

FADE IN:

INT. STUDIO THREE - FRONTIER CHURCH SET - DAY

In front of a ramshackle altar, an early 50s FRONTIER PREACHER slouches between a couple holding hands, lost in each other:

He's HOWARD MARSHALL (mid 20s) a dapper gent in a bowler with his arm in a sling and a revolver on his hip. She's IDA WALKER (early 20s), who looks like she'll take those jeans and muddy boots she's wearing straight out of this chapel and get busy breaking in some wild horses.

FRONTIER PREACHER
Y'all take each other in sickness,
health, 'n all that, till death?

HOWARD
Most certainly.

IDA
I do --

BANG. The Preacher grabs his chest and drops to the floor.

Ida and Howard let go of each other and grab their guns. They duck down behind a pew and look for the source of the shot.

Peeking over the pew, fire back BANG BANG BANG. A window breaks -- CRASH.

Toward the back row of pews, DP (mid 30s) keeps his eye on the viewfinder and cranks away at a silent movie camera, keeping the gun fight in frame.

SUPER: Hollywood, California - 1913

PHINEAS PUMPHREY, a mid-50s mustachioed go-getter in a well-cut three piece suit, leans over DP's shoulder, checking the angle.

PHINEAS
(muttering)
Good. Good...

Ida nods to Howard. Howard pops up and fires, giving Ida cover as she jumps up on the back of the pew. She bolts ahead, feet landing on the backs of the pews.

IDA
Now, Howard!

With his free hand, Howard tosses the gun to Ida. It arcs through the air. It's coming in too short. Ida over-extends and -- crashes on the wood floor of the aisle.

PHINEAS (O.S.)

Cut!

Phineas rushes up to Ida from behind the DP and kneels next to her. Phineas offers Ida his hand, but Ida hoists herself up on a pew. She dusts off her jeans.

IDA

Let's try again.

Behind them, production assistants rapidly replace the broken window with a fresh one.

Howard walks up from the front of the church. He takes the arm out of his sling to adjust his hat.

HOWARD

Dear, I'm concerned you're going to damage the floor.

IDA

Bickmores can take it out of our pay, darling.

DP

Mr. Pumphrey, if we break Ida's stunt up, we could splice together --

IDA

Won't look right if you cut it to ribbons! I can do this! Woulda had it two takes ago if it wasn't for this guy.

HOWARD

And again, I'm sorry.

Ida shakes out the aches. Phineas waves off DP, who nods and goes to check the camera gate.

HOWARD

It doesn't need to be real for the audience to believe it's real.

IDA

I'll know I didn't do it.

PHINEAS

The Bickmores' editors can cut together something dynamic enough to satisfy the audience.

IDA

You trusted me for "Apaches
at Dawn."

PHINEAS

And you landed that jump on the
first take. This isn't working.

HOWARD

We've come close, but if we don't
get it this time, we should move
on for the day.

Ida shoots him a look.

HOWARD

(with a wink)

My arm's getting tired.

Ida looks back to Phineas. Their eyes meet. He sees that fire
and gives her a small nod.

PHINEAS

Back to places!

A Day Player dressed as a Mean Hombre checks his hat and gets
back into position, crouched behind a pew. The Frontier
Preacher adjusts his collar.

Howard and Ida return to the front of the pews. PROPS, mid 20s,
holds a revolver out for Howard. She hangs on as he tries to
take it.

PROPS

Reloaded. Make sure you leave some
blanks for Ida this time.

Ida elbows Howard in the ribs as he slips his arm back in
the sling.

IDA

Hear that? Don't you mess up.

Phineas's assistant DORREGO, first-generation Mexican-American,
early 20s, runs up in front of the camera with the slate.

PHINEAS

Roll camera!

DP cranks the camera. After a beat, Dorrego rushes away.

PHINEAS

Action!

The Mean Hombre pops up and fires at Howard and Ida. The Frontier Preacher drops.

Howard raises his free arm and fires back. The Hombre ducks.

CRASH! A window behind Ida breaks. She crouches down and nods to Howard. He springs up to give cover as Ida LEAPS up onto the pew.

Ida springs, hopping along the backs of the pews, jaw clenched. Game on.

Howard fires as her feet spring off each pew -- BANG. BANG. BANG. BANG. BANG. BANG.

Ida looks back as Howard tosses the gun to her. She reaches out, almost in line with the Mean Hombre's hiding place...

She snags the revolver, but her next step falls short.

She tumbles forward, cheek scraping the next pew on her way down.

PHINEAS

Cut!

Phineas rushes out. Ida rolls over. Phineas gawks at a gash on her face, trickling blood. Ida clicks the trigger on the revolver. Empty.

IDA

Dammit, Howard!

INT. COSTUME SHOP - DAY

LENORE, mid 30s, threads a needle. Precise and poised, she has the airs of a debutante who skipped out on her debut. Phineas peers over Lenore's shoulder as she drags her chair next to Ida.

PHINEAS

Lenore, are you certain it won't leave a scar?

Ida sits on a bench next to a sewing machine, racks of outfits behind her. She takes the chunk of ice off her cut and lets Lenore inspect it.

LENORE

With proper care, no worse for wear.

IDA

Don't know.

(MORE)