

Hi Brittany,

Thank you so very much for taking the time to read Katharine's and my script. We have been huge fans of your work for a long time — and long before we were aware that we have mutual friends. It is a true honor for us to have you consider the role of Kimi in Historical Film.

Katharine, Joe, Zana, and I have been working on Historical Film for seven years. Our goal from the very beginning has been to craft a funny, moving, complex film about lovable, flawed characters. It has taken a long time, but we have succeeded in assembling a team of amazing people who have poured their hearts and souls into this project. We believe this story — a character-driven odyssey about friendship and self-discovery against the backdrop of the world of historical reenactments — will make for a very special film thanks to the incredible people involved.

Although Historical Film explores and follows the friendship and intimacy of two men, equally important are our female characters. Kimi is the most prominent and her presence is felt throughout Historical Film — in many ways she is the

gravitational center of the movie — pulling the entire story into her orbit, flipping it, and launching it in a new direction.

Kimi's life is on a very carefully planned trajectory; a Pre-Columbian history grad student, she is slowly but surely rising in academia through her grit, intelligence, and sheer force of will. When our film begins, she has just learned that she has been robbed of an opportunity that is rightfully hers. As the narrative progresses, she decides to do something about it. Her actions (and subsequent quiet transformation) earn Historical Film its saddest point and its happy ending.

Our story necessitates Kimi to possess a unique blend of intensity, gravity, and warmth. We found it very difficult to imagine, let alone find, a performer who naturally exudes these three qualities so beautifully. Then, one night as Katharine and I were unwinding after a day on set, we watched *The White Lotus* and were blown away by your subtle, commanding screen presence. Suddenly inspired, we began re-writing Kimi's scenes imagining you in the role — which truly began to write itself. Kimi thereby transformed from an interesting character to an absolute force of nature.

It would be a dream come true if you brought Kimi to life in this film. Not only would it feel like a beautiful, serendipitous completion of a long journey that we have made with Joe and Zana, but your talent and screen presence would elevate the emotional tapestry of Historical Film to the level Katharine and I first dreamed of when we began writing these characters almost a decade ago.

Thank you so very much for your time and consideration, Brittany.

Will

Historical Film

written by

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EXT. THEATRE ROYAL - DAY [OPENING CREDITS]

The following montage explores a sprawling amalgamation of an 18th century soldier's encampment, a battery-and-diesel-powered video production office, and a modern-day squatter's paradise. This is JOSS'S CAMPSITE, aka THEATRE ROYAL.

BEGIN TITLES/MUSIC: "THEATRE ROYAL"

1. Dissolving from darkness we see an eclectic assortment of items on a table (camcorder, styrofoam mannequin head, piles of history books, hard drives, and countless cans of peaches). We TRACK parallel to the cluttered table until we frame JOSS, shirtless and shaving. Composition doesn't reveal his eyes - only chin, hands and razor.

2. Joss PEELS a John Wilkes Booth-style mustache from the styrofoam mannequin head. The title *HISTORICAL FILM* explodes on the screen like a hand-painted firework.

3. We float toward Joss's reflection, from behind and over his shoulder as he daintily applies his mustache in an oval-shaped mirror. We don't see his eyes.

4. He puts his shirt on; his hand glides through the sleeve.

5. He buttons his white dress shirt.

6. Framing the back of his neck, up go the suspenders.

7. He dons his red vest, pats his pockets, turns right...

8. Opens a drawer, he finds a PISTOL and pockets it.

9. We float toward Joss from behind as he rigorously grooms his hair with two brushes. He stops and half-turns, almost showing us his face but stopping short.

10. He grabs his CAMCORDER and exits the frame. And we PIN-HOLE ZOOM on the cover of the paperback book on which the camcorder rested, *Sic Semper Tyrannis* by R.E. Annesley, and a faded illustration of John Wilkes Booth. . .

END TITLES, MUSIC.

INT. SARNAI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT [ULAANBAATAR, MONGOLIA]

A key jingles in the lock before the front door swings open.

In walks SARNAI (50s, Asian) carrying groceries and wearing a medical eyepatch and bandages.

The blue rectangle of her LAPTOP SCREEN glows in the darkness of her apartment; it's signaling an INCOMING SKYPE CALL.

She drops her groceries, turns on the overhead lights, and takes a seat at her dining room table -- where there is only a single chair.

She composes herself in her webcam before clicking "ACCEPT CALL." On her screen, the smiling face of CALEB SHATAR (20s, Asian) pops up in a little, pixelated square. He is handsome, clean-cut, smiling and wearing a blazer.

CALEB [FILTERED]

Hi Mom!

SARNAI

(Mongolian, subtitled)

Hi, sweetie! You look so handsome in that suit!

CUT TO:

INT. CALEB'S APARTMENT - RICHMOND, VIRGINIA - DAY

6,554 miles away, Caleb sits bolt-upright at his tiny IKEA desk in a Virginia student apartment complex.

In contrast to the professionalism of his blazer, just below the frame of his webcam Caleb is wearing only underwear and socks. Heaps of trash (pizza boxes, takeout) are sculpted to not appear in the background of his webcam.

CALEB

(straightening lapels)

Haha, thanks.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK on his bedroom door. Caleb ignores it and focus on his mom:

CALEB (CONT'D)

(Mongolian, subtitled)

How's your eye?

SARNAI [FILTERED]

(Mongolian, subtitled)

Much better. The doctor says I can take the bandages off Monday!

*KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK **KNOCK!***

CALEB

(Mongolian, subtitled)

...Hold on a second.

Careful to not reveal his boxers to the webcam, he stands up and opens the door to KIMI (20s), a young woman in a fuzzy, coffee-mug-themed bathrobe.

Despite the temptation, she chooses not to comment on Caleb's outfit.

KIMI

Did you win an award for my essay?

Caleb gulps.

CALEB

...No.

KIMI

Okay, then why did that creepy professor drop you a winky face in the announcement update?

CALEB

I haven't logged in today.

KIMI

You winky-faced back.

From Caleb's laptop:

SARNAI [FILTERED]

(Mongolian, subtitled)

Is that your girlfriend?

CALEB

Oh my god.

Caleb shuts the door in Kimi's face. He comes back and sits down at the computer:

CALEB (CONT'D)

(Mongolian, subtitled)

Roommate, Mom. She's not my girlfriend.

From behind the door:

KIMI [O.C.]

Go ahead. Tell her you'll be in the school paper!

SARNAI

(Mongolian, subtitled)

What did she say? I can't hear her.

CALEB
(Mongolian, subtitled)
She hopes your eye feels better.

SARNAI [FILTERED]
(Mongolian, subtitled)
That's very sweet. Is she excited
about your award?

CALEB
Um, yeah.

SARNAI [FILTERED]
(Mongolian, subtitled)
Let me see it again!

Caleb reaches into a laundry hamper and yanks out an AWARD in
an expensive-looking frame.

SARNAI [FILTERED] (CONT'D)
(Mongolian, subtitled)
Read what it says.

CALEB
(whispering, reading)
*First place. American History
Writing Contest. Caleb Shatar.*

Muffled:

KIMI [O.C]
*Bestowed with pride and recognition
by Virginia's Scholastic and
Historical Alliance.*

CALEB
Can you NOT stand outside my door,
please and thank you?

On Caleb's tiny screen, Sarnai takes a picture of her own
screen with a tiny point-and-shoot camera.

SARNAI [FILTERED]
(Mongolian, subtitled)
I'm so happy to see you writing
again. When can I read it?

Caleb's PHONE RINGS.

CALEB
Um, I'll email it to you. Hold on.

He answers:

CALEB (CONT'D)

Hello?

RALPH [O.C., FILTERED]

Caleb, this is Dr. Annessley, your professor of American History. Do you have a few minutes to chat?

CALEB

Sure. What is this about?

As Caleb is talking to Ralph, Kimi lets herself into Caleb's bedroom (now carrying a mug of tea), sits at Caleb's desk and puts his award in her own lap.

KIMI

Hello, Sarnai.

SARNAI [FILTERED]

Kimi, hi! Did you read Caleb's essay?

She turns and looks at him over her shoulder.

He is standing balanced on a pile of trash, trying to escape the webcam's field of view, with one hand he holds the phone, with his other he futilely tugs the tail of his blazer in an effort to hide his tighty-whites.

RALPH [O.C., FILTERED]

Can you come to my office now?

CALEB

Sure, I can come now.

She sips her tea.

KIMI

Oh yes. We are all so proud of him.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT OFFICE - DAY

Professor RALPH E. ANNESLEY (early 50s, white) sits among piles of books, papers, and Civil War-era memorabilia. He wears antique spectacles and a crisp baseball cap.

Caleb CRINGES as Professor Annesley (Ralph) reads aloud from Caleb's award-winning essay.

RALPH

John Wilkes Booth loved applause. Every night he would take curtain call after curtain call, basking in the thunderous cheers and whistles. His raw manhood thirsted for such recognition, and when people feel thirst like that, the only option is to drink. But Booth would learn, as he raised the glass to his soft lips, in drinking deeply we often destroy that which we most love.

(puts essay down)

Powerful stuff.

CALEB

Thanks.

Ralph shells and eats a pistachio.

RALPH

How'd you come up with such vivid language?

CALEB

I have no idea.

RALPH

Mmhhm. It's obvious you didn't write this yourself.

Caleb GULPS. Ralph leans in.

RALPH (CONT'D)

You've been visited by ghosts. Spirits of the past. Read enough history and you get bitten by the bug.

(offers bowl)

Pistachio?

CALEB

Haha. No thanks.

RALPH

That's why I nominated you for the award. Not because your essay was historically accurate, or even particularly well-written. But because you're passionate about history.

CALEB

Well, your class makes it easy.

Ralph nods.

RALPH

I appreciate that.

(beat)

Look, I didn't call you in just to congratulate you. I'd like to offer you a job over the break. It's a secret project of mine, part reenactment and part adaptation of my book.

Ralph gestures to a little display he's constructed on his desk exhibiting his paperback book, *Sic Semper Tyrannis* and a hand-written price tag of \$12.95.

CALEB

How much does it pay?

RALPH

A thousand bucks.

Beat.

CALEB

So my visa doesn't technically allow me to work off-campus, but maybe if we...

RALPH

(finishing his sentence)

Keep it off the books. Don't worry, it's under the table.

CALEB

...Cool.

CUE MUSIC: "THIS AFTERNOON"

Ralph tosses an antique wide-brimmed hat in Caleb's lap like a frisbee.

RALPH

Pop that on your noggin.

Caleb puts the hat on his head. Ralph opens a drawer, pulls out a CAMERA, and snaps a pic. Caleb blinks in the flash.

RALPH (CONT'D)

Hand me that notebook. I'm going to give you a phone number to call.

CALEB
Where am I going?

CUT TO:

INT. CALEB AND KIMI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Caleb stands on his tip-toes, reaching for a rolled-up duffle bag on the top shelf of their cluttered hallway closet.

Kimi stands behind him, dipping a fresh teabag in her mug. Her friend, ANA (20s), sits on the floor in the background with multiple tubs of water and chemicals, washing and categorizing shards of pottery.

ANA
(irritated, to Kimi)
What is he doing?

KIMI
(to Caleb)
What are you doing?

An avalanche of crap falls on Caleb from the top shelf.

CALEB
I'm going on a trip.

KIMI
Fun. You still haven't paid me for my award-winning essay.

CALEB
I'll pay you when I get back!

JUMP CUT:

INT. CALEB'S BEDROOM - DAY (MINUTES LATER)

Caleb zips his clothes, toothbrush, and iPhone charger into the duffle bag. Kimi has followed him over with her tea.

KIMI
Along with rent. Last month's electricity. Trash. Internet. And those two hamburgers you stole from the fridge.

CALEB
I'm working on it.

He grabs a little GOLDEN BULL from the shelf and wraps it in his sweatshirt.

KIMI
(after a sip)
I mean... You could sell that thing.

CALEB
My mom gave it to me.

KIMI
(poking Caleb's trash with her toe)
Did she give you all this pizza too?

CALEB
Kimi! Oh my god! Can I please live my life for just five minutes, please?

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Caleb's GOLDEN BULL sits on the dashboard of Caleb's beat up STATION WAGON. Over the car speakers we hear --

SIRI
You will reach your destination in 161 miles.

He accelerates onto the highway, leaving the city behind.

EXT. WOODS - DIRT ROAD - TWILIGHT

Frogs and crickets chirp in pitch darkness.

Caleb drives slowly into the woods, his car bouncing and squeaking on bumpy ground. Creeping along with his high beams on, he scans the trees for connecting roads.

END MUSIC.

EXT. WOODS - CLEARING - TWILIGHT

Caleb drives up to a big rock and cuts the engine. Next to the rock stands a mustachioed scarecrow, a spooky sentinel lurking in the darkness. Caleb eyes it warily.

He punches the overhead light and dials a PHONE NUMBER scribbled on the notebook page Ralph gave him. It rings several times before going to voicemail.

JOSS [O.S., FILTERED]
Leave a message.
(BEEP)

CALEB
Hi, my name is Caleb Shatar. I was hired by Professor Annesley to meet you here tonight. Hope I'm in the right place. Call me back, please.

JUMP CUT:

EXT. WOODS - CLEARING - NIGHT

Time has passed. Caleb waits leaning against his car, eating a granola bar. He redials the number.

From nearby a spooky RINGTONE echoes in the woods. Caleb freezes, trying to locate its origin in the darkness.

CALEB
(into the void)
. . . Hello?

A twig SNAPS. The ringing CUTS OFF.

Caleb leaps back into his car. LOCKS the door. STARTS the engine, flicks on the HEADLIGHTS -- and GRINNING IN THE HIGH BEAMS is a man dressed as John Wilkes Booth.

CALEB (CONT'D)
Ahhhhhh!!!

Caleb's screaming frightens JOSS (late 30s, white) a man in a soaking wet pleated shirt, coat, dyed hair, fake mustache, and runny stage makeup. He looks like a clown from hell.

JOSS
Agghhhh!!!!

CALEB/JOSS (CONT'D)
AGGHHHHHHHHHH!!!!!!!

Joss walks up, wet boots squeaking with every step. He sticks his face in Caleb's half-open window. Caleb recoils.

JOSS (CONT'D)
You scared the hell out of me.

CALEB

Sorry.

JOSS

Are you Ralph's friend?

CALEB

Professor Annesley, yeah.

JOSS

You're late.

CALEB

I called a bunch of times.

JOSS

Let's not argue.

Joss climbs in the backseat.

JOSS (CONT'D)

I hope you're ready for an
adventure.

He grabs a giraffe-pattered fleece blanket from the footwell
and wraps himself like a nun, teeth chattering.

CALEB

Were you swimming or something?

JOSS

(eyes closed)

Mm.

CALEB

You're shivering.

JOSS

I know.

CALEB

Are you okay?

JOSS

I'll be fine. Everything dries in
time.

Without opening his eyes, Joss offers Caleb a handshake.

JOSS (CONT'D)

I'm Joss. Welcome to the best job
you've ever had.

EXT. WOODS - CLEARING - DAWN

Caleb is slumped in the driver's seat, snoring with his mouth open. Joss (now dry with perfectly combed hair) TAPS the window, startling him awake.

JOSS
Morning, sunshine. Let's get moving.

EXT. WOODS - CLEARING - DAY

Caleb holds a HISTORICAL COSTUME (pleated shirt, vest, trousers, boots, and hat) in a neatly folded pile under a safety-pinned tag with his name.

While Caleb puts on his costume, Joss does his morning aerobics, spinning an invisible hula hoop.

JOSS
(breathing heavily)
So here's the deal. You and I are recreating the manhunt of 1865. I'm John Wilkes Booth, the man who shot and killed Abraham Lincoln. You are David E. Herold, my navigator and confidant. Together we'll act out the final days of Booth's life.

CALEB
Like a game?

JOSS
How do you mean?

CALEB
I dunno. Why are we doing this?

JOSS
We're making a movie, Caleb.

CALEB
Where's the crew?

JOSS
Why would we need a crew? I have a camera on the other side of the river.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY (LATER)

Now they're loading a CANOE with groceries, camping gear, and equipment from a pile of stuff on a tarp.

JOSS

We'll make this film in isolation, put it on the internet, and set the world on fire with the most electrifying historical film they've ever seen. Most people think this stuff is boring. They think history is for high school students. They think history is for shut-ins with no friends. That's why I want --

Caleb lifts a large, lumpy bag.

JOSS (CONT'D)

Put that down. We don't need that. We don't need that.

Caleb puts it down.

JOSS (CONT'D)

That's why I want to make something that grabs them by the collar.

(grabs Caleb)

Gives them a good SHAKE.

(shakes Caleb)

And says, Ssshhhh. History is...
For me.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Caleb ROWS THEIR BOAT, taking in the scenery. Joss is reading from CALEB'S ESSAY which he keeps folded in his breast pocket.

JOSS

(reading)

"Thousands of women fell under the spell of Booth's bewitching hazel eyes and silken voice. His thick chestnut hair, chiseled abs, and god-like pecs --

Joss looks over the paper at Caleb. Caleb avoids eye contact. Joss returns his attention to the paper.

JOSS (CONT'D)

-- drove them to madness. In fact, Booth is believed to be the first actor in history to have his clothing ripped apart by adoring fans."

(folds paper, puts it
back in his pocket)

Now, Caleb. This is interesting. Because Booth did have, for lack of a better term, a BODY. But few scholars have chosen to remember it. I'm curious, what are your sources?

CALEB

You know. Old books. Records. That sort of thing.

JOSS

Stuff that's sort of off the beaten path.

CALEB

For sure.

JOSS

Amazing how one narrative can dominate all the rest. Textbooks don't like ambiguity, and they don't like messiness. But life is messy --

CALEB

(interrupts, overlap)
Yeah, life is messy.

JOSS

(overlap, just keeps
going)
-- and there are always multiple versions of the way something happened. Tell me, have you ever read a theory that Booth did not die in the fire at Garrett's farm, but in fact escaped?

CALEB

Yeah.

JOSS

What's your take?

Caleb shrugs.

CALEB

Some people say he did. Some
people say he didn't.

Joss nods at the gravity of this statement.

JOSS

There's so much we fail to
remember.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Joss plops into shallow water and tugs their boat onto the shore of a pebbly beach.

EXT. FARMLAND - DAY

Uphill from the river, Joss and Caleb carry their supplies up a grassy bank.

Caleb stops in his tracks. He looks to his right. The SCARECROW (from the other side of the river) stands in the open wheat, frozen, looking back at him.

EXT. THEATRE ROYAL - DAY (MOMENTS LATER)

Caleb peels aside a branch and beholds JOSS'S CAMPSITE, an imaginative and sprawling amalgamation of an 18th century soldier's encampment, a battery-and-diesel-powered video production office, and a modern-day squatter's paradise.

Joss's LAPTOP, tethered to a network of extension cords leading spilling out from a weathered generator, sits on a desk beside his CAMCORDER under strings of Christmas lights.

An upright sheet of wood is covered in hand-drawn STORYBOARDS chronicling the manhunt of John Wilkes Booth. A tower of CANNED PEACHES, stacked like a supermarket display, is next to Joss's cot.

Books, notebook pages, and old newspapers are scattered about under umbrellas and tarps festooned with lanterns.

JOSS

Welcome to Theatre Royal,
production office and headquarters.
To your right, we have our
toiletries, to our left, home and
kitchen, behind me, our recreation
and gaming area, and all the way to
the back, sleeping quarters.

Joss walks to the laptop table.

JOSS (CONT'D)

And finally, the piece de resistance, The Office. This is where we'll handle assembly, after effects, voiceover, ADR, editing, sound mixing, color correction, and anything else.

Caleb puts down his bags.

JOSS (CONT'D)

Can I interest you in some peaches?

CALEB

I'm good for now, thank you.

JOSS

Suit yourself.

Caleb spots a worn-looking paperback titled *SIC SEMPER TYRANNIS* and grabs it.

CALEB

"*Sic Semper Tyrannis*" by R. E. Annesley. Did Professor Annesley write this?

Joss cracks open a can of peaches.

JOSS

It's in your paper.

CALEB

Oh. Yeah.

Joss looks at Caleb. Caleb looks at Joss. Then Joss takes a bite of peaches with wooden chopsticks.

JOSS

Time for a little warmup.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

Joss mounts his camcorder on a flimsy tripod, framing Caleb standing on a hilltop.

JOSS

Hold this.

Joss tosses him a PISTOL.

CALEB
It's not loaded is it?

JOSS
Repeat after me. Despotism cannot
prevail.

CALEB
Despotism cannot prevail.

JOSS
Despotism *cannot* prevail.

CALEB
Despotism cannot prevail!

JOSS
Say it like me.
(Southern accent)
Despotism. Cannot. Prevail.

CALEB
(terrible imitation)
Despotism. Cannot prevail.

JOSS
Picture the scene. They're leading
you to the gallows.

CALEB
They are?

JOSS
Yeah, they hang you for helping me
escape. Strangers boo and spit.
Your mother weeps --

CALEB
(interrupting)
Despotism cannot prevail!

JOSS
Okay let's try something. Do you
have a dog?

CALEB
My mom does, yeah.

JOSS
Well, he's dead.

CALEB
She.

JOSS
She was hit by a truck, didn't you hear?

CALEB
Um.

JOSS
My dog is dead.
(beat)
Say it.

CALEB
My dog is dead?

JOSS
My dog is dead.

CALEB
(Southern accent)
My mom's dog is dead.

JOSS
YOUR dog. Is dead.

CALEB
MY dog is dead.

JOSS
She was a good girl, wasn't she?

CALEB
Yeah.

JOSS
But now she's dead.

CALEB
My dog is dead.

JOSS
It's a pity.

CALEB
My dog is dead!

JOSS
My dog is dead
(whispers)
-- *and I don't know why.*

CALEB
My dog is dead and I don't know why!

JOSS
Admonish God for this cruelty!

CALEB
She's dead! And I don't know why!

JOSS
Good. Despotism cannot prevail.

CALEB
Despotism cannot prevail!

Joss sneaks behind the camcorder and begins filming.

JOSS
Louder.

CALEB
DESPOTISM CANNOT PREVAIL!

JOSS
My dog is dead!

CALEB
My dog is DEAD!

JOSS
And I don't know why!

CALEB
My dog is dead and I don't know
why!

JOSS
Despotism cannot prevail!

CALEB
Despotism cannot prevail!

JOSS
My dog is dead!

CALEB
MY DOG IS DEAD!

JOSS
Despotism CANNOT PREVAIL!

CALEB
DESPOTISM CANNOT PREVAIL and I
DON'T KNOW WHY!

Caleb points the prop pistol in the air and pulls the trigger. He recoils in terror as a real shot rings out.

JOSS
Good. Now that I can work with.

BEGIN MONTAGE

CUE MUSIC: "THEATRE ROYAL"

[201] EXT. JOSS'S CAMPSITE - DAY

Standing at the STORYBOARD WALL, Caleb eats a can of peaches as Joss walks him through their project.

Note: AUDIO OVERLAPS from [201] and [206] and weaves through the following moments, alternating between diegetic and non-diegetic dialogue between Caleb and Joss.

JOSS
So Lincoln was shot on the night
of April the 14th.

CALEB
How are we showing that?

JOSS
We're not. Our movie starts after.

[202] EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Caleb holds up an OIL LAMP, peering into darkness.

JOSS (O.S.)
We begin on the other side of the
Potomac, when Booth met up with
Herold.

Joss STEPS FORTH from darkness.

JOSS (CONT'D)
(in character)
Bring me my horse.

RETURN: [201] EXT. JOSS'S CAMPSITE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Joss rips a NOTEBOOK PAGE from the wall, gives it to Caleb.

JOSS
Go ahead, read the next part.

[203] EXT. FOREST - DAY

Caleb and Joss crouch and peek out from behind a boulder.

CALEB (O.S.)
(reading aloud)
Herold kept them off the main
roads, traveling through woods...

[204] EXT. SWAMP - DAY

They march through a swamp.

CALEB (O.S.)
(reading aloud)
Through swamps...

[205] EXT. CREEK - DAY

Caleb helps Joss cross a bubbling creek.

CALEB
(reading aloud)
And across rivers as Union Troops
tracked their every step.

[206] EXT. WOODS - DAY

It's raining. Caleb and Joss crouch under a TARP to keep dry. Caleb reads from Joss's notes while Joss, wearing a PONCHO WITH A HOOD, lines up a shot on his camcorder.

CALEB
(pointing with pencil)
This part doesn't make sense.

JOSS
Sure it does.

[207] EXT. WHEAT FIELD - DAY

Feigning a broken leg, Joss limps frantically through tall grass and waves his PISTOL like a madman.

AUDIO FROM [206]:

JOSS (O.S.)
Think about it from Booth's
perspective.
(MORE)

JOSS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
His leg's all F'd up and there's a
reward on his head worth fifty
thousand dollars.

JOSS (CONT'D)
Sic semper tyrannis!

Joss FIRES at the sky, the gunshot echoing for miles. Caleb
almost drops the camcorder.

RETURN: [206] EXT. WOODS - DAY

CALEB
Don't you think that's implied?

Joss heroically half-turns, his range of movement slightly
restricted by his PONCHO.

JOSS
No. I don't think that it is.

EXT. CREEK - DAY

Joss and Caleb sit on a large rock in a loud creek. Joss
UPLOADS FOOTAGE from his camcorder to his laptop. Caleb eats
a granola bar.

CALEB
So what got you into this stuff?

JOSS
You really want to know?

Joss reaches into his breast pocket and pulls out a folded
magazine cutout of CARL JENNINGS (60s, Black).

JOSS (CONT'D)
Dr. Carl Jennings. Historian. Best-
selling author. Television
personality. And my personal hero.

CALEB
Never heard of him.

JOSS
Oh, well. He's kind of like the
Alfred Hitchcock of historical
reenactors. Don't tell Ralph, but
one day I'll make a film with this
man.

CALEB
I won't tell Ralph.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

They rehearse the physical movements of an action scene, Caleb mimicking Joss's gestures.

JOSS
Follow my beats.
(strikes a pose)
ONE - you're out. You look at the
sun, it's blinding, ahhh!
(looks behind him)
TWO - danger behind you.
(squares shoulders)
THREE - my life is in
danger.
(charges forth)
FOUR - I take ACTION!

[208] EXT. WOODS - DAY (LATER)

Caleb dabs Joss's scalp with a TINY BRUSH, touching up his hair with BLACK DYE.

[209] EXT. PINE THICKET - DAY

In character, Caleb helps Joss slump down against a tree.

AUDIO FROM [201]:

CALEB (O.S.)
(reading aloud)
The fugitives spent a week
sleeping on the ground...

[210] EXT. HILLSIDE - NIGHT

Sitting next to their crates of camera equipment, Caleb and Joss cheerfully ROAST HOTDOGS.

CALEB (O.S.)
(reading aloud)
They were hungry and delirious...

RETURN: [209] EXT. PINE THICKET - DAY

Looking hungry and delirious, Joss weakly raises a WOOD FLUTE to his lips. Caleb gets ready to record.

CALEB (O.S.)
(reading aloud)
But even in moments discon...

RETURN: [201] EXT. JOSS'S CAMPSITE - DAY

CALEB
(reading aloud,
discerning Joss's
handwriting)
Discon...

JOSS (O.S.)
(reading aloud)
Even in their most disconsolate
moments --

CALEB
(interrupting, overlap)
Oh, disconsolate.

JOSS
-- music provided some small
comfort.

RETURN: [209] EXT. PINE THICKET - DAY

Joss plays a SAD TUNE on his flute. Caleb zooms in.

RETURN: [201] EXT. JOSS'S CAMPSITE - DAY

Caleb points to a drawing on the storyboard wall.

CALEB
What happens here?

JOSS
Booth gets his leg mended by
Doctor Mudd. We'll film that when
Ralph joins us.

[211] EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY

Joss and Caleb fence using sticks.

CALEB (O.S.)
And here?

JOSS (O.S.)
Swordplay. Lots of swordplay.

RETURN: [201] EXT. JOSS'S CAMPSITE - DAY

CALEB
What about this one?

Caleb points to a doodle of Booth with X's for eyes.

JOSS
That one? I don't know if you're
ready for that one.

END MONTAGE, END MUSIC.

EXT. VALLEY - DAY

From the edge of the woods, Joss peels aside a branch to reveal a SMALL BARN at the bottom of a valley.

JOSS
Here it is. Booth's last bite of
the cherry.

CALEB
The death scene?

JOSS
Yeah, Booth's death scene. Are you
ready to rumble?

CALEB
I thought it happened at night.

JOSS
We're shooting day for night. It's
fine.

(beat)
Mind checking for spiders?

EXT. VALLEY (MOMENTS LATER)

Caleb, having scoped out the barn, sticks his head out the door and calls to Joss --

CALEB
No spiders!

INT. SMALL BARN (CONTINUOUS)

Caleb and Joss perform for the camcorder. Holding his pistol, Joss tries to open the door but it's LOCKED FROM OUTSIDE.

JOSS
(in character)
Damn, they've trapped us like dogs!

A MAN'S VOICE calls from outside:

VOICE (O.S.)
You, Booth! Time's up! We know you're in there!

CALEB
(in character)
We'll have to kick our way out the back.

JOSS
My leg won't allow it.

CALEB
We'll kick together.

Caleb helps support Joss's weight as they both KICK at slats in the barn's back wall.

JOSS
It's no use, Mr. Herold.

VOICE (O.S.)
Surrender your arms! Come out and deliver yourselves up!

JOSS
I'd rather die!

VOICE (O.S.)
As you wish. We will burn this barn to the ground!

JOSS
Give us time to consider, damn you!

Caleb turns to face Joss.

CALEB
I don't intend to be burned alive.

JOSS
So you would abandon me.

CALEB
*I miss my mother, Wilkes. If you
refuse to give yourself up, at
least let me leave with my life.*

Joss SHOVES HIM.

JOSS
GO! I won't have you stay with me!

CALEB
Wait.

Caleb PAUSES the camcorder.

CALEB (CONT'D)
I have an idea.

JOSS
Let's hear it.

CALEB
*Just putting this out there. But
what if Booth kinda... Wants to be
caught?*

Beat.

JOSS
Like a sex thing?

CALEB
*NO, man. Like he's tired and his
leg hurts.*

JOSS
Oh, okay.

CALEB
*You said to think about it from
Booth's perspective. Deep down he
must know it's game over. Davy's
been so loyal this whole time. Why
would he care if he leaves now?*

JOSS
*That's a good point. But we need to
stick to Ralph's lines.*

CALEB
Are you sure?

JOSS
Yes. He's very particular.

CALEB
Then just read them differently.
Instead of like, *GO!* say it more
like... Go...

JOSS
Like, Go, go?

CALEB
More like, Go, go...

JOSS
Be free, baby bird.
(snaps fingers)
Let's try it.

INT. SMALL BARN (CONTINUOUS)

As before, Joss and Caleb perform.

JOSS
*Damn, they've trapped us like
dogs!*

VOICE (O.S.)
*You, Booth! Time's up! We know
you're in there!*

CALEB
*We'll have to kick our way out the
back.*

JOSS
My leg won't allow it.

CALEB
We'll kick together.

As before, they kick at the back wall, Caleb supporting
Joss's weight. The boards don't give.

JOSS
It's no use, Mr. Herold.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL BARN - DAY

While maintaining continuity and timing of Joss's scene, we cut to Joss wearing headphones, sticking a BOOM MICROPHONE in Caleb's face as Caleb VOICES the man outside the barn:

CALEB
(deep voice)
*Surrender your arms! Come out and
deliver yourselves up!*

INTERCUT:

INT. SMALL BARN - DAY

Joss responds more SOFTLY than he did in first take:

JOSS
I'd rather die.

INTERCUT:

EXT. SMALL BARN - DAY

As Caleb says these lines, Joss LISTENS through his headphones and whispers them in sync:

CALEB
*As you wish. We will burn this
barn to the ground!*

INTERCUT:

INT. SMALL BARN - DAY

JOSS
*Give us time to consider, damn
you!*

CALEB
I don't intend to be burned alive.

JOSS
So you would abandon me.

CALEB
*I miss my mother, Wilkes. If you
refuse to give yourself up, at
least let me leave with my life.*

Joss gives Caleb's words time to settle.

JOSS
Go. I won't have you stay with me.

He offers a HANDSHAKE.

JOSS (CONT'D)
 (softly)
Go... Go.
 (shouts to men outside)
*Captain! There's a man in here who
 wants to surrender!*

INTERCUT:

EXT. SMALL BARN - DAY

Now Caleb is using the microphone to RECORD JOSS who wears the headphones, listening to himself as he shouts:

JOSS
 (deep voice)
*No! You both must first give up
 your arms!*

INTERCUT:

INT. SMALL BARN - DAY

Joss yells back at himself:

JOSS
*The arms are mine, and I intend to
 use them against you gentlemen!*
 (pats Caleb's shoulder)
*But I swear before my maker that
 this man is innocent!*

INTERCUT:

INT. SMALL BARN - DAY

Caleb salutes Booth.

We reverse-cut to Joss, as he salutes back.

JOSS
Goodbye, my friend.

And Caleb slips out.

INTERCUT:

EXT. SMALL BARN - DAY

Again, Caleb RECORDS Joss:

JOSS
*This is your last chance, Booth.
This barn will be reduced to ashes
in five minutes!*

INTERCUT:

INT. SMALL BARN - DAY

At Joss's feet, Caleb flicks on a battery-powered HALLOWEEN LAMP that simulates the flicker of flames. This orange colored light is PROJECTED ON JOSS'S FACE from underneath, and with it comes the SOUND OF FLAMES spreading.

JOSS
*Captain! If you take your men
fifty yards from the door, I'll
come out and fight like a
gentleman!*

JOSS (O.S.) (CONT'D)
*We came here to capture you, not
to fight. Come out at once.*

As the Halloween light and sound of fire intensifies, Caleb's hand HOLDING A PROP GUN creeps in through the same gap.

JOSS (CONT'D)
*Well then, my brave boys. Make
quick work of it. Shoot me through
the heart.*

The gun FIRES -- its bullet hits Joss in the neck.

Fake blood splatters all over the barn walls. He spins, falls, and lands on the ground posed in a perfect imitation of his storyboard drawing of the dead Booth with X's for eyes.

JOSS (CONT'D)
Another stain on the old banner.

INT. SMALL BARN - DAY

Zooming out from the foldout LCD screen on the camcorder, Joss (covered in fake blood) and Caleb smile replaying the death scene.

JOSS
Heck yeah. Oh HECK YEAH.

CALEB
We got it!

They high-five.

EXT. THEATRE ROYAL - DAWN

Joss ZIPS UP a knapsack loaded with script pages, cans of peaches, and his laptop.

He throws ashes on his campfire.

JOSS
Let's get moving.

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Joss and Caleb ASCEND A SLOPE with gear and camping equipment strapped to their backs.

EXT. OVERLOOK - DAY

Joss and Caleb climb a steep hill, with the city to their backs, and exit the frame.

EXT. RADIO TOWER - DAY

Joss and Caleb cross a field, a radio tower visible in the distance behind them.

EXT. CREEK - DAY

Joss helps Caleb cross a babbling creek.

CALEB (PRE-LAP)
So Lincoln knew Booth?

EXT. CLIFFSIDE CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Caleb and Joss sit by a campfire.

JOSS
Yeah, man. Lincoln was a fan. He always made a point to see Booth perform.

(MORE)

JOSS (CONT'D)

Even tried to meet him a few times
but Booth always declined.

CALEB

That's so crazy.

JOSS

Imagine the shock. A famous actor
killing the president. It'd be
like if Tom Cruise killed Obama.
Or if Marlon Brando killed um...
um...

(beat)

Or -- after people see our movie
-- if you killed Trump.

CALEB

No, I get it. Where did you learn
all this stuff?

JOSS

In prison, mostly.

CALEB

Haha. . .

JOSS

Booth did meet Tad, Lincoln's son.
Gave him a rose. And Booth's
brother Edwin saved Tad's brother
Robert from a speeding train.

CALEB

Wow.

JOSS

Learned that in prison too.

CALEB

Are you serious?

JOSS

They had a surprisingly decent
library.

CALEB

No, that you were in prison.

JOSS

Oh, yeah.

CALEB

What for?

JOSS

Arson.

Beat.

JOSS (CONT'D)

I was going through a dark time in my life. I had all this love to give and nowhere to put it. So I ended up burning things down, mostly out of boredom. One day I find this one place, set it on fire. Turned out to be federal property. Let me tell you, the government does not mess around. You do not want to get in their crosshairs. But on the upside, that's how I met Ralph.

CALEB

Ralph was in prison too??

Joss snorts.

JOSS

He was a volunteer. Helped me organize an incarcerated acting group. Captive audience, so to speak.

They sit in silence and look at the fire.

CALEB

Was anyone in the buildings you burned down?

JOSS

No, man. Do I look like I could murder someone? You know, once we get this movie online it's gonna blow up. I could be wrong, but something tells me the French are going to love it.

CALEB

You think?

JOSS

Heck yeah. The French have always cared more about America than we do. And they don't give two shits what microphone you use.

CALEB

So this could be really big.

JOSS

Pour your heart and soul into something, people take notice. Plus with you on board, the quality is going way up.

CALEB

Thanks.

JOSS

How long have you been writing, anyway?

CALEB

I actually don't write much.

JOSS

It's that easy for you, huh?

CALEB

No, it's not easy at all. I hate it.

JOSS

But you're so good at it.

CALEB

I don't think I'm any good.

JOSS

Awards don't win themselves.

CALEB

Yeah, I didn't write that essay.

Joss turns around to look at Caleb.

CALEB (CONT'D)

I mean... I pulled from so many sources, you know? I don't feel like I can take credit.

JOSS

You gave it your own spin.

CALEB

Other people helped.

JOSS

Doesn't make you any less of a writer.

CALEB

Well my dad is a writer. And I'm not anything like my dad, so...

JOSS

Does he like history?

CALEB

No idea. I haven't talked to him in years.

JOSS

Maybe you should call him sometime.

CALEB

I don't think so.

JOSS

Why not?

CALEB

Because I haven't seen him since I was a little kid.

Joss makes a pillow out of his overcoat and lies down.

JOSS

Tell me about it. Start at the beginning.

Beat.

CALEB

So we moved here from Mongolia when I was four. My parents got a house in NOVA, but my dad also got an apartment in DC and he'd stay there most of the time.

JOSS

Why'd he have his own place?

CALEB

At the time, I remember hearing my mom tell people it was because he's a writer, and he needs a place to work in peace. Or she'd talk to my grandma, and say that he loved the city but she wanted me to live in the suburbs because the school was better. Her story was always changing, but we were alone most of the time.

JOSS

That's rough.

CALEB

Actually it was great. Those are some of my happiest memories. And on weekends, we'd ride the metro in to see my dad. We'd get ice cream, go to the zoo... I didn't think it was weird that he didn't live with us. It was just the way things were.

(beat)

Then I got older and started going to school, and we'd see him less and less. Sometimes when it was cold, we wouldn't see him at all.

(beat)

Then on my 13th birthday, I woke up and all I wanted was to see my dad. So I thought it would be a great idea to skip school and surprise him.

(beat)

So when I got there and knock on the door, this woman answers. She's holding a baby. And behind her is my dad, watching TV.

(long beat)

I was so young, I don't know how I knew it. But in that moment I knew I saw something I wasn't supposed to.

JOSS

What did your dad say?

CALEB

I left before he saw me. I just turned around and went home. But I told my mom everything.

Joss whistles softly.

CALEB (CONT'D)

I ruined something that day. I wish I never told her.

JOSS

No, you did the right thing.

CALEB

She was happier before.

JOSS

But she was bound to find out sooner or later. Maybe she knew it already.

CALEB

Yeah, exactly. Maybe she wanted to keep pretending.

JOSS

People seem happy when they ignore painful things. But that's not happiness. The truth always catches up.

CALEB

I think about all the lies that he must have told her. I think about all the lies he told me. It makes me mad. He was the one, he was always telling me, we came to this country together, we have to stick together, we're a unit, we have to be there for each other. He was lying. He was lying the whole time.

Anyway, fast forward a few years, my mom decides she's going to go back to Mongolia. I start school. End of story.

JOSS

(dozing off)

Beginning of story.

CALEB

I just want to make my mom proud. I want her to know, I want her to really know that all her sacrifices meant something. That it was all worth it. That I'm worth it... She's the most amazing person in the world.

Joss is snoring.

CALEB (CONT'D)

Joss. I'm really glad I came out here. This is the first time I've felt hopeful about something in a long time.

EXT. CLIFFSIDE CAMPSITE - DAWN

Early morning. Caleb sleeps as Joss listens to a self-help tape and packs up their gear.

EXT. WOODS - DAY (LATER)

Joss carries the gear as Caleb talks on the phone.

CALEB
(Mongolian, subtitled)
Happy birthday!!!

INT. YURT - NIGHT [MONGOLIA]

SARNAI
(Mongolian, subtitled)
Thank you, sweetie.

CALEB
(Mongolian, subtitled)
I have some good news! But first,
tell me what you're doing to
celebrate.

SARNAI
(Mongolian, subtitled)
Your uncle's making me a big
dinner.

UNCLE NATSAG (60s) takes a bite of steamed dumplings and gestures for the phone.

NATSAG
(Mongolian, subtitled)
Let me talk to him.

Sarnai tightens her grip on the phone as Natsag wrestles it from her.

NATSAG (CONT'D)
Chuluunbold!

CALEB (O.C., FILTERED)
(Mongolian, subtitled)
Hi Uncle Natsag.

NATSAG
(Mongolian, subtitled)
Tell your mother she has to go back
to the doctor. Her eye is getting
worse all the time!

Sarnai snatches the phone from him.

CALEB (O.S., FILTERED)
(Mongolian, subtitled)
What? Your eye's getting worse?

SARNAI
(Mongolian, subtitled)
Your uncle is joking.

CALEB (O.S., FILTERED)
(Mongolian, subtitled)
Well, that's not very funny.

SARNAI
(slaps Natsag)
Never mind. What's the good news?

EXT. WOODS - DAY

CALEB
(Mongolian, subtitled)
I got a job!

SARNAI (O.S., FILTERED)
(Mongolian, subtitled)
You did? What kind?

Uncle Natsag gets some dumpling stuck in his throat and starts coughing in the background.

CALEB
(Mongolian, subtitled)
I'll tell you everything about it later. You should get back to your guests. Happy Birthday! I love you!

INT. YURT - NIGHT

SARNAI
(Mongolian, subtitled)
What's that? You're breaking up.

She hangs up and looks at Natsag, who shrugs.

NATSAG
(Mongolian, subtitled)
What?

EXT. SWAMP - DAY

Caleb and Joss stand in ankle-deep water reading from notes scribbled in Ralph's BOOK.

JOSS
*High noon in the Zekiah Swamp.
Booth and Herold find themselves
surrounded by water...*
(turns page)
And snakes!

CALEB
Snakes?

JOSS
*Paranoia ravages Booth's mind as
he hobbles toward sweet asylum,
step by broken-legged step.*
(in character)
*Where are you leading us, Mr.
Herold?*

He tosses the book to Caleb.

CALEB
(reading aloud)
Like I said, South is this way.

JOSS
*Are you sure? Because it seems
we're going in circles.*
(brandishes pistol)
I draw my gun. Closeup of my gun.
(aims past Caleb)
*Aim it at you. Closeup of me,
aiming at you. You SON OF A BITCH!*

CALEB
Can I ask a question?

Joss lowers his pistol.

JOSS
What.

CALEB
I have no idea where we are,
right?

JOSS
Corect. You're trying to fool me
into thinking we're not lost.

CALEB
What if you played along?

JOSS
Why?

CALEB
Because you're trying to figure out whether or not I'm going to turn you in. Wouldn't it be more dramatic if we're both deceiving each other?

Joss thinks.

JOSS
Yes it would, but it's not in Ralph's book, so we'll have to move on.

CALEB
So what?

JOSS
We need to color inside the lines.

CALEB
Really?

JOSS
Look, I have a ton of ideas. But Ralph shoots them all down. Calls them half-baked.
(pulls out notebook)
Take this scene for example. Booth and Davy are hiding in the pines, cold, wet, and half-starved. But all Booth wants is a newspaper so he can see how the world is reacting to Lincoln's death.

CALEB
Okay.

JOSS
When he gets one, he realizes he is being universally condemned, denounced by even his closest friends and political allies. The letter he wrote explaining his actions was destroyed, so all the papers are guessing at his motivations, calling him a monster.

(MORE)

JOSS (CONT'D)

He's crushed, and in that moment,
starts to think for the very first
time that maybe he was wrong.

CALEB

That sounds amazing. Ralph didn't
like it?

JOSS

I wrote it out for him but I'm
such a bad writer. He said it
wasn't cinematic.

CALEB

I'm sure it could be, with a
little tweaking.

EXT. WOODS - LARGE ROCK - DAY

Caleb sits on a log, writing in Joss's THEATRE ROYAL
notebook. Joss paces.

JOSS

Read me what you've got so far...

CALEB

Uh...

JOSS

Never mind, don't let me distract
you.

Joss paces back and forth.

JOSS (CONT'D)

You want to know something? Even 30
minutes ago, a small part of me
thought our historical film was
boned, dead on arrival. Because no
matter how much effort I put in, I
would always be beholden to Ralph.
But look at us: a passionate
disciple of history and an award-
winning essayist. We're the full
package. And I think we're ready to
go to the man himself.

*(pulls Carl Jennings's photo from
his pocket)*

CALEB

You mean...

JOSS

(gestures to Caleb)

Carl Jennings has a reverence for the written word.

(gestures to self)

Carl Jennings has a soft spot for hot new talent. And if you can make that newspaper scene slap half as hard as I know you can, then Carl Jennings will make our dreams come true.

(turns away, mutters under his breath)

He might even accept an Associate Producer credit.

CALEB

So what do we do?

JOSS

I'm glad you asked.

EXT. WOODS - LARGE ROCK - MOMENTS LATER

Joss spreads out a MAP of the Historic Cooper Farm stained with sharpie marker X's and arrows like a football play.

JOSS

Dr. Carl Jennings uses the historic Cooper Land Trust to film his epic television battle scenes. I've asked Ralph to meet us at the Cooper House at oh- two-hundred.

CALEB

Two AM?

JOSS

Two PM. We'll approach from the northeast, cross the Herring River, and make our way towards the battlefield where we'll hop the fence. With our costumes we should blend in as part of the production crew. We'll find a PA, request a copy of the call sheet, identify the times that Jennings is onset and pounce, delivering our scene.

CALEB

You think he's going to read it?

JOSS
 Of course he's going to read it.
 It's a goddamn stick of dynamite.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

A troop of HISTORICAL REENACTORS engage in battle, SHOOTING BLANKS and FEIGNING INJURY on the grass. Half are dressed as Union infantry, the rest are dressed as Confederates.

A small FILM CREW captures the battle from various angles. Performing for the camera, soldiers fall in the grass. Most fall and roll onto their stomachs, shielding their faces from sunburns.

Supervising this spectacle is CARL JENNINGS (60s, Black) a man dressed as a distinguished Union General with a crisp hat and meticulously ironed uniform pinned with metals.

JENNINGS
 (shouting at reenactors)
 You don't want to die on your
 back, Alvin! You know what I'm
 talkin about!

EXT. FIELD - UP THE HILL (CONTINUOUS)

Joss and Caleb emerge from the woods and begin to cross the field in the direction of Jennings. An ASSISTANT DIRECTOR holding a walkie talkie stops them.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
 Are you part of the B-team?

Joss thinks fast.

JOSS
 Yes.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
 The governor's mazurka has been
 moved to next Sunday. If you had
 read the emails, you would know
 that.

JOSS
 Sunday? We weren't notified.
 Unless...

He looks at Caleb. Caleb shakes his head.

JOSS (CONT'D)

No, no. He and I were not updated.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Names?

JOSS

This marks the third consecutive week we've been delivered outdated schedules. Now I can sympathize that your team is overworked, but enough is enough. If you'll provide us the updated call times and locations then we'll be on our way.

NILES (40s, white), a humorless looking man holding a clipboard, rushes up to them.

NILES

Oh no you don't!

(to Assistant Director)

I'll take it from here.

(to Joss and Caleb)

You're breaking the law by trespassing.

JOSS

I'm just here to see Carl Jennings.

NILES

Not gonna happen.

Joss yells over Niles's shoulder --

JOSS

Dr. Jennings!

NILES

(to Assistant Director)

Call security.

CALEB

(to Assistant Director)

I'm sorry about this.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

So am I.

The Assistant Director leads Caleb away as Niles restrains Joss from coming any closer.

JOSS
(to Jennings)
I'm a huge fan of your work! In fact, you have inspired me to make my own historical film with your old friend, R.E. Annesley!

The name catches Jennings's ear.

JENNINGS
Ralph Annesley?

JOSS
Yes!

JENNINGS
Let him through, Niles.

EXT. FIELD (CONTINUOUS)

Joss walks up to Carl Jennings, his costume damp with swamp water.

JOSS
Thank you, sir. It's an honor.

JENNINGS
Did Ralph send you?
(to reenactor)
Remember to fall in stages, Toby!

JOSS
Oh, he didn't. He doesn't even know I'm here.

This gets Carl's attention.

JOSS (CONT'D)
I want to tell you about my film. It's about the manhunt for John Wilkes Booth and his companion David E. Herold. I think it could fit right in with your oeuvre.

Joss pulls out a BLUE PIECE OF PAPER on which Caleb wrote their new scene.

JOSS (CONT'D)
I brought you a sample scene. It's modest, but it'll give you a sense of our vision.

Having shepherded Caleb off, Niles jogs back to Jennings with his hat and his clipboard bobbing.

NILES

Dr. Jennings, don't encourage this guy. He's been sneaking over our fence and trying to steal your volunteers.

JENNINGS

(to Joss)

Is that a fact?

JOSS

Stealing is a strong word. I have spoken to several members of your regiment, yes. But I assure you there will be no scheduling conflicts between our respective projects.

Carl laughs.

JENNINGS

You're crazy, man. Give me that thing, I'll read it.

He takes the blue sheet of paper.

JOSS

Thank you, Dr. Jennings. I think you'll recognize your influence on what we're doing.

JENNINGS

Well if Ralph wrote it, I doubt that very much.

JOSS

Oh, he didn't. It's by a younger member of our team, an award winning essayist.

(looks around)

Where'd he go?

EXT. MANOR HOUSE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Caleb kneels in the garden outside a MANOR HOUSE on the edge of the battlefield. He reaches behind a rose bush to find an ELECTRICAL OUTLET for his phone.

Niles hovers behind him.

NILES
You can't do that here.

CALEB
It's only for a minute.

Caleb jams the plug in. His phone immediately RINGS a loud, obnoxious ringtone that ricochets across the battlefield.

Dead soldiers SIT UP and turn to face him.

CALEB (CONT'D)
Oh my god! Sorry!

He answers the phone.

CALEB (CONT'D)
Kimi, hi!

EXT. PARK - DAY

A small archeological dig. Kimi is mid-dig, gingerly unearthing pottery shards as Ana wraps them in newspaper and packs them in a crate.

KIMI
That award didn't come with a scholarship, right?

INTERCUT - MANOR HOUSE

CALEB
What? No way.

KIMI [FILTERED]
Because if it DID, you'd tell me...
Right?

CALEB
Yeah, of course.

INTERCUT - PARK

KIMI
Mhm. How sad.
(pulls a newspaper from
the stack)
It seems the journalistic integrity
of our even our little university
newspaper has fallen prey to fake
news.

CALEB [FILTERED]

... Oh no.

KIMI

(reading)

And I quote. "Mr. Shatar was delighted to learn of the substantial scholarship funds associated with this award, which is renewable through graduation. Speaking with our reporters via text message, Mr. Shatar exclaimed "This scholarship means so much to ME and MY MOM and it is a dream to be FINANCIALLY RECOGNIZED for ALL of MY HARD WORK."

INTERCUT - MANOR HOUSE

Beat.

CALEB

Okay, listen. You're right to be mad at me, but--

INTERCUT - PARK

KIMI

Yeah, but why am I mad at you? Is it because I poured my heart and soul into that essay? No, it's schlock. Is it because I work two jobs, paying my own tuition and making the dean's list while you snowboard through life? Not even that. It's your compulsive lying, Caleb. That's what really pisses me off.

Ana leans in, jostling a bin of water and pottery shards:

ANA

And why did he go on a trip?

KIMI

Yeah, and why did you go on a trip, anyway?

INTERCUT - MANOR HOUSE

CALEB

It's for work, actually.

In the distance over Caleb's shoulder, we see Joss walk up and start talking to the musicians.

KIMI [FILTERED]
Amazing. You know that I know that
you're unemployed, right?

CALEB
I can pay everything I owe you when
I get back.

INTERCUT - PARK

KIMI
Why not today?

CALEB [FILTERED]
How can I possibly give you the
money today? I'm in the woods.

KIMI
Step one, type the word "Paypal"
into your phone. Step two, FIGURE
IT OUT.

INTERCUT - MANOR HOUSE

CALEB
Just give me until Wednesday
morning, please.

Beat.

KIMI [FILTERED]
I'll give you until tomorrow,
Caleb. And if I'm not paid back for
every cent you owe me then I'm
telling the Office of Student
Affairs who really wrote that
essay.

CALEB
You wouldn't do that to me.

KIMI [FILTERED]
Wanna bet?

CALEB
Kimi. That would literally ruin my
life.

(whispering)
I can't get kicked out of this
school.

(MORE)

CALEB (CONT'D)
If I'm kicked out, my visa is
revoked. I get kicked out of the
country.

INTERCUT - THIRTY FEET BEHIND CALEB

Musicians have FORMED A CIRCLE around Joss, dancing to their
music and bowing with high kicks.

JOSS
(dancing)
Hah hah! HO!

Jennings and Niles watch Joss dance from a distance.

JENNINGS
Would you look at this crazy
bastard go? Look at him.

Joss twirls.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)
That's what I like. It's inventive.
(he claps in time to the
music)
Get to it, Niles. You can do that
too.

INTERCUT - PARK

KIMI
Oh bull crap, Caleb. Since when are
you on a visa? You have an LA
accent.

CALEB [FILTERED]
Oh my god, Kimi.

KIMI
I'm done with your lies. Get me my
money tomorrow, or I'm turning you
in.

INTERCUT - MANOR HOUSE

CALEB
Kimi, you don't understand!

INT. GIFT SHOP - DAY

It's quiet inside the manor house. Through a window with
old, wavy glass Joss continues to dance.

Next to a rack of postcards sits a small television set which plays a PBS SPECIAL about the Civil War on a loop.

On the screen, CARL JENNINGS appears on a black backdrop with the lower-third "Bestselling author."

JENNINGS (ON TV, FILTERED)

Even members of Congress suspected Andrew Johnson was involved in the plot to kill Lincoln. Was he?

(shrugs)

You've got to stay curious about things, even those that happened in the past. Curiosity and openness, that's what makes history come alive.

Watching the television special, and suppressing a sneer, is RALPH, now wearing his own historical costume.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Caleb KNOCKS on a door on which a sign is pinned "SURREAT'S TAVERN (FILMING IN PROGRESS)." From inside we hear Ralph rehearsing one line over and over:

RALPH

(muffled)

You should've poisoned Old Abe when you had the chance!

(beat)

You should've poisoned Old Abe when you had the chance!

Joss cracks open the door.

CALEB

I need to talk to Ralph.

JOSS

After.

CALEB

After what?

JOSS

After the scene.

Joss lets Caleb inside. Ralph faces the wall with his back turned, wearing a floppy hat.

RALPH
You should've POISONED Old Abe
when you had the chance!

CALEB
What's he doing?

JOSS
Preparing.

There's a chunky wooden table with four chairs, beersteins,
and an oil lamp set before Joss's camcorder.

JOSS (CONT'D)
We're doing a flashback to before
the 14th. Roundtable of
conspirators.
(points to empty chairs)
Herold. Booth. Atzerodt. And
Powell. All four men died for what
they discussed at this table.

Beat.

CALEB
But there's only three of us.

INT. CABIN - DAY (LATER)

The atmosphere of the room has changed -- it feels like
we're watching Joss's movie, and the scene is set in a rural
tavern in the spring of 1865. The CONSPIRATORS sit around
the table, their sweaty faces reflecting the light of the
oil lamp.

Joss plays two characters: Booth, and LEWIS POWELL (ripped
gray shirt, suspenders, newsboy cap).

CALEB
(as Herold)
*That's when the son of a bitch
came upon me.*
(miming punches)
*Struck him good in the jaw. Struck
him good in the ribs. And the ole
sucker just fell over, like a baby
falling asleep.*

JOSS
(as Booth, to the others)
*It's not the first time Herold has
fought off a Yankee deserter.*

Ralph whistles through the gap in his teeth.

JOSS (CONT'D)
(as Powell)
Have you ever --

Joss has left his Booth mustache on. Catching himself, he rips it off and curses. Then resets.

JOSS (CONT'D)
(as Powell)
Have you ever run packages to the colonel in Richmond?

CALEB
I've been asked to. But the nature of my job wouldn't allow for it. The pharmacist wouldn't want Confederate hands messing with all the pills and powders for Washington.

RALPH
You should've poisoned Old Abe when you had the chance!

Joss throws an arm around Caleb.

JOSS
(as Booth)
Herold, you may not be aware of it, but just a few days ago the Confederate government sent a party to Richmond to negotiate an end to the war. And Lincoln rejected all their terms. Imagine.

JOSS (CONT'D)
(as Powell)
The war will go on and on. And it could be ending right now, with fair terms for both sides.

JOSS (CONT'D)
(as Booth)
Lincoln knows we'll run out of men long before he does. And when it's all over, his power will be absolute. Like Caesar, like --

JOSS (CONT'D)
(as Powell)
Should we be talking like this in front of this boy?

JOSS (CONT'D)

(as Booth)

*Yes, Lewis. We can speak openly.
For Herold is suckish and unafraid
to speak it.*

RALPH

Secesh.

JOSS

What?

RALPH

The word is secesh.

JOSS

What did I say?

RALPH

You said suckish.

JOSS

Are you sure?

RALPH

Oh I'm sure. The word is secesh. As
in secessionist.

JOSS

Okay, just give me a second.

(As Booth)

*Yes Lewis, we can converse openly.
For Herold is sussishist, and
unafraid to --*

RALPH

Suh-seeeehhssssshhhh.

JOSS

He is sussishish.

Beat.

RALPH

Secesh.

JOSS

If you keep saying it this many
times in a row I'm never going to
get it because it just starts to
sound like nonsense.

RALPH

Just mouth it and I'll say it.

JOSS
You say it and I mouth it.

RALPH
Just mouth it.

JOSS
Okay, that's different, but I like it.

Joss composes himself.

JOSS (CONT'D)
(as Booth)
*Yes Lewis, we can converse openly.
For Herold is --*

RALPH
-- secesh--

JOSS
(as Booth)
-- and unafraid to speak it.

RALPH
Okay. We got it.

INT. CABIN - LATER

Joss stops the camcorder.

JOSS
Great work, everyone. I'll be right back.

Joss dashes out of the room. Still seated at the table, Caleb turns to Ralph.

CALEB
(whispering)
Dr. Annesley, can I ask you a question?

RALPH
Sure.

CALEB
Is it possible for me to get paid a little bit early?

Ralph leans in.

RALPH
(whispering)
Don't talk about that.

CALEB
About what?

RALPH
Money.

CALEB
Why not?

RALPH
You're the only one getting paid.
Joss isn't getting paid.

Joss returns with a hardback book MYSTERIES OF THE CIVIL WAR
by CARL E. JENNINGS in hand.

JOSS
Look what I snagged. Have you read
it, Ralph?

RALPH
Please. Jennings is a hack.

JOSS
So you're not jealous?

RALPH
Why would I be jealous?

JOSS
Oh, I don't know. His book sales.
And speaking tours.

Joss continues, raising his voice as he crosses the room to
unplug his production lights. Caleb leans over to Ralph:

CALEB
(whispers)
Can't you just Paypal me?

RALPH
(whispers)
I thought you wanted to keep this
off the books. I have your cash in
my office. The sooner we wrap
things up here, the sooner I can
pay you.

Joss is on a roll:

JOSS

And there's the TV appearances.
Movie deals. The library named in
his honor. His very public
relationship with Oprah. Oh, and
his hat. Are you jealous of his
hat?

RALPH

Rest assured, I'm not jealous of
Carl Jennings's hat.

JOSS

That's what I love about our little
team. We're not in it for the
money, or the prestige, or even the
costumes, are we boys?

EXT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

In high grass on the side of the highway stand Caleb, Joss,
and Ralph in the yard of a dilapidated house.

Joss has crutches and is wearing a shawl. Ralph has his own
fake mustache. The camcorder is already rolling.

RALPH

*Heard what you boys done. They put
a reward on your head, Booth.
Fifty thousand dollars.*

Joss blinks in disbelief.

JOSS

*I would have guessed it would be
four hundred, at least.*

RALPH

*You're no longer welcome in my
house.*

CALEB

*Please, Mr. Garrett. We need our
rest!*

RALPH

Then have your rest in my barn.

CALEB

*Can't we stay upstairs just one
more night?*

Ralph hawks a loogie.

JOSS
Wait, wait.

An AIRPLANE passes slowly overhead. They all freeze in place, waiting for the sound to fade into the distance.

JOSS (CONT'D)
Continue.

RALPH
(mouth full)
Hell no!

He spits on Caleb's shoe. Caleb recoils.

JOSS
Cut! Great job guys, really
scintillating stuff.
(stops camcorder)
One more idea. Follow me.

Joss ditches his crutches but keeps his shawl. He grabs his camera and runs across the highway, climbs over a guardrail, and descends a slope.

Caleb and Ralph follow.

EXT. SLOPE - DAY - MOMENTS LATER

Caleb helps Ralph balance as they climb over the guardrail.

CALEB
(to Ralph)
Do we have time for another scene?

RALPH
(to Joss)
We don't have time for another
scene. Caleb and I need to get back
home.

Joss calls from the slope below. The difference of elevation between them makes for an amphitheater-like setting; Caleb and Ralph are the audience above, Joss the performer below.

JOSS
Just listen to this.

Joss pulls the BLUE PAGE from his pocket.

JOSS (CONT'D)

(reading)

For twelve nights, Booth was hunted like a rabid animal. He waded through rivers, marshes, and swamps. Evaded gunboats in the night and slept on the cold ground. How did he move forward? It was his pride that spurred him on. He believed himself to be a great hero, in a glorious cause, now lost. Until one day, Thomas Jones brought him a newspaper in the pines and Booth eagerly unfolded its pages only to find universal condemnation. His friends and family denounced him, and in that moment he realized he was completely, utterly alone.

Beat.

RALPH

Well. It's not in my book.

JOSS

Just because it's not in your book, Ralph, doesn't mean it's not important.

RALPH

It's redundant. How about you leave the writing to me?

JOSS

How about we let our award-winning essayist cast the deciding vote?

CALEB

I don't think we need it. Ralph's right. It's redundant.

JOSS

Caleb, what?

Caleb helps with Ralph's bags as they descend the slope, passing Joss, and continuing on.

INT. CALEB'S AND KIMI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kimi's phone VIBRATES on a kitchen counter. The caller ID reads "CALEB" before going to voicemail.

A notification pops up, "13 MISSED CALLS."

EXT. CLIFFSIDE CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Caleb tries calling Kimi again as he pulls the GOLDEN BULL from his pocket, looks at it, and puts it back.

EXT. CLIFFSIDE CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Pocketing his phone, Caleb returns to the campsite. Joss and Ralph are sitting on opposite sides of the fire, both hunched and vigorously stirring metal bowls of FAKE BLOOD.

Ralph is now dressed as ABRAHAM LINCOLN with a top hat and fake beard.

JOSS

I think we can have more complex examinations of historical figures than is popularly done.

RALPH

This is less complex.

JOSS

This is more complex.

RALPH

No, it's less complex.

JOSS

This is like an octagon, you would have him be just a flat square.

RALPH

And you would have him be a racist murdering hero. I'd rather have him be a flat square.

JOSS

I didn't say he was a hero. I said he *thought* he was a hero.

RALPH

I'd rather film a literal walnut rolling around in the sewer than film a love letter to John Wilkes Booth.

JOSS

Well that would be significantly more interesting than your book.

RALPH

At least the walnut rolling around in the sewer wouldn't be a racist being portrayed as a hero. He'd be portrayed for what he was. A walnut rolling around in the sewer.

JOSS

No, he *thinks* he's a hero. I'm not saying he's a hero.

RALPH

The walnut?

JOSS

No. Booth. Not the walnut.

Caleb has had enough.

CALEB

I don't think people are going to pick up on all these little details. Can we just do it Ralph's way and move on?

JOSS

What about your way?

RALPH

Caleb's way?

JOSS

(pulling a blue piece of paper from his pocket)
For my country, I have sacrificed all that is sweet and holy, brought misery on my family, and am sure there is no pardon in heaven for me since man condemns me so. God try and forgive me and bless my mother.

RALPH

When did you write that?

JOSS

We have to show that good men, likable men, charming men are made villainous by their bigotry. Showing that, really showing that, will haunt our audience way more than your little ghost costume.

RALPH

We're not going to make that film.
We can't make that film. The Civil
War is a supercharged subject. We
put a film like that out, we're
destroyed.

JOSS

Great art is polarizing.

RALPH

I don't think this one will be
polarizing. I think everyone will
be in agreement that you are an
asshole.

JOSS

I like it. Caleb likes it. And now
Carl Jennings likes it and, call me
naive, but that's enough for me.

CALEB

Carl Jennings likes it?

JOSS

Yeah, man. He digs it.

RALPH

You do not want to get yourselves
tangled up with Carl Jennings.

CALEB

Why not?

RALPH

The guy is a conspiracy theorist.
Believes there's another body
buried in Booth's grave.

CALEB

Whose body?

JOSS

Somebody's!

RALPH

That's what Jennings does. Zooms in
on all these tiny historical
inconsistencies and blows them out
of proportion. That's how you sell
books. And he ends up on the
bestsellers list, but he's a big
joke to any serious historian.
Nobody respects that guy.

JOSS

What about the fact that Booth's own personal physician saw the body and said it wasn't him?

RALPH

And changed his mind one minute later.

JOSS

Or the fact that the autopsy photos mysteriously disappeared?

RALPH

Accidents happen.

JOSS

Or how about the fact that a man claiming to be Booth, with his leg broken in all the right places, shows up in Kansas 20 years later saying his name is David George? David Herold, George Atzerodt. Think about it.

RALPH

How about the FACT that the actual body had the diaries of John Wilkes Booth in his pocket, photos of his five girlfriends, the patented diamond pin that he was known for?

JOSS

Those could've been planted on him.

RALPH

Could the scar on his neck have been planted? How about the tattoo of his initials? How about the dental work? Was that planted too? And, to top all that, his own stinking brother identified him positively. Looked at the corpse and said yeah, that's him, that's my brother John Wilkes Booth. FACT.

JOSS

What about the sworn testimonies of eye witnesses saying that Booth did escape? Those are public record.

CALEB

Testimonies by who?

JOSS
By you, David E. Herold.

Ralph shifts on his log.

RALPH
You're right, Herold said that stuff. But he also said a lot of other crazy things just to save his own ass. He said for instance that he never even met John Booth, he said that three times. You can't trust the word of Herold.

JOSS
And why would he lie about this?

RALPH
Because he was trying to save his own ass. He didn't want to end up in the gallows. Booth didn't escape, no matter what your buddy Carl says.

JOSS
At least Carl Jennings isn't afraid to rock the boat.

Joss gesticulates, flicking Ralph with fake blood. Ralph freezes, indignant.

RALPH
(wiping spectacles)
Yeah, well. Carl Jennings isn't up for tenure.

Joss stands up, triumphant.

JOSS
Well I got news for you, Ralph. Tonight's your lucky night. Because Caleb has the words, I have the vision, and you have the expertise. If you don't let your foolish pride get in the way then together we can make something that can't be ignored.

RALPH
You don't have the framework to even understand what you're saying.
(MORE)

RALPH (CONT'D)

The myth of Booth's escape was dreamed up by Confederates who were trying to make Booth into some sort of folk hero.

Caleb stands up.

CALEB

That's not what we're doing.

Ralph takes a moment, summing Caleb up.

RALPH

It doesn't matter what you're doing. It matters what it LOOKS like you're doing. I gave you this project. I gave you my words, I gave you my research, I gave you my student. This is what you want to do with it? Team up like some weirdo ragtag team making a thoroughly unpleasant movie?

(shakes head)

I'm done with you.

Ralph begins to walk away.

JOSS

Fine. It's not like we're getting paid anyway.

RALPH

Yeah, fine. Good luck.

JOSS

(under his breath)

Coward.

Ralph turns around, grabs his own bowl of blood, and DUMPS it over Joss's head and shoulders from behind.

RALPH

It's your mess now. Asshole.

Joss coughs and wipes blood from his eyes.

FADE TO BLACK / FADE IN:

EXT. WOODS - DAY

Resolution of the image, now in a 2:35:1 aspect ratio, has changed. We're watching a scene from *Sic Semper Tyrannis!* through the lens of Joss's camcorder. Sound remains crisp.

Several lonely setups of empty woods. The rushing of a river, hum of patrol boats, and the distant chatter of union officers bounce through the trees.

From behind a bank of ruptured earth emerges Caleb (as David HEROLD), clutching an OILCLOTH PARCEL. He remains frozen as the sound of clopping hooves fades away before exiting the frame.

EXT. WOODS - ELSEWHERE - MINUTES LATER

He climbs down a slope, balancing himself with branches and vines along his descent to keep quiet.

EXT. PINES - MINUTES LATER

Still clutching his parcel, he stops in his tracks and looks around to orient himself.

Fifty feet ahead the cold nickel of Joss's (Booth's) REVOLVER glimmers in the afternoon sun. Booth leans out from behind a tree, pointing the weapon in Herold's direction. His face is red and swollen in pain.

Herold turns to see his friend. Booth averts his eyes before lowering his gun.

JOSS
(as Booth)
Well? Is the coast clear?

CALEB
(as Herold)
Far from it.

Herold half-unwraps the parcel and tosses Booth a chunk of crusty bread. Whatever else is in the parcel he keeps hidden for the moment and Booth keeps his eye on it.

CALEB (CONT'D)
Still too many patrol boats on the river. We'll see about tomorrow.

A deeply-held reserve of strength, nurtured by the thought of crossing the river, collapses inside Booth.

CALEB (CONT'D)
But this will boost your spirits.

Herold unwraps the rest of the parcel and brandishes a NEWSPAPER.

CALEB (CONT'D)
*These yankee boys are barking up
 the wrong tree. It says here you've
 been spotted as far south as New
 Orleans!*

Booth laughs.

CALEB (CONT'D)
*But reading ain't my strong suit.
 You tell me what it says.*

He tosses Booth the newspaper. Booth opens it, spreads the pages, and scans the text. Very quickly his smile fades.

Then his CELL PHONE rings...

EXT. PINES (CONTINUOUS)

We snap back into full-resolution 1:66:1. Joss leans forward and hits the PAUSE on his camcorder before yanking his phone from his pocket.

JOSS
 Christ, I thought that was on
 airplane mode.

Caleb stands up --

CALEB
 I've gotta pee.

JOSS
 (answering phone)
 Hello?
 (pause)
 Oh my god. Yes. Hello!

EXT. PINES - THICKET (MOMENTS LATER)

Caleb ducks behind a tree and pulls out his own cell phone, looking back at Joss over his shoulder.

He dials a number. It rings several times before someone picks up the phone, eating.

RALPH (O.S.)
 (filtered)
 Hello?

CALEB
 Dr. Annesley, it's Caleb.

RALPH (O.S.)
(filtered)
Oh, how nice of you to take a break
from penning your searing melodrama
to check in.

CALEB
Look, I'm sorry about last night.
But I still really need to get
paid.

RALPH (O.S.)
(filtered)
I'm afraid that possibility went
out the window when you threw your
cap in with Carl Jennings Jr.

Caleb looks at Joss through the trees. Joss paces as he talks
on the phone while gesticulating and laughing.

CALEB
I don't care about doing it Joss's
way. I'll do whatever you want. I
just need to get paid.

RALPH (O.S.)
(filtered)
Well, there's one thing you could
do.

CALEB
Name it.

RALPH (O.S.)
(filtered)
Get me the footage and bring it to
my office.

CALEB
Fine. I'll ask Joss to make a copy
when we get back tonight.

RALPH (O.S.)
No copies. We can't trust Joss to
hang onto any of the footage. I
need the masters.

Beat.

CALEB
You want me to steal the movie from
Joss?

RALPH (O.S.)
(filtered)
Technically it's my movie. I paid
for it. So I own the rights.

CALEB
But that would destroy him.

RALPH (O.S.)
(filtered)
You'd be doing him a favor. As long
as that poor sucker stays under the
spell of Mr. Bestselling Garbage
Books there's no telling what kind
of nonsense he'll make from my
footage. And God forbid Carl
Jennings actually sees any of it.
He'll put it on the air just to
make me look foolish. And he'll
take advantage of Joss, and you, in
the process.

CALEB
What if I convinced him to go back
to the original plan? Film it your
way?

RALPH (O.S.)
(filtered)
If you think you can persuade our
feeble-minded friend, have at it.
But I've known him longer and I got
two words: good luck.

CALEB
There has to be another way.

RALPH (O.S.)
(filtered)
There is. Take the footage from
him. Bring it to me here, where
it's safe. Get your money.

CALEB
I can't. I can't do it.

RALPH (O.S.)
(filtered)
Well, let me know when you change
your mind.

Ralph hangs up. Caleb looks up and sees the words "GO HOME"
carved into a tree over his head.

EXT. PINES (MOMENTS LATER)

Caleb returns to Joss, pocketing his phone. Joss smiles expectantly, holding two tin mugs of lemonade.

CALEB
(refusing mug)
No thanks.

JOSS
Take it. We're celebrating.

CALEB
What are we celebrating?

JOSS
Guess who that was on the phone.

CALEB
I have no clue.

JOSS
Don't be a sourpuss. Guess.

CALEB
I don't know. Your parole officer.

JOSS
No. It was this man right here.

Joss unfolds his prized portrait of CARL JENNINGS from his breast pocket and gives it to Caleb.

CALEB
What? How?

JOSS
He loved the scene, man. The one
I've always tried to make work. The
one Ralph always hated.

Joss lifts his mug high --

JOSS (CONT'D)
And the one you wrote. Which Dr.
Carl Jennings loves. And which he
is going to show his friends at
PBS. PBS -- where stars are born.

He bumps his mug against Caleb's.

CALEB
Wow. Congratulations, man.

JOSS
 Congratulations: Us.

Joss re-bumps his mug against Caleb's, resetting the toast.

JOSS (CONT'D)
 All we have to do now is give him a
 taste of the actual movie.

CALEB
 He wants to watch it?

JOSS
 Every frame we've shot. Drink,
 Caleb. Drink.

Joss drinks and Caleb thinks. . .

CALEB
 What about Ralph? He still owns the
 rights, doesn't he?

JOSS
 (coughs)
 Ralph can suck a nut. He didn't put
 in the work. That was all us. We
 own the rights.

Caleb stares into space. Joss slaps him on the back.

JOSS (CONT'D)
 Hey. It's okay, man. Ralph will
 never touch our footage. Because
 it's all right here.
 (points to backpack)
 Safe. With me. And with you.

Caleb tries to smile but cannot. SCORE CUE: 14 begins.

JOSS (CONT'D)
 (pre-lap)
 Action.

EXT. PINES (MINUTES LATER)

Joss and Caleb resume filming the newspaper scene. This time
 we don't cut to see it through Joss's camcorder, but stay in
 full-resolution 1:66:1.

Caleb unveils the newspaper from his parcel.

CALEB

(as Herold)

This will boost your spirits. Those yankees are barking up the wrong tree. Because it says here you've been spotted as far south as New Orleans.

He tosses the newspaper to Joss, whose eyes dart back and forth over the text. His lips tremble.

Unlike last time, Caleb can hardly watch. He delivers his next line without looking at Joss.

CALEB (CONT'D)

Reading isn't my strong suit. How about you tell me what it says.

Beat.

JOSS

(as Booth)

Too shameful to utter aloud. They're calling me a murderer, a villain. And these are Southern papers.

Joss throws the newspaper aside. Caleb watches from behind the camcorder.

JOSS (CONT'D)

For my country I have given up all that is sweet and holy, brought misery on my family, and am sure there is no pardon in heaven for me since man condemns me so.

Caleb meets Joss's eyes.

JOSS (CONT'D)

God try and forgive me. And bless my mother.

With his eyes closed Joss doesn't notice the approach of Caleb's shadow over him.

CALEB

It's not all men who condemn you, Mr. Booth.

He offers his hand.

CALEB (CONT'D)
*To me you are a friend. I won't
abandon you.*

Joss takes Caleb's hand.

JOSS
...Cut.

EXT. PINES (MOMENTS LATER)

Joss uploads the footage they just shot to his laptop as Caleb watches over his shoulder.

JOSS
Great job, man. Carl is going to
love this.

EXT. SLOPE - DAY

Joss and Caleb DESCEND A STEEP HILL with gear and camping equipment strapped to their backs.

EXT. OVERLOOK - DAY

They come to the crest of a hill. Joss leads the way from the top of the grassy plain to a valley below.

Caleb follows behind, makes it to the top, and stops. He beholds a breathtaking vista of the woods, rolling hills, and THE CITY in the distance. Music swells as he stares at the glimmering buildings.

He takes his GOLDEN BULL from his pocket, looks at it, and clutches it in his palm.

JOSS (O.S.)
(from below)
Come on, Caleb!

Taking one last look at the city, Caleb pockets the bull, and follows Joss as he makes his way down the slope.

EXT. RADIO TOWER - DUSK

Joss and Caleb cross the field.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

In near-pitch-darkness, Joss SLAPS a flashlight on its side to make it turn on.

As seen from far away, the beam of Caleb's flashlight/glow of Joss's lantern cut from right to left, interrupted by trees.

INT. JOSS'S CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Joss uses a Sharpie to rapidly CROSS OUT and ANNOTATE his wall of storyboards while speaking aloud:

JOSS
We'll have to redo this scene.
(crosses one out)
This scene.
(crosses another)
This scene.
(another)
And instead of this one, we'll
film Booth and Herold's farewell.

CALEB
I do have to go tonight. Remember?

JOSS
When can you come back?

Caleb looks at all the storyboards Joss crossed out.

CALEB
Is it really a good idea to redo
all these? I like what we have
already.

JOSS
The old version is child's play. We
need to do what Carl does, make
something with teeth. Can you come
back next weekend?

CALEB
I guess.

JOSS
Excellent.

Joss makes scribbles a reminder in his BLUE NOTEBOOK and
shuts his LAPTOP. Caleb's eyes linger on them both.

JOSS (CONT'D)
Grab your stuff. I'll show you how
to get back.

Joss pats Caleb on the back and leaves.

Caleb waits for a moment, silently debating with himself. He
GRABS JOSS'S LAPTOP AND NOTEBOOK, stuffing them in his bag.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Masked by trees and branches, the BEAMS of their flashlights
cut through the darkness.

CALEB
Are you sure we're going the right
way?

JOSS
It's a shortcut.

EXT. SMALL BARN - NIGHT

They emerge from the woods. Caleb's flashlight SHINES ON THE
BARN, then AT JOSS.

CALEB
Seriously?

JOSS
(squinting in the light)
Just real quick.

CALEB
Let's do the scene next week. When
I come back.

JOSS
Turn that off for a sec.

Caleb turns off his flashlight. They stand in darkness.

JOSS (CONT'D)
(after a beat)
How do I know you'll come back?

CALEB
You can trust me.

JOSS

Listen, over the years I've had a lot of people make promises to me that they never intended to keep. So I'm pretty good at knowing when it's happening.

CALEB

I'm not lying to you.

JOSS

I hope you do come back, I really do. But if you don't, I need to take advantage of every minute you're here to make the strongest case to Carl I possibly can. Do you have any idea, with my background, how hard it is to get opportunities like this? This may be my only chance.

INT. SMALL BARN (MOMENTS LATER)

Caleb stands at the back of the barn as Joss positions the camera.

CALEB

Walk me through this.

JOSS

It's the same scene as before. But this time you're alone. Booth has escaped. Union troops surround you on all sides.

CALEB

Got it.

JOSS

(throwing his voice)
*Come out with your hands up,
Booth! We know you're in there!*

CALEB

(in character)
Booth isn't here!

JOSS

*Give up your arms or this barn
will be burned to the ground in
five minutes!*
(whispers)
Start kicking.

Caleb KICKS the wall.

JOSS (CONT'D)
Put your back into it, man. Don't
be shy!

CALEB
I'm trying.

JOSS
Mule kick it!

CALEB
What??

JOSS
Kick it like a writer.

Caleb KICKS harder.

CALEB
Yah!

JOSS
Writer-kick!

Caleb stops.

CALEB
...I have to tell you something.

Joss stops filming.

JOSS
Anything.

CALEB
I'm not a writer.

JOSS
And I'm not an
actor/director/producer/historian..
.

CALEB
(interrupting)
No, Joss. I didn't write that
paper. A girl named Kimi wrote it.
That's the person you should be
working with. She should have
gotten the award, not me.

JOSS
Oh.

CALEB

I've been lying to you. I've been lying to Ralph. I've been lying to my mom. I didn't expect for it to win an award! I've been paying people to do schoolwork for me for years, and nothing like this has ever happened.

But I ran out of money. I ran out of money to pay Kimi back and now she's threatening to turn me in for plagiarism, which would be really bad, because if I get turned in and kicked out of this school, I'm out of this country. I don't know when I'll ever get a chance to come back.

Beat.

JOSS

Did Kimi write the scene in the pines?

CALEB

No.

JOSS

What you wrote in my notebook is way better than that bizarro essay that Kimi penned.

CALEB

I have to see Ralph.

JOSS

What? Why?

CALEB

Because he's paying me.

JOSS

He's paying you?

CALEB

I have to pay Kimi back.

JOSS

He's paying you... Well, how much do you need?

(reaches in pocket)

Let's see. I have twenty...

(MORE)

JOSS (CONT'D)

Twenty two dollars, and a lot of coins back at the campsite, some of them are very rare.

CALEB

Save it.

JOSS

You don't want to take his money. If you just give me one explosive scene and then we'll put our heads together and figure out the rest.

CALEB

I'm not in the mood.

JOSS

Like hell you're not, you're all worked up, now is the perfect time.

CALEB

Joss, I'm sorry. I have to go.

Caleb starts walking toward the exit.

Joss cuts him off, raises the OIL LAMP over his head and SMASHES IT on the ground --

CALEB (CONT'D)

OH MY GOD!

FIRE spreads rapidly. Joss hits RECORD.

JOSS

KICK, Mr. Herold! KICK!!!

Disoriented and frantic, Caleb KICKS.

CALEB

YAH!

JOSS

KICK!

CALEB

YAH!

JOSS

KICK!

CALEB

YAH!!

Caleb KICKS THROUGH THE WALL.

At that moment, Joss goes crosseyed and PASSES OUT in the smoke.

CALEB (CONT'D)

Oh my god!

Caleb grabs him by the collar, and tugs him out.

EXT. SMALL BARN (MOMENTS LATER)

Outside, Caleb heaves, tugging Joss's unconscious body to safety.

After a moment Joss wakes up, COUGHING. The fire rages behind them.

Once Joss is far from the barn, Caleb turns around and RUNS BACK INSIDE.

A moment later he emerges with his BACKPACK, which is on fire.

Joss's coughing turns into LAUGHING as Caleb looks increasingly panicked.

Joss crawls over to Caleb and slaps him on the back, looking at the flames.

JOSS

Where's the camera?

CALEB

(pointing)

There.

Joss grabs his camera and tries to film the fire.

JOSS

It's busted. Oh well.

He continues watching the fire.

Caleb says nothing. He rolls his bag in the grass, extinguishing the flames.

JOSS (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

Caleb opens a flap, and dumps the smoldering remains of JOSS'S LAPTOP AND NOTEBOOK on the grass.

Joss's smile fades.

JOSS (CONT'D)
Is that my stuff?

Caleb is silent. Joss falls to his knees, and TOUCHES the laptop -- burning his hands.

CALEB
Don't touch it.

JOSS
My laptop. All our footage. And
all my ideas. Our whole movie.

Joss KEEPS touching them.

CALEB
Joss, stop. It's melted. It's
gone.

JOSS
I left these on my desk.
(beat)
Why are they here?

CALEB
I took them.

Joss looks at Caleb.

CALEB (CONT'D)
I didn't know you were going to
start a fire!

JOSS
Why did you take them?

CALEB
Ralph told me to. He said we
needed to protect you. That Carl
Jennings was using you.

Joss picks up the laptop and notebook, this time hanging on.

CALEB (CONT'D)
Joss, don't burn yourself.

JOSS
YOU DON'T TELL ME WHAT TO DO.

Caleb stumbles backward as Joss's booming voice echoes.

CALEB
I'm sorry.

Joss clutches the laptop and notebook, badly burning his skin and scorching his clothes.

JOSS
Go home, Caleb.

Joss stands up and walks away from the fire into darkness.

Caleb lingers, the light of fire on his face, watching his friend disappear.

EXT. RIVER - DAWN

Caleb rows a boat away from the burning barn, looking up at smoke tumbling into the night sky.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. RALPH'S OFFICE - DAY

Caleb (covered in ashes) sits in Ralph's quiet basement office. Both stare blankly, looking past each other. The clock ticks.

RALPH
Do you think any footage can be recovered?

CALEB
There's no way.

RALPH
So the laptop and his notebook were destroyed.

CALEB
Totally destroyed.

RALPH
Totally?

Their eyes meet.

CALEB
Yes.

Beat.

RALPH
At least no one was hurt.

Ralph opens a drawer in his desk, removes a cash box and starts counting bills.

RALPH (CONT'D)
Here's for the job.
(adding extra bills ontop)
And here's for the stress... You
earned it.

CALEB
Thanks.

Caleb reaches for the money. Ralph hesitates.

RALPH
And hey. If you get a call from
the police... Tell them the truth.
(beat)
I left you guys on Sunday morning,
before the fire. Remember?

CALEB
I mean... That is the truth.

Ralph lets him have the money. Caleb stands up to leave.

RALPH
I see no reason why we should ever
need to talk about this again.

CALEB
Fine.

RALPH
And I hope we'll never hear from
that poor idiot. He's probably on
the run. Some people never change.

Caleb stops in his tracks.

CALEB
What happens if they catch him?

RALPH
He's got the record. He'll do the
time.

Ralph stands up and follows him to the door to see him out.

RALPH (CONT'D)
You did good. Rest up, and I'll
see you in class on Thursday.

Caleb looks down at the money in his hands.

CALEB
This is wrong.

RALPH
What's wrong.

CALEB
It was wrong of me to steal the laptop. And it was wrong of you to ask me to do it.

RALPH
Asking isn't a crime. Arson is a crime.
(shrugs)
And, to a lesser extent, so is plagiarism.

CALEB
What's that supposed to mean?

RALPH
I'm sympathetic to your situation, Caleb. And I trust we'll both act like grownups and do the right thing.

Caleb gives him the money back.

CALEB
Joss was right. I don't want this.
Not from you.

INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

Caleb slides his laptop across the counter. \$150 pops up on the register.

The keys to his car. Another \$500 added. He hesitates. . . and slides his GOLDEN BULL over. \$1000.

The cash register drawer shoots open and Caleb is handed a wad of cash.

INT. CALEB'S AND KIMI'S APARTMENT KITCHEN - DAY

Caleb wears Kimi's fluffy bathrobe and is making smoothies. Kimi enters holding her keys and a purse.

KIMI
You're back.

CALEB
Hey, I got your money! And...
(hands her a colorful
smoothie)
... a smoothie!

Kimi stares at her smoothie.

KIMI
I just turned you in.

CALEB
(slurping)
What's that?

KIMI
Just now. I turned you in. To the
office of Student Affairs.

Beat.

CALEB
Why would you do that?

KIMI
I didn't think you were coming
back.

CALEB
I TOLD YOU I WAS COMING BACK.

KIMI
You TOLD ME a lot of things, Caleb.
You TOLD ME you didn't eat my
hamburgers. You TOLD ME you'd been
paying our electric bill. You TOLD
ME you didn't get a scholarship.
You TOLD ME you'd get deported or
whatever if I dared to speak up.

Caleb collapses.

CALEB
That last one is true.

KIMI
What are you talking about?

CALEB
Not deported. But my visa will be
revoked if I'm expelled.

Kimi swallows back tears.

KIMI
How was I supposed to know that?

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

As seen through the window from outside, Caleb sits in an administrator's office at the Department of Student Affairs.

He nods grimly.

INT. CALEB'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Caleb sits at his desk in his apartment.

His essay award lays SMASHED at his feet.

He dials a number and Sarnai answers.

CALEB
(Mongolian, subtitled)
Hi Mom.

SARNAI (O.S., FILTERED)
(Mongolian, subtitled)
Hi, sweetie.
(hearing tears in Caleb's
voice)
What's wrong?

EXT. CALEB'S APARTMENT - DAY

Caleb sits on the curb in front of his apartment building with a duffle bag on his lap.

An Uber DRIVER creeps up and rolls down the window.

DRIVER
You Caleb?

CALEB
Yeah.

The Driver pops the trunk and helps Caleb with his bag.

DRIVER
Airport today?

CALEB
Uh-huh.

DIVER
Arrivals or departures?

He shuts the trunk.

CALEB
Departures.

JUMP CUT:

INT/EXT. CAR (MOMENTS LATER)

The Driver begins to pull away while Caleb struggles with his seat belt. The Driver twists in his seat.

DIVER
Give it a little shimmy.

CALEB
A little "shimmy?"

DIVER
Yeah, like this

The Driver reaches around to help with Caleb's belt -- at that moment there's a loud THUD.

JOSS (wearing street clothes for the first time) stands in the road, his hands on the hood of the car.

DIVER (CONT'D)
AHHHH!!!

CALEB
AGGHHH!!!

DIVER/CALEB/JOSS (CONT'D)
AAGHHHHHAHHHHH!!!

Joss walks around to Caleb's side. He has BANDAGES on his hands, and is hauling an overstuffed MESSENGER BAG.

JOSS (CONT'D)
Caleb!

CALEB
What do you want?

JOSS
To talk.

CALEB
About the fire?

JOSS

Shhh!

(eyes Driver)

No, about something else.

CALEB

I'm gonna miss my flight.

JOSS

Where are you going?

CALEB

I got turned in.

Joss gasps.

JOSS

Kimi, no...

CALEB

I'm sorry your movie was destroyed, and I understand if you're mad. But the good news is that you'll never have to see me again.

(to Driver)

You can go.

Joss reaches through the crack in Caleb's window, GRABS HIS PHONE and jumps back from the car.

Caleb flings open the door and tries to snatch it back.

CALEB (CONT'D)

Hey!

JOSS

(defensive stance)

Far as I'm concerned, all the bad stuff that happened was Ralph's fault. And all the good stuff was your fault.

Caleb LUNGES for his phone, Joss DEFLECTS him.

JOSS (CONT'D)

So what do you say we keep a good thing going?

CALEB

Can I have my phone back, please?

JOSS

Not until you hear me out.

Joss holds Caleb's phone against his body with his elbow as he twists around and starts digging through his messenger bag. His dexterity is severely limited by his bandages, and it takes a while to sort through all his stuff.

Joss brandishes his PAPER WAD.

JOSS (CONT'D)

Read this!

Caleb takes it.

CALEB

What is it?

JOSS

An employment contract. And!

Joss fishes through the pile, points to one page.

JOSS (CONT'D)

A letter of intent. Carl Jennings wants to hire us for an episode of his TV show. And he's going to sponsor YOUR work visa to make it happen.

CALEB

Why would he do that?

JOSS

Because he loved your scene! The one in the pines. YOU made this happen, man!

CALEB

I'm really happy for you.

Caleb hands the contract back.

CALEB (CONT'D)

But I can't think about this. If I don't leave the country now, I might never be able to come back.

JOSS

Risk it man, stay with me. They'll never find us at Theatre Royal.

CALEB

That would be a huge violation.

JOSS
Violation of what? Following your
dreams?

CALEB
You don't understand how much
trouble I'm in.

JOSS
And you don't understand what a big
opportunity this is.

DRIVER
I can't wait around forever, man!

JOSS
Come on, just take the contract and
think about it. This is the way it
all works out in the end!

CALEB
Don't you understand? I don't WANT
TO DO IT!

Caleb grabs the CONTRACT and throws it in the air. Papers
scatter everywhere.

Caleb gets in the car. Joss grabs the door to stop him.

JOSS
Why are you giving up now?

CALEB
I'm not giving up. I'm going home.

Caleb slams the door shut and drives away.

INT/EXT. CAR (MOMENTS LATER)

Caleb and the Driver ride in silence. Caleb looks out the
window at all the trees, houses, and people walking their
dogs.

Ahead of them is a CROSSING GUARD holding a STOP SIGN. Two
school-age CHILDREN walk across the street. The Crossing
Guard turns around and locks eyes with Caleb. It is NILES.

Niles, taken aback, waves at Caleb with a whistle in his
mouth. Caleb, after a moment of hesitation, waves too.

CALEB
Can you turn around?

DRIVER
Are you serious?

CALEB
Yeah, I forgot something.

EXT. CALEB'S APARTMENT (MOMENTS LATER)

Loose PAGES are fluttering around yards and gutters. Down the street, Joss walks slowly away.

The sound of SCREECHING TIRES makes him turn around.

He sees CALEB leap out of the Uber Driver's car and start frantically scooping up pages of Carl Jennings's EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT in the wind.

Joss doesn't even think about it. He drops his bag, BOOKS IT toward his friend, and starts grabbing papers with both bandaged fists.

CALEB
How many pages is it?

JOSS
Maybe fifty. Read it on the plane.
Tell me what you think.

CALEB
Okay.

Soon all papers are collected. Joss shoves his messy stack at Caleb as he dives into the backseat.

JOSS
(through the window)
When you get there, tell your mom
about our project. Tell her it's a
real thing.

CALEB
I will.

JOSS
See you soon, buddy.

Joss SLAMS the roof of the car with his fist.

JOSS (CONT'D)
(to Driver)
GOOOO!!!!

The Driver hits the gas. Joss runs alongside the vehicle for as long as he can, pumping his fists, cheering.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. SARNAI'S APARTMENT - DAY [MONGOLIA]

Dim, morning light covers the empty apartment. Sarnai's dog sleeps in front of the dryer, which is gently humming. Her cane is wedged in an overcrowded umbrella stand.

A copy of Carl Jennings' The Actor and The Liar sits on the coffee table with a bookmark wedged halfway through.

The PHONE RINGS several times over these still images.

Suddenly SARNAI (whose eye has completely healed) bursts through the front door followed by her brother, nieces, and nephews.

On its last ring, Sarnai grabs the phone and answers.

SARNAI
(Mongolian, subtitled)
Hello?

CALEB (O.S., FILTERED)
(Mongolian, subtitled)
Are you watching?

Sarnai covers the receiver and shouts to her brother:

SARNAI
(Mongolian, subtitled)
Turn on the TV! Quick!

INT. PUBLIC TELEVISION STATION - UNITED STATES - NIGHT

Caleb stands in the corner of a wide SOUND STAGE. Crew members mill around behind him.

CALEB
(Mongolian subtitled)
It's about to start!

INT. SARNAI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Uncle Natsag the TV to the right channel — streamed over the internet — and gets a grainy, pirated image of live television halfway across the world.

In big, storybook-like letters THE CARL JENNINGS HISTORICAL HOUR fades onto the screen with several titles including "PRODUCER - **KIMI HOWARD...**"

Then CALEB, dressed as David Herold (but with a costume upgrade) dashes onscreen carrying a pistol, looking over his shoulder, and firing.

PUSH IN on Sarnai, overwhelmed with pride:

SARNAI
That's him! THAT'S MY SON!

PUSH IN on the TELEVISION as (music cue from the Historical Film OST) "UP NEXT" ramps up and kicks in, synced with the movement of the dolly. At its climax JOSS appears, dressed as Booth, with Caleb and they point their guns at the camera.

And over the image of Sarnai's TV (not yet inside the program yet) the title HISTORICAL FILM explodes onto the screen like a hand-painted firework.

CUT TO BLACK.