This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, businesses, places, events, locales, and incidents are either the products of the author’s imagination or used in a fictitious manner. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is purely coincidental.

Amazon edition
COMANCHE

-- television pilot --

Written by Alan Nafzger
Dances with Wolves was originally written to portray the Comanche Indians. The film was changed to portray the Sioux, because of the larger number of Sioux speakers. This television series will be the long awaited story of the “dominate” native tribe, the Comanche.

FADE IN:

EXT. THE COMANCHERIA – LATE AFTERNOON

Six young COMANCHES led by BUFFALO HUMP are engaged in a fight that will be to the death with eight APACHE WARRIORS, distinguishable by their clothing. The APACHE are fleeing west into the setting sun.

Many of the COMANCHE wear buffalo scalps on their head, complete with horns. The COMANCHE men wear their hair long and have it ornamented profusely. The dress of the men consisted of leggings and moccasins, a breech cloth or flap.

Comanche society was based on raiding. These COMANCHE WARRIORS wear some of their stolen booty: stovepipe hats, women’s corsets, etc., giving them an almost circus-like appearance. The effect would have been comic, if they were not so dangerous. In this anticipatory sequence, the COMANCHE are about to run down and kill the APACHE WARRIORS.

COMANCHE do not shave, but instead, they pluck their face clean of its scant growth of beard; and many of these COMANCHE have also pull out their eyebrows.

All the horses have has been running a very long time. The APACHE horses are inferior and are about to break down. Many of the APACHE horses have arrows in them. Some of the APACHE WARRIORS also have arrows in them. They are barely able to remain on their horses. The APACHE horses are about to die.

The COMANCHE peruse firing arrows. When several of the APACHE horses do collapse, the COMANCHE veer off and stop. They watch. They follow Comanche military doctrine and they NEVER press a charge home. Instead they rely on horse archery to defeat the opposition.
We see that the Comanche tactic is extremely well synchronized and orchestrated.

Comanches approach the exhausted APACHE at a gallop, weaving, each warrior apparently taking no orders from BUFFALO HUMP. These magnificent horsemen never form a solid line (like other cavalries), instead they form a swirling, breaking, dissolving and regrouping mass of separate individual riders, making difficult moving targets.

They move into range, launch their arrows and dart out of range before the Apache can return fire.

The whooping riders charge and break off before contact; they are dodging and weaving whilst at the same time circling the enemy, showering them with arrows from all directions.

The COMANCHE also employ a trick of hanging over the far side of their horse by a strap, thus being almost protected from APACHE arrows.

The Comanche WARRIORS used their mounts like a shield. We see Comanche speeding toward the enemy, shooting arrows from beneath their horse's neck and having nothing but a leg hooked over the backbone of his mount. The WARRIORS have a loop of rope braided into his horse's mane. Our Comanche WARRIORS slip the loop over his head and under his outside arm, affording him the freedom to cling to the side of his horse and have both hands free for shooting. The Comanche bows are short and powerful, ideal for use on horseback.

One by one the APACHE succumb. NONE of the COMANCHE are harmed. And only one COMANCHE horse is wounded. The bodies of the dead lie in a "last stand" pile.

The APACHE have shown unflinching courage but we quickly appreciate the COMANCHE fighting skills and horsemanship, speed of thought, almost dodging the APACHE arrows and known exactly their range.

We see that the last APACHE is already badly wounded, with blood streaming from a wound in his chest. BUFFALO HUMP concentrates on him for a moment, riding, turning, firing arrows, twisting away so the APACHE wastes his diminishing
energy and arrows. Finally the APACHE stumbles to his knees and BUFFALO HUMP fires a second arrow into his chest.

BUFFALO HUMP and the others dismount and surround the last APACHE as he dies.

BUFFALO HUMP
Welcome to the Comancheria.

Comancheria (Numanʉ Sookobitʉ) means literally the “Comanche Land”.

BUFFALO HUMP is suddenly weary of death; he trudges a few yards and surveys the APACHE laying dead on the battle field. In the gathering gloom of dusk an eerie silence has fallen. Eight bodies, arrowed and speared lie on the ground. And there is a huge flock of crows and ravens flutter about ready and feast upon the corpses.

The COMANCHES ride away from the dusk (East). BUFFALO HUMP turns around and looks back at the battlefield and the dead APACHE.

There is not one living human thing moving over that field of death - except a solitary figure. It is BIG CANNIBAL OWL (Pia Mupitsi). A TALL WOMAN with a long buffalo skin cloak and a wide-brimmed hat, holding a lance, she moves slowly between the bodies of the APACHE dead, seeming to note and inspect each one. She is a spectral figure, strange, disturbing, powerful, with ravens sometimes perching upon her shoulders... and BUFFALO HUMP watches her like one transfigured, like one who has come face to face with a god.

BIG CANNIBAL OWL pauses by one of the APACHE dead and points him out with his spear. At that moment the air around appears to glisten and two or three almost semi-transparent, almost naked YOUNG FEMALE HELPERS appear and gather the slain warrior into their arms. In great brightness the young women lift into the humid air... and vanish.

BIG CANNIBAL OWL is something similar to the grim reaper in our Anglo culture.

BUFFALO HUMP watches this phenomenon in silent awe, then looks over again at the tall woman. For a brief moment the
tall woman lifts her head, revealing her face beneath the wide-brimmed hat.

The face is indescribable - except for its owl like eyes, which stare back at BUFFALO HUMP with a pitiless and terrible intensity. And then she is gone, as if she had never been there. She leaves BUFFALO HUMP to survey the darkening mysterious scene.

EXT. CAMP ON THE COLORADO RIVER - MORNING

The Penateka (Honey Eaters) are camped on the Colorado River. BUFFALO HUMP is sitting outside of a teepee watching TWO WARRIORS breaking a wild horse.

The WARRIORS have the horse exhausted and choked down with a rope around his neck. Of course, catching the wild horses is one thing. Training them is another matter and involves a great deal of physical effort and determination. Choking a horse is not a matter to be taken lightly.

To break the strong-willed wild horses means establishing dominance over the animal. The two Comanche warrior have choked the wild horse into exhaustion and have pull it to the ground. They fasten a pair of hobbles on the animal's two forefeet. One WARRIOR lays over the horses body to prevent it from rising. The lasso around the neck of the horse is loosened and the horse is allowed to breath. The other WARRIOR asserts his dominance over the animal by blowing their breath into the horse's nostrils.

INT. TEEPEE - MORNING

The buffalo hide teepee is dark and is lit by tallow candles. From outside comes the dull rumble of summer thunder. Somewhere in the darkness a WOMAN is breathing heavily and groaning. We hear the sound of other WOMEN’S VOICES, low and sibilant, almost chanting.

Outside, BUFFALO HUMP is anxious and restless; he crosses the space and looks into the chamber where his wife, SIGHT OF DAY, lies upon their bed giving birth. She is surrounded by three or four OLDER WOMEN, one of them older.
MEDICINE WOMAN
What do you want?

BUFFALO HUMP
Isn’t it here yet?

The OLDER WOMAN doesn’t bother to respond and places her hands again on SIGHT OF DAY’s swollen stomach and resumes her low, strange chant.

One of the other MID-WIVES speaks more kindly.

MID-WIFE
Not yet, Buffalo Hump. Go away and do something useful.

Outside the storm breaks apart, the thunder leaves and rain disappears in the distance. The wild horse is up and seems to be broken. The WARRIORS are congratulating each other and laughing.

EXT. CAMP ON THE COLORADO – MORNING

LEANING COYOTE (Buffalo Hump’s first son) is naked as the air. Known throughout the Comanche nation, the boy comes running up from the muddy Colorado holding a big snapping turtle by the tail. LEANING COYOTE is a particularly energetic young boy; many of the women and girls clear out when they see him coming with the turtle. They know he might use the turtle as some kind of weapon.

BUFFALO HUMP doesn’t leave. He waits for his son to arrive. A WARRIOR friend that has been waiting for the baby, WOODEN LANCE, begins to leave also.

WOODEN LANCE
That boy acts like he might set that turtle on me.

WOODEN LANCE seems to be hoping that BUFFALO HUMP will issue an order or something. BUFFALO HUMP chuckles and would never want to break the spirit of his son.

WOODEN LANCE
(moving to a safe distance)
Maybe he means to cook it?
BUFFALO HUMP
I've never seen a boy that young bold enough to snatch a turtle right out of the river.

LEANING COYOTE
I didn’t didn't snatch this turtle out of the river. I saw this turtle sleeping on a rock. I just snuck up on it and picked it off that rock.

WOODEN LANCE
(walking backwards away)
Look at it snap at him. Now he's got it mad!

Turns out that LEANING COYOTE only wants to show his father the trophy. The turtle’s jaws are opening and closing in a mad and mechanical rhythm.

But the boy notices that WOODEN LANCE is afraid of the turtle. This gives him the idea to swing his arm a time or two and heave the big turtle in the general direction of a bunch of young Warriors – the boys were playing a game in the dirt and laughing at the losers. They scattered like quail when they see the turtle sailing through the air. It turns over twice and lands on its back, right in the center of their game.

WOODEN LANCE gestures that he tried to warn him and perhaps that he expects the boy to be punished. BUFFALO HUMP only laughs.

INT. TEEPEE – MORNING

SIGHT OF DAY is still struggling to give birth.

EXT. NEAR THE COOKING FIRE – MORNING

LEANING COYOTE is squatted down by the turtle and watched it wiggle, a happy expression on his broad face. BUFFALO HUMP has a hatchet in one hand and a small knife in the other. He hands the tools to his son.
After a few attempts, LEANING COYOTE caught the turtle right by the head, held its jaws shut with his fingers, and slashed its neck with the knife. Slowly almost the whole camp comes watch, even WOODEN LANCE moves nearer. Several of the WARRIORS have traveled the Comancheria all their lives. They have raided far into Mexico and fought Apache in New Mexico. They considered themselves to be experienced men, but none of them had ever seen a small boy decapitate a snapping turtle before.

WOODEN LANCE
The turtle's blood is green.

A kind of green ooze dripped out of the wound LEANING COYOTE had made. All the Comanche gathered around “Ooh” and “Aah” about every move. LEANING COYOTE finds the turtle's neck difficult to cut. He gives the turtle's head two or three twists, hoping it would snap off like a chicken's would have, but the turtle's neck merely kinked, like a thick strong rope. WOODEN LANCE is leading the “Oohs” and “Aahs”.

When the turtle's head finally comes off, the group cheers. LEANING COYOTE hold it up showing the crowd that the turtle's jaw is still opening and closing. They comment in awe. LEANING COYOTE casually pitches it in the direction of WOODEN LANCE, who jumps up as if he'd thrown him a live rattler.

MEDICINE WOMAN V.O.
(to Buffalo Hump)
Come and see.

BUFFALO HUMP hurries back to the teepee.

INT. TEEPEE - MORNING

His wife’s legs are spread wide open and something amazing is emerging between them - a head, with a halo of dark hair. The old woman continues her sing-song chant and the younger women help with the birth, one of the women is holding the baby’s head as the rest of its body glide out in an sudden rush of blood and afterbirth... and BUFFALO HUMP gasps at the marvel of it. He gawks at the bloody bundle even as they cut the chord and begin to wash the new baby.
BUFFALO HUMP
(to the mid-wives)
What is it?

SIGHT OF DAY
(with a laugh)
It’s a boy.

BUFFALO HUMP
(to Sight of Day)
How do you know? You didn’t look.

SIGHT OF DAY
What are you talking about? Didn’t I promise you another son?

BUFFALO HUMP looks at the MEDICINE WOMAN.

BUFFALO HUMP
Is it a boy?

MEDICINE WOMAN
Look for yourself.

BUFFALO HUMP looks. Satisfies himself.

SIGHT OF DAY
Give him here. I have enough milk for a herd of boys.

The baby is given to her, where it suckles.

EXT. CAMP ON THE COLORADO – AFTERNOON

Later, BUFFALO HUMP emerges from the teepee carrying the baby, wrapped in a blanket. The storm has passed and the sun is bright. The teepee is one of several on the red sand beach of the river. It’s a vision of stillness and utter tranquility. The rocky slopes of the canyon drop down sheer to the sand, and above them the bare rocks are bathed in sunlight. The whole landscape has a strange, magical luminosity - a heightened, almost unnatural southwestern beauty.

BUFFALO HUMP takes his son to the water’s edge and holds him out in his arms, like an offering.
We move in CLOSE on the baby’s face - then the camera tilts up towards the rock face cliffs.

And suddenly the camp erupts with activity. A lookout on the top of the canyon has signaled. BUFFALO HUMP runs with the baby to the teepee. A woman runs to meet him. He hands her the baby and BUFFALO HUMP runs for his lance and horse.

All the Warriors leave the camp on horseback in a flash. Even little LEANING COYOTE grabs a bow and a small fist full of arrows. We see him crouching behind a bolder, waiting, with his weapon ready.

Time passes. Everything is perfectly still and quiet. LEANING COYOTE creeps slowly over to the fire. There is a rock and the turtle meat is sizzling on a smooth stone laid over the fire. He takes his bow and arrow; it is at ready. He looks around the canyon. He takes tip of the arrow and removes the turtle meat from the fire. He takes the meat in a basket to his mother in the teepee.

Suddenly, as he leaves the teepee, we hear the faint sounds of battle. The sound bounces off the wall of the canyon - war yells, human screams and horses running at a frantic pace. LEANING COYOTE looks up for a moment but then returns with his weapon behind the bolder.

**INT. TEEPEE - NIGHT**

Summer. The stars and moon glow through the smoke hole in the teepee. We are close again on the baby’s face... as he sleeps in the crook of BUFFALO HUMP’S arm. BUFFALO HUMP is awake, staring up into the darkness and the play of shadows across the teepee, a look of profound awe upon his face.

**EXT. OUTSIDE THE TEEPEE - DAY**

A rattlesnake slithers near the baby who is wrapped up in a blanket on the ground. LARGE BLOSSOM sees the snake but there is no time for help to arrive. Without hesitation, she picks up a very large and heavy rock. She runs very near the snake and throws the rock upon the snake. SIGHT OF DAY returns, just in time to see the incident.
On horseback BUFFALO HUMP has seen, from a distance, his daughter pick up the large stone and throw it down. He returns to the teepee on a gallop. When he arrives there is nothing but a still shaking rattle peaking out from under a stone.

EXT. CAMP NEAR THE CLEAR FRIO RIVER - DAY

Now everything is in the fierce grip of the hottest summer. Dry winds blast across the plains, heaping the dust into dark grayish-brown, not a single cloud, and the distant mountains are thick with a grayish-brown haze. There is so much soil in the air, even at mid-day the sky is clearly effected.

But through this haze and desolation a solitary FIGURE can be seen, a black smudge against the gray, a lone Comanche, wearing almost nothing, held up be the wind. We get the impression that the FIGURE has been on a long journey. Several WARRIORS gather but the threat quickly disappears into curiosity.

As the FIGURE comes neared to the camp, we see the real attraction is the horse. It is a beautiful Arabian horse.

The WARRIORS look at the Arabian and then at their mixed breed mustangs. They look back and forth between the two types of horse. To the Comanche just be possession of the horse is be venerated.

EXT. CAMP - DAY

Later, SIGHT OF DAY rides horses with her two CHILDREN. Her son LEANING COYOTE is about ten and daughter LARGE BLOSSOM about eleven years old. BUFFALO HUMP appears, gestures to her.

BUFFALO HUMP

Come.

BUFFALO HUMP leads SIGHT OF DAY into the teepee.

INT. TEEPEE - DAY
BUFFALO HUMP
Here is the man I told you of.

He indicates the figure sitting beside the fire: a weak OLD YAMPARIKA WARRIOR of uncertain age, his wrinkled face heavily lined, his hair and both long and tangled, as if his journey has been long and grueling.

SIGHT OF DAY
Welcome, stranger, to our house.

The strange man bows a little. SIGHT OF DAY gives him some buffalo jerky and a cup of water. The stranger empties the cup.

SIGHT OF DAY
Eat. We have plenty.

The stranger nods again, and sits, BUFFALO HUMP and SIGHT OF DAY doing likewise.

BUFFALO HUMP
This man has raided deep into the south, to a large Mexican city. He has brought back a tremendous horse.

This is clearly a shock to SIGHT OF DAY. She stares at the man.

SIGHT OF DAY
Is it true?

Once more the stranger nods, but does not reply. SIGHT OF DAY suddenly realizes that he is glancing towards the buffalo jerky, and she quickly gives him more.

And once more he eats the jerky, then belches, and wipes his hand over his mouth.

OLD YAMPARIKA WARRIOR
There are many such horses.

SIGHT OF DAY
What happened to you? Where did you get to?
In the teepee doorway, we see LEANING COYOTE and LARGE BLOSSOM peeking into the room, and listening.

OLD YAMPARIKA WARRIOR
We rode South to the rock formation which looks like a woman. And then, when we were along the mountains, we turned due south. And I was frightened.

OLD YAMPARIKA WARRIOR
After 16 nights we saw a great city. Someone said it was a place called Mexico City, for a warrior in our part had been there before. But I don’t know if it’s true. I was only told that in this land there was great horses. We found a big house there, and took some things horses from it.

From his rolled up blanket he retrieves an object, a small but very beautiful crucifix.

OLD YAMPARIKA WARRIOR
In the South, they worship a strange god called Jesus Christ. They say he died in a tree.

BUFFALO HUMP
He came back to life.

SIGHT OF DAY examines the crucifix. But laughs a the resurrection.

Once more the OLD YAMPARIKA WARRIOR looks at the buffalo jerky, and once more SIGHT OF DAY give him more.

Outside the sun blasts against the teepee.

BUFFALO HUMP takes SIGHT OF DAY outside and they look at the Spanish horse. SIGHT OF DAY lights up with a big smile. She wants a herd of such horses.

SIGHT OF DAY
What happened to the men you traveled with.
OLD YAMPARIKA WARRIOR
They don’t give them away you know.

BUFFALO HUMP
Nothing ventured, nothing gained?

OLD YAMPARIKA WARRIOR
True.

SIGHT OF DAY
Stay here for on moon. Become fat again. Let your horse run with our herd. Tell us some more about the south.

OLD YAMPARIKA WARRIOR
(to Buffalo Hump)
Really?

BUFFALO HUMP
Yes, of course?

The OLD YAMPARIKA WARRIOR smiles and is happy about the arrangement.

EXT. CAMP NEAR THE NUECES RIVER - DAY

SITE OF DAY has her infant strapped her back while she rides. Other children, barely able to walk, are tied onto their mother's horse. Boys and girls are being taught to ride without a saddle. The girls ride astride - with a leg on either side of the horse.

LEANING COYOTE has stopped using a pony and he has been given an older gentle mare.

He complains to his father.

LEANING COYOTE
I want a different horse.

He points to a large male horse.

BUFFALO HUMP
Now go pick up the bag.
There is a leather saddlebag a hundred yards out on the prairie. It might have been seized in a raid or discarded by whites. It appears to be filled with a few rocks.

This is a daily drill. LEANING COYOTE is expected to pick up the saddlebag off the ground while riding his mount at full speed. He takes the mare and does this successfully and brings it to his father. Heavier rocks are put in the saddlebag and it is placed on the ground again. This time LEANING COYOTE rides at the object full blast, when he tries to pick it up he makes several strides with it, but the weight pulls him off the horse and he hits and rolls on the ground. A puff of dust comes up from the impact. The boy is okay, but his feelings are hurt.

LEANING COYOTE
I need a different horse. No Comanche warrior rides a mare.

BUFFALO HUMP says nothing.

SIGHT OF DAY
You aren’t a warrior.

BUFFALO HUMP
When you can pick up twice that weight, you can have a male horse.

LEANING COYOTE is angry.

LEANING COYOTE
Why?

BUFFALO HUMP
This ability is of great importance.

LEANING COYOTE
Why?

BUFFALO HUMP
A Comanche’s a sacred duty is to rescue any fallen warrior and not leave their body behind.

LEANING COYOTE
Why?
BUFFALO HUMP
So they are not mutilated and desecrated by the enemy.

BUFFALO HUMP
So you are trained to perform this duty.

SIGHT OF DAY
Do we not do this every day?

LEANING COYOTE
Yes.

SIGHT OF DAY
How long have we done this, everyday?

LEANING COYOTE
Since I can remember.

SIGHT OF DAY
Well, there you have it.

INT. OVERLOOK OF THE COMANCHERIA - DUSK

Below is the clan’s large herd of horses. It is not unusual for a single Comanche to own more than 250 horses, and a particularly prominent leader might own as many as 1,000.

SIGHT OF DAY
Don’t you have enough horses?

BUFFALO HUMP
We can break them and sell them in the north. If they like the Spanish horse of the OLD YAMPARIKA WARRIOR then they will bring a nice price.

SIGHT OF DAY
The desire for horses, and the use of theft to obtain them, will cause warfare. Our enemies will only come to steal them.
BUFFALO HUMP
If they come here and survive, they will walk home.

SIGHT OF DAY
Let the others go.

BUFFALO HUMP
I am a talented horse thief. Wooden Lance is also very sly.

SIGHT OF DAY
It is too dangerous. The OLD YAMPARIKA WARRIOR he is the only one to return from his adventure.

BUFFALO HUMP
He is old; maybe they were all old.

SIGHT OF DAY
You might not become old. This is what I’m concerned about.

BUFFALO HUMP
Well, it is also dangerous to raid to the nearer peoples. When we steal from New Mexico and the Spanish settlements in Texas it isn’t easy and they have nothing really worth stealing.

SIGHT OF DAY
So if you take a risk you want a nice reward?

BUFFALO HUMP
We would attack entire communities and drive the horses away with us.

SIGHT OF DAY
I would like a horse like the OLD YAMPARIKA WARRIOR. Can you bring me back such a mare?

BUFFALO HUMP smiles and takes this as a sign of her approval.
BUFFALO HUMP
I will share with my family and friends and I will steal from strangers. It is the Comanche way.

INT. TEEPEE – DAY

SIGHT OF DAY, carrying some rubbish inside, finds BUFFALO HUMP putting a thick coat over the shoulders of his son, LEANING COYOTE, now eleven years old, and a handsome, strong-looking youth. SIGHT OF DAY stops and looks at them.

SIGHT OF DAY
What are you two doing?

BUFFALO HUMP
I’m taking LEANING COYOTE to the pau-wau.

SIGHT OF DAY
Not yet. He’s not old enough.

BUFFALO HUMP
He’s twelve years old.

SIGHT OF DAY
Take him next year. Next year is soon enough.

BUFFALO HUMP smiles at her.

BUFFALO HUMP
He’ll need a knife.

INT. TEEPEE – NIGHT

BUFFALO HUMP and SIGHT OF DAY in bed together, cradled close after lovemaking. She stares into his eyes.

SIGHT OF DAY
Don’t sleep with too many women.
BUFFALO HUMP
Are you crazy? I won’t sleep with any of them. I don’t want to. I can do without it for a week.

SIGHT OF DAY
Is that another way of saying you love me?

She teases him.

BUFFALO HUMP
I always dream of you. Last night I dreamt you were feeding me a buffalo heart.

SIGHT OF DAY
What does that mean?

BUFFALO HUMP
It means you were giving me your heart.

And they close in, and kiss passionately.

SIGHT OF DAY
I love you so much I could feed you the whole sky.

EXT. CAMP - DAY

Father and son are ready to depart on their small, tough horses. WOODEN LANCE and the OLD YAMPAARIKA WARRIOR are there also ready to depart. They have assembled several horses to trade at their destination.

Their clothing is simple. The four men wear a leather belt with a breechcloth—a long piece of buckskin that was brought up between the legs and looped over and under the belt at the front and back. They have loose-fitting deerskin leggings. Moccasins have soles made from thick, tough buffalo hide with soft deerskin uppers. The men wear nothing on the upper body.

SIGHT OF DAY and LARGE BLOSSOM bring out some food for the journey, putting it into their saddle-bags.
LEANING COYOTE
Goodbye, big sister.

LARGE BLOSSOM
Goodbye, little brother. Don’t get married.

SIGHT OF DAY
(to Leaning Coyote)
Wait. I have something for you.

She goes to a blanket and pulls it up. Under it there is a leather saddle. The takes is up and brings it to her son.

SIGHT OF DAY
There. Now everyone will know you are a man on your way to the pow-wow.

LEANING COYOTE can’t help kissing her. BUFFALO HUMP looks at his wife. It is a surprise to him also.

BUFFALO HUMP
(chuckling)
I didn’t know.
(chuckling)
You are sometimes a very sneaky wife.

SIGHT OF DAY
Look after your son - and when you come back, just tell me the truth. I don’t care about anything else.

And then she and her daughter watch BUFFALO HUMP and LEANING COYOTE set off with the two WARRIORS up the rough trail towards the north, accompanied by one of the travois dogs. All four men are fully armed - lance, a bow and knife. and LEANING COYOTE with his hunting knife. LEANING COYOTE looks back once, and raises his arm in farewell, and then they are swallowed up into the mesquite trees.

EXT. TRACK – DAY

The four men ride slowly on together over the prairie, through the scrub and rock. There is no-one else in sight, no farms or Indian dwellings, for the earth here is clearly
unfit for agriculture or plowing. Is even too barren for buffalo.

There are signs of spring everywhere, however, the trees a brighter green, the gorse in flower.

LEANING COYOTE
What will happen after all the trading?

BUFFALO HUMP
As usual, we will with some criminal offences that have happened since the last meeting.
(pause)
And then everyone will discuss the summer raids.

LEANING COYOTE
Where will you go?

There’s a long beat. BUFFALO HUMP glances at his son, then away again, with a shrug.

BUFFALO HUMP
It’s not up to me. We will all decide.
I wish it was not so... but that is the law.

But LEANING COYOTE can see that the question has affected his father’s mood. They splash through a small muddy stream.

BUFFALO HUMP
All the ice has gone. Spring is here again, thanks to Frey.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

They have camped in the open. A fire is burning and they have cooked some small animal over it and eaten it. The dog gnaws at the bones.

LEANING COYOTE
There’s something I want to ask you.
BUFFALO HUMP
Then ask me.

LEANING COYOTE
How did you meet mother?

BUFFALO HUMP smiles.

BUFFALO HUMP
Hasn’t she ever told you?

LEANING COYOTE
Of course. But I want to know if your story is the same as hers.

A beat.

BUFFALO HUMP
Well, it occurred when a Apache chieftain invaded our part of the Comancheria. I was too young and they would not let me go off to fight him. But some of his men showed up at our camp, SIGHT OF DAY lead many of the girls and women who lances and dressed up like men and mounted their horses as to give chase. SIGHT THE DAY was amongst them. They rode away thinking there were many men chasing them.

BUFFALO HUMP
From a distance they could not tell they were women?

BUFFALO HUMP
It was a ruse.

LEANING COYOTE
That is a funny story?

BUFFALO HUMP
I was impressed by her courage and courted her from afar.

LEANING COYOTE
How far is that?
BUFFALO HUMP
Near enough. Hush. Listen. After a while, I went to confess my love for her – but when I arrived I was set upon by a deer and an enormous cougar who guarded her home. I killed the deer with my spear and managed to strangle the cat with my bare hands.
(pause)
And that’s the way I gained her hand in marriage.
(glances at his son)
What did she tell you?

LEANING COYOTE smiles, then lies down, pulls the blanket over himself.

BUFFALO HUMP
Did she tell you the same story?

A long beat.

LEANING COYOTE
Just that you choked the cougar.
Nothing about women chasing off Apache.

And they both close their eyes, both still smiling.

EXT. PAU-WAU SITE NEAR WICHITA MOUNTAINS – DAY

The men arrive on horseback. Several WARRIORS approach the OLD YAMPARIKA WARRIOR.

Only Comanche and a few Wichita are attending and no women are allowed to actively participate. There are a few women but they stay in teepees a healthy distance.

We see the pau-wau ceremonies celebrating the life and death circle with tribal drums, dancing, food, chanting and traditional healing rituals. Many of the Comanches are telling stories and acting out ancient stories. They have been handed down through the generations in this manner. It is a cultural mechanism, which keeps their history alive.

Secondarily, there is a healing ceremony conducted by the spiritual or religious leaders of the various bands.
There is a ceremony to celebrate a successful hunt and to thank the spirits for a bountiful harvest.

But for our characters, this pau-wau is primarily to spiritually prepare warriors for an impending battle.

There are camels, many horses to be traded, prepared food, a broom maker, a man using a spinning wheel and even a knife maker are evident as BUFFALO HUMP and LEANING COYOTE, ride into the assembly. LEANING COYOTE is now proudly riding a gelding horse.

The camels are in the scene to illustrate a little known historical fact that the Texas government brought 75 camels to Texas in the late 1830s to help Americans settle the West. Several of them were stolen and these animals are represented here.

At first glance this is a meeting of friends and there is much camaraderie, but soon that stage of the pow-wow is over. It becomes a marketplace.

Primarily there are weapons. Coup Sticks, Hide shields, lances, Bows and Arrows, a macuahuitl (long knife or short sword), tomahawk, stone club.

There are Comanche from all parts of the southwest. They are examining pelts, furs, ropes and buffalo and deer skins for trade. The Wichitas are examining the handful of SLAVES for trade, most of Spanish or Anglo appearance (but some are Apache). The Wichita are checking their teeth, hair and nails, as if they were horses.

There is a lot of good-humored banter and loud haggling. All of this LEANING COYOTE has clearly seen before, and is not fazed by it.

There are French goods there also. Through an alliance with the Wichitas, the Comanches traded “horses, mules, and slaves for guns and metalware, corn, beans, squash, and fruit,” and, in turn, the Wichitas “exported Comanche horses, mules, and products of the hunt.”

Note that this trading with the Wichita, that connected the Comanche to the flow of French goods, further helped undermine the position of the Spanish officials and Spanish
traders in the borderlands. It will lead to a great deal of conflict in the future of this TV series.

BUFFALO HUMP trades a horse for some metal arrow tips. Evidently there is a white blacksmith somewhere who was mass producing them and they have found their way to western Oklahoma and the powwow.

He trades a second horse for some French trade goods, a brush, a comb, a mirror and some knives. He trades an arrow straightener (made from an antler) for a mortar and pestle.

BUFFALO HUMP finds men with good productive wives and trades with their husbands. He is buying things for SIGHT OF DAY. He trades for borers (small pieces of flint made into tools for piercing holes). He obtains a drill was an oblong tool made of flaked stone and used in drilling holes in hide, wood or leather. He trades for small sewing needles made of bone with punched eyeholes. He obtains a microblade - a long, narrow blade, about 2 inches long.

BUFFALO HUMP sees the pipes but passes them by.

WOOD LANCE
What is your pipe made of? I’ve never seen such a material.

NORTHERN COMANCHE WARRIOR
Catlinite.
(pause)
From the Sioux.

WOODEN LANCE trades for a pipe.

But then a large group of YOUNG WARRIORS, clearly out on a joy ride, come walking through the gathering, shouting out insults to the traders and laughing, grabbing at the pelts and goods, creating a disturbance. The traders reclaim their goods and drive them away with sticks, angrily. BUFFALO HUMP watches the incident with a heavy heart.

LEANING COYOTE
Who are they?
BUFFALO HUMP
Young men with nothing better to do. It’s a real problem. There seem to be more and more of them every year. And it’s a great power for us. Those young men are our future. Someone should harness their strength and their anger.

LEANING COYOTE
Anger?

BUFFALO HUMP
In battle.
They move on.

Then a great bear of a man steps out before their horses, grabbing the bridles and laughing.

BEAR MAN
Buffalo Hump!

BUFFALO HUMP and LEANING COYOTE dismount. BUFFALO HUMP embraces him.

BEAR MAN
Do my eyes deceive me? Is this your son? How he’s grown!

BUFFALO HUMP
Leaning Coyote, this is your uncle Bear Man. We graze sail in the same herd.

LEANING COYOTE
Uncle.

BEAR MAN looks him up and down.

BEAR MAN
So you’re here for the pow-wow? You’re a real man now. Look at your saddle!

LEANING COYOTE
It is amazing work. My mother made it as a surprise.
BEAR MAN
(to Buffalo Hump)
Yes, your mother is full of surprises.

Evidently BEAR MAN and BUFFALO HUMP once competed for SIGHT OF DAY’s affection. While BEAR MAN had hopes, BUFFALO HUMP had won.

INT. POW-WOW CAMP FIRE - EVENING

We see a large fire and the dance has just about played out. The mean sit around and tell stories. BEAR MAN watches LEANING COYOTE dance and laughs.

BEAR MAN
You won’t get married like that.

LEANING COYOTE smiles uneasily, then tips back the horn and drinks deeply.

BEAR MAN
Are you ready for a woman? There are some good-looking women in teepees over there. And they’re free.

BUFFALO HUMP
Of course he isn’t. He can’t even grow a beard.

BEAR MAN laughs again, empties his horn, and holds it out to be refilled by a WOMAN with a jug. He stares at her wolfishly.

BEAR MAN
So - who’s raid do you want to join this year?

BUFFALO HUMP
I have an idea of my own.

BEAR MAN
Really?

A beat. He glances round, lowers his voice.
BUFFALO HUMP
Far to the south.

BEAR MAN
Good those bastards we have been raiding are as poor as we are. What do they have left to give us?

BUFFALO HUMP
Only themselves.

BUFFALO HUMP
We should go south. I’ve heard such tales, Bear Man. Great towns, cities and treasures; hordes of gold and silver. And guarded by a god that is dead.

BEAR MAN
I’ve heard those stories too. But what does it mean? We can’t travel across that vast space.

A beat. BUFFALO HUMP glances carefully at LEANING COYOTE, who has fallen asleep. He looks at the OLD YAMPARIKA WARRIOR who is staring into the fire. BUFFALO HUMP lowers his voice again.

BUFFALO HUMP
We can. I know it can be done. I know someone who has done it.

BEAR MAN looks at him. Then BUFFALO HUMP picks up his son.

BEAR MAN
Where are you going?

BUFFALO HUMP
To sleep.

BEAR MAN
I don’t understand you, BUFFALO HUMP, everyone else comes here to visit good friends and family and to fuck beautiful women.

BUFFALO HUMP smiles.
BUFFALO HUMP
I’ll see tomorrow for all the politics.

He carries his son away.

INT. BUFFALO HUMP’S HOUSE – NIGHT

Outside, a warm wind whips across the southern desert of Texas. SIGHT OF DAY settles her daughter to sleep, telling her a story.

SIGHT OF DAY
Coyote was going along one day, feeling very hungry, when he met up with Skunk. "Hello, brother," Coyote greeted him. "You look hungry and so am I. If I lead the way, will you join me in a trick to get something to eat?"

(beat)
"I like tricks and I am hungry. I will do whatever you propose," said Skunk.

(beat)
"A prairie dog village is just over that hill. You go over there and lie down and play dead. I'll come along later and say to the prairie dogs, 'Come, let us have a dance over the body of our dead enemy.' "

LARGE BLOSSOM is listing intently.

SIGHT OF DAY
Skunk wondered how they would ever get anything to eat by playing dead and dancing. "Why should I do this?" he asked.

(beat)
"Go on," Coyote said. "Puff yourself up and play dead."

(beat)
Skunk went on to the prairie dog village and pretended to be dead. After a while Coyote came along and saw several prairie dogs playing outside
their holes. They were keeping a distance between themselves and Skunk.

(beat)

"Oh, look," cried Coyote, "our enemy lies dead before us. Come, we will have a dance to celebrate. Let everyone come out and then stop up the burrow holes."

(beat)
The foolish prairie dogs did as he told them. "Now," said Coyote, "let us all stand in a big circle and dance with our eyes closed. If anyone opens his eyes to look, he will turn into something bad."

LARGE BLOSSOM, warm beneath a bear skin, smiles sleepily.
She yawns.

LARGE BLOSSOM
Go on. Please finish.

SIGHT OF DAY
As soon as the prairie dogs began dancing with their eyes closed, Coyote killed one of them. "Well, now," he called out, "let's all open our eyes." The prairie dogs did so, and were surprised to see one lying dead. "Oh, dear," said Coyote, "look at this poor fellow. He opened his eyes too early and died. Now, all of you, close your eyes and dance again. Don't look, or you too will die."

(beat)
They began to dance once more, and one by one Coyote drew them out of the dance circle and killed them. At last, one of the prairie dogs became suspicious and opened his eyes...

SIGHT OF DAY notices that LARGE BLOSSOM has gone to sleep and doesn't finish the story.

EXT. PAU-WAUS SITE NEAR WICHITA MOUNTAINS - DAY
This is the day of the meeting reserved for politics and advertising for raiders.

MONTAGE BEGINS

There are speakers. Each has a different plan to lead various raids.

SPEAKER #1
Austin!

SPEAKER #2
Mescalero!

SPEAKER #3
Fort Worth!

SPEAKER #4
Ute!

SPEAKER #5
Jicarilla!

END MONTAGE

SPEAKER #6 is a young WARRIOR. He is very brave and anxious to get his career started, or perhaps he is not “right” in the head. He is inexperienced and simply shouts out the name of the farthest and more ambitious city he knows.

SPEAKER #6
Washington D.C.

This makes the WARRIORS drunk with laughter. The young WARRIORS, the same age as SPEAKER #6, they can’t understand what is so funny. SPEAKER #6 quickly sits without explaining his plan.

When the laughter dies down, BUFFALO HUMP stands.

BUFFALO HUMP
Mexico City!

Again there is laughter. But BUFFALO HUMP is un-phased. He simply stands stone faced. WOODEN LANCE and BEAR MAN look worried. BUFFALO HUMP waits... there is a long prolonged
pause. BUFFALO HUMP has a very serious look on his face and refuses to sit down. The other WARRIORS soon quiet.

BUFFALO HUMP
I have really nothing to say but to show you.

BUFFALO HUMP gestures and the OLD YAMPARIKA WARRIOR rides up on the Spanish Arabian. There is a gasp and then chatter among the warriors.

WARRIOR #1
It is only one horse.

BUFFALO HUMP
But there are many.

WARRIOR #2
Not so many to warrant such a journey.

BUFFALO HUMP
It isn’t the quantity we will return with. It is the quality.

WARRIOR #3
This is a nice horse but I would rather have 100 of our horses.

BUFFALO HUMP
How would you like 100 horses like this?

WARRIOR #1
This is a story. A myth.

BUFFALO HUMP
Raise your hand if you don’t know how a colt is made!

The WARRIORS are silent and listening to the arguments.

BUFFALO HUMP
Yes, judging from the noises from the teepees last night, this is one thing that all Comanche understand!
BUFFALO HUMP
Isn’t it true that the colts grow up to resemble the stallion and mare?

The WARRIORS are silent and listening to the arguments.

BUFFALO HUMP
And their traits are derived equally from both?

The WARRIORS are silent and listening to the arguments.

BUFFALO HUMP
Who can argue with the influence of this method of life?

The WARRIORS are silent. BUFFALO HUMP motions for LEANING COYOTE to come stand beside him. They are remarkably similar.

BUFFALO HUMP
Look at your sons and daughter. Consider the way they look and act. This is the force of life and renewing generations.

The WARRIORS begin to nod in agreement.

BUFFALO HUMP
And on the San Saba River, there waits for me a wife and a daughter that strongly resembles her in looks and bravery also.

The WARRIORS become enthusiastic. BUFFALO HUMP has won them over. It appears from their reaction that they will join him on the raid and that BUFFALO HUMP will be the leader.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Comanche leadership was never permanent or hereditary. It was very temporary and based on argumentation and merit.

EXT. POW-WOW – VERY LATE AT NIGHT

BUFFALO HUMP leads his sleepy son by the hand through the dark settlement. LEANING COYOTE trips over something, yowls. Dogs bark.
LEANING COYOTE
Where are we going now?

BUFFALO HUMP
Just to a place. Just to see someone.

LEANING COYOTE
What place? To see who?
(beat)
I’m so tired.

BUFFALO HUMP sees a lamp set outside a teepee.
There are also

BUFFALO HUMP
Here it is. Wake up.

He finds the door open, pushes his son inside, follows.

INT. TEEPEE - VERY LATE AT NIGHT

A few low tallow candles, otherwise darkness, they show the shapes of things.

A long beat.

LEANING COYOTE
I’m frightened.

BUFFALO HUMP grasps his wrist. Then there’s the sound of a voice, strange, unsexed.

VOICE
Why don’t you come in? I’m waiting.

BUFFALO HUMP encourages his son to push aside the curtained wall, and go inside.

A young MEDICINE WOMAN is sitting in the dark. She has a different appearance and clothing is bazaar compared to the COMANCHE we have seen thus far. She is a Comanche who claims to have supernatural power, and the authority that comes with it.
The problem BUFFALO HUMP is having and the reason he is sneaking around in the middle of the night is that the Comanche are not very religious. And a woman with power well... BUFFALO HUMP doesn’t want everyone to know he listens to a woman.

HISTORICAL NOTE: The Comanche people were once known as the agnostics of the plains. They were solipsists, the ultimate pragmatists. Religion anything supernatural was simply superfluous to actual reality. They believed in “luck” but beyond that was based on “personal power”, or “medicine.” And “medicine” wasn’t about healing, per se, but about unique, personal validation and influence.

BUFFALO HUMP might of might not believe in the supernatural, but he certainly doesn’t want to advertise it.

The MEDICINE WOMAN has a strange and powerful aura about the figure which makes LEANING COYOTE instinctively recoil.

Before the MEDICINE WOMAN is a bowl of dried brown shrivelled mushrooms. He reaches out with young tender fingers and chews one.

She holds out a pipe.

MEDICINE WOMAN
The first puff is for the Great Spirit.

BUFFALO HUMP inhales.

MEDICINE WOMAN
Did you bring the droppings?

BUFFALO HUMP returns the pipe and pulls out a pouch and a cloth. He dumps out the contents out on the cloth.

The MEDICINE WOMAN brings a candle over to the cloth. He examines the contents.

HISTORICAL NOTE: The Comanche knew that examining the droppings of the eagle (their idea of the top carnivore in the fauna) gives great insight into weather, water, and the general conditions. It was important knowledge to have for hunters and raiders both. A warrior theoretically could
make decisions based on such “readings.” It wasn’t exactly a prophecy but the verdicts experience.

MEDICINE WOMAN
Eagle droppings from the south?

BUFFALO HUMP
Yes.

MEDICINE WOMAN
What do you want to know?

BUFFALO HUMP
I want to know what Mexico has in store.

MEDICINE WOMAN
For you – or for your son?

BUFFALO HUMP
I’m more interested in myself.

The woman chuckles.

MEDICINE WOMAN
The weather, water, and the general conditions can provide you with a great future. I see that. But the Great Spirit’s goodwill can be withdrawn at any time.

BUFFALO HUMP
To have this great future, must I bring back Spanish horses? This seems to be the nub of it.

There’s a pause. The ancient one reaches out and touches his face and her beautiful young eyes peer into his.

MEDICINE WOMAN
It is always possible for a man to shape his own fate.

(pause)
You must ride hard and fast and you must be smart. You must be silent.
BUFFALO HUMP
So I should take only a few men?

Silence.

BUFFALO HUMP
You won’t answer me?

MEDICINE WOMAN
You already have your answer.

BUFFALO HUMP
No I don’t. I don’t have the real answer.

MEDICINE WOMAN
Then go and ask the Great Spirit himself. What are you afraid of?

Looks at her.

BUFFALO HUMP
(quietly)
Who is not afraid?

The MEDICINE WOMAN grins. She leans forward and looks deeply at LEANING COYOTE.

MEDICINE WOMAN
I say only this to you, trust your son.

BUFFALO HUMP
My son?

MEDICINE WOMAN
I see greatness.

BUFFALO HUMP
Why should I trust him? He is a twelve.

The MEDICINE WOMAN now stares at BUFFALO HUMP again with her soft and tender face - but will not answer. The turns and stares at LEANING COYOTE, who is afraid of her. He looks away.
MEDICINE WOMAN
Look at me, child.

LEANING COYOTE steels himself to look back at her. After a few seconds, she nods.

MEDICINE WOMAN
I think your son will be ready. Let him go and kill a buffalo. He can’t help. He must do this alone. And then if he wants to go deep into Mexico, then he can say this to you. That’s all I can tell you.

BUFFALO HUMP
You haven’t helped me at all, woman. He can’t kill a buffalo.

A long beat.

MEDICINE WOMAN
Perhaps you asked the wrong questions. In any case, sometimes you should not try to foresee your fate, for it is best not to know it.

EXT. TRACK TOWARD HOME – DAY

They WARRIORS come over a hill and see a buffalo herd in the distance, but very near is a single young bull. The animal is shocked and immediately breaks into a run. Without any hesitation, LEANING COYOTE gives chase. He takes an additional horse.

The older warriors, BUFFALO HUMP, WOODEN LANCE and the OLD YAMPARIKA WARRIOR don’t move. They watch from the top of the hill as the young man chases the buffalo back toward the herd. The end of the chase is too far to see in detail but there is a great deal of dust thrown up into the air.

Finally, the group of WARRIORS begin to slowly walk their horses toward the event.

INT. BUFFALO HUMP TEEPEE – DAY
BUFFALO HUMP and SIGHT OF DAY lay on floor on top of a buffalo blanket.

SIGHT OF DAY
How was it?

BUFFALO HUMP
Good. I gave you all the goods I traded for. Nothing was held back.

SIGHT OF DAY
So many things at once. My successful wealthy husband!

BUFFALO HUMP
I didn’t think you would complain. A witch told me to take LEANING COYOTE with us to Mexico. Then I brought him home.

SIGHT OF DAY
You can’t, he is too young?

BUFFALO HUMP
She said if he could kill a buffalo, then he would be safe.

SIGHT OF DAY
He can’t kill a buffalo!

BUFFALO HUMP
He did!

SIGHT OF DAY
What?

BUFFALO HUMP
We came across a young bull! He ran and our son chased him to death.

SIGHT OF DAY
No?

BUFFALO HUMP
Twelve arrows and a lance!

He reaches out, touches her breast.
BUFFALO HUMP
I missed you. Did anything happen while we were away?

She is stunned by the news that her son is already a man at the age of twelve. She looks worried but in a few seconds then she becomes proud.

SIGHT OF DAY
No. Nothing.

BUFFALO HUMP
Did you miss me?

SIGHT OF DAY
I was too busy working to miss you.

BUFFALO HUMP
Is that true?

She jokingly smiles.

SIGHT OF DAY
No. I ached with love longing. My belly was empty of laughter.

BUFFALO HUMP
How can I make you laugh now?

SIGHT OF DAY
I don’t want to laugh now.

She pushes him back on the floor, and gets astride him.

SIGHT OF DAY
I want to ride you, like a bull. 
Like a wild bull.

She rocks back and forth, her eyes gleaming. Unclasps her hair and leans down to kiss him, her hair falling all around him.

SIGHT OF DAY
Now bull, now.

He starts to make love to her.
Outside the teepee, LEANING COYOTE can hear them. His parents make love loudly, shouting, and the teepee shakes. LEANING COYOTE is untroubled.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

We are struck, again, by the immense, almost overwhelming space that is west Texas. There is a RIDER approaching, cutting through the calm waters, dwarfed by the huge space.

The RIDER reaches the camp. It is BEAR MAN and he climbs down BEAR MAN climbs down from his mount.

LEANING COYOTE
Hello BEAR MAN.

BEAR MAN ruffles the boy’s hair.

BEAR MAN
Hello, young Leaning Coyote.
(pause)
Where are your parents?

LEANING COYOTE is matter of fact.

LEANING COYOTE
They’re making me another brother.

BEAR MAN laughs.

EXT. TEEPEE - EVENING

BUFFALO HUMP, SIGHT OF DAY, LEANING WOLF, LARGE BLOSSOM and BEAR MAN eat and drink. BEAR MAN eats copiously and looks at LARGE BLOSSOM.

BEAR MAN
So, Large Blossom, tell me: is your mother teaching you how to ride a horse? And use a weapon?

LARGE BLOSSOM
Yes. I know how to use a weapon. I know what it’s for.
BEAR MAN
Your mother was a famous fighter. She mounted a stallion to chase Apache.

SIGHT OF DAY
Not so much of the “was” please, Bear man. “Is” will do.

BEAR MAN
Is...she is a famous woman. She would have killed Apache if they hadn’t run like the wind.

SIGHT OF DAY
I would have fought to protect my sisters and mother. My brothers and my father. The other men too were off fighting different Apache. I would have died if needed.

BUFFALO HUMP looks at her.

BUFFALO HUMP
You could have died.
(It’s something between them)

She rises.

SIGHT OF DAY

Come on children, to bed. We’ll leave the men.

LEANING COYOTE
I’m a man. I have a saddle.

SIGHT OF DAY
To bed!

LEANING COYOTE AND GYDA
Good night.

BUFFALO HUMP
Good night, my children.
Kisses them. They go off. BUFFALO HUMP looks his brother square in the eye.

BEAR MAN
Tell me your news. What about the raid?

BUFFALO HUMP
The old Yamparika warrior will lead us there.

BEAR MAN
Do you trust him? Isn’t he an old man? What if he dies?

BUFFALO HUMP
He’s a great warrior. I trust him to live. Sight of Day has been feeding him up.

BEAR MAN
And you still think these Spanish horses will be there?

BUFFALO HUMP
I do.
(pause)
But I have to ask you this, when we go, will you go with us?

There’s a long beat. BEAR MAN drinks wipes his mouth. Stares at his brother.

BEAR MAN
Only if we’re all equal. I won’t go under your command.

BUFFALO HUMP slips the ring from his arm. Holds it out to BEAR MAN.

BUFFALO HUMP
My Grandfather is the Fire
My Grandmother is the Wind
The Earth is my Mother
The Great Spirit is my Father
Everyone on Comanche horses will be equal, and will share equally what we find.

(beat)
Will you come?

A beat. Then BEAR MAN reaches out, and also takes hold of BUFFALO HUMP’s hand.

BEAR MAN
I will come. I swear.

BUFFALO HUMP grins, embraces him. But BEAR MAN is still staring at him.

BEAR MAN
But we must find warriors. Not many men will want to go that far into Mexico.
(pause)
Many of them will be afraid, and if we get there some of them might run for home at the least trouble.

BUFFALO HUMP
Leave that to me. I have a good idea where we will find our crew.

BEAR MAN looks at him quizzically, but doesn’t question him.

BEAR MAN
You’re very determined. How do you know we’ll be successful?

BUFFALO HUMP
I don’t know. But what I do know is that we make out our fate. It is a matter of personal power.
(pause)
If you are afraid go pray.

A beat. Then SIGHT OF DAY comes back in.

SIGHT OF DAY
They’re asleep.
She sits down. BUFFALO HUMP rises and goes outside.

BEAR MAN smiles at SIGHT OF DAY. She smiles at him. He tries to hold her gaze.

    BEAR MAN
    I’ve always wanted you. Always.

    SIGHT OF DAY
    That’s too bad.

She smiles again, but he takes it like an insult - reaches out and grabs her wrist.

    BEAR MAN
    Don’t insult me.

    SIGHT OF DAY
    No. I would never insult you. You’re too great a warrior.

Eyes tight on each other. Then he releases his grip.

    SIGHT OF DAY
    But not so great a man.

EXT. IN THE MESQUITE TREES - EVENING

BUFFALO HUMP finishes peeing. The landscape is bathed in moonlight, which gives everything a mysterious look.

BUFFALO HUMP’s gaze is somehow drawn across to the edge of the prairie... as a cougar emerges.

The cougar walks toward the horse herd, a little way, completely unafraid. Then stops, and seems to look back at BUFFALO HUMP for a few long moments.

And then the cougar turns, moves away among the shadows, but in a different direction.

EXT. TEEPEE - EVENING
BUFFALO HUMP comes back. Is immediately aware that something has happened between SIGHT OF DAY and BEAR MAN - but chooses to ignore it.

He sits down again.

    BUFFALO HUMP
    I saw a cougar out there.

    BEAR MAN
    We must kill it.

BUFFALO HUMP looks at him.

    BUFFALO HUMP
    No. We mustn’t kill it.

    BEAR MAN
    Why not?

A beat.

    BUFFALO HUMP
    Because it wasn’t a cougar.

INT. TEEPEE – NIGHT

LEANING COYOTE lies in his bed, still awake. He can hear the adult conversations in the next room. His hand still grips the knife he’s been given, for he will never let it go.

When he closes his eyes he sees the cougar. The Cougar is staring at him. But the eyes are not darting around. And his gaze is terrible. Like many cats the eye bores into you.

EXT. LANDSCAPE – DAY

The Paneteka band is moving. There are horses and dogs with travois. They are packed with all the things that own. There is a herd of horses. Everything is mobile.

There are some old and sick members who are abandoned by members of the community except their family.
LARGE BLOSSOM is worried and has never witnessed such a thing. A girl her age is being left to help care for her grandfather, who is dying.

SIGHT OF DAY
(to Large Blossom)
This was not done out of cruelty.

BUFFALO HUMP
(adding to the explanation)
Evil spirits have invaded the body of the old man.

Later, we see the knees of the deceased old man are folded and tied with a rope and then the body was washed. The old man is dressed in his finest clothing and put upon a blanket. The face was painted red and the eyes were covered with some clay.

The relatives of the old man say farewell. The body was then wrapped in blanket and tied with buffalo-hide rope and put on a horse and carried to a place of burial.

The burial is in a very small cave, in the side of a ravine. The cave is hard to spot but it is in a crevice among the rocks. The body is buried in a sitting position. They stack wooden poles in the entrance and rocks cover them.

The family of the Comanche then move back to find the band.

INT. BUFFALO HUMP’S TEEPEE – DAWN

The first brightness in the night sky. A small ray of light. The moon is still in the sky, pale and diminishing. The camera travels through the camp and its sleeping inhabitants. We see the colored shields, some weapons. We see the ashes of a fire, a slaughtered and half eaten animal hangin upon a tripod. The children asleep like any other children. LEANING COYOTE is still clasping his knife in a death grip.

BUFFALO HUMP and SIGHT OF DAY naked and asleep, coiled together. Then BUFFALO HUMP opens his eyes. And the first thing he hears is a horrifying war cry. He looks outside the teepee in a fright. And then he hears laughter, and he
sees the young wild WARRIORS, the same young men who were disruptive of the market earlier. They surround BUFFALO HUMP’s teepee. They are chanting and waving weapons.

It is something like a pep-rally before a high school football game.

SIGHT OF DAY follows BUFFALO HUMP into the morning. She is happy for her husband who seems to be the object of the young WARRIOR’s affection. He is their leader, however temporary it is the epitome of Comanche power.

BUFFALO HUMP stares at them, covering his nakedness. The OLD WARRIOR is there with them. It seems he has been watching them slowly whine themselves up to this rally.

OLD YAMPARIKA WARRIOR
They are ready.

EXT. CAMP - MORNING

The young warriors have packed and are ready. Even LEANING COYOTE is ready to go in an instance. They were ready to leave at sunrise.

The older WARRIORS take some of the morning to prepare for the journey. We watch BUFFALO HUMP, BEAR MAN and WOODEN LANCE pack. And we see BUFFALO HUMP and LEANING COYOTE say good-bye to their family.

BUFFALO HUMP
Will we share the same moon?

SIGHT OF DAY
Yes. Of course.

They mount up and ride south out of the camp.

EXT. NORTHERN MEXICO - DAY

As the group of WARRIORS progress south, we see the hardships of little water and grass. Basically, the Comanche men push the horses and then take a new one. They move fast and take not risks.

Each night we see SIGHT OF DAY and BUFFALO HUMP stare at the moon, sharing it.
EXT. NEAR MONTERREY MEXICO - DAY

They sight Mexican SOLDIERS on horseback. It isn’t know if the SOLDIERS saw them but there isn’t any reaction on their part.

EXT. SPANISH HACIENDA NEAR COYOTEPEC MEXICO - NIGHT

We see a Spanish hacienda with wealth enough for a chapel and priest. Normal operations of a huge horse operation. It is clear that the horse is main money making animal for this ranch. There are few cattle and few other animals. But clearly there are some VERY nice breeding horses. Several stallions.

EXT. NEAR MONTERREY MEXICO - NIGHT

Six Comanche WARRIORS slip into a camp of Mexican SOLDIERS. The dozen SOLDIERS are sleeping, each with a horse tied to his wrist by the leather strap and also a rope within six feet of the sleeper. They are clearly conscious of the Comanche ability to steal horses and take precautions. The Comanche get away with the horses without waking a soul.

INT. SPANISH HACIENDA NEAR COYOTEPEC - NIGHT

MARIA is a young woman, 12 years old. She has two books in her room. One is the bible and the other is a book on horse breeding.

EXT. PASTURE NEAR THE HACIENDA - NIGHT

The herd is found in a pasture of grass. The YOUNG WARRIORS their spirits sore. But the OLD WARRIOR points out there are a heavily armed set of vaquero guards. They become somber and perhaps disappointed. They were all hoping it would be easy.

The owner of the hacienda clearly knows the value of the herd. BUFFALO HUMP and his party watch from a distant mountain. He is calm and will wait for the best moment to strike.
BUFFALO HUMP notices and gestures to dark clouds far on the horizon.

**INT. CHAPEL OF THE SPANISH HACIENDA – SATURDAY**

MARIA takes her conformation examination.

**EXT. PASTURE NEAR THE HACIENDA – SATURDAY NIGHT**

The Comanche WARRIORS slowly move down the mountain nearer the herd.

**INT. CHAPEL OF THE HACIENDA – SUNDAY**

MARIA makes her first confession.

**EXT. PASTURE NEAR THE HACIENDA – SUNDAY NIGHT**

The Comanche WARRIORS slowly move even more near.

**INT. CHAPEL OF THE HACIENDA – SUNDAY**

MARIA receives her first communion.

**EXT. PASTURE NEAR THE HACIENDA – SUNDAY NIGHT**

The WARRIORS have come extremely close to the guards of the herd. The WARRIORS are about spring upon them and kill them. But a pouring rain comes and vaqueros break camp and return to the hacienda.

BUFFALO HUMP singles for the young WARRIORS to take the herd slowly north. He sends BEAR MAN with them to supervise.

BUFFALO HUMP, WOODEN LANCE and LEANING COYOTE follow the vaqueros.

**INT. MAIN HOUSE OF THE HACIENDA – SUNDAY**
There is a loud and celebratory party for MARIA. There is music and dancing. There are gifts and many friends have come to wish her luck and to celebrate.

The storm is intense.

MARIA is bored or rather more accurately preoccupied. She sneaks away from her party, gets a lantern and her book on horse breeding. She sneaks out to the barn.

INT. HORSE BARN ON THE HACIENDA – SUNDAY

There is a man watching her mare in the barn. MARIA’s mare is about to give birth to a foal.

We see MARIA in her party dress, holding a lantern and a book. She enters the stall. The mare is in labor.

The vaquero watching the mare urges her not to enter the stall. But she is fearless. The mare is agitated but not at the girl. The mare actually calms down a bit with MARIA near.

EXT. PASTURE NEAR THE HACIENDA – SUNDAY NIGHT

The herd of horse have been moved a significant distance. They consider waiting, but then begin moving.

INT. HORSE BARN ON THE HACIENDA – SUNDAY

BUFFALO HUMP, WOODEN LANCE and LEANING COYOTE follow the vaqueros and find the Hacienda... and the barn. They are looking for the stallions and best of the mares.

The three WARRIORS ride their horses into the barn. WOODEN LANCE kills the vaquero. And he begins stealing ever bit of tack and rope and packing it onto his spare horse. There must be 20 ropes and many bridles tied to the horse, when he leaves.

LEANING COYOTE looks in each stall from his horse. He of course frightens MARIA.
MARIA
She is having a foal.

LEANING COYOTE rides to tell his father about the horse and the girl. When he does this MARIA is tempted to run for the house. She reasons that she can’t make it and chooses to defend her mare and the coming foal.

She runs to the dead vaquero and takes the knife from his boot. She stands outside the door to the mare’s stall and waits for trouble.

When LEANING COYOTE returns and dismounts MARIA is ready to fight... She fights with LEANING COYOTE but he can’t subdue her. She has a knife and is enraged.

She wraps her long dress and petticoat around her hand and grabs LEANING COYOTE’s knife hand at the same time tries to stab him. BUFFALO HUMP is there and is concerned but does nothing.

MARIA blocks several of LEANING COYOTE’s thrusts with her horse breeding book.

He reasons that his son might as well learn to fight with the least amount of danger.

BUFFALO HUMP is trying to get a look inside the stall.

MARIA
She is having a foal.

LEANING COYOTE and BUFFALO HUMP do not understands her. As the boy and girl fight, LEANING COYOTE looks to his father for guidance. She is a woman, a girl, and it throws LEANING COYOTE for a loop. He doesn’t know if he is supposed to kill her... it appears that he doesn’t know how or he simply doesn’t want to.

So they end up punching each other, slashing at each other and in the end rolling around on the ground wrestling with each other.

MARIA
She is having a foal.
Finally, she gets the upper hand. She is on top of him and is about drive the knife into his face. But LEANING COYOTE grabs her hands stopping the progress of the bald. The knife nicks his cheek. But, he rolls her off of him and stands up. They both have knives but there isn’t any progress in 5 mins of fighting.

The two youth - LEANING COYOTE and MARIA stare at each other in a stand off. Neither wants to fight anymore. Both exhausted from fighting.

BEAR MAN suddenly appears and has a bow aimed at MARIA’s heart. He is about to kill her with an arrow. She doesn’t flinch at the threat of arrow.

She is not about to give up her Mare and foal. She appears willing to fight to the death.

BUFFALO HUMP stops his brother from killing the girl.

There is a momentary peace. Everyone is curious what MARIA is guarding/protecting so dearly.

BUFFALO HUMP slowly moves behind the girl. They look in the stall and there is a foal... just born.

When MARIA also looks into the stall, BEAR MAN slugs her and knocks her out. BEAR MAN wants to rape her and he pull up her dress... but the petticoat is so voluminous little is accomplished.

BUFFALO HUMP pulls BEAR MAN off the girl.

BEAR MAN
How can you stop me?

BUFFALO HUMP
I just did!

BEAR MAN
How can you stop me if we are equal?

BUFFALO HUMP
I just did!

BEAR MAN
Well I’m going to burn this barn.
BEAR MAN makes a move for the lantern. BUFFALO HUMP stops him... They are about to fight... brother vs. brother ... and it will probably be to the death... but BUFFALO HUMP tries to reason with his brother.

BUFFALO HUMP
Did you see the girl fight?

BEAR MAN nods, yes.

BUFFALO HUMP
The girl, she would die to protect that mare and foal. Right?

BEAR MAN
Right!

BUFFALO HUMP
So it is valuable. Next year we will come back and take them then. If you burn the barn there will not be any reason to return.

BUFFALO HUMP looks to the house that is well lighted and loud, the party seems uninterrupted.

MARIA is beginning to stir and is soon awake.

BUFFALO HUMP
(to Maria)
Which is the best stallion?

MARIA is not clear headed, she can’t understand what is he saying. She grabs her book and holds is near her chest.

And BUFFALO HUMP looks at Maria and reasons that the girl’s mare would get the best stallion. BUFFALO HUMP takes her to the stall where the mare is and he points to the foal.

BUFFALO HUMP
(to Maria)
Which is the best stallion?

She is puzzled, but just as BUFFALO HUMP is about to become frustrated, finally MARIA understands and points. The
stallion is clearly agitated, but he is marked exactly as
the foal.

He bridles the stallion and puts the girl on his back. She
is bareback. BUFFALO HUMP takes her hands and places them
on the mane and squeezes. She grabs hold and BUFFALO HUMP
on his horse leads them out into the rain.

She immediately falls off within sight of the hacienda, but
he returns to pick her up out of the mud. No bones are
broken so he throws her back on the stallion.

EXT. HIDALGO - DAY

The land is low and flat. We see huizache trees, mesquite
trees, prickly pear and wild lettuce, as they move north
the men see hares and owls. There is also a panther.

They follow the edge of the mountains. They stop at a hot
springs, Grutas Tolantongo, they are amazed at this sight
but don’t have time to enjoy it.

The WARRIORS can all predict that they will be tracked.

    BUFFALO HUMP
    Each man will take ten horses. And
    return independently, or at worst in a
    set of two.

    YOUNG WARRIOR
    What?

    BUFFALO HUMP
    You can travel in pairs. No more than
    20 horses on one track. Hide your trail
    if you can. Move fast and don’t kill
    the horses.

The idea is to rope and divide the 100 horses into 10
groups, with each WARRIOR put in charge of each set.

LEANING COYOTE immediately identified ten mares
and begins to work tying them together.
The young WARRIORS have no idea how to tie ten horses in a chain. They watch WOODEN LANCE and LEANING COYOTE. The boy is the first to have his ten horse tied together.

YOUNG WARRIOR
How do you know how to do this?

LEANING COYOTE
I practiced. Everyday!

BUFFALO HUMP motions to his son to move out north. BUFFALO HUMP supervises the dividing of the herd. He points the men in different directions.

BUFFALO HUMP
(pointing northeast)
You, travel in this direction for one day and then move north.

BUFFALO HUMP
(pointing north-northeast)
You, travel in this direction for two days and then move north.

BUFFALO HUMP and doesn’t move to rejoin his son until all the WARRIORS are moving in different northerly directions.

EXT. HIDALGO - DAY

We see VAQUEROS and Mexican SOLDIERS chasing around in the vast expanse. They seem perplexed and can’t manage to track any of the Comanche WARRIORS.

EXT. PENATEKA CAMP - DAY

They reach the Penateka camp in Texas. There is a small celebration when BUFFALO HUMP and LEANING COYOTE arrive with their 11 horses. LEANING COYOTE brings 10 mares and BUFFALO HUMP has the powerful Arabian stallion.

The are greeted by SIGHT OF DAY and LARGE BLOSSOM.

The captured MARIA is on the stallion. She looks and feels out of place, having been kidnapped and now witnessing the family reunion. However, she can become a part of the family and will play a part the following episodes. Many captives were adopted and taken into the Comanche society.
END CREDITS

FADE OUT
THE COMANCHES, television series by Lee A. Miller

Episode 2 - Thirty Penateka Comanche are killed in the Council House Massacre (San Antonio)

Episode 3 - The Great Raid of 1840 is the largest raid ever mounted by Native Americans on whites.

Episode 4 - The Attack on Lindale, Texas

Episode 5 - The Battle of Plum Creek, Texas

Episode 6 - Peace is made between Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Comanches. Comanches give massive gifts of horses to their new allies.

Episode 7 - Texas Rangers formed to fight Comanches.

Episode 8 - Texas has second war with Mexico.

Episode 9 - Colonel J.C. Eldridge meets with Chief Pahayuco of the Tenawa at Pecan River, near the Red River.

Episode 10 - Sam Houston meets with Chief Tseep Tasewah along with other Indian Leaders.

Episode 11 - Quannah Parker is born to Cynthia Ann Parker near Laguna Sabinas (Cedar Lake).

Episode 12 - Treaty between Republic of Texas and Texas band of Comanches is signed.

Episode 13 - United States annexes Texas.

Episode 14 - Butler-Lewis Treaty made with Comanche, Anadarko, Caddo, Lipan, Wichita and Waco.

Episode 15 - Comanche delegation meets with President Polk.

Episode 16 - German Treaty signed at Fredericksburg with Comanche, this treaty is still honored.

Episode 17 - Smallpox epidemic strikes Comanche people.

Episode 18 - Between 1848 and 1853, Mexico filed 366 separate complaints for Comanche and Apache raids originating from North of the border.

Episode 19 - Gold seekers traveling along Canadian River bring more smallpox to the Comanches.
The Comanche were a powerful group of people who fought fiercely and successfully to defend their land and way of life, so powerful that they were able to deal with many outsiders as superiors and with all others as equals.

Many portrayals show Native Americans as poor and desperate victims. But for most of the 18th and 19th centuries the Comanche would dominate a vast region of the southern Plains. In their empire at this time, no one would describe them as poor or desperate. They may have lost the encounter with the European invaders but they were never victims until the very end.

The only Indians to threaten Comanche control seriously were the Apache, and they occupied the region for only a very short time. The Comanche drove the Apache from the Plains and kept European invaders out of their land for almost 200 years.

The Sioux are famous because they killed George Custer.

The Apache are famous because Genomic was the last to surrender.

But in terms of pure political, military, economic and geographic POWER, the Comanche were the dominant Native American tribe. This is the primary reason to select this story for production.

The Comanche domination of most of what is now central and west Texas, eastern New Mexico, southeastern Colorado, southwestern Kansas, and all of western Oklahoma was so absolute that until 1875 all of this land was known simply as the Comancheria, the land of the Comanche. In fact, if you are looking for an alternate title “The Comancheria” might work well.

Look at the vast geography and diverse terrain to be include in the series. From the WEST (from the foothills of the New Mexico mountains) to the EAST (the prairie forests of central Texas, known as the Cross Timbers) to the NORTH (the banks of the Arkansas River) to the SOUTH (Pecos River and the Rio Grande), the Comanche owned this land.

The producers and director’s dilemma...
Like many film and television productions, the producers and director of this series have an interesting dilemma. They can seek to make this an epic and realistic portrayal of the most dominate of all Indian tribes that would include perhaps the use of the native Comanche language and realistic (historically accurate) events and the actual historic locations, when possible.

Of course there are limitations placed upon us by television demographics. Subtitle of the Comanche language is difficult for most people to swallow. The number of horses needed would mean a significant budget. Not to mention, the budget for the numerous locations needed to illustrate a nomadic life.

The elephant in the room? Online streaming! This is a more sophisticated audience and there will be a narrow core target audience who will see the title “Comanche” and expect an accurate portrayal. It can be argued that an investment in “authentic history” might yield a loyal viewer. While westerns aren’t a huge box office draw overseas, in the United States and Mexico there is a loyal fan base.

Think Dances with Wolves., a huge box office hit, worldwide grosses $424,208,848. The producers went to extraordinary lengths, even changing the tribe and a good portion of the story, to accommodate a more accurate portrayal. This film used subtitles for the Sioux dialogue.

But also consider Lonesome Dove. While the Larry McMurtry’s book is full of history, economics and politics and has a lot of historically accurate action not suitable for television, the screenplay is different. Bill Wittliff’s screenplay was masterful at showing the human relationships. And the characters are clearly portrayed larger than life. This isn’t a bad way to film the story of the Comanche. As a professor, I can guarantee you too much “history” and not enough “drama” will alienate many viewers.

So what do we do? The answer seems to be to try to capture both… make it a realistic as possible with violence and the hardships of living on the Comancheria, but also include the human marriages, births, the human dramas and the funerals and burials.

I suggest a historically accurate film that shows clearly the familial relationships – husband and wife, father and children, mother and children. Show the friendships and comradeships. Show the Comanche as “people” and not the old stereotypical “terrorist”.

**Historical bias against the Comanche…**

Frankly, the Comanche were such violent people there were vilified in the media at the time of course and even in history books today little is made of their family life or their friendships. It is true; they did loot, burn, murder and kidnap, but they also had close knit
families and a wealthy cultural tradition. They loved and traded and were expert horse breeders with a sometimes-superior knowledge of equine genetics than the Europeans.

Previous portrayals of the Comanche have overwhelmingly focused on the tribe’s violent encounters with outsiders. These encounters were bloody and often, but this is not the entire story.

I would suggest that we make a film that escapes the bias and yet still gives an accurate portrayal. Actually, if we can show the human aspects AND the destructive elements of the Comanche, this will be “by definition” unbiased.

If you want to understand the series, look at the pilot. The first scene is a violent and bloody action sequence. The second scene is the birth of a baby in a Comanche teepee. The same man, Buffalo Hump, who participated in the death of his Apache enemies, is a very human father in the next scene.

It might be a good rule for this series that in each episode the writer(s) include a scene of mayhem and violence and then also a scene included to humanize the Comanche. Both sequences are true and accurately portray the nature of the people. Both aspects of the Comanche character should be shown.

Where would this television series be filmed...

Lawton (OK) is the heart of the Comanche nation today. There is a tribal casino, tribal owned hotels and a large museum. There is also second museum on the ground of Fort Sill Army installation. There is a healthy population of Comanche actors in the area, but only a few (1%) know the native language.

The Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge is in this area with buffalo herds and other animals. There are many scenic locations unspoiled by the modern world. They do allow commercial filming with a permit.

The time frame for this series...

For almost two centuries the Comanche helped shape the history of the American Southwest. They moved from the northern plains (Wyoming) to the southern planes (Texas and Oklahoma) in about 1700.

The pilot is set in the late 1930s, before the Council House Massacre.
If the series were successful, it would not be a bad rule to follow this schedule…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season 1 and 2</th>
<th>1840s.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Season 3</td>
<td>1850-60s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Season 4 and 5</td>
<td>1870s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the amount of information and historically interesting events, I would say the 1840s and the 1870s are the most worthy of film. Basically the 1840s is the beginning of the tribe’s conflict with the Europeans and of course the 1770s were the beginning of end of the Comanche empire.

Hopefully we can tell the entire story.

**The political situation the tribe faced...**

Foreign powers that entered the region had to contend with the Comanche as equals. Nothing was ever forced on the Comanche until their population was depleted by disease. To their face they were, for the most part, respected. There are a few examples where this is not the case, but on a whole the Europeans feared them.

In the 18th century both the French and Spanish sought their friendship. These Europeans were never able to occupy the region and penetrated it only with the grudging permission of the Comanche.

The Mexicans and Texans who came afterward would also be unable to conquer the Comanche and settle on the southern Plains. There were periods in the 19th century where both the Mexicans and Americans sought to establish and maintain good relations with them. The Comancheria would remain a barrier to settlement by outsiders until late in the 19th century, and the Americans would gain control of it only after a long and bloody struggle.

**Historical scenes to include in future episodes...**

There is a rich oral storytelling element to the Comanche culture. In each episode it would be desirable to have an older Comanche share stories with the youth at a fire at night. I use the phrase “flashback” to describe this storytelling on film.
FLASHBACKS to show their relationship with the Shoshone.

There is no doubt that the Shoshone and the Comanche are related to one another and they were at one time a single group of people.

Before 1705 the Comanche lived in what is now Wyoming and Montana. They were mountain people. The Comanche had no written language and preserved their history only in the memories of their people so this early history has been largely lost. We should see scenes were the leaders lament about this loss of history. This might be the reason Buffalo Hump values the friendship of Maria. She can write… in Spanish of course but still he understands the written word’s power.

Buffalo Hump also adopts Maria, because of the love and knowledge of the horse. Even though she falls off a horse in her first sequence, she is later a talented rider.

Sometime around 1700 the Shoshone people became divided. Some bands abandoned the mountains and began moving south out onto the Plains. The Comanche still remember the division, and they have several stories that explain the separation.

In each flashback, one band goes to the north, the Shoshone. The other band goes south and become known as the Comanche.

FLASHBACK - One Comanche story relates that two bands of Shoshone were camped together. Boys from the two bands were playing together and during one of the games the son of one of the band leaders was kicked in the stomach by a boy from the other band. When the boy died from the injury his family wanted revenge and prepared to attack the other people. Before they began to fight, however, one of the old people convinced them that they should not fight with their own people. Both sides agreed that it was wrong to fight one’s own people, but feelings were so intense that they decided they could no longer live together. Thus the two bands separated. One band went to the north, where they became the Shoshone.

FLASHBACK - The other story about the separation also begins with two Shoshone bands. They are hunting together. During one of their combined hunts a bear was killed. Two hunters, one from each of the different bands, claimed to have killed the bear. Both bands claimed the bear meat, and neither group was willing to share the carcass. Both sides became angry. The dispute over the bear became so heated that the people decided that they could not stay together any longer.

FLASHBACK - There is a large Shoshone camp. The people of the camp were attacked by a terrible disease, perhaps smallpox. The people were suffering and many were dying.
They decided that they could not survive if they remained in one camp and that their only hope for survival was separation.

There should be friendly encounters with the Shoshone in this TV series. The northern Shoshone bands continued to maintain friendly relations with their Comanche relatives.

**Scenes that illustrate a nomadic life...**

They were a nomadic people, traveling to hunt, fish, and gather plant foods as different resources became available with the changing seasons. The dog and horse pulled travois, on which the Comanche carried their belongings when they moved camp to follow the buffalo herds. The Plains Indians used dogs for all their cargo until they acquired horses from the Spanish in the 17th century; after that they used both animals.

**Scenes that show the relationship with the horse...**

Think about making a docudrama about life in American today, without an automobile. It would be ludicrous. The same with any depiction with the Comanche, there must be a large focus on the horse.

The second most important element of this series (after the characters) should be the horse. There is a huge population of horse aficionados, hobbyists and just horse lovers and they can be a significant target audience. In the trailers, I would recommend that the producers include just as many shots of the characters as their horses.

Slowly over time the history of the horse can be brought to light by stories told around the campfire. The horse is so important to this tribe; one can imagine most of the stories handed down from generation to generation deal with the horse.

**FLASHBACK** - The Spanish arrived (with horses) in the Southwest in the 16th century, having conquered Mexico in 1521. Lured into the region by tales of the Seven Cities of Gold, the conquistador Francisco Vasquez de Coronado explored the region in 1540. Finding no great wealth, Coronado returned to Mexico. Many of the horses escaped and over time became wild mustangs.

**FLASHBACK** - In August 1680, after 90 years of abuse and mistreatment by the Spanish, the natives rose up and attacked the Spanish. The Pueblo Revolt kept the Spanish out of the Southwest for 12 years. The Spanish, surprised and outnumbered, abandoned their homes and fled south so hastily that they had to leave most of their
possessions behind. The Indians had little use for most of the goods left behind by the Spanish. They did, however, enjoy one item the Spanish abandoned, the horse.

FLASHBACK - The Spanish, intent on controlling the Indians, had attempted to keep horses from them. They knew that Indians riding horses would pose a threat to their control. Before the 1680 the Spanish had refused to allow Indians to own or ride horses. Indians found with horses were beaten and sometimes killed. But the native people knew how to take care of them. The Spanish had forced the natives to feed and care for their horses. After the Spanish left the area, the natives took and used the animals they left behind.

At every possible opportunity, it should be made very clear that horses permitted nomadic Comanche to enjoy a better life. Mounted Comanche hunters could track their quarry faster, cover greater distances in a day, and hunt more competently. They could take more animals and provide their people with more food. When they traveled to follow the seasonal migration routes of their prey, they could move more quickly, and horses could carry their belongings. After Indians acquired horses, their lives became more comfortable.

Mounted Comanche hunters could always provide their people with enough food, clothing, and shelter. No one needed to go hungry with horses; this is what the horse meant to them. No longer did the Comanche have to track animals on foot, hoping for lucky hunting. They did not have to go hungry when the game abandoned the region.

The group of natives whose lives would be MOST transformed by the use of the horse was the Comanche.

With the horse and the buffalo the Comanche thrived. The horse meant that the old, young, ill, and weak were all well nourished and so could survive longer.

The horse caused the Comanche population to grow in the 18th century. It was only the European invasion and the diseases they brought that caused the population to decline.

We should see how hardy the Comanche horses were. They thrived on the Comancheria grass. In the winter, when the grass lay dormant, the horses could subsist on bark from the Cottonwood trees that grew along the rivers and streams.

When times were especially bleak the Comanche could and did eat their horses. Horses were also useful trade items. Other Indians as well as Europeans and non-Indian Americans living far from the Spanish Southwest desired horses, and the Comanche became talented horse traders, getting tobacco, woven cloth, and especially metal items, such as knives, in return.

The Comanche were outstanding riders. Several 19th-century observers maintained that they were the finest horsemen in the entire world.
Comanche children began riding at an early age, and all Comanche, men and women alike, spent much of their lives on the back of a horse.

The Comanche were also skillful horse breeders, the particularly liked to cross the wild mustangs that captured with Arabians stolen from the Spanish.

And they also excelled at capturing wild horses. There were many herds of wild horses in the Comancheria, and Comanche often chased them down in the open country and roped them with lassos. They made ropes for lassos from material they had at hand: They cut long strips of buffalo hide into strong ropes, braided buffalo wool, and twisted and braided hair from the manes and tails of horses.

We should see the Comanche capture wild horses and manage their herds. The Comanche constructed large pens or corrals near water holes out on the plains. They used trees and brush to form the fencelike walls of the corrals, which were oval and open only at one end. Extending out from both sides of the corral opening they stacked long piles of brush thick and high enough so that the horses could not run through or jump over them. These brush arms of the corral extended for hundreds of yards, the space between them widening as they opened toward the plains to form a fan-shaped passageway. The Comanche would surround a herd of wild horses and drive them into the wide, open end of the passageway. As the horses got closer to the corral the passageway became narrower, funneling the horses into the corral where the Comanche could more easily rope them.

The Indians would often wait near a water hole until wild horses arrived and drank their fill. They then rushed among them and readily captured the slower, water-logged animals.

The Comanche also captured wild horses in the winter, when the animals, weakened by cold weather and lack of food, were slower and easier to capture.

A particularly popular way of acquiring horses was to steal them from others. The Comanche were talented horse thieves. In their value system, stealing from strangers was acceptable behavior.

On a large scale, the Comanche raided and stole from their Spanish and Native American neighbors. They would attack entire communities and drive the horses away with them. Later they would attack Texas and Americans and take their horses as well.

On a small scale, individual Comanches also often slipped undetected into the camps of enemies and stole a few horses.

The Comanche kept large herds. It was not unusual for a single Comanche to own more than 250 horses, and a particularly prominent leader might own as many as 1,000. Keeping such large herds contributed to Comanche movement. They had to keep moving
their camps, not only to find the buffalo but also to find grass to feed their thousands of horses.

Filming horse herds this large today is not going to be easy. If you make anywhere near a historically accurate film, a significant amount of the budget will be taken but by horses and handlers.

**Friendship that the Comanche developed…**

Like other Indian peoples, the Comanche established friendships with outsiders and maintained these friendships by exchanging gifts and sharing.

In this way they maintained long-term friendly relations with the Wichita tribe and Spanish traders. But any outsiders with whom they had not established a friendship were fair game. One shared with one’s family and friends and stole from strangers.

**Story of the name of the “real people”…**

The Comanche knew themselves as the Nerm, or “Real People”. We know them as the Comanche because the Spanish called them “Komantcia”. This is neither a Spanish word nor a Nerm word but the term used by the Ute, Kwuma-ci or Koh-Mahts. This word has several possible meanings. It can mean "enemy" or "anyone who wants to fight us all the time."

**Scenes that show the relationship with the grass…**

The Comancheria was a vast land of more than 24,000 square miles, covered thickly with rich grass. Although the land was generally level, it was broken in places by deep valleys, isolated, steep hills rising abruptly out of the flat country, and long, raised earthen ridges and cliff faces known as escarpments. In the north lay the Wichita Mountains, an island of rugged hills in the sea of grass. To the west there was an enormous raised stretch of flat land known as the Llano Estacado, or Staked Plain. The Comancheria stretched southward to the edges of the Edwards Plateau, and east through the rolling hills of the prairie to Cross Timbers.

The thick, rich grass supported the millions of buffalo, elk, deer, and antelope that roamed throughout the region.
Scenes that show the relationship with the rivers...

At this time of human development, all people’s traveled on and lived around rivers. Look at almost every major city in the world; it is located on an important river. The Comanche did not travel on the rivers but camped along them; they were obviously a source of water. In this film, we will see the Comanche using a variety of rivers -- the Cimarron, Canadian, Washita, Red, Pease, Frio, Brazos, Pecos and others. All are wide and shallow, often more than 100 yards wide, seldom more than 2 or 3 feet deep.

The rivers are sparsely lined with cottonwood, elm, walnut, pecan, and persimmon trees that provided food. There should be scenes where Comanche women are gathering pecans and other fruit.

Scenes that show the relationship with the weather...

The weather is relatively mild. The summers were hot and dry, but the Comanche always knew where to find fresh water. They knew how to construct teepees so that fresh air could circulate inside. And they built arbors to provide shelter from the glaring, hot sun.

The winters were cold, but certainly less harsh than the winters the Comanche had known in the mountains of Colorado and Wyoming. In the winter, the Comanche set up their camps in the shelter of the canyons and the breaks of the escarpments, where they escaped the full force of the Plains blizzards that came down from the north.

The Comanche bands and their organization...

Family groups would often join together to form an autonomous and independent band. There was no central government or any single leader. Comanche bands varied in size and could consist of a single family-hunting group or as many as several hundred people.

These bands were loosely organized and not restricted to blood relatives. Any Comanche was free to leave one band and join another. In the pilot, Buffalo Hump’s brother (Bear Man) has been living with a different band.
They knew that they were all one people, even though they had no overall tribal organization.

Several bands living in the same general area might occasionally come together to form a larger grouping to hunt or raid.

In time all the local bands living in one general area acquired a name and came to have a distinctive identity. These divisions were distinguished by various regional characteristics. This television series focuses on the Honey-Eaters (*Penateka*); they were also called the “Quick-Stingers”, “Bees” and the “Raiders”.

Other bands were
- Timber People (Jupe)
- Buffalo-Eaters (Kotsoteka)
- Antelope-Eaters (Kwahare)
- Root-Eaters (Yam-parika)
- Sunshades on Their Backs (Kwahadi)
- Wanderers (Nokoni)
- Liver-Eaters (Tanimu)
- Fish-Eaters (Pekwi Tuhka)
- Others, etc.

There were at least 30 different groups of Comanche with unique names.

Although they were called the Honey-Eaters, the Penateka, like other Comanche, relied primarily on the buffalo for food. It is the same for the other bands named after a food.

There were also other named Comanche groups that we know little about—the Burnt Meat-Eaters (Iteta-o), the Undercut Bank (Mutsane), the Water Horse (Pahuraix), the Hill Wearing Away (Wia'ne), the Cold People (It-chit-a bud-ah), and the Corn Eaters (Hai-ne-an-une). All these bands were short lived and were no longer distinct by the 19th century.

Altogether there may have been about 20,000 Comanche. And the *Penateka* had at one time as many as 5,000 people living in the same general area.

**The Comanche as a political entity...**

No single leader spoke for all of the Comanche. Each band was independent, each regional division was autonomous, and no overall tribal organization existed. All, however, were Comanche and they were amazingly united.
Although they never fought together as a single army, they never fought one another. This loose and limited unity created by a common cultural identity gave them great strength against outsiders.

The Comanche had few political institutions. There was no overall tribal government and no tribal leader or tribal council able to speak for or direct the activities of all the Comanche.

There were only three sources of political power—peace chief, band council, and war chief—and the powers of each were severely limited. None of the three had much direct authority. They had very little coercive power and their only real tool was positive leadership and persuasion. There were no dictators.

PEACE CHIEF - Within the band, each family group had a leader called the peace chief, usually one of the oldest men in the group. The peace chiefs were thought of as fathers of the band, but their powers were limited. They could only advise and suggest. When several family groups came together one of the peace chiefs was usually recognized as peace chief or leader for the combined group. He served in this capacity only as long as the bands stayed together. The other band peace chiefs acted as advisers to the group leader.

A man became a peace chief not by election but by general consent. The Comanche respected the elderly, and one who was wise, talented, generous, and kind might in time become his family’s peace chief. His leadership depended on the respect the people had for him, his popularity, and his influence. He could not force the people to do anything; his primary responsibility was to act as a mediator to keep peace within the band. To do this he relied on persuasion. His influence was limited to the internal affairs of his band and did not extend beyond his band. He held his position for only as long as the people listened to him.

BAND COUNCIL - Important decisions were made by the band council, which consisted of all the adult men in the band. All men were allowed to speak in the council meetings, but the older men did most of the talking. The council decided when and where the band should move and provided for the care of elderly and weak band members. It made decisions about war and peace, established alliances with other bands, and made decisions about trade with outsiders.

The Comanche believed that important decisions must be unanimous. When all the men agreed and a consensus was reached, the decision was announced to the people by criers. It was not always possible to achieve general agreement, but the Comanche believed that they needed unanimity in order to preserve harmony and unity within the band. If they could not all agree the council postponed the decision.

Women did not normally participate but could listen to the council meeting and speak before the council if called upon by the men.
A person who could not accept a council's decision would always leave the band. If enough people felt the same way, they might break away and form a new group with new leadership. Because of the need for consensus, a council sometimes followed rather than led popular opinion.

WAR CHIEF - Band councils recognized the most successful and respected warrior and chose him to be war chief for the band. The council based its decision on the individual's military exploits and the opinions of the other warriors. Civil leadership was separated from military leadership. The War Chief had almost always distinguished themselves in battle and were admired and respected.

During a war expedition the war leader was in charge. He directed the group and gave orders to the men, who had to obey him or leave the group. But even during a war expedition there were limits to the war chief's powers. Because people joined the groups voluntarily, they always had the right to leave at any time. The war leader's authority to tell people what to do lasted only as long as the raid. After the group returned to the band he lost his power to tell others what to do.

ANY COMANCHE A RAIDER - Although the Comanche bands recognized their outstanding warriors as the band war chiefs, any Comanche could lead a war party on a raid. A warrior who wanted to lead a raid could simply announce his plans to do so; if he had a reputation for bravery and success others might follow him. The band council did not have to authorize the raid. A warrior who had continued success and showed generosity by sharing the goods gathered on raids would gain respect, status, and greater influence within the group.

AUTHORITY - The war leader was the only Comanche who had the authority to direct others' behavior, and even he possessed that power for only a short time. The peace chief held power for a long time but also had only limited powers. The band council had only limited authority because it could make no decisions until or unless all the members of the band agreed.

FREEDOM TO LEAVE - Individuals always had the right to leave the band and ignore the decisions of the council or peace chief, or the orders of a war leader.

FLUID MOVEMENT - Each Comanche band operated independently. Sometimes a few bands camped together and sometimes band peace chiefs met with the peace chiefs and councils of other bands.

The Comanche population decline...

From a few Historical accounts it has been estimated that by the mid-18th century there were at least 20,000 Comanche living on the southern Plains. Epidemics of smallpox and
other diseases in the 1830s and 1840s caused a significant decline in the Comanche population. Other deprivations and war in the last half of the century would cause the population to drop dramatically, until by 1899 there were about 2,000 Comanche.

How did the Comanche use the buffalo...

The buffalo provided food, clothing, shelter, and tools for the Indians. The buffalo were most concentrated on the Great Plains. There is no way to know exactly how many buffalo there were in North America in the past, but historians estimate that there were more than 60 million buffalo when the Europeans first arrived.

The Great herds migrated with the seasons, but a large portion of the southern herd always remained south of the Arkansas River. This was perfect for the Comanche. Because of the animals’ continual presence on the southern plains, the Comanche always had an ample supply of buffalo.

FLASHBACK - Indian people had hunted buffalo since long before they acquired horses. Hunting on foot, native people used fire and stampedes to drive the buffalo off steep cliffs. Much of a herd would be killed, either from the fall itself, from being trampled by other animals, or from the arrows and lances of the hunters.

When they killed more animals than they could butcher, much meat and hide were wasted. After the Comanche got horses, they did not have to rely on the inefficient mass slaughter of buffalo that occurred when they had to drive entire herds off cliffs. Comanche hunters, mounted on horses, became superb buffalo hunters. And they only killed what was needed to survive.

HUNT SCENES – This television series will depict Buffalo hunts in all four seasons. There were plenty of buffalo in the region at every season so the Comanche could hunt them year-round.

The best time to hunt, however, was in the late fall. As winter approached the buffalo put on extra fat and grew thicker hides. Sometime in November the Comanche would leave their camps along the river valleys and move out onto the plains to hunt the winter buffalo. The hunters usually remained out on the plains until snow and ice drove them back to the sheltered camps.

Because small hunting parties could easily succeed among the great herds on the southern plains, the Comanche had no need for large, coordinated hunts.
Sometimes they selected a hunt leader who would decide when and where they would camp and hunt. But after they sighted the buffalo, however, the Comanche hunted individually.

Using their short wooden bows, the Comanche could drive an arrow through a buffalo at close range. Mounted on their best-trained hunting horses, Comanche hunters would charge in among the buffalo. Each Hunter would choose one and ride up from behind it. As he came alongside the beast he shot a numerous arrows into its body between the hip and rib cage.

Although most Comanche hunters used only a bow and arrows, some used a long wooden lance to spear the buffalo. They would ride alongside the buffalo and plunge the 14-foot lance into the great animal’s side.

The bow and arrow and the lance were such excellent weapons for hunting that the Comanche continued to rely solely on them even after they acquired guns. Muskets firing black powder were ill suited for buffalo hunting. The muskets had great range but were awkward to load and aim while on the back of a racing horse.

In time, Comanche warriors became skilled in loading and shooting their guns while on horseback, but they could shoot more arrows in less time than it took to fire and reload a gun. Moreover, they could not always get guns and ammunition from the traders, but they had an inexhaustible supply of the bows and arrows that they made themselves.

The buffalo provided ample food for the people as well as raw materials for their other needs. The Comanche used almost all of the animal and wasted little.

They ate the fresh meat and cut and dried the surplus meat for later use.

They used the stomach and intestines for water bags and boiled meat in the paunches.

They scraped out and cleaned the buffalo horns and used them for bowls, cups, and spoons.

They made scrapers and other tools from bones, some of which they split into sharp splinters for use as needles or awls.

They tanned buffalo hides, making warm robes and blankets from the thick winter pelts, clothing and teepee covers from scraped hides.

They fashioned bags and various other objects from hides.

Comanche women prepared buffalo hides for robes, teepee covers, and other uses. They skinned the buffalo and stretched the hides on wooden racks or staked them out on the ground. Using bone or metal scrapers they scraped the underside of the hide until all the
flesh was removed. When making tent covers they scraped both sides of the skin to remove the buffalo wool as well as the flesh.

When the hide was clean, the women rubbed a mixture of animal brains, livers, tree bark, grease, and water into it to tan and preserve it. They rubbed this tanning mixture into the hide for hours, then pulled and stretched the hide to make it soft and flexible. This process was repeated day after day until the skin was soft.

Although they relied primarily on the buffalo, the Comanche also hunted other animals of the Comancheria. They hunted elk, deer, and antelope and also used their meat for food, their hides for clothing, and the bones for tools.

**Making and using bows and arrows...**

The Comanche hunted with bows and arrows. There should be scenes in the series that show making and using the weapons... either in detail or in the background.

Although some Comanche used bows made from the horns of buffalo and elk, most used wooden bows.

Old Comanche men who could no longer hunt or go to war made most of the bows. It took great skill and months of preparation to make a good bow.

The Comanche used various kinds of wood, but the wood from the osage orange tree, also known as bois d'arc, or "wood for the bow." was the most popular. This tree, common along the river bottoms of the Comancheria, had wood that was strong, flexible, and durable. Wood for bows was cut from a still-green tree into four-foot lengths and scraped and shaved down into thin three-foot lengths.

Before any further work was done on the wood, it was allowed to dry. Drying might take several months, depending on the weather and the moisture in the wood.

Once dry, the bow was whittled down to its final shape and greased with animal fat to make it more flexible and water-resistant. The bow wood was then tightly wrapped with thin wet strips of buffalo sinew (tendon). The sinew was covered with glue made by boiling animal horns and hooves in water for hours. After the glue dried and hardened, the sinew shrunk to form a tight covering over the bow wood. Next the bowstring had to be prepared.

Bowstrings, too, were made by specialists, again usually older Comanche men. They shredded buffalo sinew into long fibrous strips and soaked the fibers in glue thinned with water. Then, while the fibers were still wet with glue, the men twisted them into a long,
single string. When the glue dried, the string would be strong and pliable. The string was then tied and glued to the bow. Finally, the bow was ready for use.

Often the same old men who made the bows and bowstrings were the specialists who made the arrows. Arrows had to be the proper length and weight in order to fly straight and true. Arrow-makers cut wood from dogwood and mulberry trees and shaped it into thin strips. The wood was then allowed to dry and, once dry, the arrows were scraped and carved down to the proper weight and size. Feathers, usually from wild turkeys or owls, were glued to one end and arrowheads were tied and glued to the other. Flint, which was easily worked, was the most popular material for arrowheads, but points were made from other types of stone and sometimes from sharpened pieces of bone and horn.

After the Comanche began trading with the Europeans in the 18th century, they began using metal for arrowheads. They cut, hammered, and filed down pieces of metal and fastened them to the arrows with glue and sinew.

The Comanche camp...

They lived in camps alongside a source of fresh water. Larger camps might stretch for miles along a stream or river. Within the camps, Comanche might set up their homes near those of their close relatives, but unlike other plains natives, they did not arrange their teepees in any special order.

When the weather was extremely cold, food was cooked inside the lodge, but otherwise cooking was done on larger fires outside.

During the hot southern Plains summers the Comanche often slept outside. They would erect a brush shelter, a simple flat-roofed arbor made of a wooden framework that was covered with leafy branches. The sides were left open. Here the Comanche could escape the sun and heat of the day and enjoy the cool breezes at night.

The Comanche teepee...

The Comanche lived in buffalo-skin teepees. This conical tent was practical and portable. A Comanche woman could set one up or take one down in about 15 minutes. Each teepee was made up of a framework of long slender wooden poles with a buffalo-skin cover.

The poles, usually made of pine or cedar, were from 12 to 20 feet long. The Comanche teepee was erected on a four-pole foundation.
Comanche women tied four poles together near one end and raised them up, setting the other ends firmly into the earth. The long ends extended out from the top. About 18 other poles were placed between the foundation poles and tied to them at the top. The ends of these poles, too, were inserted into the ground. The base of the teepee formed a circle 12 to 15 feet in diameter.

A covering of buffalo skin, tanned and with the wool removed, was stretched tightly over and attached to the wooden framework. To make the teepee cover, a woman sewed from 10 to 17 hides together, the number depending on the size of the skins. Teepees were usually 12 to 14 feet high.

Comanche men sometimes decorated the outside of their teepee by painting abstract designs and geometric figures on the teepee cover.

The hide cover was left open near the top of the teepee, just below where the lodge poles were tied together, to create a smoke hole. The size of the opening could be adjusted by folding or unfolding flaps of the teepee cover. The doorway was a small opening near the base of the teepees, directly below the smoke flap; a stiff piece of tanned leather or a large flap of bearskin covered it.

The teepee cover was held in place by stakes driven through the base and into the earth. In warm weather the women would not draw the cover all the way down to the ground when they set up their teepees but would leave a gap along the bottom to allow fresh air to enter and cool the interior. This also provided excellent ventilation and created a draft that carried smoke from the teepee fire up and out of the smoke hole.

Usually the Comanche hung a skin liner inside the lower part of the teepee. The liner was hung from the poles and the ends were tucked under the edges of the bed platforms around the inside. This liner protected the Comanche from the strong winds of the Comancheria, yet permitted fresh air to enter under the outside walls.

Inside, the teepee was simply furnished. Directly opposite the entrance, against the back wall, was the bed of the owner of the teepee. The beds of other family members were around the base.

Beds consisted of a soft pile of buffalo robes. Sometimes the robes were heaped on a low platform, constructed by stretching broad strips of rawhide across a wooden framework. These platforms raised the beds off the cold ground.

The Comanche stored their clothing, food, and any personal items in large pouches made of untanned buffalo hide. These leather pouches were kept under the beds, leaned against the walls, and hung from the lodge poles. The pouches were easy to make, pack, and carry.

A small fire was kept burning in the center of the teepee.
The should be a scene in which a Comanche is forced to sleep in a dugout sod house or cabin of an American. They comment that the tepee was warmer and more comfortable.

The teepee was sturdy and portable. It was warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

**Comanche clothing...**

**MEN** - Comanche clothing was practical and, like the teepee, made from natural materials of the Comancheria. Young boys seldom wore any clothing at all, unless the weather was cold. When they reached the age of eight or nine, they began wearing the clothing of an adult Comanche.

Men wore a leather belt with a breechclout. The breechclout was a long piece of buckskin that they brought up between their legs and looped over and under their belt in front and back. They wore close-fitting deerskin leggings to cover their legs.

The leggings were tied to their belt and extended down to their moccasins. The moccasins had soles made from thick, tough buffalo hide with soft deerskin uppers.

The Comanche usually wore nothing on their upper body, but in winter they wore heavy, warm buffalo robes around their shoulders and knee-length buffalo-hide winter boots. They sometimes wore robes made of bear, wolf, or coyote skins.

In the 19th century woven cloth replaced the buckskin breechclouts, and the men began wearing loose-fitting buckskin shirts. They decorated their shirts, leggings, and moccasins with fringe made of deerskin, animal fur, and human hair. They also decorated their shirts and leggings with patterns and shapes formed with beads and bits of metal.

Comanche men also wore bands of leather and strips of metal on their arms.

Comanche men took great pride in their hair, which they seldom cut, allowing it to grow very long. They arranged their hair with porcupine quill brushes, greased it, and parted it in the center from the forehead to the back of the neck. They painted the scalp along the part with yellow, red, or white clay or other colors and wore their hair in two long braids. They tied their braids with leather thongs or colored cloth and sometimes wrapped the braids with beaver fur.

They also braided a strand of hair from the top of their head. This slender braid dangling from their head was called a scalp lock and was decorated with colored bits of cloth, beads, and a single feather. The feather had no special meaning for the Comanche and was worn solely for decoration.
No fancy feather headdress will be shown in this series! The Comanche had no tradition of wearing the large feathered bonnets seen among the northern plains peoples. Only after they moved onto a reservation late in the 19th century would Comanche men adopt the typical plains headdress.

Comanche men rarely wore anything on their heads. If the winter was severely cold they might wear a brim-less, woolly buffalo hide hat. When they went to war some warriors wore a headdress made from the scalp of a buffalo's head. Comanche warriors cut away most of the hide from a buffalo head and scraped away most of the flesh, leaving only a portion of the woolly hair and the horns. This woolly, horned buffalo hat was only worn when raiding and was only worn by the Comanche.

Comanche men usually had pierced ears from which hung earrings of bits of shell or loops of brass or silver wire.

Comanche men also tattooed their face, arms, and chest with geometric designs.

They painted their face and body. Originally they had used paints made from berry juice and the colored clays of the Comancheria. Later, traders supplied them with vermilion (red pigment) and bright grease paints. There was no standard pattern for face and body painting among the Comanche and, with the exception of black paint, which was the color for war, there was no particular significance attached to specific colors.

Design and color were up to the individual and might have special meaning for some people. Special colors and designs might have been revealed to them in a dream. One Comanche might always paint himself in a particular way, whereas others might change their designs and colors whenever they felt like it. One might paint one side of his face white and the other side red. Another might paint an entire side of his body green while the other side would be yellow with black stripes.

WOMEN - Comanche women's clothing was also made from deerskin. Unlike the boys, young girls did not go naked. As soon as they could walk they wore a belt and breechclout. By about 12 or 13 years of age they began wearing the clothing of an adult Comanche woman.

Comanche women wore a long one-piece dress made of buckskin. The dress had a flared skirt and wide, long sleeves and was trimmed with buckskin fringe along the sleeves and hem. Beads and bits of metal were attached in geometric patterns.

Comanche women wore buckskin moccasins with buffalo-hide soles.

In the winter they, too, wore warm buffalo robes and tall, fur-lined buffalo-hide boots.

Comanche women did not let their hair grow as long as the men did. Young girls might wear their hair long and braided, but women parted their hair in the middle and kept it short. Like the men, they painted their scalp along their part with bright paint.
A female would pierce the outer edge of each ear with six or eight holes.

Comanche women might also tattoo their face, arms, and breasts. They were fond of body painting and were also free to paint themselves however they pleased. A popular pattern among Comanche women was to paint the insides of their ears a bright red and paint orange and red circles on their cheeks. They usually painted red and yellow lines around their eyes.

These people were not superstitious or religious...

All other Plains tribes practiced a ceremony known as the Sun Dance when they gathered together in great summer encampments. The Sun Dance required much energy and sacrifice, but Plains people believed that if it was conducted properly the Great Spirit would bless the people and give them great strength and a continuing supply of buffalo and other food.

Only once, in 1874, when they faced very hard times, did the Comanche conduct a Sun Dance, assisted by their friends to the north, the Kiowa, a Plains tribe that used the Sun Dance regularly. Only a few Comanche bands participated. The Comanche never held a Sun Dance again.

No military societies...

The Comanche were also unique among the Plains Indians in having no separate soldiers' societies. There were no fraternal groups. Comanche men were as brave as those of the Cheyenne or the Dakota Sioux, but they had no military societies. Nevertheless, they conquered the Comancheria and kept others out of their territory for more than a century and a half.

The Comanche art of war...

This is a violent story and there isn’t any escaping that. If you don’t want to make a brutal movie, then please just pass on this project and let someone else tell the story.

Since the early 1800s the Comanche engaged in a fierce struggle to take and then keep their land. First they fought the Apache and then the Europeans. Although not at war for
all of the next 175 years, they spent much of the time in conflict with the nations that surrounded them. The Comanche went to war not simply for individual glory, loot, and revenge, but for very real political and economic reasons as well.

On the Plains they came into conflict with the Apache people who were living there. The life-and-death struggle with the Apache for the precious resources of the southern Plains was a bitter battle with a critical outcome. The Comanche fought to acquire the buffalo and horses of the region, and the Apache fought to keep them.

After driving the Apache from the heart of the region, the Comanche continued fighting on their borders, for they were surrounded by other native groups that coveted their horses, their women, their children, and their land.

Apaches remained in the west and the south. The Pawnee, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Kiowa to the north were early threats. The Osage living to the northeast challenged the Comanche, as did the Wichita, Taovayas, Tawakoni, and other Caddoan-speaking people living along the Red River. Still other Caddoan groups—the Hasinai, Anadarko, Nabedache, and Nacono on the east as well as the Tonkawa to the south and east—would continue to threaten them.

They fought the Pawnee and the Osage for the buffalo country along the Arkansas River. They did not fight all of their neighbors at all times, and not all Comanche bands fought against the same groups.

At times some bands might make peace with people living near them or create temporary alliances with others.

Loosely organized in small bands and larger regional groups, the Comanche never fought together as a single people. Because of their fragmentary political organization they never maintained a single policy or united front. They never fought one another, however, and frequently their bands would join to fight against a common enemy.

The Comanche were skilled warriors and fierce soldiers, mounted on horseback and armed with bows and arrows, lances, clubs, or muskets. They had fought as foot soldiers before they acquired horses, and afterward they became superb cavalry soldiers.

They could attack at great distances from their camps, thus keeping enemies away from their families.

Comanche raiders would sometimes travel more than 600 miles to raid. They traveled hundreds of miles to punish enemies and acquire property. They would attack quickly and then race for home with their loot.

Warfare brought them mules, horses, and captives. All were useful to the Comanche. The horses and mules were used for transportation or food.
Male captives were usually put to death, but women and children would be put to work and, in time, married or adopted into the tribe.

Livestock as well as captives could be traded for European metal goods, knives, needles, awls, textiles, tobacco, food, or—most important of all trade goods—guns and ammunition.

The raids kept enemies at a distance from their homes and hunting grounds and thus made life more secure for the Comanche people.

Engaged in ongoing struggle, the Comanche created ways to encourage bravery and military ability. Because it was essential for Comanche survival that they keep intruders out of the Comancheria, their culture encouraged military success.

The life of a warrior was an expected and worthy role for Comanche men. Comanche warriors protected the Comanche people and kept them safe and secure. Successful soldiers were respected and were rewarded with status and power.

The Comanche had a formal system for honoring warriors: They awarded coups, or military honors, to soldiers according to the degree of bravery a particular act merited. Killing was not essential for displaying bravery. Simply touching a live enemy with one's hand was considered an exceptional act of courage.

Rushing in among a crowd of enemy warriors and striking them with a stick or club was a very brave act.

Killing an enemy from a great distance with a gun or bow and arrow did not, from the Comanche point of view, require as much courage as killing an enemy with a club or knife at close quarters.

Scalping was not highly regarded by the Comanche. They took scalps—cutting around the head just below the hairline and then pulling off the entire scalp—but scalping a dead enemy was not especially honored. Scalps themselves were seen only as visible proof of Comanche success, not proof of bravery.

The life of captives...

Maria is a Mexican captive in our story. She was taken from a horse ranch deep in Mexico. The story of Cynthia Ann Parker (the Comanche’s most famous captive) is the subject of many book and movie, so this is a spin on this character.
Captives were often treated very roughly and brutalized at first to frighten them and so control them more easily. The Comanche could not take male prisoners because they had no prisons and adult men were enemy warriors and therefore dangerous. The Comanche killed the captured men and took the women and children as prisoners.

Captives were sometimes tortured, but torture was not a common practice; the personality and character of the captor determined whether his captives were tortured. Though some Comanches did mutilate and murder their captives, most Comanches would put them to work. Others might trade them for European goods.

Comanche captives who accepted the Comanche and their way of life were well treated and respected as Comanche. And, in time, they could marry or adopt the captive into their families.

Maria should be adopted into Comanche society. She might make a good mate for Buffalo Hump’s son, Leaning Coyote.

**Scenes that show the relationship with the Apache...**

The Comanche recognized the value of the land and began seizing it from the Apache. By the 1730s, the Comanche were busy forcing the Apache out of the southern Plains. While not totally defeated yet, the Apache were being forced into western New Mexico.

To the south and west lived various groups of Apache. In the south the Li-pan Apache were constant threats to the Comanche, as were the Mescalero, Jicarilla, Palomas, and Farone Apache to the west. The Apache and Comanche were almost always at war with one another.

The Apaches were among the first Indians to get horses, and they, too, were buffalo hunters. Unlike the Comanche, however, they were also farmers, probably having learned from Pueblo Indians how to practice agriculture.

Their crops of corn, beans, and squash supplemented the food they gathered by hunting. Their small farm plots restricted the Apache to certain locations, for they had to stay in one area to tend their gardens. Their known locations made it possible for the Comanche to find and attack them.

The Apache, hovering near their rancheria gardens, were easy targets for Comanche raiders, who began attacking the Apache in the early 18th century.

A rancheria is a small settlement often consisting of relatively permanent huts occupied by Amerindians. In this case we are talking about Apache, who were not entirely mobile.
The Apache bands, based on separate rancherias, fought separately, and separately they were attacked, destroyed, and driven from the land.

Operating singly or combining their forces, Comanche bands sought out and attacked the Apache. They destroyed the rancherias and stole Apache horses, women, and children.

This war between tribes lasted for much of the 18th century.

The Comanche drove the Farones, Palomas, Ji-carillas, and Mescaleros west into the mountains of New Mexico and the Li-pans south to the Rio Grande.

**Other Indian wars...**

The Comanche were surrounded by aggressive Indians. The Pawnee were a large tribe that always posed a threat to the Comanche in the north, where both competed for the buffalo.

To the northeast, the Osage, although less numerous than the Comanche, had greater access to French guns. They also had horses. Always better armed than the Comanche, the Osage roamed and hunted in the Arkansas and Canadian river valleys and remained a threat until the 1830s.

The Ton-kawa, always a threat to the Comanche, lived farther to the south. They fought with the Comanche as both competed for hunting territory in central Texas.

North of the Comanche lived the Ute. Although a distantly related people with whom the Comanche had been friendly in the early 18th century, the two became rivals later in that century. They fought one another for years, competing for horses and buffalo as well as access to the goods of the Pueblo Indians and Spaniards of New Mexico.

**Why were the Comanche’s so successful...**

The Comanche lived between the frontiers of Spanish and French territory. They had access to the largest concentration of buffalo, Spanish horses and French guns. The French would almost give them guns, hoping they would be used on the Spanish. Although they always had more horses than guns, the combination made the Comanche particularly powerful among the Plains Indians.
The relationship with the Wichita...

The Wichita were the Wal-Mart of the Southwest. Traders, and expert bargainers!

The Wichita were east of the Comanche. Although the Comanche occasionally fought with these people, for the most part they maintained peace with them. There was a practical reason for doing so, the French came up the Red River from Louisiana to trade at Wichita villages, and that was where the Comanche could acquire the guns they needed to fight the Apache, Pawnee, and Osage.

The Wichita established two large villages, located near present-day Rowland, Texas, that served as a trading center. This location, which mistakenly came to be known as Spanish Fort, was important for Comanche trade throughout the 18th century. They brought horses, mules, hides, meat, and Apache captives that they exchanged for Wichita corn and beans and French metal tools and weapons.

War with the Spanish...

The Comanche did not have a unified or consistent policy toward the Spanish. Their bands in the north and west were near the Spanish of New Mexico, while the bands in the south were near the Spanish of Texas.

The northern and western bands would sometimes rob the Spanish as well as the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico, taking cattle, horses, mules, and captives for food and trade, but at other times they left off raiding in favor of peace and trade. In retaliation for Comanche raids the Spanish, aided by Pueblo warriors, searched them out on the Plains. Occasionally their efforts met with success, but more often they were failures, for the highly mobile Comanche were hard to find and defeat.

But there were times when the Comanche felt it was tactically advisable to be at peace with the Spanish and Pueblo Indians, who held fairs at which other Indians could trade for food, tobacco, cloth, blankets, metal tools, and livestock. The trade fairs held at the Taos and Pecos pueblos were the most important, but there were others as well.

The Comanche came to the fairs in northern New Mexico and traded their buffalo hides, deerskins, buffalo robes, and dried meat for corn, tobacco, knives, horses, and mules. The Comanche also brought to the trade fairs the Spaniards and Indians who they had captured in the south.
They traded these captives to the Spanish of New Mexico, who always purchased the freedom of Spanish prisoners and tried to secure that of Indian captives also. Unfortunately, this encouraged the Comanche to take even more prisoners.

Comanche trade was important to the economy of New Mexico, whose settlers and Indians alike needed the meat and hides brought in by the Plains people. The Spanish also had political reasons for encouraging this trade relationship: They believed that by maintaining friendly relations with the Plains Indians, especially the Comanche, who controlled the region between French Louisiana and Spanish New Mexico, they could keep the French out of the region. They also believed both that trade would create friendship and bring an end to the frequent Comanche raids and that regulating trade would give them some control over these Indians.

Trade for the Spanish goods on which they were increasingly dependent was important to the Comanche, but they were also more than willing to take what they wanted by raiding the Pueblos and the Spanish. For most of the 18th century the Comanche relationship with the Spanish and Pueblos was an uneasy one, with periods of peace interrupted by outbreaks of theft and violence.

The relationship of the southern Comanche bands with the Spanish of Texas, on the other hand, was unremittingly hostile.

Comanche extended their reach beyond the Spaniards in Texas. They began raiding farther south, deep into Mexico, to get livestock, captives, and other loot to exchange with the Wichita and French traders on the Red River or the Spanish and Pueblo Indians at Taos, Pecos, or Santa Fe.

When the Spanish were at peace with a group of Comanche, they were convinced that they had made peace with all of the Comanche. The Comanche, however, had a different notion. Each band was independent of the others. No one Comanche could speak for another.

A particularly influential band leader might be able to control his band, but he could never control any of the other Comanche bands. Also, western bands might in good faith establish peace with the Spanish of New Mexico, yet continue to raid the Spanish in Texas and Mexico; southern bands might make peace with the Spanish of Texas and raid in New Mexico. They were not being dishonest or treacherous: They made peace on an individual or band basis with other individuals or communities. As they lacked overall tribal unity, they did not recognize the unity of the Spanish.

They believed that each band was justified in attacking and stealing from any group of people with whom it had not established peace.

The Spanish were also practicing a kind of double-dealing: Those in New Mexico continued to trade with the Comanche, knowing full well that the horses and captives
came from the Spanish in Texas and Mexico. They valued their own peace more than they valued the safety and peace of their compatriots in the south.

A full mutual understanding of what peaceful relations involved was particularly difficult for two groups that did not share the same ideas about political power, peace, and war.

As Spain became more involved in European wars, it began to neglect its frontier settlements in North America. With fewer troops and funds the border communities in Texas and northern Mexico were left defenseless. The settlers there remained subject to Comanche raids and suffered tremendously.

Every spring, as warm weather began to return and the Comanche were assured of ample grass for their horses, they left their camps in New Mexico and headed south. The Comanche were frequently joined by their new allies, the Kiowa, and together the raiders from both tribes rode south to steal cattle and horses.

The Spanish defenses in northern Mexico continued to deteriorate, and the Comanche began raiding deeper and deeper into Mexico and stole thousands of horses and mules.

As conditions in Europe led to greater political instability in North America, the Comanche enjoyed increased prosperity and success.

Mexico, which achieved independence from Spain in 1821, was no better able to protect its northern outposts. Comanche raids there continued well into the early 19th century.

The Santa Fe traders...

At about the same time, Anglo traders began crossing the northern part of the Comancheria. In 1821 William Becknell, a Missouri trader, left Missouri with several wagonloads of goods to trade with the Comanche. Before he reached them, however, he learned that Mexico had achieved its independence from Spain. Becknell quickly changed his plans and headed west to Santa Fe, where he was greeted warmly by the New Mexicans. Living on the extreme northern frontier of Mexico, New Mexicans had little access to manufactured goods and were eager to trade with Becknell. The Santa Fe trade proved so profitable that a steady stream of Missouri traders soon began traveling west every year. To reach Santa Fe, their wagon trains had to cross the northern Comancheria. They seldom attacked the Santa Fe wagons.

The Comanche did not believe that the American newcomers crossing their land were a serious threat, and they knew they were potential trading partners, so they largely ignored the Anglo-Americans and seldom raided the wagons crossing to Santa Fe.
The Indian Removal Act...

In 1830 Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, and the government began forcing thousands of eastern Indians to move west. Indians were moved to an area known as the Indian Territory, a region in present-day eastern Oklahoma and Kansas and western Missouri and Arkansas. Thousands of Cherokee, Delaware, Kickapoo, Shawnee, and other eastern tribes moved to the prairies, and they began hunting on the southern Plains. The buffalo they killed were from herds that the Comanche believed were theirs. To protect their major food source, the Comanche fought the Indian newcomers whenever they met them.

The Eastern Indian intrusions to the north and east disturbed the Comanche. They determinedly fought the eastern Indians. The U.S. government, making efforts to convince many eastern Indians to move west, feared that Comanche violence in Indian Territory would give eastern tribes good reason to refuse to move there. The government sent delegations in 1832 and 1833 to meet with the Indians and establish peace between the Comanche and the eastern tribes. These first expeditions were unable to find the Comanche, and the United States did not have its first official contact with them until 1834. After several meetings, the Comanche agreed to meet and trade with the Osage, who had access to merchandise from eastern traders.

For the next 20 years, in late July or early August, the Osage brought manufactured goods to the Great Salt Plain 'between the Arkansas and Cimarron rivers. The Comanche drove thousands of horses and mules to this plain, where they traded them for guns, ammunition, and other goods. The Osage took the horses and mules to Missouri and Arkansas and traded them to Americans. This lucrative trade guaranteed the peace between these old rivals, and both groups enjoyed the benefits of it for years.

After 1833, although the Comanche resented the presence of the eastern Indians on their borders, they attacked those Indians only when they ventured onto the Comancheria.

Anglo settlers in Texas...

In the 1820s American colonizers began bringing settlers into Mexican owned Texas. The Mexicans hoped that these American colonies would serve as a barrier to keep the Comanche away from the Mexican communities of northern Mexico and so did not prevent the colonization of Texas. Within a few years, several thousand Anglo-Americans had arrived, largely through the efforts of colonizers such as Haden Edwards, Green DeWitt and Stephen Austin. The settlers had little contact with the Comanche. Most of their communities were east of the Colorado River, outside of the Comancheria and out of the path of Comanche raiders on their way to Mexico.
The Comanche continued their southern raids into Mexico but largely ignored the Anglo-Texas settlements. On one occasion, Stephen Austin was captured by a group of Comanche raiders while on a trip to Mexico City, but they let him and his horses go and took only his Spanish grammar book. Austin was unharmed.

However after a time, Texans became definitely a threat to the Comanche. The early Anglo-Texans did not move into central Texas and were not in the path of Comanche raiders on their way to Mexico.

In time, however, more and more settlers began moving to Comanche fringe areas, where they became subject to attacks. The settlers brought livestock, including a new breed of horse that was stronger and larger. The Texas settlers did not travel or settle together but instead moved west in family groups and settled on small, isolated farms at a distance from one another. These settlers, possessing attractive livestock and living alone on isolated farms, were soon prime targets of Comanche attacks. Their raids on Anglo-Texas settlements began around 1835.

At the time, Texans were involved in their brief war for independence from Mexico, and they focused little attention on the Comanche raiders until they defeated the Mexicans the following year.

In 1836 Texas became an independent country and established its own Indian policy. Texan leaders David Burnett and Sam Houston attempted to make peace with the Comanche. Houston, who had lived for years among the Cherokee, was sympathetic to the Comanche. He believed that if they were treated honorably and honestly by Texans, they would respond by maintaining peaceful relations. Houston sent several delegates to the Comancheria to request meetings, and several Comanche leaders traveled to San Antonio. A peace agreement was drawn up by the two sides.

The Indians wanted the whites to stay out of the Comancheria and out of their way when they went south to raid in Mexico. Houston was unable to guarantee that whites would stay out of Comanche country, but he did promise to establish trading posts among the Comanche in exchange for peace. Houston's agreement was not approved by the Senate of Texas and trading posts were not established. The Texans did little to convince the Comanche of their good intentions.

After Texas's independence more Americans moved there. The Texas government advertised offers of free land in Texas to citizens of England and the United States. Flyers were posted in many European and American cities as the Republic of Texas attempted to increase its non-Indian population. The Texas Republic, eager to attract settlers, began offering 1,280 acres of free land to all new arrivals.

There was an economic crisis in the United States in 1837, and to avoid unemployment and poverty thousands of newcomers flooded into Texas and began moving west into Comanche country. To protect their land, the Comanche attacked the settlers. Now free of
other military responsibilities, Texans formed local military units and groups of Indian fighters to protect their people and drive the Indians away. The Texas Rangers, which had been organized in 1836 to protect the Texans from Indians, began fighting the Comanche.

These Texas fighters soon discovered, as the Spanish had in 18th-century New Mexico, that the best way to end Comanche onslaughts was to pursue the raiders back to their homeland and attack them there. Comanche raids were followed by retaliatory attacks by the Texans.

In 1839 a group of Texans, guided by some Lipan Apache, surprised a Comanche camp near the mouth of the San Saba River and killed a number of them.

The Council House Massacre...

The Texans' attacks within the Comancheria were so successful that in early 1840 three Comanche leaders came to San Antonio and asked to make peace. In March of the same year 65 more Comanches came to San Antonio to negotiate a peace agreement. Twelve of the leaders, led by their spokesman, Muguara, the most important band leader, went inside the Council House while the women, children, and other men waited in the square in front of the building.

The Texans demanded the return of all white captives held by the Comanche. Muguara had brought in one white woman and claimed that he had no more captives. He was probably telling the truth, for captives belonged to the individuals who took them, and not to the tribe as a whole. Although other Comanche bands surely held captives, Muguara had no power to make them turn their prisoners over to the Texans. Comanche leaders could rarely force even members of their own bands to return captives, and they certainly could not return captives held by other bands. It was simply impossible.

The Texans refused to believe Muguara and, bringing a group of armed soldiers into the council room, announced that Muguara and his men would be held hostage until all the whites had been returned. At this, the Comanches jumped up and tried to escape but were shot by the soldiers as they fled the room. Some fought their way out with knives and continued fighting outside the Council House. The fight was a brief one. When it was over the Texans had killed all 12 of the Comanche leaders and 23 of the others and made prisoners of the 27 surviving Comanche women and children. The massacre of their people at San Antonio enraged the Comanche and convinced them that it was useless to talk with the whites, for the Texans could not be trusted.

Isomania and the Mission San Jose...
Shortly afterward a southern Comanche leader, Isomania, rode into San Antonio alone and challenged the Texans to fight him. The residents of San Antonio remained inside their homes and refused to meet his challenge. Isomania then took his warriors to the Mission San Jose where the Comanche prisoners were being held and demanded their release. However, the soldiers holding the prisoners remained inside the stonewalls of the mission and refused to speak with the Comanche. Disgusted with the Texans, Isomania and his band rode away.

The Great Raid of 1840...

The Council House Massacre was followed by a series of retaliatory attacks by the Comanche, and a pattern of raid and retaliation began anew. In August a large group of Comanche attacked and raided Texas settlements all the way to the Gulf Coast. Texans pursued the Comanche and defeated them along Plum Creek.

Massacre near present-day Colorado, Texas...

Texas Rangers, soldiers, and local militia continued to go after the Comanche, following them into the Comancheria and attacking them there. No longer were the Comanche safe in the heart of the Comancheria. Two months after Plum Creek a group of Texans and Lipan Apache surprised a Comanche village deep in the Comancheria, near present-day Colorado, Texas. They killed more than 130 Comanche and captured more than 500 horses. To stop the attacks in the Comancheria, the Comanche gave Texans a brief period of peace and directed most of their raids against the Mexicans south of the Rio Grande.

The Republic of Texas...

This peace was brief because settlers continued to arrive. The Republic of Texas was eager to have settlements throughout its territory and increased their advertising in Europe for settlers. And as a result, during the early 1840s, thousands of Germans and Irish poured into Texas, settling in the west and north, closer than earlier settlers to the Comancheria. The Comanche continued to concentrate their raids on Mexico, but as more whites moved west they came within range of Comanche raids.
Throughout the 1940s, representatives of the Texas government attempted to meet and negotiate with the Comanche, but the Indians, remembering the treachery of the Council House, were reluctant to come in to talk with the Texans.

In 1843 several Texas agents traveled north and met with a large group of the Penateka band. Some Comanche wanted to kill the whites, but their leaders convinced them to respect the flag of truce and after listening to the Texan's proposals to let the delegates go.

In 1844, Sam Houston, the president of Texas, met with a group of Comanche at Tehuacana Creek. The Comanche once again agreed to make peace if the Texans would stay out of their land. Houston knew that he could neither stop the tide of white settlers nor guarantee the Comanche any land, and without such promises no peace agreement would last. There were some agreements: Promises were made on both sides but neither side was able to keep them. Whites intruded into the Comancheria, the Comanches raided, and violence continued along the Comanche-Texas frontier.

The United States of America...

In 1845 the Republic of Texas became one of the United States. In the next 3 years, 70,000 people moved into Texas, many of them migrating west and settling near the Comanche. At the same time thousands of eastern Indians who had been removed to the West continued to hunt in the territory of the northern Comanche. The Comanche lashed out against all invaders, but now it was the responsibility of the federal government to deal with them.

U.S. government representatives, in hopes of securing peace in the north and the south, met with some of the Comanche in 1846. At this meeting, the southern Comanche agreed to remain at peace with the United States, stop all raids, return all stolen property, give up all their captives, and trade with only those traders licensed by the government. In return the government promised to keep whites out of Comanche territory, establish trading posts for the Comanche, and send blacksmiths to repair their guns and tools. This treaty, like the ones before it, was not observed by either side.

The United States could not guarantee land for the Comanche in Texas, for this state entered the Union under very special circumstances. The United States paid for the Texas debt and gave up any claim to ownership of land in Texas.

As a result of the special circumstances, the land in Texas was legally owned by the state, and therefore the federal government could not grant any of the land to the Comanche. For their part, Texans absolutely refused to give up any of their land to the Indians. So despite the promises of 1846, whites continued to trespass on Comanche lands, and the Comanche responded with violence.
The 1849 Gold Adventurers...

In 1848 gold was discovered in California, and by 1849 thousands of adventurers were crossing the United States on their way to the goldfields. Many traveled by a northern route along the Santa Fe Trail and the Canadian River. Thousands more passed through south Texas on their way to southern California. These travelers crossed the southern Comancheria, killing Comanche game, disrupting the seasonal movement of the buffalo, and using precious wood, water, and grass—all vital to Comanche survival. The Comanche resented this new wave of invaders, called forty-niners, who consumed their limited resources and disrupted their lives, and they attacked the newcomers.

The gold-seekers did further damage to the Indians by bringing diseases with them. In 1849 the Comanche were attacked by epidemics of cholera and smallpox, which were especially devastating to the Comanche, who had kept outsiders away from their land and had never been exposed to the diseases. The Comanche had therefore escaped the severe episodes of European diseases that struck many other Indian groups and now had no immunity to them at all. After the invasion of the Comancheria in the 19th century, cholera and smallpox killed hundreds of Comanche, including almost all of the leaders of the southern Penateka bands.

Whites push other tribes into the Comancheria...

As whites poured into Texas they began pushing other Texas Indians out onto Comanche territory. Settlers drove the Tonkawa, Waco, and Wichita bands west. At the same time Kickapoo, Delaware, Shawnee, Cherokee, and other removed tribes continued to hunt on Comanche land in the northeast and kill Comanche buffalo, deer, and other game. With increased white intrusions and Indian invasions the Comanche had to compete for a diminishing supply of buffalo.

A Matter of Self Defense...

Although thousands of buffalo remained, there were clearly no longer enough for all of the Indians and all of the whites. The Comanche required buffalo for food, clothing, and shelter and could not allow others to take away the source of their livelihood. They attacked the people who invaded their land, killed their buffalo, and threatened their lives.
The Moving Line of Forts...

In 1849 the government created a line of forts across Texas to protect white settlers. Beginning in the north at the Cross Timbers, the government built a series of forts reaching south to the Rio Grande to act as a barrier between white settlers and the Comanche. These early forts provided some protection for the whites and encouraged them to move deeper into Comanche territory.

Within two years settlement had passed the barrier of forts and in 1851 the government had to set up a new line of forts in the west.

In 1853 government representatives met once again with some of the Comanche to seek peace. Both sides agreed that peace and mutual respect were better than war. But once again little was accomplished, as neither side lived up to the treaty.

Texas establishes a reservation system...

Most Americans believed that there were only two ways to end the conflict between Indians and whites: to kill the Indians or put an end to their Indian ways of life. In 1855 federal agents finally convinced the Texans to cede some lands to establish a reservation system for the thousands of Indians in the state. The reservation system was a revival of an old idea of how to deal with Indian peoples.

Officials began a policy to encourage the Indians to give up their culture, or assimilate. The policy set up a system that would force Indians to give up most of their land and live on only the small portion that would be reserved for them. Indians were to move to these reservations and remain there, where they would live in small groups, separated from other Indians and unable to practice their traditional ways of life. Officials believed that they would soon see that the way of life practiced by white Americans was far better and would then readily give up their old ways to adopt the new.

The government agency in charge of handling matters concerning Indians, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), sent agents to the reservations to teach the Indians how to farm and live like white people. Missionaries and Indian agents taught the Indians about Christianity and the English language.

Across the West, Indians were forced to move onto reservations. Texas grudgingly gave up two small parcels of land in the north along the Brazos River and the Clear Fork of the Brazos. These two reservations were too small to support all the Indians in Texas, yet the tribes were expected to move there nonetheless. Most did not.
The remnants of the various Caddoan tribes were placed on one reservation, and a group of southern Comanche was convinced to go to the other. Some Penateka moved onto the Comanche reservation, but most refused to settle down on the small piece of ground along the Brazos River and continued to live on the Comancheria as they had for centuries.

**Mexico was cut off...**

In 1857 and 1858 Comanche raids in Texas increased. The line of forts constructed to protect Texans had made it difficult and dangerous for the Comanche to go south to Mexico. Instead of discouraging Comanche raids, however, the barrier that kept them away from Mexico caused them to focus their raids on Texas.

Unfortunately for the Comanche, they now had to contend with not only the experienced Texas Indian fighter units but also soldiers of the U. S. Army, who pursued the Indian raiders into the interior and attacked them in the north, south, east, and west. By the late 1850s the Comanche, surrounded by numerous, powerful, and well-armed enemies, were not safe anywhere in the Comancheria.

**Robert Neighbors and the attacks on peaceful indians...**

Texas settlers, unable to find the raiding Comanche, frequently attacked and robbed the Indians living peacefully on the Texas reservations. Attacks became so severe that the BIA's agent for the Texas Indians, Robert Neighbors, became convinced that unless the Indians were moved they would be destroyed. He convinced the federal government to provide land for them outside of Texas, and in July 1859 moved them north across the Red River into Indian Territory. The Indians were forced to move quickly and were unable to take all of their possessions. After moving the Indians north, Neighbors returned to Texas to complete his report on their removal. He stopped briefly at Belknap, and when he criticized the attacks on the peaceful Indians a Texan murdered him.

Only 384 Comanches were among the Indians moved north by Neighbors. Those Comanche living off the reservation continued to be attacked by the Texans and federal troops and were in deplorable condition by 1860.
The American Civil War...

Fortunately for the Comanche the Civil War broke out in 1861. Union and Texas soldiers were busy fighting each other. There were fewer troops available to chase the Comanche, so most of the White raids on the Comancheria ended during the war. Both Northern and Southern forces approached the Comanche and asked for peace. The Comanche talked to both and for the most part did not take sides in the conflict. They enjoyed the brief peace and impartially stole horses and mules from both the Union and the Confederacy.

First Battle of Adobe Walls...

In 1864, responding to increased Kiowa raids on the Santa Fe trail, the federal government sent troops into the Comancheria. Army officials in New Mexico turned to an experienced frontier fighter and settler, Christopher ("Kit") Carson, to lead this army. He had spent most of his life in the Southwest as a hunter, trapper, guide, and soldier and was very familiar with both the land and its people.

Carson and his soldiers entered the Comancheria and attacked two large camps of Kiowa and Comanche on the Canadian River near the site of an old trading post known as Adobe Walls. Carson did little damage for he was clearly outnumbered, but he had succeeded in penetrating the Comancheria and attacking the Comanche and Kiowa where they had always been safe before. Their control of their land would soon be over.

Second Battle of Adobe Walls...

In 1873, Ishatai, a Quahadi Comanche, began preaching to his people on the Plains about a way to return to the good times of the past. Ishatai told his people that he had ascended into the heavens and spoken with the Great Spirit. The Great Spirit told him to gather the Comanche and lead them in a Sun Dance. The Comanche had never before practiced the Sun Dance, but the desperate circumstances of 1873-74, when the buffalo were almost gone, convinced them to listen to Ishatai.

They agreed to perform a Sun Dance to gain the favor of the Great Spirit and gather its powers. Ishatai led the Comanche in their first Sun Dance. When it was over, he told them they must go out to drive the whites from the southern Plains. He claimed that he could protect his followers from the white men's bullets, and that after they had driven the whites away the buffalo would come back. Confident that they had the protection of
Ishatai’s spiritual power, a large contingent of Comanche, Kiowa, and Cheyenne set out to drive the whites from the land.

They chose to begin their attack on a small trading post on the Canadian River, near the site of Kit Carson’s attack in 1864. Adobe Walls was a small outpost made up of several adobe and sod buildings where white buffalo hunters gathered. At the Medicine Lodge meeting the government had promised to keep buffalo hunters north of the Arkansas, but it had not been able to keep them from going further west.

Inventors in eastern states had created a new process to convert buffalo hides into a tough leather that was used to make conveyor belts for factories. As the nation rapidly industrialized in the years following the Civil War, this new market for buffalo hides became quite large. To provide hides for eastern factories, hundreds of hunters went west, crossing the Arkansas and killing thousands of buffalo on the southern Plains. They killed thousands of buffalo that the Comanche and the Kiowa believed belonged to them.

The Comanche, Kiowa, and Cheyenne planned a dawn attack on the trading post at Adobe Walls to surprise the hunters. Unfortunately for the Indians, the hunters had spent most of the night repairing a roof beam in one of the buildings. Instead of surprising a sleeping camp, the Indian war party confronted a wide-awake group of hunters armed with large, powerful, and accurate buffalo-hunting rifles.

The hunters stayed behind the adobe walls and easily drove off the attacking Indians. Although the Comanche and Kiowa outnumbered the hunters, it became clear that Ishatai’s power was not strong enough to defeat the whites.

After several unsuccessful charges against the walls and the deadly guns, the Indians gave up and by late afternoon most of them had drifted away. This fiasco at Adobe Walls would not end the violence, but it did end the Indians’ belief in help from the Sun Dance.

The murder of fifteen-hundred Horses...

The Comanche continued to raid that summer, but they were pursued by well-armed soldiers who invaded the Comancheria from all sides. Troops from Fort Union in New Mexico, Fort Sill in Indian Territory, and Fort Concho in Texas went after the Comanche.

In the summer of 1874 soldiers were sent out with orders to drive the Comanche and Kiowa onto the reservation or kill them. Throughout the summer the Indians were attacked by the soldiers. In October Colonel Ranald Mackenzie surprised a large group of Quahadi Comanche camped in Palo Duro Canyon. Mackenzie attacked and his men set fire to the Comanche camp, destroying their teepees, clothing, and food. Most of the Comanche escaped, but Mackenzie’s men killed more than 1,500 horses that the Indians had abandoned as they fled the fire and destruction.
The surrender of 1874...

Hounded on all sides in the summer and fall of 1874, the Comanche were left in a weakened condition as winter began. Many had no horses, little food, and inadequate shelter. Now even the grim conditions on the reservation seemed better than those out on the Plains. Many Comanche, in order to escape the soldiers and the hunger of a Plains winter, moved to the reservation voluntarily. More came reluctantly, with them would be over.

They began a program to convert the Comanche from nomadic hunters to sedentary farmers, but this program was never successful. Ten Bears's words at Medicine Lodge express it best. “I was born upon the prairie, where the wind blew free and there was nothing to break the light of the sun. I was born where there were no enclosures and where everything drew a free breath. I want to die there and not remain within walls. I know every stream and every wood between the Rio Grande and the Arkansas. I have hunted and lived over that country. I live like my fathers before me and like them I lived happily.”

The last band to surrender...

By the spring of 1875 most had reported to the reservation. Those Comanche who refused to go to the reservation continued their old way of life. They continued to follow the buffalo and hunt, although by the late 1860s the herds became smaller and smaller as more and more people hunted them. Those who stayed on the Plains had a cold and hungry winter.

One Quahadi band alone remained on the Plains. In May 1875 Mackenzie sent word to them to come in to the reservation or face attack. The Quahadi broke their camps on top of the breaks of the Llano Estacado and headed for the reservation. On June 2 their leader, Quanah Parker, arrived with his people at the reservation.

Colonel Mackenzie would come to like Parker, the son of Peta Nocona, a Quahadi leader, and Cynthia Ann Parker, a white woman. She had been captured as a child during one of the first Comanche attacks on the Anglo-Texas frontier in 1836. Quanah had become an outstanding warrior among the Quahadi, and was in his twenties when he surrendered his band.

Once on the reservation he quickly gained power and influence among Comanche from other bands. The Quahadi leader was apparently willing to cooperate and compromise.
He accepted change on some issues but used his power to protect Comanche traditional practices that were important to his people. An extremely intelligent and skillful man, he operated successfully in both the Comanche and white worlds and eventually became the most powerful Comanche leader on the reservation.

The last indignity...

The Comanche reservation was covered with the thick grass that had once supported the buffalo, and it was ideal for raising horses and other livestock. Although most of their horses had been taken from them by the army, some herds remained. Texas horse thieves, however, began to cross the Red River to steal Comanche horses and mules and drive them back to Texas.

The federal government did not try to recover the Indians' livestock and would not allow them to leave the reservation to do it for themselves. When the Comanche pursued the thieves into Texas they were punished for leaving the reservation. At times Texas Rangers killed any Comanches they discovered in Texas.

In 1880, Congress made it illegal for the Comanche to enter the state of Texas.

Texans continued to enter the Comanche reservation and steal horses and mules.

While some Texans were stealing Comanche livestock others began stealing Comanche natural resources. Once the Indians were confined to the reservation Texas ranchers began illegally using the reservation land for pasture. Some ranchers drove their cattle onto the Comanche reservation and sometimes built corrals and camps on Comanche land. Others frequently drove their cattle across reservation land and used Comanche grass and water.

And there was nothing the Comanches could do about this indignity.