

# VIDEO SCRIPT

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**TITLE: A Dark Day**

**PREPARED FOR: Dakota Pathways**

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**PRODUCER: Jim Sprecher**

**DRAFT: FINAL RECORDED VERSION**

**DATE: July 25, 2005**

**SCRIPT #: 20**

**V I S U A L**

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**A U D I O**

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FADE IN:

Open

NAT. SOUND UP AND UNDER

MUSIC UP AND UNDER

DWCD 0251 "Easy Come, Easy Go"

MUSIC UP AND UNDER

AMC 017 Cut 3 "Aftermath"

New York City skyline, pre 9-11,  
against a blue sky.

NARRATOR:

There are dark days in history. Usually they  
dawn without a hint of being anything but  
ordinary...

Twin Towers burning.

yet end with everybody knowing the day's events  
won't be forgotten.

Black and white photo montage:  
of the Lincoln assassination, Pearl  
Harbor, and Kennedy assassination.

Sadness and anger, in fact, can remain even  
after those who actually lived the dark day are  
gone. Historians can help...

Montage continued

by examining what led to the tragedy, and why  
those events hold so much meaning afterwards.

MUSIC UP AND UNDER

Sissy Goodhouse "The Third Circle"

Cut 2 "Woman's Song"

NARRATOR:

Winter near Wounded Knee.

A dark day in South Dakota history happened  
December 29, 1890.

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Sunrise.

NARRATOR:

It was winter, but the day dawned sunny, warm, and still along Wounded Knee Creek in southwestern South Dakota.

Historic photo of Big Foot's people, dissolving to

The people of Big Foot, a Minneconjou chief, came into contact with the U. S. Army's Seventh Cavalry the day before.

MAP South Dakota showing route from Cheyenne River to Wounded Knee

Big Foot and his people were far from their home to the north, the Cheyenne River Reservation.

Town and ranch structures of the 1890s

All that fall and early winter, settlers across western South Dakota feared American Indians were planning to leave their reservations and attack ranches and towns. Newspapers ran stories reporting danger.

Newspaper Headlines

Marie Fox Belly ON CAMERA

MARIE FOX BELLY ON CAMERA

(Talking about her people's feelings about the incident and what led up to it.)

MUSIC UP AND UNDER

Sissy Goodhouse "Tawahe" Cut 3 "If it Feels Good"

Photo Col. James Forsyth.

NARRATOR:

Super name and dates

1834-1906

Colonel James Forsyth of the Seventh Cavalry knew Big Foot's journey off the reservation would scare some South Dakotans, even though the group certainly was no war party.

PHOTO Montage

Curtis Photo Collection

Big Foot had about 350 people with him, including many women and children. About a hundred were men who could be considered warriors. Many of those men had guns...

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PHOTO Montage continues

Grabill Photos

Curtis Photos

Montage Continues

WS Big Foot's Camp SDSHS

PHOTO Men in blankets

PHOTO Man wrapped in blanket  
with rifle

Continues

MONTAGE Battle sequence showing  
photos of Whites and Indians , guns  
firing, flashes etc.

Video: Gattling Gun firing

Video: Pistol firing

PHOTO Montage: SDSHS

Big Foot dead in snow

Wounded Knee aftermath

NARRATOR:

and Forsyth told Big Foot his people had to turn over all weapons and then go directly to Pine Ridge, 17 miles away. So the morning of December 29, Big Foot's people handed over guns, knives, axes, and even crow bars.

But Forsyth believed more guns remained hidden under blankets the people wrapped themselves in against the winter chill. Forsyth told Big Foot everyone would have to line up and show they had no hidden weapons.

One Minneconjou man pulled a rifle from under his blanket...

and said no one had a right to take it without making fair payment. Tension grew...

MUSIC OUT

SFX UP AND UNDER

and a shot rang out, and then another, and more until all that could be heard was a roar of gunfire.

MUSIC UP AND UNDER

Andrew Vasquez "V3: An American Indian" Cut 4

"We Shall Follow Our Brothers"

Among the first to die was Big Foot. Eighty-four Minneconjou men, 44 women, and 18 children died that day. More were wounded, and some of them died from those wounds later.

MUSIC OUT

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**V I S U A L**

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PHOTO MONTAGE Continues

Wounded Knee aftermath SDSHS

MARIE FOX BELLY On Camera

PHOTO: Seventh Cavalry Group  
Shot

Telegraph lines, period newspapers.

PHOTO: George Armstrong Custer

Art representing the Battle at the  
Little Big Horn, 1876.

Historic photo, Wounded knee, 1890

Photos of Aftermath of Wounded  
Knee, showing grave pits and bodies

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**A U D I O**

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MUSIC UP AND UNDER

Joseph Fire Crow "Fire Crow: Northern Cheyenne Flute"  
Cut 15 "The Mist"

MARIE FOX BELLY ON CAMERA

(Talking about her people's feelings about the  
incident.)

NARRATOR:

Thirty-one of the 470 Cavalry soldiers were killed.

News spread fast. First Wounded Knee was  
reported as a great Army victory.

MUSIC UP AND UNDER

US Military Band "Gary Owen March"

Some people pointed out it was the Seventh  
Cavalry that Lieutenant Colonel George Custer  
led to a terrible defeat against American Indian  
warriors, 14 years earlier...

at Little Big Horn, Montana. Maybe, these  
people said, justice was done—the Seventh  
Cavalry got even for Little Big Horn...

MUSIC UP AND UNDER

AMC 017 Cut 1 "Ancient Struggles"

NARRATOR:

at Wounded Knee. But that thinking changed as  
details about December 29, 1890 became  
known. How could a disaster where so many  
women and children died be called a victory?

It didn't appear anyone was looking for a fight  
that morning. But there was little trust between  
Big Foot's people and Forsyth's soldiers, and

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U.S. CAPITOL Washington DC  
Congress in session

panic probably gripped both sides.

In today's world, when things go terribly wrong, politicians and the media are often blamed, fairly or unfairly. The same was true in 1890.

MUSIC OUT

MUSIC UP AND UNDER

DWMIL 05 Cut 5 "Victorian Industry"

NARRATOR:

PHOTO Richard Pettigrew  
Super Dates  
MAP: South Dakota with Pierre  
marked  
Photo of period reservation life

Senator Richard Pettigrew believed in Dakota for Dakotans—meaning he thought U. S. government jobs in the state should be filled by South Dakotans. After South Dakota became a state in 1889, Pettigrew worked to replace many government employees, including Indian agents on reservations. At Pine Ridge Pettigrew got a political supporter, Daniel Royer, appointed agent.

Revervation period photos continued

Royer had no experience in this line of work. The people of Pine Ridge didn't trust him. Royer couldn't talk effectively with tribal leaders when he heard rumors of trouble in late 1890. Instead, he called for Army troops.

Photographer on reservation.  
Whites with Indians  
Newspaper press at work

That's where the media jumped in. South Dakota newspaper writers, and those from papers across the United States, figured the Army's movement meant a likely Indian war. They traveled to the reservations, especially Pine Ridge, and promised their readers exciting coverage.

MUSIC OUT

MUSIC UP AND UNDER

Hrcb 7 Cut 4 "Hombre"

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Recreation of typing on a period typewriter, dissolving to a dime novel.

MONTAGE of Dime Novel covers of the day.

Historic shots of Lakota ceremonies of the late 1800s. Including the Ghost Dance montage with recreation images of dance.

MAP showing Pyramid Lake Nevada and SD

Pyramid Lake, Nevada

PHOTO Wovoka SDSHS

POP-UP FACT: "The Pyramid Lake Reservation is home to the Paiute Indians."

Traditional Dance mixed with Ghost Dance photos

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NARRATOR:

Unfortunately, exciting writing about American Indians—in books of the time called dime novels—probably shaped the thinking of many young Army soldiers. In these books, Indians almost always were portrayed as cruel and fearsome.

MUSIC OUT

MUSIC UP AND UNDER

Sissy Goodhouse "The Third Circle" Cut 11  
"The Seventh Generation"

NARRATOR:

And in 1890, people who didn't understand the American Indian culture were witnessing something they found quite fearsome: a ceremony called the Ghost Dance.

The Ghost Dance started here, at Pyramid Lake in Nevada. A holy man named Wovoka said a re-born world would come with the new grass of 1891—a peaceful world with lots of bison to hunt. The new world became reality, Wovoka taught, if Indian people everywhere sang and danced the Ghost Dance.

MARIE FOX BELLY On Camera

Talking about the Ghost Dance.

MUSIC UP AND UNDER

Bald Eagle Family "Honoring Song" SOVTR

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MONTAGE CONTINUES

NARRATOR:  
On South Dakota reservations men, women, and children danced with such intensity that they sometimes collapsed in exhaustion. That intensity scared the inexperienced Indian agents, and they tried to stop the ceremony.

PHOTO Indian Agent

PHOTO Montage Reservation  
life and dancers

That didn't surprise Ghost Dancers in South Dakota. Believers most places spoke of the ceremony as peaceful, but in South Dakota, preparing for war was part of the dance. Some men wore Ghost Shirts—soft fabric with painted designs. Ghost Dancers said these shirts would stop enemy bullets.

VIDEO Ghost Shirt (SDCHM)

Big Foot's band at Wounded Knee

It's likely some men at Wounded Knee wore Ghost Shirts, and believed they couldn't be hurt.

MAP: SD. showing the Cheyenne River locations, and then the Standing Rock Reservation.

Why did Big Foot's people leave the Cheyenne River Reservation? Big Foot knew government officials tried to stop the Ghost Dance on the Standing Rock Reservation...

**MUSIC UP AND UNDER**

Andrew Vasquez V3: An American Indian Cut 5  
"Grandfather's Way"

Sitting Bulls

just to the north. They tried to arrest Chief Sitting Bull there...

SUPER 1831-1890

Indian police at Sitting Bull's cabin

and in the struggle, Sitting Bull was killed.

Winter prairie landscape.

If that could happen on the neighboring reservation, Big Foot probably thought escaping the Cheyenne River Reservation was wise. His people could go into hiding...

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Badlands.

perhaps in the Badlands, where other Ghost Dancers were said to be gathering.

Wounded Knee site today.

Distrust.

MONTAGE Photos

Indian and whites depicting fear, political appointments, dime novels, ghost shirt etc. over background.

PHOTO Big Foot dead in snow.

Indians and soldiers

.Wounded Knee survivors at Pine Ridge

PHOTO City scene 1890

Another City scene

Indian blacksmiths

Indian school group shot

Ghost Dance photo

Survivors of Wounded Knee

MUSIC OUT

NARRATOR:

Fear. Bad political appointments. Poor newspaper writing. Scary dime novels. Ghost shirts. Like chemicals that should never be mixed, these came together and exploded here.

SFX UP AND OUT Gun shot

MUSIC UP AND UNDER

Joseph Fire Crow "Legend of the Warrior" cut 11 "My Elders Speak"

NARRATOR

Wounded Knee marked the end of major violence between the United States Army and American Indians. It also opened eyes throughout the United States and around the world.

In 1890, most thought the Indian Wars to be long over. Many believed American Indians were eager to drop their traditional way of life, or were content living on remote reservations.

Wounded Knee, and the desperation behind the Ghost Dance, revealed life was terribly hard for lots of American Indians.

MUSIC OUT

SOVTR UP AND UNDER

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V I S U A L

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Wounded Knee occupation, 1973.  
(KELO news footage of occupation)

1973 Occupation continues

Graves at Wounded Knee.

CLOSE and Credits

Fade to Black

NARRATOR:

Wounded Knee opened eyes again, 83 years later. It was no coincidence that American Indian Movement leaders chose Wounded Knee in 1973 for an 11-week take-over.

MUSIC UP AND UNDER

Joseph Fire Crow "Legend of the Warrior" Cut 3 "Sweet Medicine"

NARRATOR:

They told people worldwide that conditions still weren't good for many American Indians.

Wounded Knee. Even the name sounds painful. Maybe that's as it should be—an aching reminder that fear and misunderstanding between people anywhere can lead to tragedy, and that we must learn from our dark days.

MUSIC OUT

MUSIC UP AND UNDER

DWCD 251 CUT 1 "Easy Come, Easy Go"

MUSIC OUT

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