

"THE TEXANS"

by

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THE TEXANS

EXT. - HOLLYWOOD - GRAUMAN'S CHINESE THEATRE - A SERIES OF ANGLES - (NIGHT)

ON THE MARQUEE:

FOUR STARS ABOVE THIS TITLE

SPECIAL PREVIEW

THE TEXANS

OTHER TITLES BELOW - INCLUDING TWO UNKNOWNNS - This must be a very special preview indeed, as:

THE CROWD, WAVING THEIR TICKETS, LITERALLY FIGHTS THEIR WAY TO THE THEATRE DOORS AND THROUGH THEM. Forcing their way past the:

BOX OFFICE WINDOW - SOLD OUT!

AT LEAST ONE NATIONAL AND TWO LOCAL T.V. UNITS are fucking things up - as usual - the media is in fine form. Beth White is anchorman for Channel 13.

THE CHIEF DOORMAN LOOKS AT HIS WATCH: 8:59 P.M.: The doorman blows his whistle, and:

HIS TASK FORCE OF USHERS begin forcing all the doors closed - more than:

A FEW DIEHARDS RESIST - KICKING AND SHOVING - PUNCHING UNTIL A:

GOOD FIGHT STARTS WITH LONG HAIRS, BUBBLE GUMMERS AND THE TUXEDOS JOINING TOGETHER - PUNCHING OUT THE USHERS AND SECURITY GUARDS.

THE POLICE ARRIVE AND BEGIN BREAKING IT UP.

INT. - THEATRE LOBBY - A SERIES OF ANGLES - (NIGHT)

PEOPLE ARE RUNNING THROUGH THE LOBBY INTO THE THEATRE - the doors slamming shut - the:

CLOCK ON THE WALL HITTING NINE - HOUSE LIGHTS BEGIN TO DIM AS:

POPCORN COUNTER AND SOFT DRINK CONCESSIONS ARE SNAPPED SHUT.

INT. - THEATRE - A SERIES OF ANGLES - (NIGHT)

THE LIGHTS DIM FURTHER AS:

LATECOMERS RUSH TO FIND THEIR SEATS - the house is packed.

THE SCREEN IS AS BIG AS CAN BE HAD AND THE SOUND IS AS EFFECTIVE as can be made - to create the effect of pulling the audience into the screen without their being conscious of the technical effects used to do so.

THE AUDIENCE IS A STRANGE MIXTURE OF TUXEDOED EX-STUDIO HEADS - their replacements in blue jeans - the last of the beat generation who have forgotten Kerouac.

Grandfathers in cowboy boots, patent leather and lace, old timers, stars, new agents and:

The other variations of animal and insect life that are representative of an industry that provides entertainment for millions upon millions of human beings.

A small town group of staunch, believing, incompetent blood suckers and their sometimes talented - mostly spaced out victims - special clients - even stars.

All have one thing in common - their delight in the taste of somebody's failure and it is here tonight. Hardly noticeable are:

TWO YOUNG PEOPLE HANDCUFFED TO PLAIN CLOTHESMEN.

A few words of the audience can be understood during the rush to find seats.

"The odds were a thousand to one they would never make it."

Another voice. "They didn't. They just ripped off the corporate structure - Melnick style - in front."

"So they drop eighty million and don't even wonder what pocket it came from."

"Who the hell really put up the completion bond?"

Another voice. "First it wasn't the fucking D.A.R. and second it ain't complete and you can bet your sold out first artist's ass on that."

SUDDENLY:

THE THEATRE IS IN DARKNESS - after a long moment:

THE EXIT LIGHTS SNAP OUT AND THE THEATRE IS COMPLETELY BLACKED OUT.

THE CROWD REACTS, AND THEN BECOMES MORE AND MORE QUIET - finally talking in whispers. A full minute goes by and there is no picture or sound.

THE AUDIENCE QUIETS COMPLETELY AND A STRANGE TENSION BEGINS TO BUILD -- A cough is hushed as the audience reaches the breaking point.

THEN:

THE SOUND OF A MATCH STRIKING A ROCK - ROCKS

THE THEATRE LIKE A BOLT OF THUNDER AND:

A TINY FLICKER OF LIGHT APPEARS ON THE GIANT SCREEN AND DISAPPEARS - almost instantly.

THE AUDIENCE WAITS FOR MORE LONG SECONDS - THEN THE:

SOUND OF A MATCH BEING STRUCK EXPLODES AGAIN AND IT:

LIGHTS - ILLUMINATING A SMALL PORTION OF THE SCREEN. JUST ENOUGH TO OUTLINE THE FACE OF A:

YOUNG COMMANCHE WARRIOR CROUCHED OVER A TINY PILE OF MESQUITE AND PINION TWIGS - At the touch of the match the:

TWIGS IGNITE AND WITH THE GROWING LIGHT OF THE FLAME ANOTHER -- WARRIOR IS OUTLINED CROUCHING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FIRE.

The two young men are dressed in breech-clouts and nothing else except the amulets they wear on rawhide thongs around their neck. From the amulets they take:

PIECES OF SACRED OBJECTS (FEATHERS, LEAVES, HAIR, DRIED SKIN - FUR), and throw them on the growing flame - as the objects catch and the smoke builds they:

LEAN FORWARD AND BREATHE IN DEEPLY -

THE FIRE FLAMES TO ITS PEAK AS THE SUN'S RAYS BEGIN TO HIT THE DISTANT MOUNTAINS and the screen begins to lighten.

THE YOUNG MEN RISE AND FACE THE EAST WITH THEIR ARMS OUTSTRETCHED GIVING COMMANCHE HOMAGE TO THE RISING SUN.

TWO OTHER MEN BECOME VISIBLE WITH THE GROWING LIGHT. ONE INDIAN AND ONE WHITE. BOTH OLD - BOTH SCARRED - SHOWING IT.

But nothing can conceal the inner strength of these life-long enemies and brothers who have spilled each other's blood and saved each other's lives for too many years.

Neither has ever bent to the implacable will of the other and that has become a strange bond - and like a bond is their mutual respect. Matched only by their savage determination to fight each other and what each stands for to the bitter end. For with the respect they share for each other, each is a savage competitor and they recognize - as brothers will - they are still adversaries.

BOTH MEN HOLD A HEAVY DIAMOND BACK RATTLESNAKE - each over five feet. Both reptiles, held in their folded arms, are passive.

BOTH STAND IMMOBILE - NOTHING MOVES - THEIR FATHERS - THE REPTILES - a moment frozen in time. THEN:

THE RATTLER HALF COILED AROUND TOM'S SHOULDER ATTEMPTS TO STRIKE - SLIPS - can't - starts to coil itself around his shoulders and arm again - but slowly slides down his arm and as his tightening coil begins to slip: STRIKES! HANGING FOR A MOMENT FROM THE OUTSTRETCHED ARM PUMPING POISON INTO THE ARM ABOVE THE WRIST - then drops from its own weight - leaving a fang in young Tom's arm - and begins -

TO COIL AT HIS BARE FEET - preparing to strike again.

(Intercut with the above and the following action)

THE OTHER RATTLER INCHES AWAY FROM GATO'S LEG - REACHES THE POINT OF STRIKING:

AND DOES - BUT IN THE SPLIT SECOND BEFORE THE REPTILE MOVES - THE COMMANCHE JERKS UP HIS LEG.

THE SNAKE, MISSING, IS STRETCHED OUT FOR A HALF SECOND - long enough for:

GATO'S HEEL TO SLAM BEHIND ITS HEAD AND PIN IT to the rock. In the same motion - he reaches down and throws it at:

THE ELDER TRANTON WHO CATCHES IT IN MID-AIR AND LAUGHING SPINS IT OVER AND OVER HIS HEAD AND SENDS IT spinning through the air to:

BEAR KNIFE WHO LIFTS HIS BLADE AND CATCHING THE RATTLER ON ITS POINT FLIPS IT TOWARD YOUNG TOM - BUT:

IT LANDS ON TOP OF THE SNAKE AT TOM'S FEET AS IT PREPARES TO STRIKE HIS BARE LEG...

THE TWO SNAKES WRITHE - STRIKING OUT BLINDLY - TRYING TO COIL AND:

TOM REACHES DOWN INTO THE TWISTING MESS - picks up both just behind their heads and throws them over his shoulder -

THE INSTANT HE DOES:

GATO IS AT HIS SIDE RIPPING OFF HIS AMULET USING THE RAWHIDE THONG and a piece of still burning mesquite from the fire to form a tourniquet above the wound. Before he can finish:

BEAR KNIFE AND TRANTON HAVE REACHED THEM.

CASE PICKS YOUNG TOM UP AND CARRIES HIM TOWARD THE shade of a live oak as:

BEAR KNIFE SLICES INTO THE BITE crossing four ways and before Case can lower his son to the ground -

THE OLD INDIAN IS SUCKING AND SPITTING OUT MOUTHFULS OF POISON AND BLOOD. Then Gato takes Bear Knife's place sucking and spitting.

BEAR KNIFE STANDS - CALLS SHARPLY IN COMMANCHE AND A:

GROUP OF WOMEN - SOME WHITE - MOST ARE COMMANCHE - (Possibly Tranton's wife or daughters)

AND MIXED BREEDS - COMMANCHE - MEXICAN - TEXAN - (Possibly Quanna Parker's blood is moving around)

WITH YOUNGER MEN AND BOYS -

AND YOUNG WOMEN COME RUNNING THROUGH THE BUCK BRUSH AND CHAPARRAL THAT SURROUNDS THE CLEARING...

ONE YOUNG GIRL IN PARTICULAR STANDS OUT - AND HESITATES A MOMENT BEFORE RUNNING HEADLONG TO YOUNG TRANTON. THIS IS LUPITA - SISTER OF GATO - DAUGHTER OF BEAR KNIFE - She is beautiful without being pretty. Her will and inner strength are the heritage of her father - the color and bone structure resembles the past touch of Spanish blood.

The women take charge of sucking the wound and preparing a poultice for the wound.

GATO SQUATS - INDIAN STYLE - BESIDE TOM - THEY GRIN AT EACH OTHER AS LUPITA LIFTS TOM'S HEAD INTO HER LAP so he can drink from the gourd that she holds. They are not strangers.

TOM DRINKS - TRYS NOT TO GAT - fails - spits it out. Gato takes the gourd - drinks - then grinning hands it back to Tom who smiles with hatred and through grinding teeth empties the gourd.

EVERYONE IS PLEASED - NOW HE WILL LIVE.

GATO CUTS HIS ARM IN THE SAME PLACE THAT TOM received his wound and pushing away the poultice that is now being applied by the oldest of the Commanche women, presses his bloody arm against Tom's wound - Lupita loosens the tourniquet for a moment - then tightens it again.

NOTE: (The conversation held by the Commanches and the Trantons will be a combination of broken English - Spanish - plains dialect and Commanche).

GATO

Now we are blood brothers of the rattlesnake.

CASE TRANTON AND BEAR KNIFE LOOK BRIEFLY AT EACH OTHER AND THEN MOVE AWAY. Finally sitting on the ground - Indian style - giving each other time to think - scratching marks in the sand as they try and figure how to handle what is coming next - FINALLY:

BEAR KNIFE

So now I have a son. What shall his name be? Brother to the snake? Or Rattle Head?

CASE

And I will have a daughter who will be called: She Who Makes The Flesh Rise.

BEAR KNIFE TURNS, EYES COLD.

BEAR KNIFE

Her name is Lupita. What flesh...

CASE TRANTON

(grinning)

Any flesh that a man has - you rotten old back-stabbing chicken shit son of a bitch. Except for that withered strip of frog skin you carry between your broken up bend old coyote legs - or has it dropped off yet?

Bear Knife, apparently deeply insulted, almost beyond anger has to turn away to stop his grin.

BEAR KNIFE

And you - you ancient whey (Spanish

BEAR KNIFE (cont.)  
 for castrated bull or ox). The  
 sack you carry holds only dust  
 of Huevos (eggs) gone for 20  
 years.

CASE TRANTON  
 (laughing)  
 So we are to share a grandchild.  
 We have become a family.

BEAR KNIFE  
 Yes, there will be times we are  
 a family and times we will fight  
 side by side - yet our battles  
 will come again for you - and for  
 me - for there can be no change  
 between us.

TRANTON  
 (after a long moment)  
 No - there will be no change  
 until you and your people make  
 peace.

BEAR KNIFE  
 Not while your longhorns eat the  
 grass that belongs to the buffalo.  
 Your people have killed our life  
 and left it to rot taking only  
 the tongue and hide when you kill  
 the buffalo - you are killing me -  
 my people -  
 (then:)  
 We will not stop fighting for our  
 life -  
 (then:)  
 Enough of that - we should be proud  
 of our sons.

TRANTON  
 We are.

BEAR KNIFE  
 The house you built - that stands  
 on Commanche land - that on the  
 west side of the river - I give  
 to you and your son.

TRANTON  
 And your daughter.



BEAR KNIFE

You cross our land with your  
cattle or your horses - then  
we will begin to kill each other  
once again.

TRANTON

(after a long moment)  
And our children and their children -

BEAR KNIFE

(shrugs)  
They will grow strong - strong  
enough to fight us - what we are -  
our ways - our lives - are dying.  
My life is ending as is yours.  
They will see this - watch and  
help it to happen...

CASE

If they become our enemies as  
their children will become theirs -

BEAR KNIFE

(after a moment)  
No one will remember what we are.  
No - there will be nothing left  
but scratches in the sand and  
stories that someone will hear  
walking over a buried campfire -  
(his voice changing)  
ON THIS LAND OF MY PEOPLE.  
(then with quiet fury)  
And it will be you - your people  
who killed us.

CASE TRANTON

Would you kill my son?

BEAR KNIFE

Not before I kill you.

There is a moment of silence as they look at each other - then  
with almost an imperceptible nod both have:

KNIVES IN THEIR HANDS.

THE FIGHT - A SERIES OF ANGLES

THEY BEGIN. BOTH ARE VERY QUICK AND AGILE AND EXTREMELY STRONG  
FOR THEIR AGE.

THEY FIGHT - STAB - SPIN - THRUST - PARRY - AN EVEN MATCH IN

DEADLY EARNEST.

BLOOD IS DRAWN AGAIN AND AGAIN - not too serious - to be fatal - or near fatal - but:

LUPITA - GATO - ALL THE WOMEN AND YOUNG MEN stand frozen - eyes riveted to the fight - trying not to show their deep concern and fear.

YOUNG TOM RISES - leaning weakly against the tree - his head sags back on the trunk of the oak - watching as:

BEAR KNIFE DUCKS ASIDE AND UNDER - A CROSSING SLASH BY TRANTON - THEN SPINS AND COMES IN LOW AND FAST.

TRANTON IS A BIT SLOW IN TURNING and for a moment it looks like he will be open for a fatal wound when:

A TWISTING ROCK SUDDENLY HALF TRIPS THE OLD COMMANCHE AND IN A SECOND...

TRANTON HAS HIM PINNED - HIS KNEES ON THE INDIAN'S WRISTS.

BEAR KNIFE LOOKS UP AT TRANTON - THEN AT ALL HIS PEOPLE. FINALLY TURNS HIS HEAD TO LOOK AT YOUNG TOM AND GATO. TOM STILL LEANS AGAINST THE TREE. PITA AND GATO ARE STANDING on either side of him. Bear Knife looks steadily at them as he does the older Tranton. Gato and Tom answer the look of Tranton and Bear Knife by giving:

THE CLASSIC THUMBS DOWN VERDICT.

TRANTON INSTANTLY RAISES HIS KNIFE AND PLUNGES IT DOWN TOWARD BEAR KNIFE'S NECK!

THE KNIFE GOES THROUGH - HALF OF THE OLD MAN'S EAR. TRANTON RAISES THE KNIFE AGAIN AND DRIVES IT HOME - cutting the ear again leaving a clean but somewhat bloody notch. Tranton stands up wiping his blade on his legging.

A SERIES OF ANGLES -

AS ALL REACT - AND NOT PASSIVELY. Laughter - whoops - hollers - warwhoops. The clearing is filled with excitement - no one is dead and it was a great fight.

BEAR KNIFE SITS UP FURIOUS - CURSING TRANTON IN EVERY language that he knows - slows down finally:

BEAR KNIFE  
In one month I will kill you or  
die. You cannot put a mark on  
me like one of your fucking cattle.

BEAR KNIFE (cont.)  
 (then smashing the rock against  
 another larger stone)  
 But first I kill this fucking  
 Gringo rock.

This is greeted by applause by all. (The rock breaks but he almost loses a knuckle - which is ignored by all.)

TRANTON GIVES BEAR KNIFE A HAND - HE TAKES IT AS:

WOMEN RUN UP AND BEGIN TO WRAP HIS HEAD - he beats them off cursing...

TRANTON  
 Got worried - didn't want to lose you - being part of the family and all. But with you wearin' the Tranton ear crop no one is goin' to steal you - not from me.

BEAR KNIFE  
 You are one blue-eyed Gringo son of a bitch - born out of a pile of fresh cat shit.  
 (then - as Tranton just grins at him:)  
 It is true, I wear your mark but before the year is over I will put my brand on you, old friend.

TRANTON  
 Will you kill me?

BEAR KNIFE  
 (grinning)  
 Many times - many ways.

Young Tom leans his head back against the tree - relieved - exhausted. Lupita begins to loosen his tourniquet again.

BEAR KNIFE SUDDENLY SPINS - KNIFE IN HAND AND THROWS IT WITH FULL STRENGTH, AT YOUNG TOM.

THE BLADE BURIES ITSELF A HALF INCH INTO THE TREE pinning Tom's ear to the bark...

GATO PULLS OUT THE KNIFE BUT HE TWISTS HIS WRIST SO THAT IT CUTS A LITTLE BIT JAGGED coming out leaving a small notch.

TOM'S KNIFE IS IN HIS HAND - HE IS MOVING - eyes black with anger:

GATO BACKS AWAY QUICKLY, LAUGHING AS HE DOES. Tom's father - Gato's father - Lupita - the entire group - laugh and cheer. Characterizing the irony of different peoples - born enemies but more than sometime friends. The spirit and freedom of life is in them all and if Pita is crying it is not of sadness - but the joy of being alive and free and in love.

ALL THE PEOPLE GATHER AROUND AS BEAR KNIFE WALKS INTO THE CENTER OF THE CLEARING.

BEAR KNIFE  
(as Tranton joins him)  
And how shall they be married?

TRANTON  
(bellowing out)  
They will be married with a preacher -  
A god damned - honest to the Bible -  
Holy Word packin' preacher in a  
proper church.

TOM  
Ain't a church in more than 50 miles.

TRANTON  
Then by God, I'll build one.  
A back-sliding - soaking wet  
Baptish church to put all you  
heathens to shame and on the  
road to heaven.

BEAR KNIFE  
Your church is to build graves.  
Our gods give life.

YOUNG TOM  
(as Lupita bandages his ear)  
No - we marry Commanche as my  
tribe wants - As I want. If  
my wife wants to become a Christian  
we'll have a Christian marriage.  
Hell! I don't even know if I'm  
a Christian.  
(then:)  
To the father of my wife I will  
give thirty of my father's finest  
ponies.

GATO  
(as Tranton starts to protest)  
And my snake brother and I will  
run the buffalo - together.

There is a general reaction - this is a rare honor.

GATO

(after a long moment, to Bear  
Knife and Tranton)  
And when the time comes being  
as you - our children - will  
brand each other - forever.

BEAR KNIFE

But even as they mend - it will  
go - all of it - what we have  
shared will change and the brands  
will become different, and the  
ear marks will become different,  
and our land...

(then to Tranton)

and our life will be gone.

GATO

Perhaps you speak the truth. But  
not for 1000 winters.

PITA CROSSES TO TRANTON HOLDING OUT HER KNIFE.

PITA

I would wear your mark as  
does my husband and my father.

TRANTON

That is for your husband - my son  
to decide.

PITA

And you ---?

THERE IS ONE MOMENT OF SILENCE - THEN TRANTON NODS. She moves  
toward him.

HE STANDS SILENT LOOKING AT THIS GIRL FEELING THE TRIBAL  
JOINING - knowing he has always been a part of these people and  
when they are gone - so will he be.

SHE MARKS HIM WITH THE COMMANCHE LIFE SIGN AND steps back.

DURING THE ABOVE A NOISE HAS BEEN GROWING IN THE BACKGROUND like  
the sound of distant thunder. Tranton turns to Bear Knife:

TRANTON

There will be no more fighting.  
My cattle will travel the Chisolm  
trail away from your land.

## BEAR KNIFE

No - all the land is ours.  
If you come with cattle it  
will be as before.

## TRANTON

Then we will be dead and eating  
buffalo tongue in your lodges  
in the sky.

THE SOUND HAS BEEN BUILDING AND SUDDENLY:

EIGHT BIG LONGHORNS - WILD AS AN ELK AND MEAN AS GRIZZLY BEARS  
BREAK INTO the clearing followed by two of Tranton's cowboys:

ARCH BUTLER AND LEE ROY KANTZ. Everyone takes cover except  
Tranton and Bear Knife - the cattle begin to mill.

## ARCH

We got eight, Case. Maybe 15  
to 20 more still up them canyons.

## TRANTON

Push 'em on down to the corral.  
Then take Dillon and String-Fellow  
and go back up and get 'em. All  
of 'em. We'll leave in ten days,  
and I want every horn on the trail -  
WITH ME - MOVING NORTH!

BEAR KNIFE - SEEING THE END OF HIS WORLD - is oblivious to  
everything - then:

ONE BIG OLD BLUE LONGHORN STEER TAKES A LIKING TO TRANTON AND  
DIPPING HIS HORNS moves toward him at a flat run.

TRANTON HITS THE NEAREST TREE - CLIMBING...

EVERYONE REACTS TO THIS WITH LAUGHTER - ONLY BEAR KNIFE STANDS  
IMMOVABLE AS:

ARCH AND LEE ROY MOVE THE CATTLE OUT OF THE CLEARING - IGNORING  
THE SOUND OF A GIANT HELICOPTER GRINDING AND CLATTERING over  
them burying the sound of the disappearing longhorns...  
unnoticed by everyone except:

BEAR KNIFE (in foreground) WHO LOOKS UP AT:

THE BIGGEST - BRIGHTEST - NEWEST HELICOPTER EVER BUILT (AND  
OWNED) BY TRANTON OIL - FLYING OVER THE CLEARING.

EXT. -INT.- HELICOPTER - OVER TEXAS - A SERIES OF ANGLES -

(DAY) - (PRESENT)

IT HOLDS TWELVE OR FOURTEEN PEOPLE WITH ENOUGH ROOM LEFT OVER FOR A TANK OR TWO. It is almost sound proof - complete with cushioned chairs - couches - tables - portable bar and T.V.

The group is involved in various conversations - but over this we hear Tranton's last yell to Arch Butler.

TRANTON

Did you hear me, Arch - every  
horn on the trail to Kansas  
in ten days! WITH ME - MOVING  
NORTH!

BEAR KNIFE

It will be good to fight you  
again Tranton.

THE PEOPLE IN THE HUGE CHOPPER ARE VERY, VERY HEAVY TOP EXECUTIVES - almost all members of Tranton Oil Company's Board of Directors are present - enjoying their liquor - scenting fresh blood - watching - as:

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD - JASON TRANTON COMES under the knife. Jace is the grandson of Young Tom - over 60 - he looks it - but like old Case there's something underneath.

He appears a little quieter - possibly a little slow in making decisions - a little hard of hearing when it suits him - nods off a little when people get boring.

There are very few people who have ever known Jace to engage in any kind of violence or serious trouble. Some of those that have - the lucky ones - don't speak of it...the others can't.

He looks like old Case - bears a small scar on his ear.

He has a much talked about drinking problem that's been going on for years - seems like he's always getting off the wagon to fix a wheel, but no one has ever seen him drunk.

Most people in the helicopter dress in Neiman-Marcus Texas - maybe just a little over the line - but not Jace - he can make a cashmere sport coat look like a leather brush jacket.

ARNOLD - (ARNE) - JACE'S SON - SEATED ACROSS FROM HIS FATHER IS A VERY LOW KEY - VERY RICH YOUNG TEXAN. (Arnold is played by the same actor that played Young Tom in the opening sequence - as is Jace and many others.)

He is cool - sharp - quietly aggressive and intelligent enough to keep his driving ambition within bounds along with his explosive anger; and he knows how to run when the time comes -