

THE WAR OF THE REDWOODS

FADE-IN:

EXT. SHETLAND, CA - ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAWN

HEAVY RAIN hammers small dwellings and house trailers at the foot of a steep hillside, covered mostly with tree stumps.

TITLE OVER: Shetland, CA January 1, 1997 - 7:34 a.m.

Side-by-side double wide trailers. Sign in front of one with an arrow pointing next door: KELLY BROPHY. Next door, a similar sign points back at the first: KYLE BROPHY.

INT. KELLY BROPHY'S HOUSE - DAWN

KELLY BROPHY, 30, strapping lumber worker, in the kitchen making coffee. Suddenly, a series of sharp, snapping CRACKS. He looks out the window.

HIS POV

The saturated hillside is collapsing. A giant wall of trees, rocks and mud heading straight for his home!

He spins and bolts up the stairs, CAMERA TRACKING...

rushes to a bedroom to rouse his sleeping nine-year-old.

KELLY
Janice! Get up!

The ROAR outside increases.

OUTSIDE

He holds his daughter's hand as they race next door...

pounds on the door.

KELLY
THE MOUNTAIN'S COMING DOWN!

Kelly's twin, KYLE BROPHY, 30, and his wife come to the door. She's holding a small BOY in diapers.

KYLE
What the hell?

KELLY

You've got to get out! Look!

THEIR POV

A massive, lavalike flow hits Kelly's house, lifting it off its foundation as it steamrollers toward Highway 101.

KYLE

Sweet Jesus...

Kyle whirls back into the house. A window SHATTERS. The child SCREAMS.

Kelly and daughter dash next door. The mudflow smashes into Kyle's trailer, overturning it like a toy.

The rock and mud hit them broadside, separating them.

He watches helplessly as she's carried away from him.

KELLY

Janice!?! JANICE!!! Dear God!
JANICE!!!

HIGH ANGLE - SHETLAND

Seven homes swept away, others badly damaged, piled together with sections of broken trees.

A huge tree, 300 feet long, slides across the road where an orange Jeep Cherokee swerves to avoid it.

The giant comes to a rest only when its ball of roots intertwine with those of another.

DIP TO BLACK

INT. JED HAWKINS' BEDROOM, SAN FRANCISCO - PRE-DAWN

TITLE: 10 YEARS EARLIER

RINGING PHONE awakens JED HAWKINS, 30. A covered bird cage near the bed with monogram MR. FOX.

MR. FOX (O.S.)

HeLLow! HeLLow!

Jed fumbles with the phone, answers groggily.

JED
Yeah? (pause) Why...?

INT. SHELAN'S KITCHEN, SAN FRANCISCO - PRE-DAWN

PETE SHELAN, 48, in shirtsleeves and suspenders at the breakfast table, watching the market report on TV.

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY.

SHELAN
You got the business report on?

JED
Asleep...

SHELAN
They're reporting a rumor that
Humboldt Lumber's "in play."

Jed's awaking up now.

JED
Huh? No shit? Who says?

SHELAN
What does "in play" mean?

He sits up, wide awake.

JED
Means someone's stalking us...as in
hostile takeover. On my way.

He hangs up, looks to the other side of the bed that clearly has not been slept in.

Gets up, pulls the cover off the cage, revealing MR. FOX, a loveable parrot.

MR. FOX.
Morning glory...

Jed makes a face at him, moves toward the bathroom. He has a slight LIMP, as he will throughout.

Pulling on his robe, he accidentally knocks over a wedding photo on the dresser...starts to pick it up, thinks better of it, keeps moving to the bathroom.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY 101, SONOMA COUNTY - EARLY MORNING

LUCY "EARTH ANGEL" DILLON, 24, hitchhikes alongside of the road. She's fresh and athletic, dressed in jeans, tie-dyed T-shirt and hiking boots.

A battered old pickup truck - painted like a Pinto pony - stops for her. She throws her heavy backpack in the back.

INT. SPIRIT WIND'S PICKUP TRUCK - MOVING SHOT - DAY

SPIRIT WIND, 70, a Native American with a kindly, weather-beaten face.

LUCY
Thanks for picking me up

SPIRIT WIND
Sure. What's a nice young...

LUCY
Car got stolen in Oakland. Bummer.

SPIRIT WIND
Where ya goin?

LUCY
Up the coast. Oregon maybe.

SPIRIT WIND
I can getcha as far as Eureka.

LUCY
Cool. (pause) My name's Lucy
Dillon.

SPIRIT WIND
Spirit Wind.

SPIRIT WIND'S TRUCK

winds through the redwood forest.

INSIDE

Lucy looks out in awe of the towering redwoods.

LUCY
These trees are humongous!

SPIRIT WIND
Not from here, I take it.

LUCY
McCook, Nebraska. No trees at all,
let alone...

SPIRIT WIND
No trees like these anywhere.
Oldest, tallest living things on
Earth.

They ride in respectful silence for a moment.

SPIRIT WIND
What brings you to California?

LUCY
I wasn't really sure -- until now.

CUT TO:

EXT. HUMBOLDT LUMBER CO. SAN FRANCISCO HEADQUARTERS - MORNING

INT. PETE SHELAN'S OFFICE

Several executives sit around the room. They're dressed in business attire, save for CAMERON BELL, 42, who looks like he just came out of the woods. They greet Jed as he arrives.

SHELAN
Morning, Jed. Where's Bridget?

JED
I'm, ah...not sure. (beat) What do
you know about this? You're CEO.

SHELAN
There's been unusual trading in the
stock. Probably nothing.

JED
Nothing? Hostile corporate
takeovers are all over the news.

VIC GARNETT, 45, owlish, white shirt and suspenders.

VIC

So what? We're not for sale. Not for any price. Not as long as I'm Chief Financial Officer.

HL's Operations manager speaks with an Australian accent.

BELL

Humboldt Lumber's been in the Flynn family for a century. (to Jed)
Hell, your wife's the biggest shareholder.

JED

Everybody's a target these days. Wall Street's a war zone.

BELL

We're the biggest employer in the County. And the most stable.

JED

Two hundred thousand acres of old growth redwood, no debt, an over-funded pension fund. We're a prime takeover target.

SHELAN

Who's afraid of the big bad wolf?

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON HARLEY PURVIS,

45, perfectly tailored in a dark suit; eyes cold, face expressionless.

EXT. ARCADA AIRPORT - DAY

A corporate jet touches down.

INSIDE

Next to Purvis is his lawyer and confidant, ED TREVOR, 55.

TREVOR

You and he go way back.

PURVIS

Long time. If anyone can pull this off, it's Mike Fishkin.

TREVOR

The king of junk bonds.

PURVIS

No one else can get us the kind of money we need on such short notice.

TREVOR

Yes, but junk bonds are very risky.

PURVIS

Only if you're an investor.

ON THE TARMAC

Purvis and Trevor climb out of the plane, greeted by MIKE FISHKIN, 38, and a young associate named SEDGWICK.

FISHKIN

Harley Purvis! Great to see you again.

They walk to the helicopter. Purvis uses a handkerchief.

FISHKIN (CONT'D)

Allergies?

Purvis nods.

I gotta say, this is the juiciest deal we've done since you took over that Texas savings and loan.

PURVIS

...which I gave to the taxpayers.

CUT TO:

INT. SHELAN'S OFFICE - DAY

The meeting continues. Garnett picks up on Shelan's comment.

VIC

But suppose it is the Big Bad Wolf?

BRIDGET FLYNN HAWKINS, 30, walks in. "Bridge" is attractive, well-dressed and educated, but with a little hard edge.

She sits across from Jed. Their eyes meet - his ask "why?" hers reply with resignation.

SHELAN

Jed thinks we're a takeover target.
Sitting ducks.

BALL

We're not helpless. We're a forty
million dollar corporation!

JED

Corporate raiders can raise that
before lunch. They'll start buying
up our shares on the open market...

BRIDGE

(indignantly)

I've got more shares than anybody,
and...and...and I'm not selling.

The tension between her and Jed is palpable.

JED

We have a lot of shares. But if
they come in with big bucks, why
don't we just put a huge price
tag...

BRIDGE

And sell HL! My father would barf
in his grave.

SHELAN

OK, Jed, why don't you get up to
Scotsland and sniff around - just
in case there is something to this.

JED

(sarcastically)

You know I love going back there.

SHELAN

It's your hometown...

BRIDGE

Get over it, Jed.

JED

Yeah, well, if I never see another
tree - or another chainsaw . . .

BELL

Strange words from a timber company executive. And a board member.

JED

Hey, I'm the marketing guy. I sell redwood decks and patio furniture. They're not trees anymore.

SHELAN

Just get up there!

EXT. SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF HL HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Workers use a JACKHAMMER. The sound becomes the SCREECH of a CHAINSAW. Jed cringes, wipes his hand across his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE REDWOOD FOREST - DAY

Spirit Wind's truck negotiates a narrow road that literally squeezes past mammoth trees, gliding to a stop at a pullout.

Lucy's out of the truck now, looking up, giggling with glee.

HER POV

A cathedral-like canopy a hundred feet up. A shaft of sunlight penetrates an opening.

BACK TO SCENE

Spirit Wind produces a paper bag.

SPIRIT WIND

This looks like a good place for lunch. Got an extra sandwich.

LATER

they sit on a huge fallen log, finishing lunch.

LUCY

Spirit Wind. Seems appropriate...

SPIRIT WIND

I was named for the song of the Marbled Murrelet that nests up top.

LUCY
Think we'll see one?

SPIRIT WIND
Doubt it. Spend most of their time
out to sea. Only come back to nest.

She leans back on her arms, gazing up in awe.

LUCY
It's like a living cathedral.

He leans back against a tree, pulls his hat over his eyes.

SPIRIT WIND
Shouldn't sleep in church, but...

STILL LATER

The Indian snoozes. In the distance, down a narrow path,
Angel dances naked, drinking in the majesty of the place. She
moves with cat-like grace.

The shaft of sunlight that spotlights her is interrupted by a
moving shadow. She looks up.

HER POV

A HELICOPTER flying low overhead.

CUT TO:

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

Purvis sits next to the pilot; Fishkin, Trevor and Sedgewick
behind. They SHOUT to be heard NOISE.

PILOT
There. The the last stand of
privately held old-growth redwood
in the world.

TREVOR
No one else owns anything like it.

FISHKIN
The Flynn family owned it until the
old man died and they went public.
Biggest shareholder is the only
kid, Bridget.

PURVIS
Know anything about the business?

FISHKIN
Some. But her husband, Jed Hawkins
is VP/Marketing; probably the
smartest guy on the board.

PURVIS
(to Trevor)
Let's find a way to get to him.

FISHKIN
None of the rest have any business
sense. Instead of maximizing
production, they treat the forest
like it'll last forever!

All laugh except Purvis.

FISHKIN
Company's worth at least three
times the current share price!

SEDGWICK
And a huge pension fund surplus!

Purvis looks distant.

TREVOR
Whaddya thinking about, Harley?

Slowly, a wry smile.

PURVIS
Ivy League goyim. (pause) Whaddya
say we run up the score?

BACK AT THE AIRPORT:

The four of them shake hands next to the plane.

FISHKIN
They'll never know what hit 'em.

CUT TO: