

"BUSHWHACKER"

by  
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Registered WGAw 1986  
by  
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*Seebe*

1.

We hear water sloshing. Next, we hear someone choking as water heads down the wrong tube. More water sounds, harsher and more urgent this time.

FADE IN:

EXT. - POND - DAY

We see rippling water. Summer 1986. The back of a coughing head bobs into the frame and then back out of the frame. The water quiets, and we see the reflection of a child. The child is fifteen, but his physical features are mature beyond his years. The boy's name is ASA and we see that his face is wet and he is still coughing. ASA takes water from the river in his cupped hands and drinks. The boy looks at his reflection in the river. He gets close to the water and smiles. He begins to laugh, but no sound comes from his mouth. ASA wipes his face off on his bare arm as his face moves from the water's reflection.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. - BANK - DAY

For the first time, we see ASA's body. He is dressed in what is supposed to be a loincloth. In reality, his loincloth is a grey jumpsuit he put between his legs and ended up tying each arm to a leg around his waist. We can read the stencil #012765 on his loincloth. His arms and legs are bony, his hair is an uncombed tangle. His face looks like an animal's. His eyes are small and dark. This pond is deserted. ASA takes little pods of red, blue and yellow face paint and dabs the colors on three fingers. ASA's face fills the screen as he carefully paints one red, one blue and one yellow stripe on the right side of his face. A twig drops into the river and ASA'S eyes widen as he spins around and out of the frame. We see the wind blow through a tree next to the pond.

FAST CUT TO:

EXT. - CAMP GROUND - DAY

ASA stands and his eyes scan his crude camp. There is a dying fire with red embers. The door on a weathered and warped old trailer swings and squeaks. The windows on the trailer are dirty and cracked. A cloth travois rests next to the door of the trailer. The travois has provisions strapped to it. The forest directly behind the trailer is dark and lightless. Satisfied that no one is behind him, ASA returns to the river and washes his hands.

ASA looks at himself in the river and crunches his eyebrows together and he scowls at himself. ASA laughs again, and again, no sound from his throat. ASA takes the pod of yellow paint and leans close to the river's surface. He takes the yellow paint and draws a crude thunderbolt on his other cheek. With the thunderbolt finished, a leather belt flies into the picture and wraps around ASA's neck. ASA grabs at the leather and pries a finger between the tightening leather and his neck. The assailant's voice is unique, aged and gruff.

XAVIER

No Pappa or Mamma to rescue you out here,  
son. Me an' you together forever!

We still don't see the assailant, but we do see the leather get tighter and ASA's mouth widens into a scream...but still no sound from the boy.

XAVIER

(Cont'd)

C'mon boy, you're deaf, not dumb!

EXT. - ACROSS THE POND - DAY

From the opposite side of the river, we see ASA and XAVIER together for the first time. ASA is now on his feet and we can see an old man about sixty-five dressed in a white robe with a thick grey and silver beard and a balding head. XAVIER looks like ZEUS but he is not muscular and he walks with a limp. The two struggle and finally, ASA flips XAVIER over his back and the leather strap splashes in the river.

EXT. - CAMP - DAY

XAVIER is on the ground laughing. ASA rubs his neck and we see little bleeding cuts where the leather rubbed him the wrong way. XAVIER gets up slowly and takes ASA by the hand. ASA grabs at his paint pods and takes them with him and XAVIER digs in the provisions on the travois and sneaks an egg into the pocket of his robe without ASA seeing him do it. Next, XAVIER takes a bucket of dirty dish water and douses the dying fire. ASA helps XAVIER into the trailer.

3 people  
Killed

XAVIER w/ Family

INT. - TRAILER - DAY

At one time, this trailer served as home for a vacationing family of four. Faded and water-stained photographs cling to the walls. A child's top is motionless in the corner. A yellowed newspaper is crumpled on a soggy couch and the headline reads "HURRICANE HELENA ~~CRASHES~~ CAMP." Sludge covers the kitchen sink and the dining table is marbled formica. Outside light sneaks in through the cracks in the windows, the floor and through holes in the roof.

It moved in here  
after I lost  
my family.  
It ain't  
home but  
it's close  
to home.

XAVIER

Got a little surprise for you, son. Been workin' on it since day before yesterday. ~~This way we'll always be together no matter what happens... pals forever, eh?~~ Made outta genuine twine from the postal office.

pretty -> twine w/ leather fringe.

XAVIER brings ASA an ugly, hand-made headband made from wrapping twine. He pushes it on top of ASA's head and the headband rests around the boy's head. ASA smiles and hugs XAVIER.

ASA

Thanks, Zahvur, I like it.

XAVIER searches in the pocket of his robe and finds the raw egg from the travios. XAVIER takes a filthy tin plate from the cabinet, blows dust off of it and cracks the egg on his head and drops the egg into the tin. Next, XAVIER takes a lighter from his other robe pocket, lights it to fire, and runs the flame under the tin.

XAVIER

Listen, son. My name's Xavier. Read me? X-Ay-Vee-Yar. Not no Zayfur, or whatever that dribble you been sayin'. Form those words like they taught ya at the center. ~~If we're gonna be pals forever, you gotta learn. Ouch! Dagnubbt, singed a fingerprint, I did!~~

-> Father language

XAVIER drops the tin with the uncooked egg on the table in front of ASA. ASA looks at the egg, then at XAVIER, then back at the egg.

XAVIER  
(Cont'd)

Well? Gobble it up! Last egg from the Center, and I give it to you. *Guesapant goin.*  
*Back of the hip, have somethin to eat.*

ASA clears his throat and an idea flashes in his mind.



ASA  
You hut my neck. Can't swallow.

XAVIER  
I'm not proud.

XAVIER snatches the tin and gulps the egg in a second. ASA feels his headband with quiet pride and takes a seat on the soggy sofa. ASA uses sign language with his words as he bolts straight back up.

ASA  
Ooo, whet! I like duh present.

*Reach you up there.*  
XAVIER  
Listen, pal. Don't go usin' that sign stuff on me. I don't read it, so just open yer mouth an' talk or I'll ship ya right back. ~~I like ya, kid 'cause we understand each other, right?~~ I'm not in business like them to get money from the government for takin' care of dummies and cripples. So you just talk normal like I know you is.

ASA speaks slowly and does not sign.

ASA  
You dunt like to pretund wit me? You cun war the paints now if you want be happy.

~~Nope, Nope, Nope. I don't need no dressin' up.~~  
XAVIER  
Anything's better than being a prisoner. ~~Even dressin' up.~~ Nope, we own our own skins, right pardner? Together forever, us two.

*we can do any damn thing we want*  
ASA  
I dunt like duh centa. Dey hut me too.

XAVIER turns away from ASA, wipes dust from a mirrow and fixes his hair.

XAVIER  
Guess everyplace gots some price, eh, Asa? Jus like my brother Ned. Always yappin' and squakin' 'bout money. Well, he gets greedy, crosses a friend and now he gots somethin' else to think 'bout 'sides money, eh champ? Now ol' Ned thinkin' 'bout worms chewin' his toes six foot under.

ASA

Whut dud yoo sah? I can't red lips if  
yoo tun away.

XAVIER

Nuthin', buddy. Old Xavier was only  
funin' round. Now jus where is yer  
folk's house?

} 1 provisions

ASA stares back at him blankfaced and shaking his head. XAVIER  
gets two inches away from ASA's face. ASA smiles and extends his  
paint pods to XAVIER.

XAVIER

(Cont'd)

I'm. Done. Dressin'. Up. Like. A.  
~~Damn. Fool.~~ How. Far. To. Yer.  
Folksus. House!

ASA

Up dah rud I think. I furgut.

OLD BROKEN DOWN TRUCK

XAVIER

Well, we better get movin'. You're too  
young to drive, I'm too old to see the  
curves. Creepies ~~back at the center~~ <sup>up on the hill</sup> 'll  
be wantin' our Federal money to launder,  
so we got to leave here now.

ASA gets up and climbs down out of the trailer, grasping at his  
rear trying to dry it off. The second ASA's feet hit the ground,  
XAVIER lunges for ASA from the trailer and lands on his back.  
The old man laughs as ASA spins. ASA begins to laugh again.

XAVIER

(laughing)

Never learn, do ya Asa? *Indians never  
turn your back on a white man.*

ASA bucks up, and XAVIER flies through the air, giggling all the  
way to the ground. IN SLOW MOTION AND WITH NO SOUND, we see  
XAVIER smash his head on a rock. ASA stops. XAVIER is knocked  
out cold.

ASA

You can't fool me two time.

ASA walks to the old man, sees blood running from his temple.

ASA

(Cont'd)

Yoo allrut? Hulloo?

There is a pool of blood by XAVIER'S head. ASA dips his finger in the blood. ASA then brings the blood to his nose and smells it.

ASA  
(Cont'd)

Warm.

ASA tastes the blood and frowns. Up close, we see that ASA's hands are stained with blood. XAVIER's beard and robe are spattered with red. ASA tries to wipe the blood off on his own feet. The blood now sticks and dries to ASA's hands and feet. ASA takes one finger and tenderly touched the bleeding part of XAVIER's head. ASA then draws three lines on one of XAVIER's cheeks.

ASA  
(Cont'd)

Zahvur? Come out an play?

ASA shakes XAVIER. XAVIER's eyes open.

XAVIER  
Kid? I can't see nuthin' but ...  
blackboards. Ya gotta help me, son.

XAVIER passes out. ASA stands and runs to the travios. He then unties the provisions and bread, clothes, shoes and spare change falls to the earth. ASA drags the empty travios behind him to where XAVIER is passed out.

ASA  
Find Motha and Fahtha. Help Zahvur.

ASA picks up XAVIER and carries him like a bride. ASA lifts and straps XAVIER onto the travios and ASA begins to slowly drag XAVIER behind him. ASA's face is still painted with lines and a thunderbolt. The headband still grips his head and ASA's hands and feet are stained with dried blood. The only cloth on his body is the loincloth. Blood still trickles and drops to the ground as ASA moves through the woods behind the campground.

EXT. - BACK ROAD - DAY

From a long distance away, we see ASA still pulling XAVIER. The road is gravel and it bends in the distance due to the extreme heat. ASA is sweating and panting, he can't drag XAVIER any longer. ASA stops underneath a tree and leans XAVIER against the trunk.

Blinded by optic nerve. train whistle scares him.  
X - Scared.

ASA

Zahvur? Wake up. Plee wake up!  
Father hep Zahvur.

XAVIER's face is pale and the wound on his head is not longer throbbing and the blood is now longer wet. The old man's face is caked with blood.

ASA

(Cont'd)

Zahvur? I got lost. Plee, Zahvur....  
Yuh sah "tugethur" forever.

XAVIER's eyes open but they are unfocused.

*Yeah, pretty right. Help.*

XAVIER

~~You got it, Asa. I'm not a piece of property anymore, promise me?~~ We gotta get out.... got to get me... help.

XAVIER looks ASA in the eye. The boy begins a strained sob, his tears run down his cheeks and the colors drawn on his face run together becoming the colors of the rainbow. ASA wipe at his tears with his forearm, and the colors are gone.

ASA

Father hep Zahvur. Plee hep Zahvur.

CROSSFADE:

EXT. - STREET CORNER - DAY

We see a sign. **THE MESSIAH ANTICIPATORS** is lettered in cheap, sparkly rainbow colors. An EXTREME CLOSE-UP as a sparkling diamond comes into the frame. As we pull back, the ring begins to circle. The ring is on a gigantic wrinkled finger and as we pull back farther, we discover that the hand belongs to JEROME, the world's oldest living chauffeur. The sign is in a rear window of a black limosine. JEROME is polishing the beautiful limosine and the car shines in the sunlight.

MAURICE (V.O.)

(distant)

What is paper money, friends? Let us pray for an answer. Is money a necessity, or are those glorious greenbacks only God testing our willpower? I'll tell you what paper money is... it is the only true form of Salvation. Oh, yes! Help us friends in our duty to send five hundred tons of braille Bibles to Zimbabwe. The Lord's word in braille is more nourishing than five thousand bushels of wheat, corn or rice. The Lord will provide, friends.

As we PULL BACK and AWAY from JEROME we travel around the corner and find MAURICE on the steps of a building. We see a huge sign in a small town with the words **THE MESSIAH ANTICIPATORS** written in bold red letters. MAURICE, a middle-aged man with a fake smile and a million dollar wardrobe, is speaking over a cheap little public address system. All of MAURICE's props are cheap. A group of about fifteen people are standing around MAURICE. DANIEL, MAURICE'S young assistant, stands behind MAURICE breathing on silver collection plates and shining them with the elbow of his leisure suit.

MAURICE

Before I let you go today, fellow Messiah Anticipators, I have one other thought. What is Love? Some compare love to a child's smile. Other's say love is a rainbow after a storm. But your Maurice was directly told by God in a mailgram that Love is...loose change... pennies, nickles, quarters, it all counts. But the best kind of Love is silver dollars. Dig down deep into your pockets now children and give your beloved Maurice all your love. Then, when you get home, check under your sofa cushions and scour your dresser drawers for more Love for the next meeting.

BURTICE and EVAN, two disillusioned Anticipators, begin to heckle MAURICE.

BURTICE

C'mon. We've been meeting here for three weeks and no new Messiah! We read in the newspaper that you been talkin' this Messiah bit in every little town this side of the river.

EVAN

Yeah, I want my money back!

MAURICE

Newspapers? What is a newspaper? It is the Devil in pulp and printer's ink. Believe me, friends. God spoke to me just the other day on the subject of Satanistic journalists during a game of golf.

EVAN

C'mon you fool! We want the Messiah now! Messiah!

BURTICE

Messiah!

EVAN

We're tired of bein' hungry and spit upon. You promised us someone to believe in! We can't wait no more!

All of the followers begin to chant "Messiah."

EXT. - STREET - DAY

In a REVERSE ANGLE BEHIND THE MESSIAH ANTICIPATORS, we see ASA gasping for air as he drags XAVIER into town on the travois. ASA sees the crowd gathered at the streetcorner and he begins to run toward their salvation.

ASA

(hoarse)

Hep Zahver.

MAURICE

(beginning to sweat)

Now, now, friends. Keep your distance. I know you're hungry.

The crowd is chanting "Messiah" and Asa comes within twenty feet of the crowd and then he stops. He stops by a street pole with "Walk/Don't Walk" blinking signs. ASA gently places XAVIER on the ground between the pole and the crowd.

ASA

Dey hep us.

ASA begins to walk to the CROWD and doesn't hear XAVIER's warning.

XAVIER

Careful, son.

The crowd becomes animated and they jump and scream for the new Messiah.

EXT. - LIMOSINE - DAY

We see JEROME reacting to the chanting crowd. He takes off his diamond ring, and puts on a pair of brass knuckles. He rolls over the hood, leaps behind the wheel like Batman and sparks the car to life.

EXT. - STREET - DAY

MAURICE sees ASA through the crowd and is stunned, but recovers quickly.

MAURICE

There he is, Anticipators! Our new  
Messiah! Just like I been saying!  
(out of the side of his mouth)  
Oh my, I see dollar signs. Danny-boy.  
Get the contribution baskets out there.

In a series of fast cuts, DANIEL heads into the crowd taking loose change from an old lady who is taking pennies out of an old sock she hides in her hat. Another man takes off his cowboy boot and empties a bunch of change. For a nanosecond, MAURICE entertains the thought that ASA may actually be the real Savior in the flesh, then he quickly shakes his head, and decides "no." Others scream and rejoice as they toss their coins into the collection baskets.

BURTICE

No more lies!

EVAN

We want to be saved right now!

DANIEL

Look! Just like he said! The Messiah!

The CROWD TURNS AS ONE and looks at Asa. Silence. A stare down between ASA and the CROWD. ASA signals back to XAVIER's body.

ASA

Hep.

The crowd gasps and the crowd moves closer to ASA.

BURTICE

Whad he say?

DANIEL

He said "Hi."

MAURICE

I told you he'd be here! Dig into your pockets for that loose, jingling love. Look at his crown! Made of simple rope. He doesn't deserve thorns or the slings and arrows of an ungrateful people! He needs solid gold, rubies and genuine diamels! He is our Lord King and we should treat him as such!

We hear the amplified sound of CHANGE dropping into the basket. ASA cocks his head to the side and uses sign language.

ASA

Hep Zahver.

EVAN

Lookit his hands. Looks like blood.

BURTICE

There's blood on his feet, too!

MAURICE

It is blood! He has suffered for us! Give him the crown he deserves. It's our turn to suffer.

DANIEL

He does got a crown.

DANIEL is transformed by the sight of ASA. The entire CROWD gets closer to ASA. ASA backs up, and the CROWD charges at ASA.

ASA

Hep. Plesse hep Zahvur! Hep Zahvur!

MAURICE

"Help the Savior!" Hear that? He needs your help! No more anticipation.



The crowd starts to stampede ASA. ASA climbs up the street pole and hangs on between two "Walk/Don't Walk" signs as he faces the crowd.

ASA

Hep Zahvur! Pluhese hep Zahvur.

EVAN

By jibbers, he is sayin', "Help the Savior!"

BURTICE

He needs us! We been saved!

The crowd charges as ASA takes both arms and hangs from between the signs with his arms outstretched. Now, in SLOW MOTION, the crowd moves to XAVIER, and being strapped to the travois, XAVIER struggles to get out of the way, but it is to no avail. XAVIER is trampled by the CROWD as they go to ASA. ASA screams and looks to the sky.

ASA

No! Father!

ASA sees XAVIER, beat and bloody. He begins to scream as the crowd pries him from his perch. The LIMOSINE horn begins to sound and as WE TURN, we find MAURICE sitting on the hood of the limosine waving his arms as the car moves in, parting the crowd. The people quiet and leave ASA. The car stops underneath the light pole and MAURICE extends his hand to ASA.

ASA

Zahvur.

MAURICE

In the clubhouse, God also spoke to me about limosines for the Lord's work. Would you want the new Messiah to drive in the back bed of a pickup truck? Of course not... crushed velvet and tinted glass with air conditioning is the only way to go. God doesn't know what "mid-size economy" means and I'm not the one to explain it to him.

ASA

Hep.

MAURICE helps ASA down to the bumper of the car. Next, MAURICE jumps to the ground and DANIEL opens the back door of limosine.

MAURICE

See followers? He needs my help as well as yours. The Messiah, the Savior, YOUR Salvation came unto me. I will feed him, clothe him, and wash between his toes. Yes, friends. Your Belief will be well spent. Love is loose change, and Everlasting Life is a blank cashier's check.

MAURICE stuffs DANIEL into the back of the limosine, and then pushes ASA in too.

MAURICE

(Cont'd)

We are all set for life, my friends. You were witnesses to a miracle. A true gold-plated miracle. Praise the Lord.

MAURICE climbs into the car. In the front seat, the collection baskets are overflowing with money. JEROME smiles as MAURICE pats him on the back. JEROME takes off his brass knuckles and puts his gigantic diamond ring back on.

JEROME

Where to this time, boss?

MAURICE

Fort Knox, my friend. We got ourselves a gold mine here. We got a meal ticket for life.

MAURICE runs his fingers through the money in the collection plates and laughs. JEROME picks up some change and laughs as he sprinkles the money over his head. Then, **OUTSIDE**, The CROWD, alone and tired does not move. **INSIDE** the limosine, ASA sits quietly between DANIEL AND MAURICE. DANIEL is mesmerized by ASA. MAURICE locks his door, and motions for DANIEL to do the same. MAURICE smiles and looks ASA in the eye.

MAURICE

It's you an' me, kid. Together forever.

MAURICE laughs hideously. ASA peeks back over this shoulder out the rear window of the car and looks at the CROWD. From THE CROWD'S POINT OF VIEW... We see ASA peering out at US, and we then see MAURICE'S hand remove **THE MESSIAH ANTICIPATORS** sign from the rear window as the limosine rolls into the setting sun. As the limosine and MAURICE's laugh disappear, we have the ....

FINAL FADE OUT.