

# WATERSHED

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A play

By Stephen Most

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

SANDY, a camerawoman for a TV station who has Indian fishing family origins and mainstream ambitions

BARNEY, her grandfather, watches the river through a telescope

LEATHA, her grandmother, a storyteller and native speaker

RICK, their son, a gillnetter

LUANNE, his wife, "bootlegs" the salmon Rick catches

DOUG, Sandy's boss, directs a TV news show

FRED SILVER, a Fish & Wildlife Service fishery biologist

ROD HURLBUT heads a Fish & Wildlife Service enforcement operation

CECIL ANDRUS, Secretary of the Interior

FEDERAL AGENTS working for Rod's Special Operations Group

STORY CHARACTERS appearing in memory scenes and a traditional tale:

GRAMPA, JUDGE BOWIE, THE MAN WITH A SACHEL,  
FISH & GAME WARDENS, YOUNG MAN & YOUNG WOMAN

NOTE: Seven actors, four women and three men, are needed in all.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

Midsummer, 1978. BARNEY, an American Indian in his late seventies, looks through a telescope at the estuary below his house. LEATHA, his wife, enters the living room.

LEATHA

You know, that river's gonna keep flowin' without you watchin' it.

BARNEY

Ain't nothin' on television.

LEATHA

You need to exercise.

BARNEY

I exercise plenty.

LEATHA

Not enough to keep you off that table. You gotta get your heart pumpin' every day.

BARNEY

My heart's beatin' like a drum.

LEATHA

You could split some logs for the stove. We need a stack before the rains come.

BARNEY

I'll get around to it.

Leatha exits. As Barney looks through the scope, SANDY enters.

SANDY

Good morning, Grampa.

BARNEY

You were out early.

SANDY

It was quite a sunrise.

BARNEY

I saw you on the beach.

SANDY

I was watching light sparkle in the river-

BARNEY

Can't see that in the City!

SANDY

when an otter popped his head up and watched me.

BARNEY

Until that tohris gunned his motor boat. Look at him tryin' to catch something. Besides a cold. He's over there.

SANDY

I'm looking for Uncle.

BARNEY

Raymond's still upriver. When he comes below the bridge, I'll let you know.

SANDY

Mind if I take some pictures?

BARNEY

It don't bother me. You know, some Japanese was up here takin' pictures. They wanted to go into the old Indian house with their flash, but your grandma wouldn't let them. Too sacred, she says. I'd a charged them.

SANDY

Hold it!

BARNEY

Them sports fishermen sure like to take pictures. When they catch somethin' worth seein'. Which ain't too often.

Sandy snaps the picture.

BARNEY

Say, you oughta start a business. Have Rick pull the bigges' salmon outa his boat, let a tohris hold it for a bit, and you take the picture.

SANDY

I don't know if tourists would go for that.

BARNEY

You could sell 'em the fish. Tohris would buy a fish and a photo from you any day, and pay good money too.

SANDY

I like the job I have.

BARNEY

Takin' TV pictures in the City? You don't wanna be no sidewalk Indian. You should make like a salmon. You been out in the ocean. You built up your weight in the right places. Now go back to the river and spawn!

Leatha enters.

LEATHA

Sandy didn't ask you what to do with her life.

BARNEY

I was jus' tellin' her-

LEATHA

I know what you tellin' her.  
(to Sandy)  
What are you takin' pictures for?

SANDY

I won't be able to come back for awhile. I wish the two of you would visit me.

LEATHA

What's keepin' you so busy?

SANDY

I'm going to be a reporter. In two weeks, I go on camera.

LEATHA

On the TV?

SANDY

That's right.

BARNEY

Like Walter Cronkite?

SANDY

Not exactly. I'll start out doing weather. What I want to do is news, not from behind a desk but where it's happening.

BARNEY

Somehow that don't seem right.

SANDY

When a man reports something, it's news. When a woman says it, it's gossip.

BARNEY

That ain't what I meant.

SANDY

Just teasing you, Grampa. Some day, if I can assign the stories, I'd like to anchor, like Walter Cronkite. Have you noticed that issues that concern women like sexual harassment don't even make it on the air? That's because women say the news now, but we don't have a say in what's news, not yet.

LEATHA

That's a lot to take on.

BARNEY

Have you signed a contract?

SANDY

We're still negotiating.

BARNEY

Tell me, Sandy, did a man promise you that job so you'd sleep with him?

LEATHA

Barney!

BARNEY

I know how these things work.

LEATHA

How did you find out so much?

SANDY

Do you really think I'd lie on a casting couch to get hired as a reporter?

BARNEY

I didn't say that. I'm not insultin' you. Jus' don't want you to get your hopes up and get hurt. Nobody ever heard of an Indian doin' the news.

SANDY

Grampa, I don't look Indian. Sometimes I'll meet a guy and he'll say, "You look different. Are you Italian?" But it's just a line. It doesn't matter.

BARNEY

You sayin', it don't matter who your people are?

SANDY

I'm not forgetting who my people are, Grampa. But why should I advertise that I'm Native American? I don't want people to see me in terms of my ethnic origin.

BARNEY

Why not?

SANDY

I want the news to come through me without people getting hung up on some image of whatever they think I am.

BARNEY

How come you want more women seen on TV, but when it comes to bein' a skin, you're one a those vanishin' Indians?

SANDY

I'm not ashamed of my background, Grampa.

BARNEY

If you go mainstream, you better remember, your people come from the main stream. This river is no backwater.

LEATHA

She'll be followin' one of our traditions if she does news. In the old days, our people had something like reporters. We called 'em repeaters.

BARNEY

I ain't talkin' 'bout the old days. That's got nothin' to do-

LEATHA

If you had a dispute, there'd be a negotiator between the two parties. And a repeater came along to report exactly what each side had to say so there'd be no misunderstandin'. Them negotiators were so trusted that once there was a settlement, that was it. That argument was over forever.

BARNEY

There's one repeater left in this tribe, Sandy, and that's your gramma. I call her "the mouth of the Klamath."

LEATHA

You're the one does all the talkin'.

BARNEY

Sandy's gonna think we're stuck in the old ways of the old days, when everyone had a common understandin'. But those days are gone.

LEATHA

It's a bigger world, that's all. It's harder to settle our problems face to face, but we still need to do it.

BARNEY

I suppose you think we could do a renewal ceremony and solve the world's problems.

LEATHA

The world could use some renewin'. Don't you think so, Sandy?

SANDY

That's a powerful dream. Gramma, would you turn your head? A little more.

(She takes a picture.)

I'd better pack.

LEATHA

You ain't leavin' yet, are you?

SANDY

I just want to organize my stuff so I don't leave anything behind.

BARNEY

You carry more for a weekend than I do when I'm travelin' for a month.

LEATHA

That's 'cause Sandy brings a change of clothes. Now don't you go off to that 'scope. You won't be seein' Sandy for awhile.

BARNEY

I told her I'd look for Rick.

LEATHA

I want to give you somethin'. It may not look like much.

Leatha takes an abalone shell from a trunk and hands it to Sandy.

SANDY

Thank you, but I don't smoke.

LEATHA

This is a story-tellin' shell. I figure, you gonna be tellin' stories on the news. Remember the summer you lived with us, gatherin' seaweed, acorns and basket roots, havin' cook-outs on the beach?



SANDY

Some of it. Not much.

LEATHA

It wasn't so long ago. You were six. It was when your dad was stationed in Germany. Do you recall how we went collectin' mussels? We took a burden basket, and I showed you how to reach deep in to pick the ones under water, not the ones that are hot and dry.

BARNEY

He's below the bridge.

SANDY

One thing I remember. You and I were walking along the bank near the landing. And I dropped my doll in the river.

LEATHA

Oh yes. That Raggedy Anne.

SANDY

Uncle Rick heard me crying and rowed quickly downstream. He tossed his net and rescued her. I never forgot that.

LEATHA

When I was six, I started boardin' school. And I was desperate to be home. They won't let me go, not even summers. At first I cried and cried. After awhile, I came around to believin' their ways were better than Indian way. And I believed that for a long time. So when your mother grew to the age to start her family, I told her to marry a wageh.

SANDY

A what?

LEATHA

A white man. I guess you grew up thinking Indian ways were nothin'.

SANDY

O no, Gramma. It's just- I never thought they had much to do with my world.

LEATHA

I never thought our ways was right for San Francisco or New York or for them Army forts you grew up on. But I came back to believin' they're right for this place.

BARNEY

He's headin' in.

(He exits.)

SANDY

I'll put this with my things.

LEATHA

You got time to listen. There's a story goes with this.

Leatha places a strand of sage into  
the abalone shell.

LEATHA

This shell holds the spirit of the sea. This sage speaks for  
the plant beings.

She strikes a match and lights the  
sage.

LEATHA

Whenever I do this, I look within the flame for the wisdom  
and power of the great mystery.

Leatha blows out the match. Holding  
the sage in her right hand, she  
lifts the smoking strand above her  
body.

LEATHA

In the beginning of time, the power that created the earth  
and the stars and put a harmony between all things above and  
below came to the mouth of the river. He stood on the beach  
and thought: "This is a great river. I want to leave my  
children here. But there's nothin' for them to eat." So the  
Creator called to the spirit of the river and said: "I want  
to leave my children here, but you will have to help me.  
They will need food. What can you do to help?" The spirit  
answered, "I can feed them. I can send fish." "That is good,"  
said the Worldmaker. "But don't send the fish all at one  
time. My children need to have different kinds come in at  
different months. That way they will have somethin' to look  
forward to and they won't get tired of it." And so  
Pulekukwerek made eels for the winter run, candlefish for the  
spring, and sturgeon for the summer. Greatest of all, Nepewo  
[pronounced Ne-pú-we], entered the river each fall, leadin'  
the salmon people. Then the Creator made human people. He  
showed them the great guardian rocks he had put on either  
side of the river's mouth to protect them. He showed the  
people how to catch the food of the river and how to prepare  
the food of the land. Then the maker of all things walked to  
the top of the hill and said: "My people, I am leavin' you.  
I have created you in this place. I have left the fish, the  
acorns and all the things you need to eat. You will never  
want for anythin' as long as you remember me." At that moment  
the Creator disappeared.

My grandma told me this story, her grandma told it to her, and her grandma told it to her. So I believe it goes back to the beginnin'.

SANDY

Thank you for telling me this.

LEATHA

Maybe you'll tell it to your granddaughter someday.

SANDY

I don't expect to have a family, Gramma. It could hold me back.

LEATHA

Lovin' your children, watchin' 'em grow and have children of their own, that's the greatest thing life has to offer you.

RICK enters through the front door.

RICK

Hey Mama, did Luanne call?

LEATHA

Phone hasn't rung once.

RICK

She should be back by now.

SANDY

Don't you have a phone yet, Uncle?

RICK

Where you been hidin' yourself?

LEATHA

She was in front of your face. I better get you some coffee.

Leatha exits.

RICK

You're lookin' great. How long you been here?

SANDY

Since yesterday. I head back this afternoon.

RICK

You're a roadrunner, eyyy! Bee beep!

SANDY

Uncle, you've been drinking.

RICK  
A man gets thirsty, that's all.

SANDY  
How are the boys?

RICK  
Joe's as tall as me. And Wally's gettin' there. They're good fishermen already.

SANDY  
Are they around? I'd like to see them.

RICK  
They're campin' with their friends Sam and Tony.

SANDY  
Tell them 'hi' for me. How's Luanne?

RICK  
Haven't seen her since Friday.

SANDY  
Where is she?

Barney enters.

BARNEY  
Luanne ain't back yet?

RICK  
She's probably locked up.

BARNEY  
Not again!

Leatha enters with a pot of coffee.

LEATHA  
Why didn't she call?

RICK  
I don't know.

SANDY  
Why would Luanne be in jail?

RICK  
She took some fish to Oakland. We were tryin' out a new buyer.

BARNEY  
You were set up.

LEATHA  
You take too many risks.

SANDY  
Let's find out where she is.

RICK  
She's all right.

SANDY  
I can help you.

RICK  
I'll handle it.

SANDY  
Uncle, I can get the arrest file through my station.

RICK  
If she's in jail, she'll call. So, how's life in the City?

SANDY  
Busy. I'm training to be a reporter.

RICK  
On TV? That's good! Gonna do a story 'bout our season?

SANDY  
TV Three doesn't cover this part of the State.

BARNEY  
'Cept when there's big news. They was here for the flood.

LEATHA  
Fourteen years ago.

RICK  
The big news is what we're doin' now: clearin' debris outa them creeks so salmon can spawn there again.

SANDY  
That'll be great footage. Watching my uncle pull branches out of a stream. Maybe a shot of a fish flopping between logs.

RICK  
It'll be news in Frisco and everywhere else if we can get the run back where it should be. Price of salmon will go way down.

BARNEY

Folks who moved to the city could come back. We could open a restaurant on the beach, have luaus with salmon like the natives do with pigs in Hawaii. You could make a good livin'.

LEATHA

Barney, it rains half the year.

BARNEY

Rains in Hawaii.

LEATHA

It's not winter like here.

SANDY

If you want this story on TV Three, we'll need a local angle.

RICK

An angle?

SANDY

A news hook. Something that ties the story to the Bay Area.

BARNEY

Fishermen hook 'em and city folks cook 'em.

RICK

Interview a salmon. They go down there.

LEATHA

We used to talk to Nepewo, the salmon leader, durin' the First Salmon Ceremony.

SANDY

Did Nepewo talk back?

LEATHA

Nepewo understood everythin'. You could tell by the way he moved.

RICK

(as Nepewo)

I usually don't go on the air. But for you, I'll surface.

SANDY

Thank you for stopping at the Golden Gate to speak to our viewers. I understand you're heading to the Klamath River.

RICK

Can't wait. I'm tired of swimmin' round the Pacific, dodgin' garbage and factory boats. Out here I'm nobody. Back home I'm the big fish.

SANDY

How do you think the run will be this year?

RICK

Not too good. Not like in the old days. Old time Indians used to say there was so many salmon, they coulda crossed the river steppin' on our backs. Of course, if anyone had tried walkin' on us, he woulda been one wet Indian.

SANDY

Will you be able to make a comeback?

RICK

We always come back to the river. East or West, home is best.

SANDY

You salmon are famous for your passionate run upstream.

RICK

I'm no stud fish or nothin' like that.

SANDY

Is it getting harder to spawn?

RICK

Don't know. Haven't spawned yet. But let me tell you, when I was a fingerlin', wrigglin' about in that cool stream, I dreamed I'd come back to my gravel bed and have a few fry of my own.

SANDY

Thank you, Nepewo.

RICK

Catch you later.

SANDY

You're a slippery interview.

RICK

Gotta clean my net. Why don't you come down to the beach? Take the trail where the road ends.

SANDY

I've got to go pretty soon.

RICK

Okay.

SANDY

If I can do anything about Luanne-

RICK

Don't worry 'bout her. She's half salmon. She'll make it home.

SANDY

Take care of yourself, Uncle.

RICK

See you later.

Rick exits.

SANDY

Give my love to the boys.

LEATHA

You know, in the old days we never said goodbye. We'd say chuue'.

SANDY

What does that mean?

LEATHA

So be it.

SANDY

Do you think Luanne's in jail?

BARNEY

The State never gets a conviction, but that don't stop 'em from arrestin'.

SANDY

I'll call the station. I guess she'd be at the Oakland county jail.

BARNEY

That's where she landed last time.

SANDY

Do you have a party line?

BARNEY

No.



I hear voices. SANDY

Let me listen. LEATHA

Is the store open? SANDY

Should be. BARNEY

I'll call from there. SANDY

Sandy exits.

What do you hear? BARNEY

A couple men talking 'bout jetboats. LEATHA

Jetboats? BARNEY

It got quiet. LEATHA

She hangs up.

They were listenin'. LEATHA

Maybe they'll pay our phone bill. BARNEY

Barney, this is serious. Someone's listenin' in on our phone. LEATHA

## SCENE TWO

Rick enters, pulling a tub of fish onto the riverbank. Fred, a Fish & Wildlife Service biologist, enters.

I thought you were outta here. RICK

Fred  
Just getting started, with the run coming.

RICK  
Got a couple bucks?

FRED  
I don't know.

RICK  
Pay you back right away.

FRED  
Sure.

RICK  
Soon as my wife gets here, I'll have some money.

FRED  
Okay.

Fred hands Rick two dollars. He  
points to a fish in Rick's tub.

FRED  
This one's still got eggs in her. Ever eat the roe?

RICK  
I get 'em from sturgeon. Make bread with it.

FRED  
How do you do that?

RICK  
Wrap it in skunk cabbage.

FRED  
I finished that report I was writing. Now that it's in, I'm  
going to try to get funding for your stream clearing group.

RICK  
Who from?

FRED  
Our habitat restoration program.

RICK  
Fed money.

FRED  
It's all fed money. We print it.

RICK  
Mr. Washington.

FRED  
If I got you on that program, you and your buddies could clean up every creek this side of Hoopa Valley.

RICK  
Not those clogged creeks on the 'timber farm' forest. That debris floats downstream, man.

FRED  
You do what you can. Every mile you clear helps the spawners.

RICK  
And who would be callin' the shots?

FRED  
You would.

RICK  
I'd be workin' for your boss: Mr. Washington.

FRED  
We're working for the salmon.

RICK  
I don't want no job. I live off my river, without anyone tellin' me what to do.

FRED  
And how long will you be able to live off this river, Rick?

FRED  
What's it to you?

FRED  
Wild salmon are in danger of extinction, Rick.

RICK  
Tell that to the timber farm. And the offshore fishermen.

FRED  
They're not my jurisdiction.

RICK  
This ain't either. We never signed no treaty.

FRED

If we work together, we can restore the run. There could be enough for trollers, sports fishermen, and gillnetters. That would reduce some of the tension around here.

RICK

We still can't sell our fish. Trollers make a livin' off salmon. Indians try to sell 'em and we get busted.

FRED

That's state law. Interior has no jurisdiction.

RICK

Who gave the State jurisdiction? Around here each family controls its part of the river. On this bank, near that rock, it's my family. We got the first right to the catch.

FRED

You can use my report to defend your fishing rights. Here. Take this copy. I'm taking a lot of flak for writing it. Some people think gillnetting should be restricted.

RICK

Them sports fishermen don't scare me.

FRED

I'm talking about the Interior Department, Rick. What I need is for you gillnetters to draw up guidelines for regulating the catch. I'll work with you on it. That would be a big help politically. That's the only way I can get stream clearance funding.

Sandy enters.

SANDY

Uncle!

RICK

What's up?

Sandy hands him a newspaper.

SANDY

Look at this.

FRED

I hope nothing's wrong.

RICK

Let's go to the house.

SANDY

Okay.

FRED

Can I help?

RICK

Yeah. Help me put this in the pickup.

Fred and Rick carry the tub off stage. Sandy follows.

SCENE THREE

The living room. As Sandy picks up the phone, Rick stands next to her. Leatha and Barney look at the newspaper.

SANDY

It's working. I got a dial tone. Oakland, please. County Sheriff's Department. Thank you.

BARNEY

I'm not surprised she got busted. But havin' it right on the front page, that's new.

SANDY

Yes, do you have a Luanne Keppel in custody?

(to Rick)

She's checking.

LEATHA

She sure looks mad.

BARNEY

That's a big headline: INDIAN 'RESTED IN OAKLAND. ILLEGAL SALMON SALES. Makes it sound important.

SANDY

See the article about the FBI breaking up a cocaine ring? It's on the same page, this big. Luanne gets caught for selling salmon, and there's a photo, a headline, and a two-column spread.

BARNEY

I don't know why Luanne gets the headline and not the drug ring. I never heard of no one overdosed on fish.

SANDY

Uh huh. When was she booked?

RICK

Let me have it. I'm Rick Keppel. Can I talk to my wife? She never had her phone call. She's entitled to one phone call. No, she didn't. Yeah? And you got bail set for her? How much? How much?

(Rick hangs up.)

You'd think we're rich or somethin.

SANDY

How much is it?

RICK

Five grand. Ten percent gets her out.

LEATHA

How are we gonna find five hundred dollars?

RICK

There's only one way.

BARNEY

How many fish you got?

RICK

Thirty.

SANDY

What would that bring in?

RICK

'Bout six hundred. When are you headin' back?

SANDY

I want to get home before dark.

RICK

Will you take a load?

SANDY

Luanne just got arrested for selling-

RICK

She was set up. But I have a connection that's safe.

LEATHA

Why didn't Luanne sell to your safe connection?

RICK

We thought we'd get more money. I should have known.

SANDY

Even if your buyer's okay, I'd still have to get the fish to him. Isn't it illegal just to drive salmon off the reservation?

RICK

Don't worry. Once you're on the road, no one's gonna stop you.

SANDY

I'm going to drive down the highway with a tub full of salmon in my hatchback and no one's going to notice.

RICK

No one will guess you're bootleggin'. Luanne looks a lot more Indian than you. When she drives up to Portlan' with a load of fish, or to LA, or Oaklan', she takes a risk. But nobody will stop you.

BARNEY

Just don't pick up no hitchhikers.

SANDY

I can't do it.

RICK

How's Luanne gonna get out? We ain't got five hundred dollars.

SANDY

I can't get arrested. I'll lose my job.

RICK

You don't want to lose your job. Luanne's in jail, and you're on TV showin' the world what's what, leavin' a few things outa the picture.

SANDY

Uncle-

RICK

Go home, Roadrunner. I'm gonna drive them fish myself.

Barney exits furtively.

LEATHA

You're not gettin' in that pickup.

RICK

I'm drivin' south soon as I load the fish.

LEATHA

You'll get yourself locked up. Or wrecked.

RICK

I'm gonna get Luanne out a jail!

LEATHA

Whoever is messin' up our phone could be watchin' our house. And they'll be watchin' for you more than anybody.

RICK

Get out a my way, Mama. Let me go.

SANDY

Wait. I'll get her out.

RICK

How you gonna pay five hundred dollars?

SANDY

I'll charge Luanne's bail to my VISA.

LEATHA

You can't afford that.

SANDY

When I'm promoted, I'll get a raise.

LEATHA

And if you don't?

SANDY

I'll owe. It's okay. I'd rather flash my plastic than sell fish any day.

RICK

I'll deal with it.

SANDY

I'll get her out. You stay here, Uncle. Don't worry. I'll do it.

LEATHA

Barney, come back here. Barney! Sandy's gonna get Luanne out with her credit card.



BARNEY  
(coming back inside)  
What's she got, a Master Race card?

RICK  
What are you holdin'?

BARNEY  
Your spark plug wires.

RICK  
Gimme those.

SANDY  
I'd better go.

BARNEY  
You drive safely now.

RICK  
See you, Roadrunner.

LEATHA  
Come back as soon as you can.

SANDY  
It's going to be awhile, Grandma.

LEATHA  
Don't forget your shell.

SANDY  
Thanks. I love you. Chuue'.

Sandy exits.

RICK  
What did you take those for?

BARNEY  
You're the only son I got left.

RICK  
I better ice my fish. What's the matter, Mama? Sandy can take care of herself.

ACT TWO

## SCENE ONE

That night in San Francisco, Luanne and Sandy enter Sandy's apartment.

SANDY

It's small, but it's home.

LUANNE

It's bigger than our trailer. And a hell of a lot bigger than that cell. The worst part was the outfit I had to wear: that orange jumpsuit. It was too tight, the buttons kept popping open.

SANDY

And you had to sleep in that.

LUANNE

I told the guard, "I know this isn't a boutique, but if you don't get me something else, this jumpsuit is going to burst, and then you'll be seeing a lot more of me than you should." He said, "Shut your face!" I was mad, you know, but I also had to laugh, because his head was completely bald and shiny, like Yul Brynner as the King of Siam. I could tell he thought he looked really tough, with that skull of his. So I said to him, "I know why you're being so mean. Looks like an Indian got ahold of your hair and went off with it." He did not think that was very funny. If you hadn't come by to bail me out, he'd a tried something. I could see he didn't like me too much.

SANDY

Why don't you sit down, unwind. Can I get you something?

LUANNE

Why's that light blinking?

SANDY

Somebody left a message.

ANSWERING MACHINE

Beep!

WOMAN'S VOICE

Hi, sweetheart.

LUANNE

That's your mom!

WOMAN'S VOICE

Call me when you get back. Haven't talked with you for awhile. Okay?

LUANNE

She sounds lonely.

SANDY

For her Fort Bliss does not live up to its name. She can't wait 'til Dad retires.

ANSWERING MACHINE

Beep!

MAN'S VOICE

Hey, babe. If you're in town before dinner, give me a call. There's a steak here with your name on it.

ANSWERING MACHINE

Beep!

MAN'S VOICE

Me again. I got hungry. Figured you weren't gonna make it by dinner time. What about a movie? There's a new Jane Fonda flick, China Syndrome. She plays a tv news reporter. We could catch it tonight if you don't get in too late. See ya.

LUANNE

Who's the guy?

SANDY

Just somebody I'm dating.

LUANNE

Your calendar man. Today's date.

SANDY

It's nothing serious. Like the machine?

LUANNE

I'd have to get a phone first.

SANDY

It is convenient.

LUANNE

Convenient? The guy offers you a steak, then eats it himself. If he hadn't left his message, you wouldn't have known that. I'd tell him to find somebody else to eat his meat.

SANDY

I'd better call before he goes out.

LUANNE

You mean, before he goes out to see Jane Fonda after he said he wanted to see you. That machine makes life too complicated.

SANDY

I like to know who's trying to reach me. When I'm away I call in for my messages.

LUANNE

You must have been on the line at my in-laws' place. Every chance I got to make my call, it was busy.

SANDY

The first time I picked the phone up I heard voices. Two men discussing some kind of boat, like on a party line.

LUANNE

Could be the phone was tapped.

SANDY

Who would wiretap Gramma and Grampa?

LUANNE

Fish and Game.

SANDY

What for?

LUANNE

To keep tabs on Rick and me.

SANDY

Maybe the phone company screwed up.

LUANNE

It's Fish and Game. They set me up.

SANDY

That doesn't make sense. The State had you in jail. Why would they keep tabs?

LUANNE

Did you see Wally and Joe?

SANDY

Uncle said they were camping with some friends.

LUANNE

Who with? Sam and Tony?

SANDY

Aunt Luanne, you've got to relax.

LUANNE

What if the State is after them? Or Rick?

SANDY

Why don't you call? Uncle's waiting to hear from you.

LUANNE

They'll trace the call here. Then they'll be able to follow me driving north.

SANDY

Why don't you take a shower? I'll get a towel.

LUANNE

Do you think I'm being paranoid?

SANDY

You're upset, that's all. You'll feel better with a shower and a night's sleep.

LUANNE

You don't understand what we're up against.

SANDY

I guess I don't. I don't see why Fish and Game would find you and follow your car.

LUANNE

One time they came into our trailer. It was one in the morning.

Blackout. A loud knocking, then a crash. Two agents enter, rifles in hand. Rick and Luanne are in bed.

AGENT 1

All right, fuckers, hit the floor!

RICK

What's goin' on?

AGENT 1

Get down by the bed.

RICK

Let's see your ID.

AGENT 2  
Hands behind your head.

RICK  
What are you doin' here?

AGENT 1  
(to Luanne)  
You too! Get down there!

AGENT 2  
Keep those hands back of your head.

He searches through the closet.

AGENT 1  
Any fish in there?

AGENT 2  
Look at this.

RICK  
It's not loaded.

AGENT 1  
Write down the serial number. I'll check the other rooms.

LUANNE  
Leave the boys alone.

RICK  
Don't you touch them.

AGENT 1  
A lot you can do about it.

He exits.

LUANNE  
If you even touch those boys, I'm gonna bite you so hard  
you'll shoot yourself to stop the pain.

AGENT 2  
Keep that mouth open and I'll stop your pain.

RICK  
You got no right to search my place.

AGENT 2  
Where are the fish?

LUANNE

We've got a secret compartment under the outhouse.

RICK

Luanne, let me handle it.

Agent 1 enters.

RICK

Where's your warrant?

AGENT 2

Oh my, did we forget the warrant?

AGENT 1

Here it is.

RICK

This has no signature, no stamp, nothin'. I'll sue you for illegal search and seizure.

AGENT 1

A technical oversight, that's all. I'll have a judge's signature in no time.

LUANNE

In no time is right!

AGENT 2

That mouth makes a good target. Open wide.

AGENT 1

Come on.

They leave. Lights up in Sandy's apartment.

SANDY

I didn't know that happened.

LUANNE

You haven't been around much.

SANDY

You must have been terrified. Did you contact the media?

LUANNE

Who would have listened to us?

SANDY

They could come back any time and do anything.

LUANNE

That's right.

SANDY

Do you have to sell fish?

LUANNE

We can't survive without money.

SANDY

You could go somewhere else, get a job.

LUANNE

That river is Rick's birthright.

SANDY

It's hard for me to understand why you sacrifice yourself-

LUANNE

I feed my family. That's no sacrifice. That's what life's all about. We are responsible for each other. That's how we look at it.

SANDY

My mother gave up too much. When we were growing up, she had no life of her own. She couldn't even keep her friends, we moved so often.

LUANNE

Sandy, I've got to get on the road.

SANDY

Tonight? You'll be fresher tomorrow.

LUANNE

I won't relax until I'm up there.

SANDY

Let me get you something to eat.

LUANNE

I'm not hungry.

SANDY

It won't take a minute. I've got a microwave.

LUANNE

Thanks, Sandy, I'll see you next time around.

SANDY

You're welcome to stay. You really are.



LUANNE

I know.

Luanne goes. Sandy picks up the phone and dials.

MAN'S VOICE

This isn't me. It's my machine. If you want the real McCoy, leave your number and a message at the tone. Bee boo.

SANDY

Hi, it's me. I got back later than I expected. Guess you went to the early show. I couldn't have come anyway; my aunt was visiting. Talk to you tomorrow.

She hangs up.

SANDY

Why did I do that?

SCENE TWO

The living room the next morning. Barney enters with an armload of wood and puts it by the woodstove.

BARNEY

That's all the wood we're gonna need today.

LEATHA

That's not very much.

BARNEY

It'll get warm once the fog burns off.

LEATHA

Why don't you cut a few more? We can always use 'em tomorrow.

Barney exits, Leatha remains onstage. The lights shift to Rick and Luanne, who are on the riverbank.

RICK

You didn't lose no time gettin' home.

LUANNE

Night driving's the best. No slowing for logging trucks -- or Highway Patrol. It's so good to be back. Where are the boys?

RICK

Fishcamp. I saw 'em yesterday. Wally caught one in the crick:  
this long.

LUANNE

Pretty good. He's gettin' to be like his dad.

RICK

You must be wiped out. A night in jail. Two nights on the  
road.

LUANNE

I'm dead, just haven't fallen down yet.

RICK

Let's go home.

LUANNE

It's okay. I'll crash later.

RICK

You can come in for a soft three-point landin'.

LUANNE

You miss me?

RICK

The worst was not knowin' where you were.

LUANNE

I tried to call.

RICK

Somebody's on the line, listenin'. Probably got their wires  
crossed. How'd you get caught?

LUANNE

It was my fault. I had a feeling about those buyers. Should  
have trusted it. One of them kept talking loud to me, so I  
nodded back to him. Didn't want to say anything. When he paid  
me, he said, "Here's your money, Luanne! Do you want to count  
it back to us?" I could sense they wanted to get everything  
on tape. But I went through with it. I took their money. I  
was stupid!

RICK

Then they busted you?

LUANNE

Some other men did soon as those guys left.

The sound of a jetboat.

RICK

What's that? Never heard a motor like that.

LUANNE

Joy riders.

RICK

Scarin' the fish! Look at them helmets. Those guys look like they dropped in from outer space.

LUANNE

He's throwin' somethin' in the water.

RICK

A book.

LUANNE

Yeah, it's a book. His partner's throwin' another one in.

RICK

Looks like they got a whole box of 'em.

LUANNE

I must be asleep and dreamin' this.

RICK

Let's push the boat in. I'm gonna get one.

Rick and Luanne exit. Barney enters his living room carrying more logs.

LEATHA

Did you work up a sweat?

BARNEY

Any more and the logs would be too wet to burn.

LEATHA

A little exercise is better than none, I guess.

BARNEY

I don't see you doin' no exercise.

LEATHA

I'm movin' all the time, gettin' things done around here.

Barney goes to the telescope.

LEATHA

Do that later. I got a rug needs shakin' out.

BARNEY

That's an odd boat. Sure is long enough.

LEATHA

What kinda boat?

BARNEY

Don't know. Look at them helmets. Someone must a told 'em the fish were bitin'.

LEATHA

They're havin' some kind a engine trouble.

BARNEY

They'd better have an anchor.

LEATHA

They're awful close to the mouth.

BARNEY

Engine conked. They're driftin'. Better call someone.

LEATHA

Coast Guard?

BARNEY

Never make it.

LEATHA

The Inn's got a boat near there.

BARNEY

At least they got life jackets.

LEATHA

Line's busy.

BARNEY

They're jumpin' out.

LEATHA

Let me see. There's one of 'em.

BARNEY

Don't lose him. What's he doin'?

LEATHA

Tryin' to swim in.

Where?  
BARNEY

By the end of the spit. Oh!  
LEATHA

What?  
BARNEY

Current got 'im. He got pulled through the mouth into the ocean somewhere. I can't see him.  
LEATHA

Barney exits quickly. Returning with a rifle, he looks through the scope.

Found 'im?  
BARNEY

He's not in the breakers.  
LEATHA

I think I see a head bobbin' out there.  
BARNEY

Sure it's not a seal?  
LEATHA

That's him in the wave.  
BARNEY

Where?  
LEATHA

Dogpaddlin' toward the beach.  
BARNEY

There's the boat! It bobbed up past the breakers.  
LEATHA

The other guy's holdin' onto it. Must a been quite a ride!  
BARNEY

Thank God they're all right.  
LEATHA

If they wasn't wearin' those jackets, they'd be dead.  
BARNEY

LEATHA

Maybe they need some help.

BARNEY

They'll be okay once they get their feet on the sand.

LEATHA

Who do you suppose they are?

BARNEY

They're not fishermen. Fishermen know better to boat without an anchor. Even the ones from LA.

SCENE THREE

Sandy enters an office at San Francisco's TV Three to speak with DOUG, the news director.

DOUG

Don't sit. Let me look at you. We need to talk about what you'll be wearing on camera. Have you thought about that?

SANDY

Not really.

DOUG

Start out by looking at the colors on the set. Your clothes have to match.

SANDY

Did Kevin tell you, I got a tip about a major demonstration at the Soviet consulate.

DOUG

There's always somebody protesting something.

SANDY

Yes, but Carter just made a human rights cause out of Shcharansky. It's a local angle on a national story.

DOUG

The network might want that.

SANDY

I'll tell Kevin.

DOUG

We haven't finished talking about your look.

SANDY

Sorry.

DOUG

Do you ever wear a ponytail?

SANDY

I haven't since I was a kid.

DOUG

You might try Barbara Walter's hairstyle.

SANDY

I'll go with the ponytail.

DOUG

Do you have any bow-tie blouses, like Supervisor Feinstein wears?

SANDY

That's not my style.

DOUG

You'll need some new outfits. Candy will help you choose them. She's our wardrobe consultant.

SANDY

Who's going to pay for the outfits?

DOUG

We've worked out an advertising trade with Macy's. And we have a great deal on jewelry. Gumps will let you pick out anything you want. Then, when people ask where your earrings come from or your choker, you tell them. Free advertising for them. A free loan for us.

SANDY

Doug, I'm training to be a reporter, not a mannequin.

DOUG

You can be as good a reporter with a necklace on as without one.

SCENE FOUR

Luanne is with Barney and Leatha in their living room.

LUANNE

I couldn't believe it. Those men were throwing books in the river.

BARNEY

I bet some of 'em got sucked up in the jets. That's why their engine conked.

LEATHA

Who are those men?

LUANNE

Here's who they work for. This is the Interior Department logo.

LEATHA

A buffalo and a settin' sun. Salmon are the buffalo of the river. And the sun is still settin'.

BARNEY

How come it ain't wet? Didn't Rick get this outa the water?

LUANNE

I took it home and smoked it.

BARNEY

People smokin' ever'thin' these days.

LEATHA

This ain't time for joke, Barney.

BARNEY

When times get tense, you need a little survival laughter.

LEATHA

I'll survive fine without your jokes.

LUANNE

What I don't get is why anyone would throw books in the river. That makes no sense at all.

BARNEY

Maybe they got a literacy program for the fish.

LEATHA

Barney!

LUANNE

This won't hook anyone on readin'.



BARNEY

What are these numbers?

LUANNE

That's a time table spelling out when we're allowed to gillnet.

BARNEY

What about the tide? No point goin' out if the tide ain't right. Some paid brain sittin' behind a desk in DC musta wrote this up.

LEATHA

What happens if we don't do what they say?

LUANNE

They're setting up a Court of Indian Offenses to enforce the rules. See, in this section here.

LEATHA

A Court of Indian Offenses? I never heard of such a thing.

BARNEY

It's like the Court of Caucasian Offenses. The Court of Jewish Offenses.

LUANNE

It says they can take our nets and our fish and arrest us for fishing, like they used to.

BARNEY

They can't do that. We got an aboriginal right. Supreme Court says so.

LUANNE

Feds will do whatever they can get away with. Especially in Indian country.

BARNEY

We got equal protection under the law like everyone else. I won that right, you know. We are citizens of the United States cause men like me fought in the Great War. And that gives us the best weapon the Indian ever had: the U.S. Constitution.

LUANNE

You're joking.

BARNEY

I'm serious! Look at how we got our fishin' rights back. By takin' our case all the way up.

Once the Supreme Court agreed we got an aboriginal right to gillnet, everybody's got to recognize that. It's the highest law of the land.

LEATHA

(holding the book)

Here is your Constitution. Here is your Bill of Rights. This is your Supreme Court decision, Barney. Remember the treaty up in Washin'ton that says Indians can fish as long as the grass shall grow and the river shall flow. So the wagéh paved the grass and dammed the river. Now there's not many fish to catch.

BARNEY

Not like in the old days, on the Columbia, the Klamath, or anywhere.

LEATHA

We should talk to those men. Make them look us in the eye.

LUANNE

I'll go with you. I want to check them out.

Rick enters.

RICK

Sam and Tony got arrested.

LUANNE

What?

RICK

Feds came up to their boat, pulled the net right outa the water. They claimed the boys threatened 'em with a rock. They took their anchor rock as evidence. The feds carried M-16s, so they must have felt real threatened.

LUANNE

Where did they take them?

RICK

Jail in Crescent.

LEATHA

Those boys have never been in jail.

BARNEY

We better call a lawyer.

LEATHA

How we gonna pay for a lawyer if they stop us from fishin'?

RICK

We got some fish. Let's run a load down.

LUANNE

They're watching evert road, Rick.

BARNEY

We don't have enough fish to pay lawyers. 'Cause it's not just the boys. They're gonna 'rest all of us for breakin' their rules. Nobody's gonna go out there like this book says, with short nets when the tide's goin' the wrong way. We won't catch nothin'.

LUANNE

I bet they threw this in the water so they can use it against us in their fish court. "Oh, yes, Your Honor, we passed these books out. Every one of em, up and down the river. Those Indians may be too dumb to read the regulations, but that doesn't let em off the hook."

RICK

I'm beginnin' to see why them feds got helmets on their heads.

BARNEY

I'm a veteran of the Great War. My first boy killed in World War Two. The highes' court in the land recognizes my fishin' rights. They can't do this.

RICK

Skins don't have no rights, Dad.

BARNEY

A Court of Indian Offenses. It's like I'm in a different country, after all these years.

LEATHA

Give me that. It's good for somethin'.

Leatha takes the book and shoves it  
in the stove.

BARNEY

Hold it! What Did you do that for?

Barney tries and fails to rescue  
the book from the fire.

LUANNE

Did you see Wally and Joe?

RICK

They wasn't with Sam and Tony.

LUANNE

The feds will be after them next. They better stay with my folks.

RICK

I want everyone old enough to gillnet out on the river.

LUANNE

How are you going to defend our sons against M-16s? You think they're safe in our trailer?

RICK

This river is their life. They've got to learn to stand up for it.

LUANNE

I'm taking our boys off this river.

Luanne exits.

RICK

Luanne!

BARNEY

What you gonna do, son?

RICK

Put my net in. I'm gonna fish no matter what they do.

BARNEY

What if they 'rest you?

RICK

They done that before, and they ain't stopped me yet.

#### SCENE FIVE

In a make-shift office, ROD HURLBUT, who heads Fish & Wildlife Service field operations, meets Leatha and Luanne.

LEATHA

We brought you some salmon, Mr. Hurlbut.

ROD

Thank you. I always like to eat local foods.

LEATHA

I'm Leatha Keppel. This is my daughter-in-law, Luanne.

ROD

I only have a few minutes.

LUANNE

We only need a few minutes.

ROD

This is delicious.

LEATHA

It's from our smoke house.

ROD

Indian-style salmon jerky. The best.

LUANNE

They sell "Indian-style" on the highway. This is the real thing.

LEATHA

We came to ask you 'bout the men you got on the river.

ROD

This is why they're here. To reverse the decline of the wild salmon that are in danger of extinction.

LEATHA

When I was a girl, nobody went hungry. We always made sure there was plenty for everybody, especially our elders. And plenty of salmon got upstream to their spawning beds all the way up the Klamath to the headwaters.

ROD

I know this is a difficult time for you. The Supreme Court affirmed your right to gillnet. But that upset the balance of forces affecting the salmon's survival.

LEATHA

You sayin' we catch too much?

LUANNE

The salmon were in trouble long before that ruling.

ROD

True, but the legalization of gillnetting brought a new element into the fishery.

LEATHA

We've been here thousands of years, since time began.

ROD

Yes, but now anyone who looks Indian feels free to string a gillnet across the river. The fish have no chance.

LEATHA

A lot of folks moved away because there was no way to live here. They have a right to come home and fish with the rest of us. You know, we Indian people have a law. Nobody's ever supposed to quarrel over fish. If you don't share your fish or you quarrel about fish like you *wageh* do today, pretty soon few fish'll come in. You don't play with food. The Creator will always provide your needs.

ROD

But clearly this situation requires regulation. All those gillnets severely impact the resource.

LUANNE

How does Indian fishing threaten salmon when we take less than five percent of the catch?

ROD

That's not a reliable figure.

LUANNE

You're right. It's closer to three percent, according to this Fish & Wildlife Service report.

ROD

How'd you get that?

LUANNE

Someone must have dropped it in the water.

ROD

I don't blame Indians alone for the decline of the fish. There are multiple factors. But under these conditions, gillnetting can be the final blow to a species that's under stress.

LEATHA

Why do you have armed men on the river?

ROD

We need to bring some order to the fishery. There are always a few irresponsible individuals in situations like these.

LUANNE

Don't hurt my boys.

ROD  
No one will get hurt. Now I'm late for a meeting.

LEATHA  
You can't go to a meeting.

ROD  
Why not?

LEATHA  
You've got grease on your chin.

Leatha hands him a handkerchief,  
Rod wipes his chin.

#### SCENE SIX

Rick pulls a tub of salmon onto the bank, then goes offstage to get his net. Fred enters. He picks up a fish, measures it, and notes the length on a pad of paper. Then he holds the fish on a small scale. Rick returns.

RICK  
Put that down!

FRED  
I haven't weighed it yet.

RICK  
Your friends made a good catch. But what they caught was under age.

FRED  
Rick, those aren't my men.

RICK  
Your paycheck comes from the same place.

FRED  
I didn't expect this.

RICK  
You knew.

FRED

I told you some people in Interior oppose gillnetting. I argued against them, circulated my report, did everything I could.

RICK

You didn't tell me-

FRED

I wasn't sure it would happen. But that's why I wanted to support your stream clearance group right away. To make the case that their operation would jeopardize our coöperation.

RICK

You're good at double-talk.

FRED

That's not what I'm-

RICK

But your 'notes' ain't good enough.

FRED

You read my report.

RICK

Why is Fish and Wildlife bustin' Indians? What's this Court of Indian Offenses?

FRED

It's politics. Sportsmen complain to the Department. They say gillnetters catch too many salmon.

RICK

You're one of 'em.

FRED

You've seen me on this river for more than a year now, counting fish every day of every run.

RICK

If I see you countin' my fish or weighin' my fish or lookin' at my fish, you're roadkill, you know that?

FRED

Threats won't do anyone any good, Rick.

RICK

Get off my beach!



FRED

I know how you must feel, with your boys' friends in jail.

RICK

How would you know how I feel? This was a paradise before you came. You take everythin' and then you come back and take some more. And then you tell me, you know how I feel! You want to know how I feel? You want to feel like I do? Come back here! What kind of man are you?

## SCENE SEVEN

In the living room, Leatha and Luanne hear tires screeching and motors revving.

LUANNE

They sure make a racket.

LEATHA

Why would those men gun their engines on a dirt road?

LUANNE

What was that?

LEATHA

A crash? Barney, where are you?

Barney enters.

BARNEY

One of the feds' cars ran into a sheriff's car. Couldn't see for all the dust.

LEATHA

That'll teach 'em to go slower.

BARNEY

My guess is it's some kind of trainin' manuever. Either that or they're tryin' to 'timidate us.

LUANNE

If they want to do that, they'll come to our homes.

LEATHA

Hasn't been an agent here since Grampa's time.

LUANNE

You gotta be ready for it.

LEATHA

You know, I never forgot what he said to those men. We were livin' in the old Indian house then.

Lights up on Grampa sitting in a plank house early in the 20th century.

LEATHA

Our dog was up the hill, barkin'. Us kids went out to look and we saw two men comin' down the path. We told Grampa, and he said:

GRAMPA

Stop the dog!

LEATHA

So we stopped the dog from barkin', and the two men came to the house and knocked at the entrance. Granpa said:

GRAMPA

Don't make no noise with these people.

The JUDGE and the SUIT enter.

LEATHA

They bent way over to get through the door, like they'd never been in an Indian house before. One of them was a Justice of the Peace. The other one was also all dress' up, and he was carryin' a small satchel. The Judge called Granpa "Billy."

JUDGE

Hello, Billy.

GRAMPA

Hello, Judge Bowie.

JUDGE

This man is here to see you today. He's come to talk to you.

GRAMPA

He's here. I'll listen. Go ahead and tell me what you're here for.

JUDGE

Billy speaks English well. He'll understand you.

SUIT

William Brooks, I've come to tell you that you can't set your net anymore on this property.

GRAMPA

I've always set my net down there, by that rock out there.

SUIT

You can't set it there any more.

GRAMPA

Why not?

SANDY

Because you're a white man now.

GRAMPA

Do I look like a white man to you?

SUIT

You sold your timber, didn't you?

GRAMPA

What's that got to do with it?

SUIT

The deed gives my company use of your land.

JUDGE

Exclusive use, Billy.

GRAMPA

I let your company take some trees off.

JUDGE

What the deed says, Billy, is that his company has exclusive use of your land. You signed your name.

GRAMPA

I never signed nothin' that said that.

JUDGE

Did you read it, Billy? That's what it says. See, here's your mark. This man is claiming what's rightfully his by law.

GRAMPA

No law is gonna make me a white man. No piece of paper's gonna keep me off my land. And no man's gonna keep me off my beach.

SUIT

But Mr. Brooks, you sold your rights. You were paid for them.

GRAMPA

I heard what you came to tell me, Mr. White Man. Now you let me talk. From the time I was gettin' to be a man, when I was stayin' in the sweat house, I learned how to fish and how to hunt, what to kill and what not to kill, so that if somethin' happened to my folks, I could survive and provide for my family. That's been my life, all my life. I raised my children. Now I have four grandchildren to raise. My son died, so I have to raise 'em. Today you come to my house. You tell me I can't fish no more. You got anythin' else to say?

SUIT

Not really, no.

GRAMPA

Judge Bowie, I was trained to live the way I live. Nobody's gonna tell me how to live.

JUDGE

I know it's difficult-

GRAMPA

Get the hell outa my house!

JUDGE

Billy-

GRAMPA

I said, get the hell out! Don't you ever come back here and tell me I can't fish no more. I'll fish as long as I live, as long as I can take care of my net. No white man's gonna tell me how to live. Get out of here as fast as you can. God damn you!

LEATHA

Grampa was trained on how to treat people. No quarrelin', no swearin' at nobody. But he learned to cuss cause he worked some with non-Indians. And that day he was mad, so that's how he talked. I remember us kids just curled up right there. We'd never heard words like that. And those two men hurried out of the house and marched up the road. Ever since then, all these years, we never even seen a game warden here.

Barney's at the telescope.

BARNEY

Your grampa isn't here to help us today.

LEATHA

Oh, he's with us, all right.

BARNEY

You can't live in the past, Leatha. Those men could do anythin' to us.

LUANNE

Do you see Rick?

BARNEY

He's fishin' near the bridge.

LUANNE

Who's with him?

BARNEY

He's out there alone.

LUANNE

That man never listens.

LEATHA

What's he doin'?

BARNEY

Checkin' his net.

They hear jetboats.

LUANNE

He better come in.

Leatha goes to the window.

LEATHA

Two jetboats headin' downriver.

Luanne takes the rifle and points it out the window, looking through the scope.

BARNEY

They're comin' right at him.

Luanne rushes out of the house, carrying the rifle.

BARNEY

That one's gonna ram his boat.

LEATHA

Where's Rick? I don't see him.

BARNEY

He's in the water. Don't see him either.

LEATHA

Here comes the other one.

BARNEY

Is that his head?

LEATHA

It's speedin' up. Aimin' right at him!

BARNEY

They're tryin' to kill him!

BLACKOUT

ACT THREE

Later that day in the living room,  
the rifle is back on the rack. Rick  
is shirtless. Leatha hands him a  
towel.

LEATHA

Here, son.

BARNEY

They almost got you.

RICK

Tryin' to 'timidate me, that's all.  
(to Luanne)  
Why'd you bring the gun?

LUANNE

Why do you think they split?

RICK

That's a good way to get killed.

LUANNE

We'll get killed for sure if we don't defend ourselves.

RICK

Guns won't stop 'em. That's playin' their game.

LUANNE

Our guns change the game.

BARNEY

Then we lose for sure. 'Cause they can bring in all the men they want.

LUANNE

People from all over the country will join us the minute we defend ourselves.

BARNEY

Bringin' in outsiders ain't a good idea.

LUANNE

It's not just warriors. Folks trucking food in. Lawyers working for free. Medics. That's what happened at the Knee.

BARNEY

Them outsiders know so much, they'll tell us what to do. But they won't care the way we do. And they won't suffer like us when we lose. This is our river. What happens here affects us forever.

RICK

Guns won't do us no good no how. On the river, we're exposed. They'll pick us off one by one.

LUANNE

We'll have reporters all over the place. The feds will have to watch what they do.

BARNEY

Reporters will talk to the feds, no to us. And that's who they'll show on TV: talkin' feds. Remember the news they did on Wounded Knee? I thought, those no-good Indians are givin' the rest of us a bad name. Now we're the no-good Indians. That's how we'll be painted.

RICK

Not if all we do is fish. We're gonna fish on in their face. We'll fight for our rights by doin' what's our right on this river.

LUANNE

You saw what they did? Next time they'll kill you. Unless we have a movement here.

BARNEY

We need discipline, like in the Army. Other side's got that. We gotta have it too.

RICK

It's gotta be all out. Everyone who has a boat on the water; everyone else on the bank.

BARNEY

We can't be doin' that all the time. We need to think bigger. We need a strategy.

LEATHA

Who made you a general?

BARNEY

They got faster boats than we do. They can bring in as many men as they want. But we know the river. And some of those men wouldn't know how to handle their boats in a bathtub. I bet we can keep them from doin' too much.

RICK

How we gonna manage that?

BARNEY

By usin' bait. We put a few boats in the water, and when the feds come at 'em, all our other boats surround 'em.

RICK

I dunno.

BARNEY

I'd call that Injun-uity, eyyyy!

LEATHA

You'd joke at a funeral, Barney. This is serious.

BARNEY

I am serious.

RICK

What if they surround us first, on the banks?

BARNEY

We keep a lookout.

LUANNE

Only way this works is if someone is in charge.

BARNEY

That's right. We gotta have a general.

RICK

Don't look at me.

BARNEY

You got a lot of respect when you won back our fishin' rights.



RICK

We never gave 'em up.

BARNEY

Some folks did. You're the one wouldn't plead guilty. You're the one fought that charge through the state courts to the district court on up to the highes' court. People look to you. You gotta be out front. You gotta lead us.

LUANNE

He was out front today and look what they did.

RICK

Nothin' is what they did.

LUANNE

They broke your boat and almost took you out.

BARNEY

So an outsider should lead us instead? We're afraid, but we gotta master our fear. Can you take this on, son?

RICK

I dunno.

LEATHA

In the old days, if we'd faced anythin like this, we'da been in the sweat house or up in the high country, prayin' ten days at least, no food, no sex, nothin', makin' ourselves pure.

RICK

Nobody does that anymore, Mama.

LEATHA

People go to the high country.

LUANNE

Now don't give Rick the idea he should stop having sex.

LEATHA

We gotta keep our dance up.

LUANNE

Let's call someone who's been through this before, who knows what we're up against.

BARNEY

Our talk's goin' in circles.

LEATHA

I'm callin' Sandy.

LUANNE

You think she'll get this on TV?

LEATHA

Sandy got you out of jail.

LEATHA picks up the phone and dials long distance. After several rings, SANDY's voice is heard on her answering machine.

SANDY

I'm sorry I missed your call. But don't hang up. I want to hear from you. So please, leave your message after the beep. *Beeeeep.*

LEATHA

Sandy? We need you.

SCENE TWO

Wearing a bow-tie blouse and a skirt, her hair in a ponytail, Sandy enters Doug's office.

SANDY

Like the earrings?

DOUG

Not bad. Your colors are right.

SANDY

I'll blend in.

DOUG

You'll stand out. What's up? You didn't come here to show off your clothes.

SANDY

I got a lead on a hot story.

DOUG

What?

SANDY

Federal commandos arresting Indians for catching fish.

DOUG  
Where?

SANDY  
The Klamath River. I could go there Monday, do some interviews, and get footage to use later if we do the story.

DOUG  
No go.

SANDY  
Why not?

DOUG  
There won't be any action up there if you bring a camera. Agents will stay on the sidelines, believe me. Besides, I can't afford to send a crew to the Klamath. It's too far. Unless this is a national story, for network news, which it's not.

SANDY  
But Doug-

DOUG  
Look, you're about to make your on-camera début in one of the top news markets in the country. You'd better spend next week preparing for that.

SANDY  
How can you say it's not a national story when a federal army is conducting operations on a major river?

DOUG  
What percentage of our viewers do you think has even heard of the Klamath River? Five? Ten?

SANDY  
If you were the news director in Rapid City, would you have sent a crew to Wounded Knee?

DOUG  
Only if there was nothing happening in Rapid City, which is usually the case. But that was Wounded Knee.

SANDY  
This could be as big.

DOUG  
If people get killed, sure.

SANDY

I don't need a crew. I can research it, report, and do camera. Even edit if I have to. If you like what I get, you have the story at almost no cost. If you don't, it's good training for other shoots.

DOUG

This matters to you, doesn't it?

SANDY

In a way.

DOUG

Why go to all that trouble for a story about Indians on a river no one's heard of?

SANDY

I am part Indian.

DOUG

Really? I thought you were Italian. Look, do you mind a little advice?

SANDY

Not at all.

DOUG

To be a pro, you've got to keep your personal baggage out of your work. There's an axiom in this business: one story's the same as any other. People are different, the place is different. The approach is the same. That's why it's best to begin with weather and soft news. When content doesn't matter, you can focus on your delivery, on developing credibility.

SANDY

I don't see how I can have any credibility if I don't do hard news. Especially being a woman-

DOUG

You won't have any credibility if you do an Indian story first time out.

SANDY

You have Andrew do the black stories.

DOUG

Yes, but Andy does them like any other story, objectively, without a hint of personal interest. Okay? Have you got that? Don't disappoint me. I'll see you Monday. I've arranged for Candy to go to Macy's with you. That dress is a good start, but you'll need several outfits.

SANDY

What if I go up there this weekend? On my time.

DOUG

Fine. As long as you don't tell anyone you work for TV Three.

DOUG

I'm not assigning you anything until you've aced the weather desk. Besides, I don't want anyone to think TV Three has an axe to grind.

SANDY

I'm a professional, Doug.

DOUG

Then watch Barbara tonight. And lose that ponytail. It doesn't go with your blouse.

### SCENE THREE

Rick and Leatha are alone in the living room.

LEATHA

Sometimes, son, I look at you and almost see my grandfather the way he was when he led the World Renewal ceremony.

RICK

That was a long time ago.

LEATHA

People tell me sometimes, "Your Rick, he's like one of our old time leaders." And then they ask how you're feelin'. They want to know if you're still sick.

RICK

Don't worry 'bout it.

LEATHA

Can't help it. Every day I'm afraid somethin's gonna happen to you.

RICK

I'm okay, Mama.

LEATHA

I don't want to lose another son. If Jack had come home from the war, now Jack would a set an example. You'd a never started. You know that. He'd a been with you. And Troy. That's when I started, you know.

Comin' home after seein' the body of my boy, I couldn't help it. I felt so bad. Remember how he was? He didn't think anything could stop him. On top of the world. And then he crashed into that truck. You know what brought me out of it, what kept me alive?

RICK

No, Mama.

LEATHA

You. You and your sister. Remember the frightened look in her eyes, like there was nothin' to hold onto in the whole world? Took all my strength to stop. But one day I found every bottle I'd stashed in this house. I smashed every one. Smashed every single one in the tub. Watched that liquor drainin' through broken glass. Stood there. No one to help me. Took all my strength. But I haven't had a drink since that day. Now, all of us have to keep our minds clear. You can't be drinkin' no more.

RICK

I'll be okay.

LEATHA

You find that strength, son. You don't need to drink.

RICK

I'm not afraid.

LEATHA

It don't surprise me you're not afraid to die. What I don't know is if you got the courage to live. That's harder. A lot harder.

RICK

'Course I want to live.

LEATHA

I'll pray to Oregos to protect you. She will. You'll see. You'll get all the strength you need. Go to our rock and look into her face. She'll look back at you. Everythin' knows you, son. Everythin' knows you.

#### SCENE FOUR

On the beach near Rick's empty netframe Fred looks through binoculars at a boat in the water. He jots notes in a notebook as Sandy enters.

FRED

Looking for your uncle?

SANDY

Well, yes.

FRED

I don't think we've actually met. I'm Fred Silver.

SANDY

What are you writing?

FRED

I'm counting fish. They just pulled a netload into their boat. I'm trying to estimate what they caught.

SANDY

My uncle thinks you're with the enforcement agents.

FRED

Look for yourself. It's all fish data. I was working with Rick and the other gillnetters until he decided I was on the wrong side.

SANDY

How many commandos are there?

FRED

I don't know.

SANDY

You must have some idea.

FRED

Really, I don't. Biology and Enforcement are separate divisions.

SANDY

You have the same boss.

FRED

Fish and Wildlife's like a big circus tent with many rings, and every act competes for the ringmaster's attention. Enforcement gets a lot of support from Congress, so it's pretty autonomous.

SANDY

What's their act?

FRED

Taming animals.

SANDY  
The salmon?

FRED  
No, the Indians.

SANDY  
They don't really think that.

FRED  
Ever been to the Smithsonian, in DC?

SANDY  
No.

FRED  
When I got this job, I went to the History Museum to learn about the struggle over salmon fishing on Puget Sound and the Columbia. They didn't have anything. I found out they had files and displays for every kind of American except Native Americans. You're in the Natural History Museum, on display with the stuffed wildlife.

SANDY  
What's your act?

FRED  
Excuse me?

SANDY  
If Enforcement is an animal act, what's yours?

FRED  
Call it the trapeze act. A death-defying attempt to catch endangered species in mid-air without a net.

SANDY  
Sounds heroic.

FRED  
The details are boring.

SANDY  
I read your report.

FRED  
So you know what I'm doing.

SANDY  
You should show it to the animal tamers.



FRED

They don't care about facts. Those agents imagine they're back in Vietnam. They'll do what it takes to eliminate native resistance.

SANDY

There wouldn't be resistance if they weren't on our river.

FRED

For them this is no more your river than it is that seal's river.

SANDY

Are you on your high trapeze to rescue wild salmon or wild Indians?

FRED

As long as an Indian fishery exists, we've got a shot at restoring the runs. Your water and fishing rights give the coho legal protection. But we need data to back that up. That's why I have to work with gillnetters, with your uncle.

SANDY

Lots of luck.

FRED

Will you talk to him for me?

SANDY

Uncle won't listen to me.

FRED

Won't you even try?

SANDY

It won't do any good.

FRED

You know how passionately salmon hurl themselves against a waterfall, a dam, any obstacle, trying to make it to their spawning stream. Why shouldn't we go all out to save them?

SANDY

Uncle's doing that. If you want to go all out, you have to prove yourself.

FRED

Your fishermen should know me by now.

SANDY

You're a good fish counter. Start counting men. Find out Enforcement's objective. Tell us what restrictions they have and under what conditions they'll open fire.

FRED

You put me in a difficult position.

SANDY

Try my uncle's position if you want something difficult.

FRED

I'll see what I can do. Where will I find you?

SANDY

I'll find you, Fred.

Fred exits. Rick appears from behind a rock, bottle in hand.

RICK

Me white man. You Pocahontas.

SANDY

Uncle! I was looking for you.

RICK

You make good Indian princess.

SANDY

I'm a red-blooded American.

RICK

That fed is hot for you.

SANDY

He cares about wild salmon. And Indian fishing.

RICK

Feds will say anything to spawn.

SANDY

Are you okay? Gramma said they almost killed you.

RICK

They missed.

SANDY

They'll try again. Some of those men were in Vietnam.

RICK

Some were at Wounded Knee. So what? Hey, why didn't you tell him you're from the TV?

SANDY

My boss won't let me cover this story.

FRED

You gonna be an undercover agent? Fred would like to get you under covers.

SANDY

I can get media up here, maybe my station, if I can convince them the story's big enough. But I have to know what's going on.

RICK

We had an action this morning. Surrounded this fed boat that tried to cut a net. When they brought more boats in, we split. They didn't know what to do. It was the most fun I had since I caught that Great White. You hear about that? Bigges' fish ever caught in the Klamath.

SANDY

Uncle, this is no time for a fish story.

RICK

It's true. I thought I had a sea lion, you know, or a sturgeon. I was tuggin' on the net, tryin' to lift it into the boat when this head popped right outa the water. The eye was about that big around. Its fin was stuck in the net. Couldn't get it loose. Finally I brought my boat in. Meanwhile these tohris started comin' around, you know.

SANDY

Non-Indians?

RICK

You don't see no Indian tohris. Twenty of us worked at it, man, haulin' that net. That shark musta weighed half a ton! It was twelve feet long! Me catchin' that shark, that's no accident. That's some kind of power, you know.

SANDY

That kind of power won't protect you.

RICK

It's hard to explain. It's like the whole river's flowin' through me. It's like my church and it's my God. You know, once I was out there fishin', and there was a brush dance goin on in the ceremony grounds 'cross the river. It was about midnight. Everybody else was dancin'.

I was 'bout two miles away downstream, just lettin' my net drift, feelin' the mist on my cheeks, and I could hear the singin' like it was right in my boat, like I was right there. It was beautiful, gave me a good feelin', like what I'm doin' is part of a bigger power.

SANDY

There are sharks in the water right now, Uncle. You'd better put that away.

RICK

Hey, I'm on top of it.

SANDY

Do you have anything planned that will make news?

RICK

Like what?

SANDY

A flotilla of gillnetters confronting the jetboats. A ceremony. A protest demonstration.

RICK

We don't make plans. Best way's to be ready all the time. You do what you have to do to survive.

SCENE FIVE

Fred enters Rod's office.

ROD

What can I do for you, Silver?

FRED

Just wanted to touch base, Hurlbut. Your operation is making my job more difficult.

ROD

If you need protection, I can arrange-

FRED

I need coordination with what you're doing.

ROD

What do you have in mind?

FRED

If I had a better idea of your action plan and timeline, I would be able-

ROD

A couple of Indian ladies were in here the other day with a copy of your report.

FRED

What report?

ROD

Your thing about the causes of the fishery's decline.

FRED

It's not classified.

ROD

You're leaking Fish and Wildlife documents to the enemy.

FRED

Indians are not the enemy, not as far as the salmon are concerned.

ROD

Then who is the enemy?

FRED

It's not as simple as that.

ROD

What side are you on? I need to know. The Secretary is coming tomorrow.

FRED

Andrus? Why is he coming here?

RICK

We need a new strategy.

FRED

What's the problem?

ROD

I'll discuss that with the Secretary. But things can't go on like this. Did you see what happened this morning?

FRED

I was upriver.

ROD

One of our boats got caught on a gillnet. The men thought they could tear through it, but their motor stalled out. Before you knew it, twenty gillnetters were out there surrounding five men.

And they're yelling insults, telling them what they can do with their nightsticks, complete with obscene gestures, while my men are trying to get their engine going.

FRED

So what happened?

ROD

One of the Indians jumped in, swam under our boat, and unscrewed the engine. It dropped to the bottom of the river. And there was nothing we could do about it. By the time reinforcements got there, the Indians were out of sight. And we couldn't go after them. Not without changing our rules of engagement. But we know who they are. Every one of them.

FRED

So you want Andrus to approve new rules of engagement.

ROD

And give us good PR. I'd tell you more if I was sure you're going to be a team player.

FRED

We have the same goals. I'd like to work with you on regulations the Indians can sign onto. They'll come around because they want to save the salmon as much as anyone. I think we can get them to enforce regulations, which will be much more cost-effective.

ROD

You're out of the loop, Fred. Way out. If you want to save salmon, you'd better find yourself another river. In fact, I'd transfer right now if I were you.

FRED

What are you saying?

ROD

Have you seen the BLM map of Lake Ah-Pah?

FRED

You mean Ah-Pah Creek?

ROD

I mean Lake Ah-Pah. They plan to dam the river there. It's already surveyed.

FRED

That would block hundreds of miles of spawning habitat.

ROD

And hold a lot of water for the folks down south.

FRED

The fishery would be destroyed.

ROD

That resource brings in a lot less than the water would. And you know there are no votes up here.

FRED

Can I have a copy of that map?

ROD

To give to your Indian friends? I'll give you some advice: Side with the losers and you'll end up a loser yourself.

FRED

I'm siding with no one except wild salmon. That's my job. I'm doing it as best I can.

ROD

Sure you are. But we can't have you wearing a black hat when the rest of us are wearing white. Andrus won't like that at all.

FRED

We'll see what color hat Andrus is wearing.

## SCENE SIX

Sandy and Leatha are in the living room.

SANDY

It's so frustrating! Silver pretends he doesn't know anything. Uncle would rather talk about catching a shark. You burned the fishing regulations in your woodstove. And my boss won't let me conduct interviews. How am I going to convince media people to cover an event that I can't even prove is happening?

LEATHA

Let's go talk to Hurlbut. You can go as my granddaughter.

SANDY

You already talked to him. And what did he tell you? Nothing. I could go to Crescent and talk to those boys who got arrested. But with my luck, the minute I enter their cell is when the Marines land on the Klamath.

LEATHA

You can keep a watch from here.

SANDY

That's a waste of time.

LEATHA

You may not get what you need in a weekend. What would happen if you're not at work on Monday?

SANDY

I can't turn away from what you're going through, but I'd lose my job.

LEATHA

You're like the woman who left her home in the old days, when the world was bein' created. She couldn't turn away either.

SANDY

You always have a story, Gramma.

LEATHA

You know, the things people did in the old days created the world we got today. Right here long ago this young married couple was told, "Get your boat ready, get everythin' ready, both of you- you're goin' out to the ocean." So they put what they needed in their boat. They pushed off, and he started paddlin'. The two of 'em went further and further out to sea. But she kept lookin' at the shore. Never spoke to him, never turned her face to him. She just looked toward the land.

Lights up on a YOUNG MAN and a  
YOUNG WOMAN in a boat.

YOUNG MAN

Why are you lookin' back? You mus' be thinkin' a somebody.

YOUNG WOMAN

I'm thinkin' of my loved ones that I'm leavin'. What's gonna become of 'em?

LEATHA

He kept on paddlin' further and further, and he kept lookin' back.

YOUNG MAN

That shore is gettin smaller and smaller. And that sun is gettin' higher. We're gonna have to think about where we're goin' and who we're gonna be.

LEATHA

She didn' answer. She kept on lookin' back.

YOUNG MAN

Who are you thinkin' about? Who is it?



LEATHA

She still didn't answer. And they were gettin' way out there.

YOUNG MAN

You look here! We're s'posed to help make the world. We're gonna do it. Turn around! Look at me!

The woman turns. He hits her. Blood pours from her nose. She stands up in the canoe.

YOUNG WOMAN

I see you. But from now on, you shall be at the bottom of the ocean, the hardest thing to find. And I shall be seen as shells on the young girls' dresses. I shall be heard on the young people's regalia as they dance. Beautiful to see, beautiful to hear.

LEATHA

At that moment he turned into a dentalium shell. That's the Indian money. He sank to the bottom of the ocean. He turned into a money shell, and she became an abalone shell, like that one, on that dress.

A loud knocking. Barney rushes into the room.

BARNEY

What's that? Who's there?

LEATHA

I'll get it, Barney.

BARNEY

You don't have to open it.

Sandy picks up her video camera and aims at the front door, which Leatha opens slowly.

FRED

Hello, Mrs. Keppel.

LEATHA

Oh! Come in, Fred. You were poundin' kinda loud.

FRED

Sorry.

BARNEY

What do you want?

FRED  
I need to talk to Sandy.

SANDY  
What about?

FRED  
I have some news.

ACT FOUR

The next morning, on the beach,  
RICK mends his net. A quart bottle  
of beer and the tub of fish are in  
sand near the net frame. LUANNE  
looks at the net.

RICK  
A damn harbor seal did that. They're comin' pretty far in.  
Everybody's fish hungry this year.

LUANNE  
You'll be fixing that for awhile.

RICK  
And still it won't catch nothin'. Except feds. Hey, let's use  
it to protest-fish. Throw it in from the bank. See what we  
bring in.

LUANNE  
Can't we have one quiet day?

RICK  
They don't let up. We can't either.

LUANNE  
Just one day, Rick.

RICK  
We can't let em think they're gettin' to us. It's hard, but  
this river, it's our life. Our boys, I want 'em to fish  
forever!

Luanne and Rick take the net off  
the frame and throw it in the  
water.

LUANNE  
They'll haul you in to that Court of Indian Offenses. You  
belong there.

RICK

How come?

LUANNE

You're one offensive Indian, eyyy.

RICK

With no defense. All the prosecutor has to do is pull out a salmon and ask me, "Ever seen this fish before?"

LUANNE

Would you admit it?

RICK

I'd plead to that judge, "Your Honor, you got me red-handed. I would recognize those lips anywhere. But please, don't tell my wife, your Honor. I'll cop to any other Indian offense: seal-clubbin', set-nettin', bar-hoppin', anything but spawnin' with another female."

LUANNE

Your gills are full today.

RICK

That's my secret as a fisherman. We're in the same element. Once I know how they feel, I know where they are.

LUANNE

You know, if the feds show up, they'll take our net for evidence.

Luanne takes her panties off and  
attaches them to a cork on the net.

RICK

What are you don'?

LUANNE

Putting ID on it. The regs say we've got to have ID.

RICK

Have are the feds gonna know that's yours?

LUANNE

Those men have x-ray vision when it comes to women.

RICK

You sure you wasn't flashin' at 'em, eyyy?

LUANNE

Don't want to give them any thrills. Let them be homesick for their wives.

RICK

We'll tell them nightsticks where their wives are droppin' their panties.

They laugh. Rick takes a drink.

LUANNE

Your mama's comin' down the hill.

RICK

I'll be right back.

LUANNE

Bury it. You can find it later. Be careful!

Rick goes. Leatha enters. She carries redwood stakes sharpened at one end.

LEATHA

Where's Rick goin'?

LUANNE

He forgot something.

LEATHA

I need to talk to him.

LUANNE

He said he'll be right back.

LEATHA

Whose panties are those?

LUANNE

Mine.

LEATHA

I thought he caught you years ago.

LUANNE

I'm still catching him.

LEATHA

A man's got eyes in back of his head. You can't help that. But the way I see it, a woman's greatest beauty comes when she's showin' her age.

LUANNE

Men have a different view of beauty. Though Rick did say one time, "I'll never trade a spawner for a fingerling." Not too complimentary, but I'll take it.

LEATHA

You know, Luanne, every one of these wrinkles I've earned. Every one. And I've come to like 'em. My grandpa used to say, if you're born ugly, you inherited that face, it's not your fault. But once you're an elder, if you're still ugly, you're responsible for that. Your face can be held against you. Now help me gather wood. We're havin' a cook-out tonight.

Barney enters carrying a square drum and a box with plates, paper napkins, and a sharp knife. After turning the box upside down, he sets its contents on top.

BARNEY

What's underwear doin' on Rick's net?

LUANNE

That's ID, for the regs.

BARNEY

You got to put a name on there, like 'Corky' or 'Gil.'

LUANNE

How about Fruit of the Loom?

LEATHA

Let's get the fire started. How many fish we got?

LUANNE

There's three in the tub.

BARNEY

You see? There ain't enough.

LUANNE

That's plenty.

LEATHA

Not if we invite Mr. Andrus.

LUANNE

Cecil Andrus?

LEATHA

Don't you know? He's on the river today.

LUANNE

What's he doing here?

LEATHA

Sandy don't know for sure. He's supposed to meet with Hurlbut.

BARNEY

It's the first time the Secretary of Interior ever come to our river.

LEATHA

That's why were gonna invite him.

LUANNE

Andrus sent the troops.

LEATHA

It can't hurt to share salmon with him. Show him our rock, our river.

BARNEY

He won't come. Andrus don't want to look at us, and he don't have to. This is where your faith in doin' things face-to-face falls down, Leatha.

LEATHA

Sandy was gonna talk with him. She can bring him down the hill.

LUANNE

With an armed escort.

LEATHA

With Hurlbut. We know he likes fish.

BARNEY

With him or without it, we're havin' a cookout.

LEATHA

What's the harm in askin' Andrus to dinner?

LUANNE

That's what we said about the pilgrims.

LEATHA

If you expect the worst, that's what you'll get.

LUANNE

We need to expect the worst and be ready for it. We're so exposed.

BARNEY

Then put your panties back on.

LEATHA

Let's give Andrus a chance to see how we live.

LUANNE

What do you think, Barney?

BARNEY

He's a powerful man. Did you know that with a stroke of his pen, Andrus can make this a Wild and Scenic River.

LUANNE

It's wild enough already.

LEATHA

Why not ask him?

BARNEY

It is better to ask and get turned down than not to and never know. I was thinkin' that when I asked you to marry me.

LEATHA

I almost turned you down, too. You weren't much of a dancer.

BARNEY

My good looks made up for it, eyyy.

LEATHA

Your good sense for pickin' me.

BARNEY

It's not worth Andrus' while just to meet our family. But, you know, if all the fishin' families came to the cook-out, he might go for that. Then we'd have enough fish, too.

LEATHA

Barney, that quick head of yours makes up for those slow feet. Let's see, we'll need more potatoes and corn. . .

LUANNE

I don't think it's a good idea, Mama. Rick's not feeling well today. You know how he gets. If he meets Andrus, I don't know what would happen.

LEATHA

You never know.

Barney picks up the drum and plays it. He sings. Leatha and Luanne join in.

BARNEY

Wey hey o wey yo  
 Wey hey o wey yo  
 Wey hey o wey o wey yo  
 Hey hey yo wey hey

SCENE TWO

In front of a weathered plank house SANDY holds her camera and pans along the river. The sound of BARNEY'S drumming continues from the bank below. SANDY does not see RICK, who is sitting with his bottle. She is looking through the lens and speaking to herself.

SANDY

Okay. Pan past that rock, across the sandspit, and up the river. That's a good shot. Once more now, for keeps. Tape is-rolling. For thousands of years California's Klamath River- Wait. Better change the lead. Drumbeats sound across the Klamath River on California's redwood coast. For thousands of years Yurok Indians have lived beside this river, following a way of life that revolves around the salmon harvest. But this year is different.

RICK

The Injuns are drummin'. Better circle the wagons.

SANDY

Uncle! Let me finish before the light changes.

RICK

Finish what?

SANDY

I'm taping an intro. It's much harder without a crew.

RICK

What about your boss?

SANDY

With Cecil Andrus here, I'm going to risk it. This is an incredible scoop, Uncle. An exclusive on a national story.



RICK

Cecil Andrus?

SANDY

The Secretary flew in this morning.

RICK

What's Andrus doin' here?

SANDY

He's meeting with enforcement. Fred Silver told me.

RICK

What are they meetin' about?

SANDY

Enforcement wants authority to use more force. I'll ask Andrus what he's going to do. One thing about tv, if you point a camera at an official, he has to talk to you.

RICK

And lie through his teeth.

SANDY

Once Andrus knows the public is watching, he'll be limited in what-

RICK

They had Vietnam on TV. Didn't stop nobody.

SANDY

Some people think TV coverage helped end that war.

RICK

Why you pointin' a camera there?

SANDY

To show we're in Indian country.

RICK

We used to Jump Dance here. On this spot. This is a sacred place. Do you know what happened the day we fixed this old house up? An eagle flew right above it, circlin' higher and higher. I never saw an eagle here before that day. This place is sacred. Don't show nothin' that's sacred.

SANDY

I won't, Uncle.

RICK

Get that thing out a here.

SANDY

I will, as soon as I-

RICK

Go on! Get it out a here!

SANDY

But Uncle-

Sandy goes. Rick lifts his bottle as if to drink, then looks at it and suddenly hurls it offstage. With the sound of the bottle breaking against a rock, the drumming stops.

## SCENE THREE

Carrying the camera, Sandy approaches CECIL ANDRUS. The Secretary of the Interior is accompanied by FEDERAL AGENTS 1 & 2.

FEDERAL AGENT 1

Out of the way.

FEDERAL AGENT 2

Move it. He's coming through.

SANDY

Sir. Sir. May I have an interview? I'm from TV Three in San Francisco.

ANDRUS

Sorry. I've got a plane to catch.

SANDY

I'll make it quick.

ANDRUS

My office will give you a press release.

SANDY

Shall I report that you made an unannounced trip here and refuse to speak-

ANDRUS

You can have a minute.

SANDY

Thank you. And- I'm rolling. Mr. Secretary, what brings you to the Klamath River today?

ANDRUS

I have come to the Klamath to consult with Fish and Wildlife personnel who are managing our save-the-salmon enforcement effort.

SANDY

How many men have you deployed here?

ANDRUS

Currently about three hundred.

SANDY

Will you change the objectives or tactics of this campaign?

ANDRUS

We're beginning a new phase: a moratorium on gillnetting.

SANDY

You're going to ban Indian fishing?

ANDRUS

Temporarily. This suspension is necessary because of the failure of some fishermen to cooperate with federal efforts to regulate the fishery. I appeal to all affected parties for voluntary compliance with this measure. Okay, now I've got to get to the airport.

Rick enters and confronts Andrus.

RICK

Who are you to tell me to stop fishin'?

ANDRUS

As Secretary of the Interior, it's my responsibility-

RICK

Supreme Court says I got an aboriginal right to gillnet. I got a right to feed my family accordin' to our traditions, our religion. Stop me from fishin', and you're takin' my rights away.

FEDERAL AGENT 1

Back off, Tonto.

ANDRUS

Hold on. The Supreme Court determined that this is a reservation. That's what gives you the right to gillnet.

RICK

Nobody gave us that right. We always had it. We're a nation in a country what took our land.

ANDRUS

Your reservation is under the authority of the Interior Department. It is Interior's trust responsibility to ensure that salmon survive for future generations.

RICK

Never had a poor run 'til you came.

ANDRUS

I've never been here before today.

RICK

Ever since the Gold Rush your people been foulin' this river. If you really want to save salmon, after all these years, here's what you can do: Keep those factory boats off our coast. Make sure the fish get enough water. Stop the tree cutters from foulin' the cricks, and clean up the river.

ANDRUS

Some of those things are beyond my jurisdiction. But I welcome your suggestions. Now I've got to go.

RICK

Not so fast. Why did you set up that fish court? Why did you send Fish and Wildlife troopers against us? Why are you stoppin' us from fishin'?

Rick begins poking Andrus hard with a finger against the Secretary's chest. Andrus gestures to the Agents. Sandy moves in to tape this confrontation.

ANDRUS

Get him off me.

The agents grab Rick.

RICK

Get your men off the river. Let go of me. I know what you're doin'. You're takin' it over. You've screwed us for a hundred years and you're still doin' it. But you ain't gonna keep me from fishin'.

FEDERAL AGENT 1

Show's over, Chief.

SANDY

Don't hurt him. He's not armed. I know him.

ANDRUS

Who did you say you're working with?

SANDY

TV Three. San Francisco.

ANDRUS

Let him go.

The agents and Andrus exit rapidly.

SANDY

Are you all right?

RICK

Yeah. Thanks for speakin' up.

SANDY

That was brave of you, to confront the Secretary of the Interior.

RICK

Brave, hell. Foolish! One thing drinkin' did for me was take away the fear. When you been eighty-sixed from every bar in the county, like I have, you stop worryin' somethin' might happen to you. You were the brave one, speakin' up for me. You didn't have to tell him the name of your station. What if you get fired?

SANDY

Do you think he would have let you go if I had said, you're my uncle?

RICK

He would a taken you in with me.

SANDY

TV Three has a little more clout.

RICK

Come on, Roadrunner. Let's get some dinner.

SCENE FOUR

Leatha, Barney, Sandy, Luanne and Rick sit around a firepit.

BARNEY

That was a crazy thing you did.

RICK

Hardest part was clearin' my head so I could talk to him.

LEATHA

I knew you had that strength, son.

LUANNE

Do you think Andrus heard what you said?

RICK

I made a big impression on him. With my finger. I poked him hard.

LEATHA

And you got that in your camera?

RICK

You should a seen Sandy tell those goons to let go of me. Andrus was shocked. "What station did you say you work for?"

LUANNE

I want to see that.

SANDY

I have to edit that out.

RICK

That was the best part.

LUANNE

Is your tape going to be on television?

SANDY

We might get a national news slot. But at most they'll run ninety seconds. And I can't control what the anchor says. He can make it seem like Andrus is being assaulted by a wild man.

LUANNE

Rick is a wild man.

BARNEY

Let's think about consequences here. Andrus announces his ban on fishin'. And you stand up to him. That could inspire people on and off the river.

LEATHA

You think that movement's gonna come here?

LUANNE

Could be, Mama. But don't worry. Rick will keep them under control.

RICK

You bet. 'Specially those weekend warriors.

LUANNE

Especially those hippies: "I'm on a vision quest. I come to serve the Indian people."

BARNEY

All right. So we're gonna challenge that moratorium. We're gonna fish on! And we may have outside supporters followin' our lead. So far, so good. But we gotta change tactics if they ain't lettin' us put any boats on the water. And we gotta be ready for them to try stuff they wasn't doin' before.

RICK

Like what?

BARNEY

Depends on what Amdrus told 'em to do.

LEATHA

If he'd a come for dinner, I would a told him a few things.

SANDY

Like what, Gramma?

LEATHA

I'd a told him that the power that created the earth and the stars and put a harmony between all things above and below made one mistake. The Worldmaker also created vanity. Vanity is what makes a person love himself more than anythin' else. Everybody wants to take for himself and nobody thinks about what everybody needs. Some want the fish, some want the water, some want the power from a dam. Others want the trees without carin' bout anythin else. When there was abundance for everyone, vanity was no problem. But now it's what puts the world out of balance.

BARNEY

Vanity ain't what ruined things. What put the world out of balance was one tribe that began to dominate. Once many tribes lived off what the earth, the sky, and the waters gave them. They had everythin' they needed, and they didn't interfere with each other. They traded with each other and got along most of the time. Then one day a tribe came to this country from a harsher land.

It was their way to take whatever they wanted from everyone and everything. Once that got started, there was no stoppin' it.

LEATHA

You're a lot of fun tonight, Barney.

LUANNE

You better get going, Sandy. Don't you want a few hours' sleep before you go to work?

SANDY

You're right. It's a long drive.

LUANNE

Be careful with that tape.

SANDY

I will be.

LEATHA

Sandy, this beach is where our people first met the *wagéh*. It used to glisten with gold, little specks of gold everywhere—in the sand, sparklin' in the water. Great Gramma Fanny told my grandma how beautiful it was when she was a girl. As long as she lived, she never understood why the *wagéh* would take away that beauty.

The following occurs in the dark,  
with lights only on the person who  
is speaking. The feds' voices come  
out of the darkness.

SANDY

Suddenly there was this great big flash up on the hill behind us. It lit up the whole sky. It scared us all. Right after that we saw lots of little lights, flashlights, on the hillside. And we heard cars up there, zooming past grandma's house. Soon there were more lights coming down the hill, about two hundred of them. Then we heard several boats start up in the water. They turned bright beams on us and landed just as the other men got down to the beach on both sides of us. Some of the men in the boats came ashore, so we were surrounded. And all those men carried black billy clubs. As they came in closer they slapped their palms with the billy clubs. There was no doubt in my mind. I knew we were all going to die.

FEDERAL AGENT VOICE 1

This is an arrest.



FEDERAL AGENT VOICE 2

Caught you this time. All of you.

BARNEY

Two of the men took the net and threw it over us. I didn't know what to do. I'd never been so frightened, not even when I was on the front.

LUANNE

I hurled a handful of sand at them. A bunch of men were on me like that! They grabbed hold of me every which way and started dragging me. They had me facedown on the ground, holding the back of my head up by the hair, one man for each hand and one for each foot, and another was macing me in the face as they dragged me across the sand. My eyes were burning really bad, you know.

RICK

I saw them grab Luanne, and I was hollerin' at 'em, but they didn't pay no attention. I struggled out of the net and I tried to go after her, but-

FEDERAL AGENT VOICE 3

There he is.

FEDERAL AGENT VOICE 4

You're going for a ride, Chief.

LUANNE

They put handcuffs on me and threw me in a boat. They started feeling around as if I had a gun, and then they took off up the river still feeling me all over. I'm screaming, and they're saying-

FEDERAL AGENT VOICES

Oh, you're a cute one. You really like this, don't you?

BARNEY

Some men pulled me out from under the net.

FEDERAL AGENT VOICE 1

All right, old man. You're next.

BARNEY

My granddaughter was yellin'-

SANDY

Let go of him! He's got a bad heart. He's seven-nine years old. We'll sue you!

BARNEY

-but that didn't stop 'em none. They slapped cuffs on me and hustled me down to a boat. I was ready for the worst, but by then I was feelin' kind of excited 'cause, I'd never been arrested before.

SANDY

One of the men kicked me. He had big black boots, and he kicked me right in the leg.

Leatha beats the drum.

LEATHA

I was under the net holdin' onto the drum. And I don't know what came over me. I just started beatin' on that drum. When they heard it, it seemed to slow em up. They backed away and they stopped bangin' them nightsticks of theirs.

SANDY

I don't know how I got out of that net, but I popped right out. I was so angry, so insulted, I collared that man.

(To the feds, who are now in  
the light.)

Don't you dare touch me again. You, get away from my grandmother. Get out of here!

FEDERAL AGENT 2

Shit! She's that TV news bitch. We screwed up!

BLACKOUT

SCENE FIVE

Hours later, in the living room,  
Sandy is asleep on the couch when  
Leatha enters.

SANDY

Who is it?

LEATHA

What are you doin' here?

SANDY

I was afraid I wouldn't hear the phone. What time is it?

LEATHA

Early dawn.

SANDY

I should drive to Crescent.

LEATHA

That won't get 'em out any faster. Go to the city. You still have time.

SANDY

How will you get them out of jail?

LEATHA

I'll manage. You drive down there and put that tape on the air.

SANDY

I can't. I'm part of the story. I was going to show the world what's going on here. But I'm completely powerless.

LEATHA

Come. Look at the sun come up on the night and light the sky, never makin' a sound. All that power and beauty is inside you.

SANDY

I feel like someone split me down the middle and everything just drained out.

LEATHA

Last night I was sure I was gonna die. But when I grabbed that drum and started bangin', suddenly I felt so much stronger. You know, I think that's what stopped em, that spirit we had.

SANDY

They left because one of us savages looks white and does tv news. When I go, they're going to attack you again. And they won't hold back.

LEATHA

Don't you worry about them. We'll be all right.

SANDY

How can you say that?

LEATHA

I have a feelin'. We're not as alone as you think.

Leatha takes her ceremonial outfit out of an old trunk and puts it on.

SANDY

What are you doing?

LEATHA

My gramma used to wear this at the World Renewal Ceremony. The dance was s'posed to restore the world when everythin' got out of balance. In those times you had to keep your dance up, stampin' the earth with your feet, to make the world balance out again. And as you moved, these shells made music.

SANDY

Did you dance?

LEATHA

When I was old enough to wear this, nobody did the ceremony anymore. No one was left who understood how to make medicine for that dance. You have to know every song and every step. You have to know how to pray. The power is too great to make a mistake.

Leatha picks up a basket cap and puts it on.

LEATHA

My great gramma made this cap. I want to pass it on to my only granddaughter. But it can't leave the river. It must stay here forever.

Leatha heads for the door.

SANDY

Where are you going?

LEATHA

Fishin'. I'm goin' fishin'. Want to come?

SANDY

Gramma, are you all right?

LEATHA

I won't catch nothin'. But it's time for me to put my net in the water.

SANDY

Are you sure you want to go down there?

LEATHA

Sure as I've ever been.

SANDY

I can't let you do that.

LEATHA

You'll just have to.

SANDY

Gramma, wait!

After a moment's hesitation, Sandy picks up the television camera and follows her grandmother.

SCENE SIX

Leatha walks onto the riverbank holding a piece of net with cork floats. She steps into a rowboat, pushes off onto the river, and casts her net into the water. There are sounds of seabirds, then of a jetboat approaching. Carrying two federal agents, the jetboat draws near the rowboat.

FEDERAL AGENT 1

Get that net out of the water and hand it over. You are violating the moratorium.

FEDERAL AGENT 2

You have one minute to hand over that net.

FEDERAL AGENT 1

Take it out of the water now or we're going to confiscate it.

FEDERAL AGENT 2

If you don't hand over that net right now, we're going to arrest you. Let go of the net.

Leatha stands and starts praying.  
Birds circle over her head.

FEDERAL AGENT 2

Okay, that does it. We're taking you to jail.

FEDERAL AGENT 1

Jesus! Look at those birds.

LEATHA

Héy, ya hey héy ya  
Héy, ya hey héy ya  
Hey héy ya hey héy ya

Hey héy ya  
 Hey héy ya

FEDERAL AGENT 1

Let's get the hell out of here!

EPILOGUE

Sandy enters with the abalone shell  
 and a strand of sage. She is  
 wearing a ceremonial dress and  
 basket cap. Holding the abalone  
 shell, Sandy strikes a match and  
 lights the sage.

SANDY

This shell holds the spirit of the sea. This sage speaks for  
 the plant beings. Whenever I do this I look within the flame  
 for the wisdom and power of the great mystery.

Sandy blows out the match. She  
 holds the shell in her left hand.  
 Holding the sage with her right,  
 she lifts the smoke about her body.

SANDY

In the beginning of time, the Creator came to the mouth of  
 the Klamath River. She called to the spirit of this place,  
 Pulekukwerek, and said, "I want to leave my children here,  
 but you will have to help me. They will need food. What can  
 you do to help?" Pulekukwerek replied, "They are never going  
 to make it." And he cried. His tears flowed into creeks, the  
 creeks flowed into a river, and the flowing river brought the  
 people the food that they need. We remember where our food  
 comes from, for that is our source, our origin. When we  
 forget, the river dries up. The fish cannot find their  
 spawning grounds. The forest dies. The living circle breaks  
 apart.

Every year we try to fix the world. We try to get the  
 world back into balance. That task was given to us, the  
 people of the river. I learned this from my grandmother. Her  
 grandmother taught it to her, and her grandmother taught it  
 to her. So I believe it goes back to the beginning.



