her ear, as Cory approaches.

MONICA

911's on the line. Are there people
back there?!

CORY

Not anymore.

Cory reaches in the truck, grabs his pistol, walks back toward the house. Monica hangs up and rushes after him.

MONICA

WHAT ARE YOU DOING???!

CORY
Stay here.

MONICA
NO!!

Cory stops.

CORY
You want the truth? I'll give you
some: you don't want to see this.

Monica's cellphone starts ringing ...

MONICA
I go where you go.

CORY
Fine. Don't breathe the smoke.
Cover your face with your shirt.
Keep your eyes closed 'till you're
past it.

He starts walking back toward the house. She follows. Pulls up her shirt to cover her face as she ducks the pluming smoke. Cory is far ahead of her now ...

She rounds the burning shell of the house, freezes in horror as she sees --

The frantic dog pivoting around in a mad circle. The smoldering body of what used to be a child and the impaled man, smoke rising from him like charcoal ...

Cory walks to the dog, puts a round through the back of it's head and ends it's suffering. Walks to the man, stands over him and looks back at Monica.

CORY (CONT'D)
How long for an ambulance?

She snaps from the shock of the scene and answers her still ringing phone.

MONICA
How long for an ambulance?

Listens to the answer. Looks at Cory.

MONICA (CONT'D)
Twenty minutes.

Cory looks at the man.

CORY
Can you make it that long?

The man's lips mouth 'family'.

CORY (CONT'D)
You ain't got one anymore.

The man looks at the pistol, then Cory, then nods. Cory looks at Monica --

She looks at his charred body. The bar stool legs punched through the man's chest like spears. The smoldering lumps that used to be his children. Then looks back at Cory --

MONICA
Do it.

FROM A DISTANCE --

Cory raises the pistol and fires, ending the burning man's misery ...

EXT. METH HOUSE -- LATER.

Rainwater and Ben Waters look down on the dead body of the burning man, and the hole through the center of his forehead.

WATERS
Was the right thing to do.

Rainwater nods. Studies the bullet wound.

RAINWATER
No question.

They both look back at Cory leaning against Ben's police vehicle.

WATERS
What do you want to do?

RAINWATER
I'm not ready to play this hand.

Rainwater looks at Waters. Points at the burning man's dead body.

RAINWATER (CONT'D)
Make it go away.

Waters nods, walks to Cory.

WATERS

I hear you SEALS like the Glock 19.
That what you used?

Cory lifts his shirt and shows Ben his Glock 19. Waters stares at it.

WATERS (CONT'D)

I like them too.

Waters pulls the pistol from Cory's pants, and removes the slide and barrel. Sets it on the hood. Removes his own pistol -- A Glock 19 -- and removes his own slide and barrel. Reattaches Cory's slide and barrel to his own gun. Does the same to Cory's. Hands it back to Cory.

WATERS (CONT'D)

You were there when I put this
piece of shit out of his misery.
Understand? You're my witness. I'll
put it that way in my report.

Cory has no choice but to say --

CORY

Okay.

ANGLE ON --

RAINWATER, looking back at Cory. Then down at the burning man. Looks into his lifeless eyes and says --

RAINWATER

You got off easy. I would've let
you burn.

Rainwater walks toward the road, shielding his eyes as he passes the burnt body of the child. Stops in front of Cory.

RAINWATER (CONT'D)

Follow my vehicle in your truck.

CORY

Gotta get my son from school.

RAINWATER

Squad car will take your wife to
pick him up and get them both home.

CORY

I already gave a statement.

Rainwater steps close, looks at Cory -- dead serious.

RAINWATER

We're covered in evil, you and me.
Gotta wash it off.

Points back at the burning house.

RAINWATER (CONT'D)

You don't dare take that home.

Cory looks across the street at his wife. She looks back at him across an ocean of asphalt and officers ...

EXT. RESERVATION -- SUNSET.

CAMERA WATCHES FROM A DISTANCE AS THE SHADOWS OF MEN STAND AROUND A FIRE. Huddle beside it like men did before man was the word that described them ...

CAMERA CREEPS ACROSS THE PRAIRIE TOWARD THE FIRE UNTIL CORY'S FACE IS IN FRAME, bathed in the amber of burning wood ...

He is stripped to his underwear. Wrapped in a blanket. Every officer from the burned house are there as well -- stripped wrapped in blankets. A MAN uses a pitchfork to stoke the fire.

Rainwater sits beside Cory. Looks at the faded Yellowstone brand on his chest ...

RAINWATER

Know what I think? (points at the brand) I think a man who does that to himself never changes sides.

Rainwater turns to Cory, shows him the SUN DANCE SCARS that criss-cross his chest.

RAINWATER (CONT'D)

I know I won't.

CORY

I didn't do it.

Rainwater processes what that means. Cory stares at the fire.

CORY (CONT'D)

We don't get to choose our fathers.

RAINWATER

Wouldn't make a difference if we could. We'd just chose wrong ...
Your son doesn't look like you.

CORY
No, he got lucky.

RAINWATER
Looked like you when he was born,
though. Didn't he?

Cory looks at him. Nods.

RAINWATER (CONT'D)
Just like you.

CORY
Like a mirror.

RAINWATER
Every child looks like their father
when they're born. Doesn't matter
boy or girl ... Doesn't matter who
they'll look like in three days,
when they come out of the womb they
are a perfect reflection of the man
who made them ...

CORY
He was ...

Rainwater nods.

RAINWATER
Wanna know why? It's nature's way
of proving you're the father. So
you don't think the baby belongs to
someone else. And kill it ...

Cory takes that in as they watch the fire.

RAINWATER (CONT'D)
No such thing as a good man, Cory.
All men are bad. But some of us try
real hard to be good.

The man steps into the fire pit, removes a burning log
revealing A STACK OF LAVA ROCKS GLOWING RED HOT.

MAN
Stones are ready.

RAINWATER
First sweat?

Cory nods.

RAINWATER (CONT'D)

Ceremony doesn't end when the sweat ends. Study the things you see: they're a map of your future. Good thing about maps is -- if you don't like the path you're on, you can choose another.

CORY

When does the ceremony end?

RAINWATER

When you die. Then the next one begins.

Rainwater stands, drops his blanket. Cory stands as well. Looks over all the other shirtless men, THEIR CHESTS RIDDLED WITH SUN DANCE SCARS - 1 inch gashes where wooden rods penetrated the muscle and tethered them to the TREE OF LIFE until they found the strength to break free. Judging from the multitude of scars on every man's chest, they found the strength many times ...

CAMERA WATCHES FROM A DISTANCE as the silhouettes of men duck beneath the firelight and climb into the sweat lodge.

From this distance it looks as though they are climbing back in the womb ...

INT. VETERINARY CREMATORIUM -- NIGHT.

The ceilings are 20 feet tall with a rail system and crane built to carry one ton animals toward the enormous cremation oven.

An OLD MAN, 80 if he's a day, works levers that guide the casket inside. John Dutton and Jamie stand beside him, faces grim.

OLD MAN

This oven'll incinerate a horse in about an hour. Never had a person in it, though. My guess is you'll have ashes in about 10 minutes.

Jamie puts a hand on the casket as it goes past, then it slides inside the oven. The old man closes the door, presses a button, and the casket disappears in the orange glow of flames.

Jamie's solemn gaze is interrupted by the feeling of EYES ON HIM. Turns to see his father staring at him like a stranger.

A look that kills the messenger all over again. Or perhaps, just wishes it was a different son being fed to the furnace.

EXT. MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE -- NIGHT.

HANDS SHAKE AS THEY GRIP A GAS LINE. PULL IT FROM THE WALL.

WIDEN TO REVEAL --

The MEDICAL EXAMINER(45), on his knees beside numerous tubes running to and from the wall.

RIP (O.S.)
What's the green one?

He looks back at the voice, where Rip leans against an exam table.

MEDICAL EXAMINER
Oxygen.

RIP
Pull that one too.

He does.

RIP (CONT'D)
Come over here and pick this up.

Rip points to STEEL SURGICAL EQUIPMENT on a tray: forceps, scalpels ...

MEDICAL EXAMINER
I don't want to.

RIP
Not what I asked.

Rip grabs him by the throat.

MEDICAL EXAMINER
Look. Do what you want. I'll never say a word.

RIP
Spoken like a true victim. No victims today. Just accomplices. Let's go.

The Medical Examiner scoops up the surgical tools.

RIP (CONT'D)
Put them in the microwave.

He does.

RIP (CONT'D)
Turn it on high. For an hour.

He does. Rip points to a computer.

RIP (CONT'D)
What other computer has the report?

MEDICAL EXAMINER
Just this one.

RIP
Not one at your house?

He shakes his head no.

RIP (CONT'D)
If you're lying, I'll burn that to
the ground too.

MEDICAL EXAMINER
I'm not lying ... Who do you think
this is going to fool?? Everyone's
going to know this was arson.

RIP
Don't look like arson to me. Looks
like a suicide.

Rip spins the terrified man, slips his arm beneath his chin -- using his arm like a vice. Sends a short punch to the man's kidney -- knocking his pelvis forward and centering all of the man's weight into the vice. Rip begins walking backwards, letting the flailing man's own weight cut the blood flow to his brain. The man goes limp.

Rip lays him down as he walks out past the microwave as sparks fly inside it like an orange tornado ...

EXT. RESERVATION ROAD -- NIGHT.

Cory's hair is pasted to his head with sweat. Eyes red from smoke and sage. Skin almost glows from the steam that sucked every impurity from his pores ...

Blurry eyes struggle to see the road -- everything is out of focus ...

He sees SOMETHING ahead, slows to a stop. Shakes his head, blinks his eyes wildly, seeking clear vision ...

The road comes into view, then what stands in the center of it --

A COYOTE.

Looks Cory dead in the eye. In it's mouth is a HOUSE CAT.
Neck broken. Body limp.

Cory stares at it as A BROOD OF COYOTE PUPS RUN ONTO THE ROAD AND HIDE UNDER THEIR MOTHER.

HEADLIGHTS ILLUMINATE THE HORIZON. Coyote doesn't notice. Too blinded by Cory's truck. But Cory sees it. Lays on his horn.

The coyote begins slowly moving off the road, never taking it's eyes off Cory. Not even when A SEMI crests the horizon and eviscerates the whole lot of them ...

Cory stares at the spot where the coyote family used to be, now only smears on the asphalt.

Stares in his rearview mirror at the pink blips of the truck's tail lights. It never even slowed down ...

INT. BATHROOM -- CORY AND MONICA'S -- NIGHT.

A YELLOW RUBBER DUCKIE floats across bath water.

A BAR OF SOAP sails into frame, pounding the duckie, forcing it underwater. It bounds up, rights itself, and continues floating to the sounds of TATE'S GIGGLES ...

WIDEN TO REVEAL --

Tate, sitting in the tub, Monica resting against it.

MONICA

That's enough target practice,
dude. Come on ...

Hands him a wash cloth.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Behind the ears.

He rubs the cloth behind his ears.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Under your arms.

Rubs under the arms.

MONICA (CONT'D)
Now the bum-bum.

TATE
Bum-bum's fine.

MONICA
Bum-bum is not fine. Believe me.

Rubs his little bottom with the washcloth, then hands it to his mother.

MONICA (CONT'D)
... Thank you.

She stands, grabs a towel.

MONICA (CONT'D)
Out.

He climbs out. She rubs him dry with the towel ...

INT. TATE'S BEDROOM -- LATER.

Monica sets him in bed. Walks to a BOOK SHELF.

MONICA
Bug book or snake book.

TATE
Dinosaur book.

Grabs a book about dinosaurs, sits beside him. He opens it to a picture of a Tyrannosaurus Rex.

MONICA
Want me to read it to you?

TATE
No, my dad needs to because we found one and it's our secret and you can't know about it cuz if you tell someone they might steal it.

MONICA
Ah ...

TATE
Loose lips sink ships.

She shakes her head.

MONICA

Where do you come up with this stuff ... Daddy's not here, honey. So you're gonna have to tell me the secret or settle for looking at pictures.

Tate studies her face, wrestling with the decision.

TATE

I'll look at the pictures.

She hands him the book, stands.

MONICA

Just like your father.

Monica walks out.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- MOMENT LATER.

Monica walks in the living room. Sits on the couch and pulls out a stack of papers in dire need of grades. HEADLIGHTS flash through the window. Car door opens and closes. Her body stiffens ...

Cory walks through the front door. Looks like he's seen a ghost. Looks like he's seen an army of them ...

Cory and Monica lock eyes.

CORY

If I'm going to lose you it ain't gonna be 'cuz I kept something from you. You can leave me for what I did, but not because I lied.

Monica shuts her eyes tight. An eternity passes before she opens them. Cory exhales. Readies himself to say it. Monica holds up a hand.

MONICA

If I give you this lie, will you stay?

CORY

If I stay you'll learn it.

MONICA

Whatever I hear I won't believe.

CORY

You won't want to. But you will.

MONICA

I guess this is what we meant when we said 'for better or for worse'.

CORY

It'll get worse than this.

TATE

DADDY!?!

MONICA

Say you'll stay.

CORY

Whatever I do it's because I love you. I'll say that.

The words come close to killing her.

MONICA

Baby. Look at me. There's nothing you can do I won't forgive you for.

He walks to her. Leans close. Kisses her forehead.

CORY

Yes there is.

TATE (O.S.)

DADDYYYY!!!!

CORY

I want to be with my son.

She surrenders with a nod and Cory walks down the hall ...

INT. TATE'S BEDROOM -- LATER.

Cory lays on the bed with Tate looking at the dinosaur book, studying the Tyrannosaurus Rex.

TATE (O.S.)

Think ours is as big as this one?

CORY

Maybe bigger.

Monica peeks in the door, watches them.

TATE

We need to dig him up tomorrow.

CORY

We can start but it's gonna be a lot of work.

TATE

I ain't scared of work.

Tate looks at Cory, almost whispers --

TATE (CONT'D)

Where do we hide him?

CORY

How 'bout the barn.

TATE

People will look there. Maybe we dig a cave.

Cory rests his head against Tate's little shoulder, looks at the picture of the dinosaur.

CORY

Whatever you want, buddy.

She wants nothing more than to lay down beside them. It takes all her strength to fight the temptation. Hard as it is to do, she backs away and closes the door.

INT. HALLWAY -- CONT.

CAMERA follows Monica as she walks down the hall and disappears into the bedroom. CAMERA holds on what is likely their first FAMILY PHOTO --

Taken at the hospital. Monica holds a bundled, infant Tate as she lays in a hospital bed. Cory sits beside her. Both are too shell-shocked to truly smile. Cory and Monica look like children pretending to be parents, they're so young. Tate's hair is almost blonde, his skin much lighter. Chalk it up to jaundice or the fluorescent hospital lighting, but it's undeniable -- Cory and Tate look exactly alike ...

EXT. YELLOWSTONE LODGE -- MORNING.

A SHITTY SEDAN putters up the hill toward the lodge. Stops. A MAN gets out -- cheap blazer, cheap slacks, cheap tie. Starts walking toward the house.

Jamie opens the front door as the man reaches the porch.

JAMIE DUTTON
Can I help you?

MAN
You John Dutton?

JAMIE DUTTON
He's not here.

The man looks around. Jamie notices THE MAN'S HANDS HELD BEHIND HIS BACK. Jamie's rests his hands on the door jam above him.

FROM INSIDE THE HOUSE --

Jamie's hands find A SHOTGUN resting above the door.

BACK OUTSIDE --

JAMIE DUTTON (CONT'D)
What do you got there?

MAN
Hmm?

JAMIE DUTTON
Behind your back.

MAN
When will John Dutton will be home?

JAMIE DUTTON
Let me see your hands.

The man starts backing away toward his car. Jamie removes the shotgun from above the door, raises it to his shoulder and marches out after him. The man backs away wildly.

JAMIE DUTTON (CONT'D)
Let me see your hands!

The terrified man stumbles and falls back in the driveway. Jamie stands over him. The man shows both hands.

MAN
I'm not here to hurt him. I have something I can only give to him.

JAMIE DUTTON
I'm his son. And attorney. Give it to me.

MAN
... His attorney?

Jamie nods. The man slowly stands.

MAN (CONT'D)
You're right. I can give it to you.

The man pulls a large MANILA ENVELOPE FROM HIS WAISTBAND, TOSSES IT AT JAMIE'S FEET.

MAN (CONT'D)
He's been served.

The scurries back to his car, starts it and hauls ass down the drive.

Jamie opens the envelope. Reads:

SUMMONS TO APPEAR:

PARK COUNTY VS YELLOWSTONE LAND AND CATTLE COMPANY, INC.

CONDEMNATION HEARING: 30,000 ACRES TO DEVELOP AND BUILD A SECONDARY SCHOOL TO SERVE SOUTHERN PARK COUNTY.

Jamie stares at the summons, resisting the temptation to shoot the process server as he flees ...

EXT. ROLLING PLAINS -- DAY.

JOHN DUTTON SITS ALONE on the top of a windswept hill. Wears a BLACK SUIT. The blue-grey stallion grazes, saddled, in the distance.

John Dutton watches the wind send undulating waves back and forth through the tall grass. Across from John Dutton is a MARBLE CROSS POUNDED INTO THE EARTH YEARS BEFORE ...

PUSH IN ON THE CROSS --

Etched in the marble are the words: EVELYN DUTTON MET GOD HERE. JUNE 3RD, 1997. John Dutton looks at the cross ...

JOHN DUTTON
Who thought 'look after our
children' would be such a hard
promise to keep ...

In John Dutton's lap is A BOWL FILLED WITH ASHES. His hands cradle it like a child, which in essence it is ...

JOHN DUTTON (CONT'D)
Most father's don't have to do this
twice.

(MORE)

JOHN DUTTON (CONT'D)

Since I do, and considering the
date ... thought I'd bring you some
company. Happy birthday.

John Dutton hoists the bowl into the air. The wind sucks the
ashes from it and swirls them into a dust devil that dances
through the sky until it's broken apart and disappears.

THE END.