

WOLF TREE  
an original screenplay by  
Chad Callaghan

from his own "THE COMPLETE ORAL HISTORY OF WOLF TREE"

HARD IN:

1 EXT. RURAL UTAH (1952) - NIGHT - ANGLE - WOLF TREE

1

**TITLE CARD APPEARS:**

**"WOLF TREE"**

We PAN OVER to INCLUDE the mid-twentieth century'est of campsites.

A fire dances to, adds to, the atmospheric air.

Several CHILDREN gather around ABBY, a grandmotherly figure through and through.

TITLE CARD APPEARS:

**"1952"**

Abby spins a doozy...

ABBY

A hundred years might seem a *long*  
*chalk* in

(points to each, in turn)  
your wide eyes, but you have to -  
at least for the '*preciaton* of this  
story - view time as the winding  
river does... or as measured by the  
canyon... or from the vantage of  
the towering...

GEORGE HALLY (eleven, pudgy) interrupts her.

GEORGE

...*Wolf Tree*??

ABBY

Ah. Yes. Certainly from ***its***

(glances O.S.)

vantage, *Young Professor* George  
Hally.

The kids SNICKER.

ABBY (CONTD)

Why, my own mother was your very  
age a hundred short years ago. She  
played her part in the great  
opening-up of the West... well,  
"played" really ain't the right  
word. She "busted" her... *part*.

(CONTINUED)

More SNICKERS.

ABBY (CONTD)

You see, pioneering is hard. Hard  
on backs, hard on wills, hard on  
souls. And sometimes, as it was  
with our storied Wolf Tree,  
decisions had to be made. Decisions  
that plow right over mere "hard"...

DISSOLVE TO:

2 ANIMATED SEQUENCE (1852)

2

Highly stylized. Somewhat choppy.

Wagon trains a rollin', cold winds a blowin'.

ABBY (V.O.)

Our Ute and Navajo friends were, at  
that spot along our shared path, in  
full blown  
*there-goes-the-neighborhood*  
mindset... But then, their tribal  
war parties t'were only one piece  
of our trouble pie. There were  
impending elements brought on by  
unforeseen delays. There were lags  
in supplies... And there were **other**  
**hostiles** to contend with...

The lead wagon "WHOA"s to a HALT. A lone PIONEER WOMAN  
disembarks, walks toward the Wolf Tree carrying what can  
only be a BUNDLED BABY.

The Woman whispers something through tears into the bundle,  
sets Baby down at the base of the Tree, reboards the wagon.  
The covered convoy again "YAH"s its WESTWARD HO.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. RURAL UTAH - LATE AFTERNOON - WOLF TREE (PRESENT DAY) 3

A HELICOPTER shadow ZIPS up, over the Wolf Tree itself.

TITLE CARD APPEARS:

**"PRESENT DAY"**

4

INT. HELICOPTER

4

which banks over a massive tree line, into heavy forest.

Aboard are: PILOT, CURT PRATT (with CEO for DNA) and LES PRATT (twelve, quasi-"normal"). Les is in his own world.

They bank again, LAND in a clearing.

5

EXT. LANDING ZONE

5

Curt and Les disembark carrying gear.

The copter LIFTS up, away.

PORTER and EPHRAIM ROCKWELL (a more *grounded* father/son counterpart) are waiting on ATV's. Ephraim appears solemn.

The parties greet.

CURT

Mister Rockwell? Thank you for grasping the nettle on this little inspection.

PORTER

Of course, Mister Pratt, and it's just Porter... My boy, Ephraim.

(beat)

And apologies, my team didn't have time to clear a landing site for you at the mine herself.

CURT

Not at all. Besides, Les here and I need to do some *affectional bonding*. Is that what your mother said we should do, "affectional bond" with one another?

LES

Yes, sir... I guess.

PORTER

Old shaft's three, four hours from here. If we huff n' puff it, we should reach the camp just ahead of dusk.

CURT

Sounds just fine, Porter. Lead the way.

(CONTINUED)

The party of four head into the wood.

CURT (CONTD)

Now, I presume those test mineral samples will be ready.

PORTER

Yes, sir. Everything is arranged.

6

EXT. THE EARLY WOODS

6

Take a hike.

A RUSTLING in the brush. Distant, but big enough to hear.

LES

What was that?

EPHRAIM

A wapiti.

Les looks lost.

EPHRAIM (CONT'D)

It was a wapiti... It *probably* was a wapiti. You know, an elk.

Only slightly less lost.

LES

An elk? Gotcha. Thanks... You know this area well, then?

EPHRAIM

Seems like it's *all* I know.

A beat.

LES

I've not heard the name "Ephraim" before, I'm sure of it.

EPHRAIM

(clumsily)

I suppose it's old. A Hebrew tribe.

LES

Hmm. Interesting.

The AWKWARD SILENCE, along with their hike, treks on.

7

EXT. THE MID WOODS

7

The foursome has stopped for a PEE BREAK.

They are staggered, all but Les WIZZ away.

LES

Oh, why not?

He finds a spot not far from Ephraim. PSSSS.

EPHRAIM

So do you travel a lot with your father?

LES

With my... with *him*? No, but often with my mom. She's from Liverpool, and wants to skip *across the pond* whenever possible.

Their lizards properly drained, Ephraim walks beside Les.

EPHRAIM

(attempting non-awkwardness)  
Liverpool, let's see. Called "The East Coast of Ireland", home of course to The Beatles, but also to Elvis Costello.

LES

You listen to Elvis Costello?

EPHRAIM

Honestly, no. Not really.

LES

Well, it would seem that you know more than Utah wildlife migration patterns after all.

EPHRAIM

No, just how to *google*...

The return of (dun dun DUN) *AWKWARD SILENCE*.

8

EXT. THE MID-TO-LATE WOODS

8

Some time, daylight, *schlepage* has passed.

Curt YAPS UP Porter ahead, the boys lag behind.

Ephraim again breaks the silence.

(CONTINUED)

EPHRAIM

I guess we met before. At that *thing*. At your dad's lake house.

LES

*Huh?* Don't remember... Oh, was it a company cookout?? Sure, man, must have been. That was fourth grade Fourth of July.

EPHRAIM

Me too. Summer before fifth grade, I mean. My dad worked the Modoc City site for your dad then... Anyways, a buncha us kids had gone down to the la...

Les speaks in a low voice, motions ahead.

LES

(interrupts, venting)

Look, dude, *he* drug me out here to the Neanderthal-nated boonie-sticks because *he* is reneging on his mid-life crisis, and now wants my mom back... *He* hates one thing more than these regulatory delays, and that's **me**... So. Excuse me if I'm not the best "Pratt Ventures & Resources" ambassador to the Honey Bear State.

EPHRAIM

Sorry.

LES

Nah. It's, it is, it's fine... You were saying? Something you did at the lake?

EPHRAIM

*Beehive*.

LES

*Wha??*

EPHRAIM

We're the Beehive State.

LES

...That. Is. *Lame*.

(CONTINUED)

EPHRAIM  
I dunno. I think  
(sotto)  
it's mad "**sweet**", yo.

Les is flabbergasted, then laughs.

LES  
Now **that** was lame.

They laugh together. Hard. Harder.

Curt and Porter stop, about face.

CURT  
What is going on? Les?!

Curt starts to go on, sees Porter is even less happy.

PORTER  
Ephraim!

A **real** hardass look flashes briefly, is gone.

PORTER (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry, Mister Pratt. Won't be  
happenin' again.

CURT  
Let's just keep moving. We are  
making solid time, are we not,  
Porter?

PORTER  
Splendid time, sir. Not much  
further.

CURT  
Not much **farther**, Porter. Very  
well. Carry on. "Nothing  
ventured"...

LES  
..."not tang game", sir...

Les winks at Ephraim, who is back to dire.

LES (CONT'D)  
"Not. Our. Game".

The group treks on, with Curt in the lead...

More time passage.

The team approaches an ANTIQUATED TUNNEL.

CURT

...and my analysts tell me that  
this new vein could, conceivably,  
yield at 2 million oh zeers per...  
(pause, sees tunnel)  
Is it through there?

PORTER

That's the old Landis Pass. She's  
right steady, Mister Pratt. Our  
team stress-tested the beams  
yesterday. You'll want a lantern  
all the same.

CURT

Les, take out your light.

Curt, Porter, Les and Ephraim ENTER Landis Pass...

Les is visibly uneasy.

LES

Um, we're in a dark tunnel right  
now. Is there any way we could not  
be in a dark tunnel... right...  
now?

Ephraim locks his arm in Les'. Les is surprised, smiles.

LES (CONT'D)

Thanks.

CURT

...Of course, if the LSEVD  
stockworks double back, as they may  
well do, then this  
abandoned-at-the-prom gal of of  
ours could put out more than  
Tonopah...

No response from Porter.

CURT (CONT'D)

Did you *comprende* that last bit,  
Porter? I said, she could put out  
more tonnage per year than To...

Curt turns, Porter is gone.

(CONTINUED)

CURT (CONT'D)

...no...pah.

(beat)

Boys, where is Porter??

Curt, Les and Ephraim EXIT Landis Pass.

LES

I don't know. I can barely see you.

CURT

(to no one)

He's right. Why is it so dark??

(beat)

Get up here, Ephraim.

EPHRAIM

Yes sir.

CURT

You've been to the old mine, yes?

With you father, yes? How much farther is it?

EPHRAIM

Not far at all, Mister Pratt.

CURT

Well, get us to that camp. And make haste. We somehow slipped away from your...

The FLASH OF A SHADOW in the fading light. A SOUND from behind them. From *the tunnel*...

LES

What, what what. WHAT was that??

CURT

Now Ephraim!! Get us there now!

CHAOS. Ephraim makes like a tree, and USAIN BOLTS.

Curt grabs Les' hand. Even amongst chaos, Les is shocked.

They run like mad hell, try to follow Ephraim.

Another SHADOWY FLASH, another surrounding SOUND.

Terror realized.

(CONTINUED)

CURT  
EPHRAIM!! EPHRAIM!

The chase, endless. Then, a glimpse of...*THE CAMP?*

Curt and Les EXPLODE out of the tree line, into:

10 EXT. THE OLD MINE - NIGHT

10

Long deserted.

The (modern) camp is just to the side, but

CURT  
**HEY, over there! At the camp!!**

something

CURT (CONT'D)  
**HELP US!**

is

CURT (CONT'D)  
**Come quick! SOMETHING IS...**

wrong.

CURT (CONT'D)  
...behind us.

As Curt approaches the camp, a full-on MASSACRE is REVEALED.  
The work tents are the oversized canvas for a veritable  
*Jackson Pollock* painting of blood and guts...

Curt's terror goes *to eleven* as:

Five bloodthirsty WEREWOLVES encircle him.

Werewolves One through Four POUNCE on him as he pushes Les  
back, away. Hard.

LES  
**DAAAAD! NO!**

Curt Pratt, *CEO, Pratt Ventures/Resources*, is FEASTED UPON.

Still moving backward from the inertia of Curt's push, Les  
begins to cry, *PEES* himself.

Werewolf Five STALKS him, crouches, tenses, ready to lunge:

Ephraim LEAPS INTO FRAME, TACKLES Les. The two boys roll into the...

11 INT. MINE SHAFT 11

Still rolling, still tumbling. Les STRIKES his head on a beam. As he PASSES OUT, we FADE TO:

Blackness. Blackness. Blackness.

FADE BACK IN:

12 INSERT - LES' POV 12

Still inside the Mine Shaft. Ephraim, now shirtless, sits watch over Les by laternlight.

BACK TO SCENE

Ephraim's shirt is being used as a bandage for Les' head.

WEREWOLVES can be heard just outside. Les begins to FREAK.

EPHRAIM

Les. Les, calm down. They can't come in.

LES

Whaddya, whaddya?

EPHRAIM

It's the mine.

LES

The mine? The **mine**? But howdya, howdya?

EPHRAIM

*Shhh.* Were we in your dad's strip mines, or one of his copper sites, we'd be **BEGGIN' STRIPS** right now. But this... even after nearly eighty years... the...

LES

(with sudden realization)  
*Silver.*

EPHRAIM

Right. There are particles, dusts still. And still deadly to... *them.*

(CONTINUED)

They seem to RESPOND on cue, from the darkness.

EPHRAIM

Look, there ain't time. You need a doctor soon, or else. We've gotta act fast... Just swear it, and please... mean it.

LES

But I, I don't know...

EPHRAIM

Exactly.

(beat)

And **please** mean it.

Ephraim smiles, gets up, walks toward the shaft entrance.

LES

Ephraim?? What are you...

Ephraim back is still to him.

EPHRAIM

Wait twenty seconds, then follow me out.

LES

What?! But the...

EPHRAIM

Just do it. That's the play... I do wish I coulda met you before today, Les Pratt. I think we coulda been pals. We maybe woulda been *tight*...

LES

We did meet, I thought. Summer before fifth grade...

Ephraim turns to face him. His nose, eyes are bleeding.

He begins to CHANGE INTO A WEREWOLF!

EPHRAIM

(mid-change)

I'm not... who... you... think I  
*aaamm*.

EPHRAIM-WEREWOLF exits the shaft to multiple GROWLS, HOWLS.

Les, resigned to what may come, stands; closes his eyes, walks toward his destiny...

13

EXT. THE OLD MINE

13

Les exits the shaft, stops. His eyes, still closed. The FIVE WEREWOLVES, are joined by PORTER-WEREWOLF and EPHRAIM-WEREWOLF. They each peer at Les.

A beat. Les opens his eyes. Fear will have to take a number.

He looks to each of them, says with **true sincerity**:

LES

I swear... I swear... I swear it...  
I do.

The Werewolves remain motionless. Only Ephraim-Werewolf moves, and is holding something in his claws... a SATELLITE PHONE.

As Les approaches him, WE SEE that Ephraim-Werewolf's eye/nose bleeding has intensified.

Les takes the phone.

Ephraim Werewolf motions toward the woods. Les doesn't hesitate, walks in that direction and O.S.

The Werewolves HOWL at the moon, which is, of course, full.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END

### EPILOGUE

14

EXT. RURAL UTAH (1952) - NIGHT - ANGLE - CAMPSITE

14

We now rejoin ABBY, her *yarn spinning* already in progress.

GEORGE HALLY and the CHILDREN are still tuned in.

GEORGE

Wait. So the baby was found alive??  
Nah-uh.

ABBY

Very much alive and screamin',  
George... just like that appetite  
a' yours.

George, embarrassed, drops the s'mores he's working on, not his first.

A round of GIGGLES.

15 INSERT - ANIMATED SEQUENCE (1852)

15

The BUNDLED BABY, still at the Wolf Tree's base, looks alert and... healthy.

A slew of WAGONTRAINERS approach her, über-confused.

ABBY (V.O.)

You heard me right. That young'un was found happy as you please not a week later by a group of straggler pioneers. They hardly knew what to make of that li'l bundle of discovery...

BACK TO SCENE

The Children sit in awe, processing.

One LITTLE GIRL finally speaks up:

LITTLE GIRL

What happened to that baby, Miss Abby?

ABBY

She grew up healthy amongst the Pioneers. Became a mid-wife, birthed many a baby includin' yours trul...

GEORGE

(interrupting)

Naw. She means what happened that kept the baby alive.

If looks could kill...

ABBY

Well, now some say lightening struck yon tree, chargin' the ions in the air, and Mother-Naturally *defibrillatornated* her babyheart.

(beat)

Others claim an *Afatkuq* witch doctor wandered too far south, stumbled upon her, and worked his hoodoo.

(beat)

And still others make claim that a deformed, one-fanged, boomslang viper went and bit the little papoose - somehow causing a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ABBY (cont'd)  
epinephrine/adrenaline effect...  
That theory's generally held by  
them known as "idiots".

LITTLE GIRL  
What do you think, Miss Abby?

ABBY  
Oh, I got nothing for thinkin'. I  
**know** what happened. I got it first  
hand... But it would horrify you  
all something fierce. 'Sides it's  
bedtime.

Grumble. Grumbles.

ABBY (CONTD)  
Come on, now. Sweet dreams, my  
dears.

Abby again looks O.S. The kids make their way to the tents.

We PAN OVER to INCLUDE the Wolf Tree.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

16      ANIMATED SEQUENCE (1852)      16  
  
version of the Wolf Tree.  
  
BUNDLED BABY is there.  
  
For a FEW final FRAMES, we SEE the eyes of THE PACK  
surrounding her.

HARD OUT.