

SPIRIT of the FRONTIER

by
TOM MENARY

Second draft
April 25th, 2011

A Wingless Films production
youtube.com/WinglessFilms

1 EXT. PLAINS - DAY 2

A MAN falls down an incline. A cloud of dust. Rolls to the bottom, breathing hard.

EDMUND CASH. Beaten and bloody. Scared.
MAIN TITLES.

2 EXT. PLAINS - DAY 1

EARLIER.

Long, wide shot. Vast. CASH walks out of the horizon.

Landscape shots.

3 EXT. RESERVOIR - DAY 1

CASH emerges from the treeline beside a LAKE.

A TRACKER sits at a burned-out campfire by the trees. A BOTTLE beside her. She waits.

CASH walks to her. Stops. Picks up the BOTTLE and takes a swig. Sits.

He drinks in silence.

TRACKER
For bad spirits.

Cash just stares; stands, puts the BOTTLE down, and leaves.

4 EXT. PLAINS - DAY 1

CASH walking. The TRACKER follows.

TRACKER
Where do you go?

CASH
This way.

Pause.

TRACKER
Long way to go.

No response.

TRACKER
Where do you come from?

CASH halts, turns back.

(CONTINUED)

CASH

There's a man. A man. I have to
kill him.

He keeps walking. The TRACKER follows.

5 EXT. FOREST 1 - DAY 1

CASH stops in a clearing. TRACKER stops. Stare-down.

CASH steps forward.

TRACKER steps back.

CASH

Boo.

TRACKER doesn't move.

CASH walks on.

6 EXT. PLAINS - SHELTER - DAY 1

Golden skies. CASH in shelter, TRACKER a little way off.

TRACKER

It isn't the guns that kill
people out here. It's the
distance. Many came this way.

CASH

Yeah? What happened to them?

TRACKER

Bad spirits.

CASH

You still got that bottle?

TRACKER

Always. I think it will not help
you.

He drinks from it all the same.

TRACKER

There are worse than spirits,
here.

CASH

There's nothing. Used to be
frontiers. We travelled
everywhere; places nobody's seen.
Never will. It's a small world.
Getting smaller.

Stares into the sunset.

7 EXT. FOREST 2 - DAY 2

CASH is tracking, checking for footprints.

TRACKER
Who is he?

CASH
He's a man.

TRACKER
Did he kill?

CASH
Probably did.

TRACKER
Why do you chase him?

CASH
Because he's running. Following
the Pony Express, by all
accounts. Making for the coast in
Sacramento; then onto a steamer
for... whatever the hell is out
there.

TRACKER
Do you know him?

CASH
Just a name, and a price. It's
how it goes.

Puts his ear to the ground, listens.

CASH
We're close.

8 EXT. PLAINS - DAY 2

CASH and TRACKER hurrying through the landscape.

They crest a hill, overlooking one last forest, far below.

CASH starts for it. TRACKER overtakes him, stands in his
way.

CASH
(disappointed)
Oh. Come on.

(CONTINUED)

TRACKER

The land is sacred.

CASH

There's nothing sacred out here.
There's just...

(picks up dirt)

...this. Sacred? Ask the Choctaw.
The Cherokee. Ask the thousands
who were marched across this
route, out of their homes. We're
standing on the Trail of Tears,
and you're telling me it's
sacred? It's built on blood.

TRACKER

I have not spilled blood. I only
stop you, and those like you. It
is their land.

CASH

It's no one's land. It's for the
dead.

He tries to go past; she blocks him. He pushes. They
grapple, fall. CASH pushes her down, hands on her throat.
Squeezes.

He CHOKES her. She goes still.

CASH stands. Drops dirt on the corpse, like he's at a
graveside.

Sees her BOTTLE, having rolled a little way out of her
bag. Ignores it.

Walks on, looking weary and ragged.

9 EXT. FOREST 3 - DAY 2

Close, spooky shots. CASH walking carefully; sneaking.

Comes to a CORPSE. Recognizes it. Checks the body; no
marks or wounds.

CASH

Damn.

Looks all around, utterly lost. Sits staring at the
CORPSE, in a daze. Hangs his head, and we pull back, as if
he's going to stay there forever.

He hears something.

Looks up; stands. Turns to face a GROVE; a dead end.

(CONTINUED)

CASH

All right, then. Should've had another drink.

A MAN emerges from behind a tree. He's dressed smartly in a gentleman's suit. Perfectly calm.

CASH

There's no trouble between us.

THE MAN

We don't shoot people no more.

CASH

(on the CORPSE)

Tell it to him.

THE MAN

Does this picture look straight to you? Look at him. No blood, no wound. Dig around inside. No bullet.

CASH

People don't go 'round killing themselves.

THE MAN

Nope, they go and let others do it for them.

CASH

Who are you?

THE MAN

A dead man, killed by a coward.

CASH

We're all dead men. It just hasn't taken yet.

THE MAN

Folks are makin' a name out of me nowadays. Sayin' I gave back all what I took. We're all right here, just how the good God left us. Every one of us. Waiting.

CASH

So move.

They face off, circling. CASH runs at THE MAN; he dodges, CASH hitting a wall.

THE MAN

People end up ghosts of themselves. Come away.

(CONTINUED)

CASH charges again; he halts, as if being held back. THE MAN doesn't move.

THE MAN
You know what she's done, don't
you?

CASH is THROWN backwards. Lands in the dirt.

He picks himself up, takes a step; his knee CRACKS, falls with a yell.

THE MAN shakes his head.

THE MAN
It don't go that way no more.
We're all dead men.

(Distant shot; CASH down on his knees, looking at thin air.)

CASH gets up, testing his leg, and charges; he's THROWN back into a tree, and collapses. Coughs blood.

THE MAN stands over him.

CASH runs, terrified.

10 EXT. PLAINS - DAY 2

Repeat of [Sc.1]: CASH falls down the hill. Continue: He scrambles up and runs on (limping), bloodied and battered. Wearing the TRACKER'S BAG.

REVEAL the OCEAN over a hill. CASH stands on the rise.

CASH
I could keep going. Go to the
other side. What do you think?

Takes out the BOTTLE, holds it up.

CASH
I was born here. Thought I'd die
here, too. Life and death.
There's more than dirt. There's
the frontier.

He lowers the BOTTLE.

CASH
Maybe there's another.

Stands between the plain and the sea, undecided.

END.