

Quanah
by
Jonathan Morgan Jenkins

WGA# 1051185

EXT. FORT PARKER, TEXAS - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: MAY 19, 1836, FORT PARKER, TEXAS

EXT. COURTYARD

White SETTLERS perform various chores on a hot summer day. A happy BOY runs across the courtyard into a modest home.

INT. PARKER RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

BENJAMIN PARKER, 10, enters, looks around mischievously, walks to a jar filled with fresh biscuits and attempts to pull one out. His brother, JOHN PARKER, 6, and blue eyed sister, CYNTHIA ANN, 9, watch and chuckle, seated on a day bed. His arm gets stuck and he drops the jar. His mother, LUCY PARKER, enters from the bedroom waving a broom.

LUCY

Benjamin Parker! If I told you
once!

Benjamin runs to the front door. Lucy follows with the broom.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Wait until I tell your father!

EXT. COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

The front door flies open. Benjamin exits and the broom smacks his rear end. His mother exits, shaking her head.

JOHN PARKER, Benjamin's father and GRANDFATHER PARKER are sawing a timber. They stop working as GRANDMOTHER PARKER arrives with fresh water. Benjamin arrives, out of breath. His Grandfather drinks heartily and hugs him.

GRANDFATHER PARKER

What kind of mischief we in today?

GRANDMOTHER PARKER

Wouldn't be raidin' supplies again.
Would ya?

BENJAMIN

(smugly)

It's time to feed the cattle.

JOHN

That's your morning chore.

Exposed, Benjamin starts to leave.

BENJAMIN

Don't worry father. I'll do it.

Grandmother Parker shakes her head. Benjamin playfully runs toward the front gate.

JOHN

(shouting)

Leave the gate open Ben. Be takin' this log out.

GRANDFATHER PARKER

Sure that's a good idea?

JOHN

(confident)

Statehood works. Safety. Security. Haven't seen an Comanche in months.

I/E. FORT PARKER - CONTINUOUS

(crosscut as needed)

Benjamin grabs some feed, opens the gate, peeks out and sees only cattle in near distance. He confidently walks out, leaving the gate open.

He arrives at the cattle and begins to feed them. Soon, he hears a crackling noise and slowly turns around. He is shocked.

He sees ten Comanche Warriors approaching on horseback, one waving a white flag.

A woman peers over the fort fence and gasps. John Parker observes her reaction and runs to the fence.

The Indians approach Benjamin.

COMANCHE LEADER

Young white. Comanche need meat.

Benjamin shields himself behind one of the cattle.

John Parker anxiously observes with Grandfather Parker who turns toward Grandmother Parker.

GRANDFATHER PARKER

Tell Lucy to gather the children and leave. Get a move woman!

She hurries off. John Parker cups his hands.

JOHN

It's ok Ben. Tell our friends to
come here and talk to me.

COMANCHE LEADER

(very upset)
Comanche need meat!

The Comanches inch closer. Benjamin is frozen in fear. The
cattle are startled and flee, knocking Benjamin to the
ground. He gets up, backs up and points at the Comanche.

BENJAMIN

Our meat is not for Comanches!

The enraged Comanche tosses a lance at Benjamin, hitting him
in the chest and killing him instantly.

The fierce warriors quickly ride toward fort.

John Parker looks on in horror and alerts the Settlers.

JOHN

Comanches! Close the gate! Close
the gate!

The Settlers react and scurry about in panic.

The Comanches ride fast and determined, nearing gate.

INT. PARKER RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Grandmother Parker bursts through the door.

GRANDMOTHER PARKER

Savages everywhere. Gather the
children. Head to the river.

Lucy holds her as if it's the last time she will see her.

GRANDMOTHER PARKER (CONT'D)

Don't worry about me. Save the
children.

Lucy gathers the children while Grandmother Parker hurries
out the front door after grabbing a rifle.

INT. COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

While John Parker and others arrive at the gate, attempting to shut it, the Comanches burst through. John Parker tries to fire his gun and is killed with a hatchet to the head.

The Comanches kill settlers without hesitation while ransacking and burning structures.

As feeble Grandfather Parker tries to fire his rifle, a WARRIOR grabs him by the hair, pulls him to ground, scalps him and cuts off his genitals before running a lance through his heart, killing him.

I/E. PARKER RESIDENCE - CONTINUOUS

Lucy is panicked while trying to gather John, Cynthia Ann and a few supplies.

Grandmother Parker shoots and kills a Comanche.

Lucy exits the back door with the children, running toward the river.

A Comanche knocks Grandmother Parker down, strips her naked and runs a lance through her chest, just missing her heart.

He enters the residence, runs to the rear and sees Lucy fleeing.

He returns to his horse and gives chase with two other WARRIORS.

EXT. OPEN FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Lucy, clinging to her children, runs as fast as she can.

Arriving at the river, she sees the Comanches approaching and hides in some bushes near the water.

The Comanches soon locate her and the frightened Children.

The Comanches, with their captives, ride back to the fort and are met by two angry SETTLERS, running and firing their guns.

One Comanche pushes Lucy off this horse. She lands hard on the ground. The Comanches escape with the children.

As the Settlers arrive, Lucy screams, runs, trips and falls while her children cry for their mother. Their wails of anguish join in a horrid chorus that reaches

the heavens.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ABAGAIL MACKENZIE RESIDENCE, RANALD MACKENZIE'S ROOM

SUPERIMPOSE: STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK, WINTER, 1889

On a stormy night, a screaming unshaven man, RANALD MACKENZIE, late 40's, appears older, is dressed in soiled bed clothes and wearing a 19th century Brigadier General army jacket.

He awakes from a nightmare on a disheveled bed.

RANALD MACKENZIE
Company! Ready! Aim! Fire!

He stands up, acting like he's a riding horse and draws an imaginary pistol, aiming and firing randomly.

The bedroom door bursts open. ABAGAIL MACKENZIE, 50's, enters, holding a lighted hurricane gas lamp. A dog, MACK, enters and observes the commotion.

ABAGAIL
Ranald! Stop it. Lay down. Now!

Ranald becomes frightened and cowers in the corner.

RANALD
The Medicine Man! Come to torture
this white man again?

ABAGAIL
I'm Abigail. Your cousin.

RANALD
I was wrong. You're Quanah! I'll
kill you before you kill me.

His countenance changes to evil as he walks toward her.

ABAGAIL
Ranald! Come to your senses!

She defends herself with the lamp, throwing it at him. It hits the ground and starts a fire. Ranald falls back against the wall while she smothers the flames with a blanket.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

She quickly exits the room, bolting the door. Ranald pounds on the door, walls and throws things.

RANALD(O.C.)
 You won't kill me Quanah....
 Company! Ready! Aim! Fire!

Abigail leans against the wall, exhausted. Her maid, CHARLOTTE, arrives and wipes sweat from her forehead.

FADE TO:

INT. ABAGAIL MACKENZIE RESIDENCE - LATER

Hard rain falls as a fire burns in the fireplace. There's a knock on the front door. Charlotte answers as Abigail arrives. DOCTOR ADAMS quickly enters.

DOCTOR ADAMS
 Came as soon as I could. Such
 weather.

Charlotte takes his wet coat, hat and gloves.

DOCTOR ADAMS
 How is the General?

ABAGAIL
 Quiet for now.

I/E. RANALD'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They approach Ranald's room, carefully unlatch door and enter.

Ranald appears very delirious. Doctor Adams checks his pupils and gives him a shot. The Doctor begins to leave and Ranald grabs his arm.

RANALD
 (weak voice)
 Please Doctor, don't go, help me.
 I saw Quanah. The Indian spirits
 want their revenge.

ABAGAIL
 Ranald. The good Doctor does not
 need to hear such nonsense.

Ranald becomes more determined.

RANALD

I know you and General Grant think
I've lost my mind.

Ranald breaks down in tears. He grabs Doctor Adam's lapel
and lifts himself up.

RANALD (CONT'D)

I need a Priest. I must confess my
sins or my soul is doomed.

The Doctor looks to Abigail for an answer. She sits on the
bed, grabbing Ranald's bandaged right hand.

ABAGAIL

I'll do what I can. Now, you rest.

He slumps. Abigail lays his head down. Mack jumps on the
bed and licks his master's face.

Abigail and Doctor Adams exit the room and close the door.

DOCTOR ADAMS

The Progressive Paresis is in its
final stages. Not much time, I'm
afraid.

At the front door, she hands him his coat.

DOCTOR ADAMS (CONT'D)

Send Charlotte if you need me.
Best you find that Priest.

She nods and opens the door as he leaves.

ABAGAIL

Thank you doctor.

She closes the door, leans against the wall and sobs with her
head in her hands.

FADE TO:

INT. NEW YORK TIMES/OFFICE OF CHARLES RANSOM MILLER - THE
NEXT DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: NEW YORK TIMES

The Editor, CHARLES RANSOM MILLER, 50's and son, HOYT MILLER,
18, meet in Charles' office with other STAFF, smoking cigars
and telling off color jokes. Hoyt is out of place, young and
naive. A REPORTER slaps him on the shoulder. Hoyt chokes.

REPORTER

A chip off the old block. The
Editor's apprentice!

All become silent as Charles lights a cigar and hands it to Hoyt. As they observe in anxious anticipation, Hoyt reluctantly takes a puff and chokes. All laugh. Charles sighs and shakes his head. His secretary, MARTHA, 30's, enters, carving a path through the smoke.

MARTHA

A Miss Abigail Mackenzie to see
you. I told her she needed an...

CHARLES

(interrupts)
See her in. Okay boys, party's
over. Back to work.

The noisy bunch begins to file out, including Hoyt.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Not you son.

Abigail enters. Charles ushers her to a comfortable chair.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Such a renewed surprise. How is
General Mackenzie?

ABAGAIL

Not well sir. Doctor says the
Syphilis is eating his brain.

Hoyt looks sick, again.

CHARLES

I see. Sorry to hear. I trust
your presence here means you have
reconsidered my offer?

ABAGAIL

If it is not too late. The world
should know Ranald was a good man.

CHARLES

And that they will. May I
introduce my future reporter and
son, Hoyt. On Winter leave from
Dartmouth, my Alma Mater.

Hoyt walks to her, holds her hand and bows.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
I have personally chosen him to
tell your cousins story.

Hoyt acts very surprised, then, composes himself.

ABAGAIL
No offense sir. He is so young.

HOYT
(smiles)
I would be honored to tell his
story. A proper project for my
degree.

She arises and walks to a window.

ABAGAIL
There is one problem. The
General's memories of the Indian
wars haunt him. The spirits cry
out, plot revenge on his soul.

She gets weak, sits back down and lightly sobs.

ABAGAIL (CONT'D)
He demands a Priest to offer
confession for his soul.

Hoyt offers her a napkin and kneels before her.

HOYT
I understand. I was an alter boy.
He must confess. Afraid I can't be
of help.

CHARLES
Nonsense. The Priest and reporter
can be one!

Charles walks to Hoyt, face to face.

CHARLES (CONT'D)
Right son?

HOYT
(upset)
You are not suggesting I
impersonate a Holy Father!

Abigail performs a rosary.

ABAGAIL
Mercy no Mr. Miller.

Charles paces and preaches.

CHARLES

Son, you have been granted, by God,
the honor of sparing a man's soul
and telling the world of his
greatness. His story of bravery
will be read by thousands. You
will be famous before you graduate.

Hoyt is speechless and stares at Abigail.

ABAGAIL

I trust God will work his will.

Hoyt sits forward and puts his head in his hands.

**To Read the Full Script, contact Jonathan Morgan Jenkins @
skymusic@cox.net Or 949-842-9351**