



Scripts.com

Woman Walks Ahead

By Steven Knight

1

[CATHERINE] 'Dear sir,
'my name is Catherine Weldon
and I live in New York City.
'I studied portrait painting
as a young woman,
'but when I married,
'it was deemed unsuitable
for me to pursue a profession.
'Recently, I visited
an exhibition
'of George Catlin paintings
of American Indians
'and my breath was taken away.
'It was the freedom
that struck me.
'Even inside the paintings,
the people were free.
'I discovered that
no portrait of you,
'the great Chief Sitting Bull,
'exists in any
of our public galleries
'and I intend
to rectify the situation.
'Almost one year ago,
my husband died
'and I've been in mourning
ever since.'

No.

[CATHERINE] Please stop here.

[CATHERINE] 'Now my deep grief
has finally passed.'

Aah!

'And I can find consolation
in my work.

'I've not sought
the permission of my father
'or my husband's family
'so you may think I am
something of a renegade.

'I assure you, this is not
by nature but by circumstance.

'I've written to the Agent

to say I'm on my way.'

[CHASKA] "Dear Mr. McLaughlin,
"I have painted many portraits
of senators, congressmen,
"and even a vice president.
"But lately I took
a decision to head west,
"with the intention of
painting portraits of Indians
"who've made their own
mark on history.
"In particular, I'm keen
to capture on canvas
"the last of the great Sioux
war chiefs, Chief Sitting Bull."
Tell her, hell, no.
She's also enclosed a letter
addressed to Sitting Bull
to be delivered in person.
New York liberals
stoking the flames.
When she gets here, arrest her.

[KNOCK AT DOOR]

Hello?

- Fresh linens, ma'am?

- Oh, yes, please.

How long till we get to Omaha?

Half a day.

- You're an Indian, aren't you?

- Yes, ma'am.

- Which tribe?

- Presbyterian.

I'm heading to
Standing Rock Reservation.
I'm going to paint
Sioux Indians.
Have you ever been
to Standing Rock?
The Sioux hunted my people
like rabbits,
cut out their hearts
and fed 'em to the dogs.
You call if you need
any more towels.

[MEN TALK INDISTINCTLY]

- Ma'am.

- [MAN LAUGHS]

Hm.

Thank you.

Forgive me, ma'am,

but, uh...

very few unaccompanied ladies

travel beyond Omaha.

Then they are missing

some rare beauty.

- You're not a soldier's wife?

- No.

Soldiers' wives don't see

the beauty of the prairie,

only its hazards.

Well, are you gonna

make me guess?

You seem very good at it.

You're a missionary.

Oh. No, unfortunately,

I don't have the certainty.

Well, the only stop left is

Standing Rock Reservation.

If you're not a soldier's wife

and you're not a missionary...

...what other business

could you possibly have?

- I'm a painter.

- A painter?

Yes, a full-time painter.

I'd guess you came here

out of New York City.

Why?

'Cause New York is

the headquarters

of the National Indian

Defense Association.

From time to time, they send

their political agitators

out west

to stir things up

on the reservations.

I guess that's closer

to the truth.
I just told you,
I'm a... a painter.
Painters can be agitators too.
Often are.
So, now I'm a spy?
I'd guess you're traveling
to Standing Rock
to promote opposition
to the Allotment Act treaty.
Sir, if I knew what
the Allotment treaty was,
which I don't,
I probably would oppose it.
Well, you sure as hell
couldn't paint it.
I met you two minutes ago,
and already you have accused me
of being a spy and a liar.
I work for the War Department,
darling.
I didn't mean to be
presumptuous,
but you do have
that certain look.
What look is that?
The look of someone
filled with good intentions.
Oh!
And that's bad?
West of Missouri,
it can be lethal.
Would you mind if I gave you
some practical advice?
I don't really care
for practical advice
from someone who's such
a poor judge of character.
May I take your order, ma'am?
No, I'll... I'll eat in
my compartment. Thank you.
Yes, ma'am.
Ma'am.
[MAN 1] Okay, I've got it.

[MAN 2]

What have you got in here?

[MAN 1] Get my bag, will you?

Bring it. Grab a hold of...

Porter!

Hey, not her. I need you here.

Yes, sir.

I'll give you a hand with that.

Oh! Thank you.

- Sounds good, Charlie.

- Colonel.

This lady here, she came
all the way from New York

to paint Indians.

Is that a fact?

- Oh!

- I hope they fuck you.

Cut the baby out, like they did
the Robinson girls.

Indian-loving bitch.

I'm sorry, Colonel.

My blood boils.

If you had any sense at all,
you'd get back on that train.

Return east with it today.

[TRAIN WHISTLE BLOWS]

[SHE GRUNTS]

[SHE PANTS]

Uh!

[INSECT BUZZES]

Hello.

Do you know somewhere
maybe I could...

[SHE PANTS]

...hire a wagon?

[INSECT BUZZES]

Oh.

This is really very kind of you.

So, is the weather...

often this bad?

Or is this unusual?

Please be careful. There are
bottles of turpentine in there.

Wait!

Slow down!

Good afternoon.

Agent McLaughlin?

Colonel Groves. War Department.
Special Envoy for General Crook.

Where's the rest of it?

Yeah, General Crook's ordered
a 50% cut in rations
of flour, bacon and sugar
to take effect immediately.

When a new treaty
needs to be ratified,
it's our experience that hunger
concentrates the Indian mind.

This is my wife Susan. Susan?

Do you find that hunger
concentrates your mind?

[SPEAKS LAKOTA]

We don't encourage
the use of the old language
on the reservation.

Thank you, dear.

[DOOR SHUTS]

Hot as hell out there.

You fucking idiots in Washington
want to start another war?

No, sir.

[HE TALKS INDISTINCTLY]

[GROVES] Mr. McLaughlin,
did you give permission
to that crazy woman to
come onto the reservation?

Oh, Agent McLaughlin.

It's a pleasure to meet you.

Sorry. I... I look a mess.

It's kind of dusty out here.

Well, we're in the middle
of a three-month drought.

Sorry if it inconvenienced you.

You got my letter?

Didn't wait for a reply?

Why would you refuse?

Mrs. Weldon, I order you
to be on the train

when it returns east
tomorrow morning.
You order me?
Find her a cabin for the night.
Escort her back to the train
in the morning.
Can I help you
with your luggage?
Her luggage was stolen.
Mrs. Weldon,
I hope you made a sketch
of the thief before he got away.
[INDISTINCT CHATTER]
If I gave you money,
would you get word
to Sitting Bull I'm here?
I'll be back
tomorrow morning at dawn.
You'll be here, right?
[LOUD KNOCKS AT DOOR]
- Who is it?
- [GROVES] It's me.
Go away. I'm writing
to my congressman.
You really should
lock this door.
Lot of thieves around.
I'll be upcountry
in the morning
so I came to say goodbye.
Maybe arrange to meet
for dinner,
next time I'm in New York.
Why would I want to
have dinner with you?
I don't know.
We might get along.
I paint a little myself.
Landscapes.
You're an admirer
of George Catlin.
You know his work?
You bet.
I can't look at these

the way most people do, though.
The scalp dance.
Saw my first scalp dance
in the Black Hills back in '75.
But when I saw it,
there were little blonde scalps.
The warriors had stumbled across
some Swedish immigrant children
walking to school.
The little girls had blue
ribbons tied up in their hair.
Mr. Groves, I've no doubt...
...terrible things have
happened here in the past.
The past?
You ever wish you were
young again, Mrs. Weldon?
I mean really young, 18.
No mistakes.
Still strong, still free.
Well, on this reservation
there's a whole nation
wants to be young again.
But their youth
isn't in the past.
Their youth lives in a log cabin
20 miles west of here
down a dirt road.
Their youth
is called Sitting Bull.
This is my other reason
for dropping by.
I'm afraid there's a...
a little blood.
Blood?
That old Indian stole your
trunk, drank the turpentine,
so, when the police
went to get your stuff,
he was drunk, pulled a gun,
so they shot him.
Maybe you want to put that in
your letter to your congressman.
[DOOR SHUTS]

- [BIRDS TWEET]
- [CARRIAGE PASSES]
[DOOR BANGS]
[CHASKA] Mrs. Weldon!
Time to go.
I'm not leaving.
Oh!
Did Sitting Bull even get
the letter I sent him?
No. Agent burnt it.
He burnt it?
Well, naturally.
He's God Almighty here, right?
I read it, though,
before he burnt it.
Is it true
you've painted senators?
Before I married,
I used to paint commissions
for the Smithsonian.
I wanted Sitting Bull to know
that I've painted
important people before.
[DOG BARKS]
This isn't the way
I came from the station.
Where are we?
Whoa, whoa, whoa.
[KNOCKS]
- [DOOR OPENS]
- [CHASKA SPEAKS LAKOTA]
[SHE SPEAKS LAKOTA]
He's in the fields,
digging potatoes.
- Who is?
- My uncle.
Sitting Bull.
[GRUNTS]
There he is.
[SPEAKS LAKOTA]
My name's Catherine Weldon.
I'm deeply honored to meet you.
[THEY SPEAK LAKOTA]
What happened?

Don't I get an explanation?
I had this stupid idea
you might be able to help us.
Help with what?
I've got friends from Indian
school, Kiowas, Comanches,
and last summer a new treaty
took half their land,
and this winter it's our turn
but no-one here gives a damn.
The young ones just get drunk
and the old ones,
they dance a ghost dance.
[CHASKA] My uncle?
He says his day is done.
He'd rather dig damn potatoes.
What good
do you think I could do?
I thought you could get
a message to your senators.
Maybe they would listen
if it came from Sitting Bull.
Let's go.
I want to speak to him.
So, speak to him. He speaks
English well enough.
When he wants to.
Excuse me.
I have traveled many miles
from the east...
...across many...
...rivers and hills...
...for the honor
of speaking with you.
You got a train
from New York, right?
Did you get a Pullman?
- Yes.
- Nice.
They gave me free cigars too.
I have a proposition.
So, who have you painted before?
Oh, Congressman Tom Ochiltree
from Texas

and Senator Eamonn Brooks
from Idaho.

So, how much?

How much for what?

For painting someone's picture.

Oh, I usually charge \$40

but in this case...

I mean how much

would you pay me?

I'd be happy to pay you \$50.

\$100.

[SINGS LAKOTA SONG]

\$500.

\$1,000.

That's a lot of money. I...

I don't have that kind

of cash with me.

There's a First National Bank

in town.

\$1,000 it is.

Do we have a deal?

What?

It's raining.

[RAIN POURS]

How long has it been

since it rained?

When Lakota first meet,
we don't speak for a while.

Oh.

Words get in the way
of getting to know each other.

Sorry.

You could throw some wood
on the fire, though.

Lakota likes a woman
who works hard.

[SPEAKS LAKOTA]

That's not firewood.

That's furniture.

Oh! Oh.

Maybe I could make some coffee?

Well, to make coffee,
you'd need coffee.

- [DOOR RATTLES]

- [LAUGHTER AND CHATTER]
[WHISPERING]
The children want to see
the woman who brought the rain.
I've cleared this cabin for you.
Oh!
What will you tell McLaughlin?
That I put you on the train.
You climbed off again.
He trusts you?
He thinks I spy on my uncle
for the Agency.
But it's the other way around.
[SCREAMS]
[WHISPERS] What do you want?
[SPEAKS LAKOTA]
[SPEAKS LAKOTA]
Who was that?
Shell King.
This used to be his cabin
until I told him to leave.
He looked so...
...magnificent.
- [BELL CHIMES]
- [PEOPLE CHATTER]
[WOMAN] I needed to go to
the store the other day, but...
Kira! Kira, you come back here.
Do you always walk this fast?
Why?
I'm trying to get ahead of you
before someone sees us.
You don't walk ahead of a chief.
Should I walk behind?
Side by side is fine.
[BREATHES HARD]
Are you alright?
Walking so fast
has loosened my bullets.
Oh. What bullets?
I have four bullets
still in my body.
They move around.
What does your husband think

about you coming here?

I'm a widow.

- I'm sorry.

- I'm not.

Mrs. Weldon.

May I speak with you in private?

- What do you want?

- I'm here to rescue you.

Rescue me?

Hear you got yourself kidnapped.

These men are gonna
escort you to Cannon Ball,
catch the next train
heading east.

That's very kind of you,
Mr. Groves. Go to hell.

Mrs. Weldon,

Dakota territory is hell.

Since I've been here,
I've seen deplorable conditions
and I hear the treaty
you are here to serve
will only make things worse.

Look here, it's time
you get on that train
and report back
to your seditionist friends
in Greenwich Village.

Well, If I take the train,
I can be in Washington D.C.
by Thursday.

The editor of "The Post"
is an investor in my father's
shipping business.

From his office I will go
direct to the Senate,
then to the Bureau
of Indian Affairs,
and finally accept a
long-standing dinner invitation
with former
Vice President Buckley.

[WHISTLES]

You know, it'd be

kind of unfortunate
to meet all those important
people without all the facts.
So, the truth is important
to both of us. Good.
Maybe you should stick around
till General Crook gets here
and I have the final draft
of the treaty.
[LOWERS VOICE] Mrs. Weldon,
do not give him reason to hope.
No-one here's forgotten
and forgiven,
least of all General Crook
and the Seventh Cavalry.
Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse
massacred the Seventh
at Little Bighorn.
I don't need a history lesson.
It's not history
till it's over...
...and for the Seventh,
[WHISPERS] ...this isn't over
until Sitting Bull's dead
and if they kill him, half the
Sioux Nation'll throw themselves
against the American Army
and Little Bighorn
will be avenged.
You follow?
I'm just here
to paint a painting.
Whoa!
Welcome to Fort Yates,
General Crook.
Mr. McLaughlin.
- Where's the Bull?
- A painter came from New York.
Seems to appeal
to Sitting Bull's vanity.
He's having
his portrait painted,
while his people
dance with ghosts.

He's not gonna be
a problem, sir.
He's shown no interest
in opposing the commission.
Get a message to this painter
and tell him I'd like him
to join me for dinner.
It's a woman, actually.
Man, those New York ladies
love a bad man, don't they?
Invite her to dinner anyway.
This is the suit I wore
to meet the President
of the United States.
It's beautiful.
But I was hoping for something
a little more traditional.
The Agent doesn't like us
to wear buckskins.
If the white farmers around
here see an Indian in skins,
they get scared.
Well, okay, then.
The suit's fine.
The Agent said we should burn
all the old stuff.
Some we burnt.
Some we hid.
For \$1,000, you should
get what you want.
You're gonna need a horse.
No.
- I don't ride.
- What?
In New York City,
we don't need to ride horses.
[WHISTLES]
This is Rico.
Buffalo Bill gave him to me.
He's a circus horse.
It'd be just like
sitting on a chair.
When you click
your tongue...

[WHINNIES]

...he paws the ground.

When he hears a gunshot...

...he dances.

Come on, stroke him.

No, I don't want to stroke him.

Wherever it is we're going,

I'll walk.

- Your shoes.

- My shoes are walking shoes.

I paid \$1,000. If I want to
walk, I will damn well walk.

Does the snow stay
on the mountains all year round?

It's not snow. It's bones.

Buffalo bones.

When the buffalo hear a gunshot
they don't run. They stand.

So, the white hunters
could just shoot and shoot
until they were all dead.

We used to spend our lives
following the buffalo herds.

Now they've all gone and
we have to live in one place
and ask the earth

to grow potatoes.

You'll never be free on
the prairie if you don't ride.

Freedom's in the head.

- And in the feet.

- Oh.

My feet are just fine.

Try these.

My old ones, soft buckskin.

Uh!

You got big feet for a woman.

You got small feet for a man.

[SPEAKS LAKOTA]

It means big feet. Maybe that
could be your Indian name.

They called George Catlin

"Mystery Spirit Painter".

Think of something like that.

Whoa.
You gettin' on that
damn horse yet?
You walk behind me, looks
like I've taken you prisoner.
Behind. In front.
So many rules about walking.
Can't I just walk?
Rico's taken it pretty badly
you don't like him.
It's okay, Rico.
She's from New York.
I thought you liked New York.
Too many people with too much.
Too many people
with nothing at all.
Your society values people
by how much you have...
...ours by how much
we give away.
[SIGHS]
Soft. Feel.
We used to use the buffalo's
brains to soften the hide.
Every animal has exactly enough
brains to tan its own hide.
Never too much.
Never too little.
You can look now.
You think you could
wear your feathers?
Why not?
Same reason you don't
wear your wedding dress.
I need you to
come outside, though.
You can paint me in here.
There's no light in here.
You can't see my face?
When you've smoked,
you'll come outside, yes?
Mrs. Weldon, don't talk to me
like you don't know who I am.
I'll be outside.

[CATHERINE TAPS SKETCHBOOK]

[SIGHS]

So, Mrs. Weldon...

...how come you're scared
of horses?

I got locked in a stable.

My dad's best saddle horse
called Sultan.

I was eight years old.

My father...

locked me in there on purpose.

Since then,

I haven't ridden horses.

[SITTING BULL]

Why would he do that?

Decided I needed to be
taught to obey...

...broken like a horse...

...because I wasn't...

behaving like a lady.

It was the way

I wiped my mouth...

...at the dinner table,

our country place, and some...

some grand people

came to dinner.

I was eight years old and...

...I wiped my mouth

with my sleeve.

[CATHERINE] I was traded

from father to husband.

I've decided to change.

I'm trying...

not to care

what people think of me.

That's why I'm out here

on my own in the...

...middle of nowhere.

At my age, it's kind of stupid.

It's damned hard being brave.

[STIFLES SOBS]

[SNIFFS]

So, anyway,

...I'd really prefer

to work outside,
if that's okay with you.
[INSECT BUZZES]
You're not good
at keeping still, are you?
Shoot me, then I will be still.
What would be the point
of shooting you?
Bullets don't seem to have
any effect.
[SIGHS] God damn.
She really is a painter.
[EAGLE CALLS]
The eagle is telling
Sitting Bull we're here.
What?
[SINGS LAKOTA SONG]
You're gonna paint me now?
In New York, I draw
naked people all the time.
I can see without looking.
So, would you take
your clothes off in front of me?
You're not a painter.
No?
I've painted a painting
for every year of my life.
This was the first man
I ever killed in battle,
a Crow on the Powder River.
My name then was Hunkesni.
It means "slow".
Slow?
I thought before I spoke...
...and on this day
I became a man.
You became a man
by killing someone?
Someone who would have killed
my mother and sister.
- How old were you?
- 13.
This is the death
of my father...

...and this is how I killed
the man who killed him.
This is the year when
the measles first came.
Half our village died.
Is that General Custer?
I met with Tashunka Witko,
Crazy Horse.
We decided we needed
to all be together,
if we were to survive.
The Hunkpapa, Oglala, Blackfeet,
Minneconjou, Cheyenne, Arapaho.
Crazy Horse was a religious man.
He said the people needed a sign
for them to believe
in their own strength.
I went to seek a vision
that year.
This was my vision,
white soldiers...
falling from the sky.
Two days later, Long Hair,
Custer, came with his army.
We didn't leave
a single one of them alive.
After that year...
...they tracked down every
chief who fought in that battle,
killed them all.
Except for you.
So, you see?
I am a painter too.
This is one of the most
exquisite pieces of work
I've ever seen.
Then why does it make you sad?
Because you've lived all this
and turned it into
something beautiful.
The only battle I ever fought
against is insignificance.
So, live more.
[WHISPERS] Live more. Yes.

That's what I want to do.
Must have been hell to be in
jail after living like this.
I was never in jail.
This body full of bullets
was in jail.
But I was out there.
The guards thought
I was sleeping.
But I'd made myself
into an eagle.
Is there something wrong?
It's cold.
Why are there no fires?
This morning at Fort Yates,
they issued copies
of the new treaty.
Then they announced
the new winter rations.
Everything's cut in half.
The beef, flour, sugar.
They're gonna starve us
into signing.
When people heard the news,
they came running here
asking for you,
even Arapahoes and Cheyennes.
The Shell King came.
He asked where was Sitting Bull
when his people needed him.
He said you were off
with the white woman,
a government spy,
who arrived on the same train
as the man who cut the rations.
He said you abandoned them.
When Shell King left, most
of the villagers left with him.
They went off to join
the ghost dance.
What's... what's the ghost dance?
An Indian from the south
had a vision.
He said if the Lakota

wear certain clothes
and dance a certain dance,
then the old ways will return.
The buffalo will come running,
scattered across the prairie,
like they used to.

The Indians who died of hunger
and measles, they will return
and the white man
will leave us alone.

They dance until they fall.
There's nothing left for them
but to dance.

[SPEAKS LAKOTA]

[DRUMMING AND CHANTING]

[DRUMMING AND CHANTING]

[CARRIAGE APPROACHES]

Mrs. Weldon, last night
I asked the spirits for help.
What did they say?
They told me it was time
for you to go into town,
do some shopping.
People get scared
when Indians dance.
Dancing was scalps and war.
They see dancing,
they want soldiers.
By the way, General Crook and
McLaughlin are having a dinner.
They told me to tell you
you're invited to the party.
I can only give you 32 sacks of
white flour, ma'am. That's it.
The rest is earmarked
for the Army.
Very well, then.
32 will have to do.
And beans, I've only got
black beans in that quantity.
Black beans is fine.
100 large sacks, please.
And 50 barrels of molasses.
All set.

Alright, keep 'em coming.

[DOG BARKS]

Whoa, whoa.

And this is all for
the Sioux police barracks?

So, how come
the white woman's paying cash?

No English. Hup.

Aah.

Catherine Weldon.

[SCREAMS]

There you go, whore.

Now you're red, just like him.

[GRUNTS]

[GRUNTS]

[SNIFFS]

[SOBS]

[SOBS]

You'd better go.

They're looking for rope.

Woman Walks Ahead.

[INDISTINCT CHATTER]

- Right, we all ready?

- [SHE MURMURS ASSENT]

Good morning.

Yeah, we'll see. Right.

[THEY SPEAK LAKOTA]

Number 21, please.

[SPEAKS LAKOTA]

Yeah, wait, she does understand
that her beef and flour rations
have been cut in half,
doesn't she?

[SPEAKS LAKOTA]

[SPEAKS LAKOTA]

What did she say?

She said she already
has enough flour.

- From where?

- [SPEAKS LAKOTA]

[SPEAKS LAKOTA]

[SUSAN] She said
from the Great Spirit.

[GUNSHOT]

General Crook.

We have a problem
at Standing Rock.
Mrs. Weldon is buying
food for the Indians,
thereby... thereby undermining
the ration system.

I recommend we arrest her,
keep her locked up
until after the vote.

[GUNSHOT]

Thought you said I didn't need
to worry about Sitting Bull.

I was wrong.

She's agitating him.

She has him wearing
buckskins and feathers.

You can't arrest someone
for spending their own money.

Sir, with all due respect,
our job here

is to deliver a ratification
of the Allotment Act.

I bet my old friend Sitting
Bull feels about potatoes
the way I feel about you,
Mr. Groves.

She's agitating the Bull, sir.

She's agitating him to act.

No, she's a painter
painting what she sees.

When she sees the Bull,
she sees a warrior.

I, too, am a warrior. Our
destinies appear to be entwined.

Sir, I fear that for some
among your regiment,
this return to Dakota
is about revenge.

Vengeance is
for the Lord to take.

But maybe our good Lord
sent us Mrs. Weldon.

Sir...

Permission to issue
an arrest warrant is denied.
Do you remember who did this?
[CATHERINE] The whole town.
I guess I really
made them mad, huh?
The local paper...
[CLEARS THROAT]
...seems to have gotten
the idea that...
you and me are somehow
romantically connected.
Some joke, huh?
They also think that...
...you and me are planning
some kind of uprising.
Imagine.
A painter of a certain age
and an old potato farmer.
Once, I would have
taken 100 warriors
and finished that whole town.
But I've learnt to swallow it,
like swallowing rocks.
If we fight,
they'll massacre us all.
We can fight it in an election.
They have to put
the treaty to a vote.
There won't be any need
for violence.
Where are you going?
To get someone to saddle Rico.
[GRUNTS]
[SHE GRUNTS]
Sometimes, the sadness I feel
for the passing of the old days
is such that I find it
hard to swallow.
The Dakota wind,
the smell of buffalo
and churned-up grass,
smoking pine,
burning fat, tobacco,

Indian girls wearing cut sage,
sleeping on soft furs.
But, you see, it is time.
Time cannot be resisted.
Change comes
the way the rain comes.
Those days cannot return.
But, still,
there are rocks inside a man
that the rain won't wash away.
- Meaning what exactly?
- Meaning debts remain.
You reckon
you're owed something?
Should we serve the soup?
General Crook,
since the arrival of your men,
I must say, there's been an air
of sourness about the place.
Yes. Because debts remain.
Those beautiful days are
not quite gone. Not quite.
Yes, Susan, why don't you
bring the soup?
[KNOCK AT DOOR]
I got your invitation.
Sorry I'm a bit late.
I have decided to help
with the democratic process.
What happened to you?
I've already written
to Senator Fracks
about my presence here
at the reservation.
I posted the letter
in Cannon Ball,
where certain
wild rumors about me
led to a very violent reception.
Mrs. Weldon,
if you have been assaulted,
I will take the matter up with
the police and the military.
I've decided to help

the campaign against the treaty.
I've a democratic right
to do this
as part
of the political process.
Any violent move against me
or any of the people
I campaign with
will be reported
to the Senator by wire.
You really should see
a doctor about that.
I have been to a doctor.
Good evening.

Maybe you should begin by
explaining what the allotment is
and show them how much land
will be taken away
if they agree.

I can't be seen taking
orders from you.
Now we will have to wait.

[HE SNIFFS]

[CLEARS THROAT]

[THEY WHOOP AND YELL]

[THEY WHOOP AND YELL]

How's it going?

These elders, they don't
care to be told what to do.

How do we convince them to vote?

With food. I hope it's good.

[LAUGHTER]

Mm-hm.

[LAUGHTER]

- [LAUGHTER]

- What are they saying?

The older ones, the new ways
of resisting may take some time.

[THEY YELL AND WHOOP]

[MAN SINGS IN LAKOTA]

[CROWD YELLS AND WHOOPS]

[THUNDER ROLLS]

The crowds are getting bigger
every time.

Getting angrier too.
They've been angry
for a long time.
Are we here for the night?
You are here for the night.
Where are you going?
Can't you hear?
The thunder spirits
have returned.
I read that
the thunder spirits bring war.
They will vote for us.
[DRUMMING AND SINGING]
[BIRDSONG]
What's happening?
My campaign committee.
[INDISTINCT CHATTER]
[BANGS GAVEL]
People of the Sioux Nation...
...I declare this commission
open for submission.
Let me introduce
the commission's mediator,
Colonel Silas Groves.
Good afternoon.
[SPEAKS LAKOTA]
Before I ask the General
to give his own testimony
to his commission,
I have a list of council elders
who've all agreed to share
their opinions with us
and, to begin, I'd like to start
by calling Sioux Chief Black
Bear of the Sans Arc Sioux.
[SPEAKS LAKOTA]
[YELLING AND WHOOPING]
[YELLING SUBSIDES]
[SPEAKS LAKOTA]
Chief Black Bear, please
carry on with your testimony.
[SPEAKS LAKOTA]
He's saying
that's all he has to say.

Guess the cat got his tongue.
Next we'll hear from, uh...
[CLEARS THROAT]
...Chief Yellow Hand.
Yellow Hand?
Then can we hear from
John Grass of the Minneconjou?
Come on, John!
Sir, maybe
we should call this off.
I thought you bribed
these people.
I have a list of six more
chiefs who gave me their word
they'd speak here today
in favor of the Allotment Act.
[CROOK] Are any of them
prepared to stand up?
We have a real chance here.
Maybe we should just adjourn
till tomorrow.
- I would like to speak.
- [SPEAKS LAKOTA] No, you won't.
He's not a registered member
of any tribal council.
We have the power to say no.
Power?
[LAUGHS] You wanna speak, Bull?
- You go ahead.
- General.
Let the man speak, for Christ's
sake. This is a free land.
What do you have to say,
my old friend?
[SPEAKS LAKOTA]
Since the white man came...
...and broke up the grassland
with his ploughs...
...the earth has turned to dust.
[SPEAKS LAKOTA]
In this dust, there is
the body of Crazy Horse...
[SPEAKS LAKOTA]
...American Horse...

[SITTING BULL SPEAKS LAKOTA]
...Spotted Tail...
[SITTING BULL SPEAKS LAKOTA]
...Black Kettle...
- [SITTING BULL SPEAKS LAKOTA]
- ...Sword...
- [SITTING BULL SPEAKS LAKOTA]
- ...Two Moons...
- [SITTING BULL SPEAKS LAKOTA]
- ...Rain in the Face.
- [SPEAKS LAKOTA]
- When the wind blows...
[SPEAKS LAKOTA]
...it blows our heroes
in our faces.
[SITTING BULL SPEAKS LAKOTA]
Our diplomats.
[SPEAKS LAKOTA]
[SUSAN] Our doctors.
[SPEAKS LAKOTA]
[SUSAN] Our priests.
[SPEAKS LAKOTA]
Our dead children.
[SPEAKS LAKOTA]
The Great Spirit speaks to us
in clouds of dust.
[SPEAKS LAKOTA]
[SUSAN] You cannot sell...
[SPEAKS LAKOTA]
...pieces of the earth...
[SPEAKS LAKOTA]
...because the earth
belongs to God.
[SITTING BULL SPEAKS LAKOTA]
We must tell these people
to go home...
- [SITTING BULL SPEAKS LAKOTA]
- ...back to Washington,
and not hurt the earth any more.
[SPEAKS LAKOTA]
[SUSAN] Enough. Enough.
[SPEAKS LAKOTA]
We will give no more
of our land away.

[SPEAKS LAKOTA]

Not even this much.

[CROWD WHOOPING AND YELLING]

[WHOOPING STOPS]

[CROOK] Anybody else
care to speak?

[WHISPERS] You're not
helping me, General?

- We have to adjourn.

- Adjourn?

Why don't we go
straight to a vote?

Sir, if we vote now, they'll
vote against. You know that.

It's called democracy,
Colonel Groves.

This is a mistake, General.

All those in favor
of the Allotment Treaty,
line up at the red circle.

Those against it,
line up at the blue.

[SPEAKS LAKOTA]

What the hell are they doing?

They're handing us a victory.

You don't get it, do you?

Don't you understand?

This is what the General
wanted all along.

If we lose the vote, they'll
have an excuse to go to war.

And deep down,
that's what the Bull wants too.

To find our way on the open
prairie, we stop sometimes
and look, remember.

With people too.

You stop sometimes
and look and remember.

It's called cantognake.

To place and hold in your heart.

This moment.

Our power returning.

Young again.

Hold it in your heart.
You are already in my heart.
So, you should know...
...the spirits have told me
that this is the winter
I'll cross over
into the spirit world.
No. I don't want...
[SNIFFS]
Don't tell me that.
Cantognake.
I've finished it.
Come and see.
You've made me look too old.
[HORSE WHINNIES]
[DOOR BANGS]
Congratulations.
It's a beautiful painting.
Get out of my house.
What did he say?
What is it?
Don't forget about our dinner
in New York City, Mrs. Weldon.
[DOOR SHUTS]
Jesus, it's so quiet.
I wish a dog would bark.
They really can't charge you
with sedition...
...and I'm a witness you never
took part in any violence.
When does the river freeze?
When the geese fly.
We have to leave
before then or...
...we'll be stuck here
all winter.
We'll leave tomorrow...
...and when we go to New York
we can stay in my apartment.
[SHE SOBS]
[SOBS]
My parents will have a fit.
[SNIFFS]
There's lights in the streets

now, since you've been there.

It never really
gets dark any more.

[SNIFFS]

Fire needs more logs.

[SOBS] I'm warm enough.

[SIGHS]

Go. The Lakota like
a woman who works hard.

[SHE GASPS AND SCREAMS]

No! No!

No! No!

[CHASKA] What's happening?

Corporal?

Where are you going?

We're off the reservation.

You're free to go. You're safe.

Mrs. Wel... Mrs. Weldon,
you'll never make it!

[SHE PANTS]

[GRUNTS]

[PANTS]

[CRIES]

[SINGS LAKOTA DEATH SONG]

[EAGLE CALLS]