

1881 ZOMBIES

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. MASSACRE RIDGE - DUSK

The silhouette of an Indian medicine man dances and CHANTS against the red setting sun.

The soils stirs. A hand reaches out from beneath the earth.

INT. SALOON - DUSK

Merrick, 30, a tall sturdy, experienced gun, dressed in worldly attire hidden under a common leather duster and cowboy hat, stumbles to the bar. His thick uneasy presence makes a man's trigger finger itch.

MERRICK

Whiskey

A blood stained hand reaches for the glass.

RIFFLE COCKING. Two men stand behind Merrick. SHERIFF CODY, a man with a likeable presence, stands next to DEPUTY BILL, a short, unsightly, less than charismatic man, cradling a riffle.

Merrick turns his head. The brim of his hat covers his eyes forcing his ears see for him.

SHERIFF CODY

Ten men went out, and only the drifter came back.

Merrick slides his gun down the counter. The Saloon's patrons keep fingers glued to their triggers.

MERRICK

I have seen enough blood for one day, Cody.

Even unarmed, Merrick makes a man tense. He turns to face the sheriff. Spinning just a little too fast, the Deputy reacts by bashing the butt of his riffle into Merrick's head.

Merrick crashes to the floor. All eyes are on the Sheriff.

SHERIFF CODY

In the morning, this man will hang.
You will have retribution for your fathers, brothers, and sons.

The crowds cheers.

Merrick's world goes dark.

BEGIN FLASHBACK SEQUENCE:

EXT. MASSACRE RIDGE - DUSK

The POV of Merrick's gun barrel aimed at a group of Indians. The Indian men protectively surround the women and children. A glance to the left reveals a row of cowboy executioners, guns drawn with Merrick.

END FLASHBACK SEQUENCE:

INT. JAIL - NIGHT

Merrick wakes in a jail cell.

In the distance, the medicine man's chants merge with the horrific war cries of his own people. Sherrif Cody stands in the doorway listening, while loading his riffle.

SHERRIF CODY

They've been calling for you.

MERRICK

I'll get mine in the morning, but they ain't calling just for me. It was your people that rode out with me. Their coming for everyone.

Sherrif Cody loads another bullet. Cocks the riffle then looks down the barrel.

SHERRIF CODY

I can handle what's left of them by myself, tonight.

He pauses before stepping out the door. Sherrif Cody pulls out his keys.

SHERRIF CODY (CONT'D)

Whatever you did to our boys out there, you crossed the line. There ain't much I can do for you other than tell you if you're here when I get back, I'll be forced to hang you.

MERRICK

I ain't looking for you to save my
skin this time, Cody.

The sheriff hands Merrick the set of keys.

SHERRIF CODY

Even So. .

Sherrif slips into the darkness outside the door. Merrick's
takes the keys. His face shows contemplation, while his
fingers twirl the keys.

EXT. JAIL CELL - NEXT MORNING

Seemingly vacant. Morning rays spot the sleeping jail. The
DEPUTY charges in.

DEPUTY BILL

Where hell is he? The Sherrif,
where is he?!

The stout Deputy smashes Merrick against the wall.

CLINK. The keys hits the ground. The examines them closely.

DEPUTY BILL (CONT'D)

There are two keys to this jail. I
have one. The sheriff had the
other. Turn around.

The deputy uses hanging rope to bind Merrick's hands behind
his back. Mustering all his strength, the deputy punches
Merrick in the kidney. Merrick crumbles to his knees.

DEPUTY BILL (CONT'D)

A hanging is too merciful a
punishment for you.

The deputy begins to repeatedly kick Merrick while he's down.

EXT. HANGING AREA - DAWN

A small crowd has gathered for the spectacle. They scream.
They shout. Their faces angry and hurt. They have come for
justice. A PREACHER presides over the proceedings.

The noose slides over Merrick's battered face.

PREACHER

Forgive our trespasses, as we
forgive those that trespasses
against us, Lead us not into
temptation and deliver us from
evil.

Merrick's swollen eyes squint, attempting to digest a swarm
of Indians darting towards town. Something is horribly wrong;
their faces grotesquely twisted, lips eroded, teeth exposed.

BEGIN FLASH BACK SEQUENCE:

EXT. MASSACRE RIDGE - DUSK

The male Indians flood the ridge. Like ants up a hill; ants
smashed by an onslaught of gunfire. The ones that fall, are
the same ones invading the town.

END FLASHBACK SEQUENCE:

EXT. HANGING AREA - DAWN

The revived Indians race to town with inhuman speed and
endurance. A quickness that leaves no time for the
unsuspecting crowd to defend an attack. Something else stands
out; the zombie Sheriff Cody travels amongst them.

MERRICK

Wait!?!

DEPUTY BILL

Too late to beg.

The deputy pulls the lever. Merrick surrenders to his fate.

A majority of the crowd falls under the hunger of the warrior
zombies. Even the sheriff joins the buffet, starting with
the all you can eat deputy section.

Zombie teeth chew chunks of intestines and flesh that hang
sloppily from their mouths.

The number of zombies are fewer than the crowd, leaving
survivors who are unsure of what to do next. A WOMAN hunches
over either crying and screaming.

A MAN shoots, gun in each hand, with no avail.

SHOOTING MAN

Theses son's of bitches is already
dead.

The man runs four, maybe five steps, before being pounced by a zombie. Merrick's glossed over eyes look on apathetically, as his body silently hangs.

A woman wildly wields a shovel like a sword. The zombies hesitate just at the end of her reach.

Of the survivors that escaped the initial feed, HENRY, a young boy gains Merrick's attention.

Just in front of Merrick, Henry crawls on his stomach. His cries for help bait in more and more zombies.

No more. Merrick breaks his surrender. His neck tenses against the noose, white knuckles strain for his bound wrists, and his feet kick ferociously. Merrick sways back and forth, ringing the dinner bell for a hanging orduve.

A single zombie claims Merrick for itself. It climbs Merrick's body like a ladder towards his head.

The Zombie reaches Merrick's neck; it bites. Zombie teeth sink into the noose around his neck. Each bite brings Merrick closer to being free of the noose.

Zombies take Henry by the ankles. His belly scratches across the ground. His face disappears into the shadows cast by three zombies.

The noose snaps. Merrick hits the ground, hard. Merrick struggles on the ground, managing to get his bound hands to his front. His teeth snap and pull against the rope. The zombie begins to stand.

His hands are freed, but no guns. Experience courses through his body. The zombie lunges, Merrick turns towards it with a skull shattering punch. The Zombie goes down and stays down. One after one he bashes the zombies down on his way to Henry.

Of the three zombies that have the boy, the center one leans in for a bite. Merrick leaps, taking the three zombies into a tumble. Merrick has it in a head lock.

MERRICK
Gun. Bullets. Now.

The boy looks at him frantically then runs off.

INT. SALOON - MORNING

Empty. The boy grabs riffle mounted on the wall, and a case of shells under the counter.

EXT. HANGING AREA - MORNING

Henry reaches Merrick on the losing end of a fight. He heaves the riffle. Merrick catches.

MERRICK
Wrong Gun. Wrong Bullets.

A zombie tackles the distracted Merrick.

The steel of the riffle against the zombie's neck creates a few inches between its teeth and his flesh. The zombie bites at him like a ravenous dog at the end of its leash.

The boy runs off.

MERRICK (CONT'D)
Come back with the pistol you
little shit.

Merrick's strength gives to the endurance of the zombie. Slobber drips on his face.

BANG. a gun fires. The zombie rolls off. Merrick looks in the direction of the gunfire.

Elizabeth stands frozen behind the barrel of a smoking pistol.

MERRICK (CONT'D)
That's the gun.

Heart wounded by Merrick, she takes aim.

ELIZABETH
My husband rode out with you. Why
didn't he come back.

BEGIN FLASH BACK SEQUENCE:

EXT. MASSACRE RIDGE - DAY

The women huddle children to their breasts.

All the cowboy executioners take aim at the women and children.

Merrick hesitates before turning his gun onto the cowboy executioners next to him. Merrick fires. The cowboys fall.

END FLASH BACK

Her thumb pulls back the hammer.

ELIZABETH
Why didn't he come back?

MERRICK
No man deserved to come back after
what happened out there.

She's not Merrick, she's not a killer. As she lowers the gun, a zombie leaps for her from behind. Merrick has a second to react.

Merrick swipes the gun from Elizabeth, then hurtles her to the ground. He lodges a bullet dead center into the zombie's head at point blank range.

The gun fire draws the attention of all zombies to Merrick, and the woman. Even the preacher is momentarily spared.

MERRICK (CONT'D)
When this mess is over, we'll
settle up on our debt.

Henry runs up with a hand full of bullets. Merrick collectively loads 6, dumps the rest in his pocket.

Merrick drag the boy and woman by their arms, leading the two off the killing field.

INT. SALOON - DAY

Merrick tosses them on their asses.

MERRICK
Stay here.

EXT. HANGING AREA - DAY

Merrick steps out of the saloon to the preacher pinned against the wall.

PREACHER
The power of Christ compels you.
The power of Christ compels you.

Merrick snatches the cross out of hand and forces it through the zombie's skull.

MERRICK
You've been forgiven.

Merrick gives the preacher the same treatment as the boy and woman.

With a handful of bullets, Merrick take the rest of the zombies down like a shooting gallery at a carnival.

A second gun fire ECHO's. A bullet hits Merrick's shoulder. Merrick turns to see the deputy, bloody, bitten, but alive.

Merrick Aims. CLICK, out of bullets. Merrick holds up a lone bullet between his fingers.

MERRICK (CONT'D)
It only takes one.

With a flaring movement only an experienced gun-man could guide, it's loaded. He holds it at his side. The two face off in a showdown. Death in their gazes.

The deputy's gun breaks the stand off. He misses.

MERRICK (CONT'D)
We all get ours in the end.

Merrick shoots. The bullet flies through the deputy's head.

The people Merrick saved surround him, plus a few other survivors. Merrick stares off to the distance.

EXT: MASSACRE RIDGE- MORNING

A larger wave a zombies marches toward the town.

EXT: HANGING AREA - MORNING

Alerted to the danger, the survivors stand facing the same direction as Merrick.

MERRICK
This is going to get a whole lot worse before it gets better.

Unnoticed, the recently dead rise behind Merrick and friends.

GRAPHIC TITLE: 1881 Zombies