

SUN DANCE

Libretto by **Leonard Walton**

Music by **Matthew J. Walton**

ACT ONE, SCENE ONE (PROLOGUE)

Character Breakdown

Parts 1-10: Native American

Leonard and Parts 5-10 move to the center of the stage and sit in a semi-circle to begin a sweat ceremony.

LP - I take out my sacred pipe... cleaning and polishing the red pipestone bowl and stem...keeping the two pieces apart until just before the actual ceremony...when I smoke it during the ceremony the Great Spirit listens to every word of prayer. We enter through the pulled back door flap, moving clockwise through the lodge...the red hot stones brought in by the fire keeper...Seven stones are brought in...four for the sacred directions and stones for Mother Earth, the People and Wakan Tanka. We offer cedar on the stones, cleansing and purifying the air.... we pour the water on the stones, hissing sharply as it fills the air with the lovely smell...four times the water is poured from the buffalo horn onto the molten rocks, four times the steam explodes and envelops us...you resist the temptation to leave the scalding steam, digging your nails into the bare soil of the floor, your knees inches from the rocks...and you realize the fear of pain is worse than the pain itself, a lesson you need to survive in the world

The music is interrupted by a loud, abrasive buzzer. We realize that the sweat ceremony is being conducted in prison.

Voice (over a loudspeaker) - Time's up; Get ready for four o'clock headcount.

The stage darkens and the following poem is sung.

Part 1 - We are not separate beings, you and I
We are different strands of the same Being
You are me and I am you
and we are they and they are us.
This is how we're meant to be,
each of us one,
each of us all.
You reach out across the void of Otherness to me
and you touch your own soul.

There is a loud "clang" of cell closing, communication radio sounds... A spotlight comes on to show Leonard Peltier speaking from a darkened area at center stage, the light only on him.

LP - Time for the nightly lockdown and headcount...the heavy metal door to my cell lets out a grinding sound, then slides shut with a loud clang...the other doors closing almost at once down the cell block...even though I know it's about to happen my skin jumps at the sudden noise...you never let your guard down when you live in hell.

The noise, always the noise...disembodied voices drone, steel doors slam, an ever present

background chorus of shouts and yells, demented babblings, crazed screams, ghostlike laughter

The guard's shadow passes by the little window on the cell door...his keys jangle, the mindless squawking of his two way radio...his gaze passes over me, pauses, then moves on...another day ends, another night begins

I am Leonard Peltier, I am Gwarth-ee-lass; He Leads the People, I am Tate Wikikuwa; Wind Chases the Sun, I am US Prisoner #89637132...I am in the 29th year of my imprisonment for a crime I did not commit.

LP moves to the side of the stage and enters his cell where he will narrate the rest of the opera.

The stage becomes dark and the following poem is sung by the entire ensemble:

Listen to me!

Listen!

I am the Indian voice.

Hear me crying out of the wind,

Hear me crying out of the silence.

I am the Indian voice.

Listen to me!

I speak for our ancestors,

They cry out to you from the unstill grave.

I speak for the children yet unborn,

They cry out to you from the unspoken silence.

We are your own conscience calling to you.

We are you yourself

crying unheard within you

Put your ear to the earth

and hear my heart beating there.

Put your ear to the wind

and hear me speaking there.

We are the voice of the earth,

of the future,

of the mystery.

Hear us.

ACT ONE, SCENE TWO (WOUNDED KNEE)

Character Breakdown

Parts 3,4,5,8,9: Native American

Part 1,2: White female (Switch to Native American for chorus)

Parts 6,7,10: White soldiers (Part 6 switches to white minister, then to Native American for chorus)

Back projected screen shows:

*WOUNDED KNEE, SOUTH DAKOTA
DECEMBER 29, 1890*

LP - Even in this cold cell I feel the excitement of my ancestors on the plains. A rumor was sweeping over the reservation, a messiah was coming to deliver the Indians from the white man. The great ritual of our movement, the Ghost Dance, spread across the Dakotas... and the white man was afraid, the old fears of an Indian uprising returned.

The army started rounding up and disarming my people. As some of the Indians were being arrested by the soldiers, Sitting Bull was killed. The ninth and seventh cavalries, Custer's old unit, came back to the fight. In my mind, I could see what was about to happen... Just like the gunfight would be at Pine Ridge, no one knows who fired the first shot at Wounded Knee. But there is no doubt about the massacre that followed.

LP/Part 5 (*LP begins the first few words and the phrase is then picked up by the singer*)

I hear the voices of the children crying out from the cold, the hunger, the terror... I hear the wails of the mothers weeping in agony for their dying babies. I hear the screams and feel the pain of those mothers, children and old men as they are torn to pieces by the bullets and the flashing sabers, striking them again and again as they lay there defenseless... I see the proud butchers of the Seventh Cavalry receiving their medals of honor ... history books call it a battle as if to give some dignity to what had been done.

Back projected screen shows continuous pictures of Indian families from the Wounded Knee time period. Pictures will be consistent with the dialogue.

Part 9 – What treaty that the whites have kept has the red man ever broken? Not one. What treaty that the white man ever made with us have they kept? Not one... What law have I broken? Is it wrong for me to love my own?because I was born where my father died....

Part 5 - After Sitting Bull was killed, I felt there was not hope on earth, and God seemed to have forgotten us. Some said they saw the Son of God, others did not see Him. If He had come, He would have done great things for us as He had done before... The white men saw us dance, they saw we were without fear.... They were frightened and called for soldiers. We had begged for life, and the white men thought we wanted theirs ... A white man said the soldiers meant to kill us, we did not believe it...

Part 8 - On December 23, I and my brother William Horn Cloud, went down the river for some hay. When we were loading, an Indian rode up with a sweating and foaming horse and told us to hurry and get home, that some soldiers were coming to fight. We did not believe him, and kept at our work.

Parts 6,7,10

The Ninth marched out to splendid cheer the Badlands to explore,
With Col. Henry at their head they never fear the foe;
So on they rode from Christmas Eve 'till dawn of Christmas day;
The redskins heard the Ninth was near, and fled in great dismay.
They claimed the shirt Messiah gave, no bullet could go through,
But when the soldiers fired at them they saw this was not true.
The medicine man supplied them with their great Messiah's grace,
And he too, pulled his freight and swore the 9th hard to face

Part 4 - By 9 o'clock a long line of women were standing, I would think nearly 1000, shivering in the keen air, waiting to be served... We have told the missionaries that in the past we women have been forced for days to stand here in sleet and snow, waiting on the convenience of the issue clerk, and that many deaths occurred from the exposure caused by this needless cruelty...Why hasn't the clothing to which we are entitled been sent to the agency?

Part 7 - Last evening a courier came in from the Badlands with a letter from the hostiles, saying the whole tribe had started in.

Part 10 - The news about the Indians today is quite reassuring and I feel that we can almost begin to hope for a speedy end to this performance.

Part 7 - But part of me is distrustful, I feel we'll still need to use our guns to teach the savages their final lesson.

Part 5 - We saw three men coming towards us on horseback...they were scouts for the white soldiers. Two were Indians and one was a mixed blood...he said that everything would be alright if we would go with the soldiers.

Parts 6,7,10

About their tents, the soldiers stood, awaiting one and all,
That they might hear the trumpet clear when sounding general call
Or Boot and Saddles in a rush, that each and every man
Might mount in haste, ride soon and fast to stop this devilish band
But generals great like Miles and Brooke don't do things up that way,
For they know the Indian like a book, and let him have his sway
Until they think him far enough and then to John they'll say,
"You had better stop your fooling or we'll bring our guns to play"
They claimed the shirt Messiah gave, no bullet could go through,
But when the soldiers fired at them they saw this was not true.
The medicine man supplied them with their great Messiah's grace,
And he too, pulled his freight and swore the 9th hard to face

Part 8 - Finally our chief said, You men better give him your guns. We are not on this trip to do any fighting.

Part 9 - We did not like this, but Chief Big Foot told us to do what the soldiers say, so we piled our guns in the center.

Part 3 - A medicine man by the name of Yellow Bird appeared from nowhere and stood facing the east...he was praying and crying...He was saying to the eagles that he wanted to die instead of his people. He must have sensed that something was going to happen.

Part 5 - The Medicine Man stopped praying and stooping down, took some dirt and rose up facing the west, raised his two hands, and still facing the west, cast the dirt with a circular motion of his hand toward the soldiers in the road..."I have lived long enough."

Part 4 - A deaf Indian named Black Coyote, did not want to give up his gun, he did not understand what they were giving up their arms for.

A shot is heard

Part 10 - There seemed to be a lull for a second or two, then the soldiers fired and I saw bucks falling fast. They broke and ran in every direction, mainly towards their village.

Gun shots, shouting, smoke...Back projected screen shows continuous pictures of Indians killed during the massacre.

Part 8 - As soon as the first shot was fired, the Indians began drawing their knives...the firing began immediately on the part of the soldiers

Part 7 - Fire, fire on them

Part 8 - We had no chance to fight back as we had no weapons. All we thought about, those of us who were still alive, was to get away. The morning was cloudy and damp and the smoke from the guns did not rise but settled right on us. From then on nothing could be seen very plain. The soldiers were rushing around shooting all of us they could see to shoot,

Part 9 - My mother was crying and trying to protect our small family...I was just a little boy...a soldier came to where we were hiding and shot my mother, baby brother and I as my mother pleaded for our lives...I lay in the snow for hours

Part 3 - My grandfather was shot in the back, it went through his lung. He was again shot in the right calf and in the hip. He was coughing blood, he had lost a lot of blood. He could hear someone singing a death song. Whenever someone moved, the soldiers shot them.

Part 5 - I started to the creek and on the way I saw a great number of men, women and children, dead or wounded and bleeding. I went on past them down into the creek as I saw a few others running there to get protection.

Part 3 - The women started to run toward the west, but the soldiers from both sides shot them. My husband was killed there and my little girl, and a little baby boy on my back.

Part 8 - In this ravine where we took refuge, most of them were women and children ...above them the soldiers just got near them and shot these people down.

Part 7 - I saw no wanton destruction of non combatants, not that could be helped, in my opinion...they were at times 200 yards off and we could not discern the distinction between bucks and squaws. I stand proud of our soldiers...unlike the fighters of ancient Rome these men showed

mercy and understanding to their adversary.

Part 6 (as minister)- The troops acted with consummate skill and wisdom...the officers commanding these troops are gentlemen, humane and tender in all their instincts, unusually refined and cultured, the farthest removed from cruelty and inhumanity

Part 1 - The church was filled with the suffering...A good many of them died of their wounds, infants from a few months to tender years of age were shot in all parts of their bodies...

Part 6 – Our nation is honored to have men like these soldiers. They use no unnecessary force, they may protect themselves from the attacks of the savages, but they take no revenge. God has truly blessed us with men like these.

Part 2 - We laid the poor creatures side to side in rows and the night was devoted to caring for them as best we could...many were frightfully torn to pieces... In spite of all our efforts we lost the greater part of them, but a few recovered, including several children who were adopted into kind Christian families.

Part 10 - From the first instant the squaws started for the hills and it is my belief that comparatively few of them were injured.

Part 3 - The soldiers followed us up and kept firing...My mother and I kept going until we got to the end of the ravine. When we got there, we were charged by the army

Part 9 - Right in front of me, I saw an old woman who had been killed. As I passed her, I ran across a woman who had a girl about one year old on her back. This little girl had her head blown off.

Back projected screen shows and holds a final picture of the bodies of dead women and children, frozen in the snow.

Part 10 reads to Part 7 from a telegram.

Part 10 (spoken) - "The evidence shows that great care was taken by the officers and generally by the enlisted men to avoid unnecessary killing of Indian women and children in the affair at Wounded Knee and shows that the conduct of the Seventh Cavalry was characterized by excellent discipline and great forbearance. In my judgment the conduct of the regiment was well worthy of the commendation bestowed upon it by me..." Signed, J.M. Schofield, Major General Commanding

Screen then shows the statement by Kicking Bear which is sung by the ensemble, minus Parts 7 and 10.

My brothers, I bring you the promise of a day in which there will be no white man to lay his hand on the bridle of the Indian's horse, when the red men of the prairie will rule the world and not be turned from the hunting grounds by any man. I bring you words from your fathers the ghosts, that they are now marching to join you, led by the Messiah who came once to live on earth with the white men, but was cast out and killed by them. I have seen the wonders of the spirit land, and have talked with the ghosts. I traveled far and am sent back with a message to tell you to make ready for the coming of the messiah and return of the ghosts in spring.

ACT ONE, SCENE THREE (ALCATRAZ)

Character Breakdown

Parts 1-10: Native American

Back projected screen shows:

*Alcatraz
November 20, 1969 - June 11, 1971*

Part 2 - Throughout the cold and winter nights, we tended to our fires. We drew our blankets close around and watched the waves crash higher.

LP- In 1970, while the Alcatraz takeover was still going on, we laid claim to surplus Indian land at Fort Lawton. We found our inspiration in the message of native leaders....men and women whose vision, bravery, and fiery, even incendiary words, gave voice to a whole generation of Indian activists...The actual occupation of Alcatraz began in November, 1969. At first, several groups of Native Americans attempted to occupy the abandoned prison, and were removed by local officials. But by late November, with better planning and more support, they were ready to occupy the island permanently.

Part 2 - Though the cold waves beat on Alcatraz, Indian hearts are stout. For White men think we'll go away, but we'll live this winter out.

Back projected screen then shows photos and film footage of Alcatraz during the initial night of the occupation.

Part 6 - Careful getting out of the boat.

Part 1 - We made it. After all those tries, we're finally on the island.

Part 3 - There's more of us this time, we've got families and kids.

Part 8 - How many did we get in tonight?

Part 9 - 80 or 90 must have made it over before the boats had to stop.

Part 3 - So, now what do we do?

Part 1 - Well, it's ours now. Let's go get settled in. We're here to stay this time.

Part 2 - For the north wind is our brother, we share his bitter shock.
Aii - we are the warriors of Alcatraz, and we hold the rock.

Part 3 - We are not leaving the Rock; it is ours.

All - We are the Indians of All Tribes!

Part 3 - This is not just a space for dancing, but for building an Indian future. Alcatraz is because the government forced our back against the wall...They legislate what they want and disregard the Indian people's treaty rights, tribal rights, human rights and civil rights.

All - We are on a new trail.

Part 3 - We are staying here.

Part 8 - People from all over the world will be paying attention to us. We need to develop our message.

Part 3 - Tell them that our landing on Alcatraz Island is a symbol of our cultural right to land and to life. This is what we will say to the world:

Parts 1,3 - We, the Native Americans, reclaim the land known as Alcatraz Island in the name of all American Indians by the right of Discovery.

Parts 6,8 - We will give to the inhabitants of this island a portion of the land for their own, to be held in trust... for as long as the sun shall rise and the rivers go down to the sea. We will further guide the inhabitants in the proper way of living....

Parts 1,3 - And thus raise them and their white brothers up from their savage and unhappy state.

Part 3 - It would be fitting and symbolic that ships from all over the world, entering the Golden Gate, would first see Indian land, and thus be reminded of the true history of this nation. This tiny island would be a symbol of the great lands once ruled by free and noble Indians.

Passage of time

LP - I wasn't at Alcatraz, but I remember all of the stories that I heard later. During the first few weeks, everything went well. New people came to the island each week to be a part of what was happening. The Indians on the island had broad support from all parts of the United States, and even from the government officials

Part 1 - It seems that there's always something to do, with new people coming over each day

Part 8 - But today was good, the school opened with 12 children.

Part 6 - We've got volunteer doctors to work in the clinic

Part 4 - And John is getting ready to start publishing the newspaper, Indians of All Tribes

Part 1 - Listen to these telegrams the White House is getting:

Parts 1,6 – Dear Mr. Nixon, For once in our history, let the Indians have something.

Parts 4,7 - Did you hear that? Mr. Nixon, let the Indians have something.

Parts 3,9 - Dear Mr. President, Do something decent for a change, return Alcatraz

Part 1 – They're all saying it, Mr. President.

Parts 1,3,4,6,7,9 - Return Alcatraz.

Part 8 - For once, America is for us rather than against us.

Part 9 - There are so many opportunities with this island, a place to live, schools, a place to teach our history to our children

Part 1 - It seems like the whole future is opening up right before our eyes

Passage of time

LP - As time went on, some of the early supporters felt that the occupation of Alcatraz no longer served a purpose. It had attracted national attention to the issue of Indian rights, but now it was time to go. Many Indians on the mainland wanted to use this attention to address the real needs of Indians, like housing, education and employment. To them, Alcatraz was only a symbol, and there was nothing to be gained by actually owning the rock. But others were afraid to give it up, fearing that the government would betray them once they left Alcatraz.

And there was trouble on the island. Many of the initial occupiers had left, and some of the newer residents were causing problems. There were new people on the council, and some seemed to be more interested in keeping power than talking about what Alcatraz could become. Some who left the island said that the early rules that controlled alcohol were being ignored. Across the island there was no longer a common voice.

Part 3 – I don't like the council, it just takes too much time listening to everybody.

Part 2 - But we must keep it going, all the brothers and sisters must have a voice.

Part 3 - But why should someone who just came be equal to someone who was here from the start? Some of the new people don't understand why we came here.

Part 2 – You're the one who doesn't understand. We are all leaders here. Everyone's voice is important.

Part 3 - But all voices are not the same. Many of the new people just care about being in charge, they don't remember why we took the island in the beginning.

Part 8 – And I don't like the way some of our people are always talking to the reporters.

Part 3 – I agree, I don't want someone else to speak for me.

Part 6 - But without a clear spokesman, our message is confusing. How can we expect the government to negotiate in good faith, when they don't know what we want?

Part 10 - Well I say, we should all be spokesmen.

Part 4 - Why is it so hard...it was so clear on that first day, and so beautiful...we had come together as Indians of all tribes and we felt a oneness that had never existed before

Why is it so hard...is it because we were never one tribe before...because we lived on those separate reservations as people tried to take the Indian out of us

Why is it so hard...is it because some of us who are old want to keep the few things we've gotten, while some of us who are young want to put all we have at risk for this new freedom

Why is it so hard...is it because we really can't go back to being Indians again....Is that lost to us forever? Is the only way left for us to go forward in the white world?

Why is it so hard....it was so clear on that first day, and so beautiful...we had come together as Indians of all tribes and we felt a oneness that had never existed before.....can we find it again?

Passage of time

LP – As time passed, the island began to attract a completely different type of person. Many of the new ones came without any purpose. Even worse were those that came with a darker purpose, like the group of thugs who claimed that they came to provide security. They called themselves the Thunderbirds, but instead of making the island safe, they sold drugs and violently dealt with anyone who opposed them. They began to control some members of the council through bribes and fear.

Two conversations taking place at a similar time but different locations on the island *Conversation 1*

Part 5 - It seems to get colder and harder each day.

Part 3 - These new people, they don't understand why we came to Alcatraz

Part 5 - I'm afraid to say anything. They broke John's nose, just because he tried to talk to the council about some of the new guys who drink all day long.

Part 7 - But the council protects them. Someone said that they give money to council members to let them stay.

Part 3 - Where do they get all this money?

Part 7 - It's the Thunderbirds that have the money. I heard they use the island as their new base for running drugs.

Part 5 - When I go back next weekend, I think I might just stay on the mainland.

Conversation 2

Part 2 - Listen to what they're saying about us. (*Reads from a newspaper*) Like children, away from adults and civilization, they have established their own brutal society. Drunkenness is rampant, mindless vandalism is widespread...Young toughs, outfitted with special jackets, roam the island threatening and beating the residents.

Part 9 - Here's how we will respond. There are always those present who would ruin things, but the majority, those dedicated to the true aim of our occupation, will make the spoilers into true believers.

Part 8 - The island has become our symbol, we cannot trade it away.

Part 10 - The whites say they are concerned for the destruction of property at Alcatraz. Where is their concern for the destruction of our people, for human lives? Where is their concern for us? We have not asked them to give up their religion for ours. We have not asked them to give up their way of life for ours. We have not asked them to give up their government for ours. We have not asked them to give up their territories. Why can they not accord us with the same respect? For the children learn from watching their elders, and if you want your children to do what is right, then it is up to you to set the example.

Passage of time

LP – As the months passed, it became clear that the government was no longer conducting serious negotiations. People had forgotten why we occupied Alcatraz in the first place. The government’s last proposal was to make Alcatraz into an Indian memorial or a museum. Once again, we became a sideshow, like Sitting Bull at the rodeo. With all hope lost, the anger began to build once more.

Part 1 - The government proposals for settlement are ridiculous. It's nothing more than building another state park.

Part 6 - They're trying to end the Alcatraz movement.

Part 9 - They just want us to be museum pieces and tourist attractions.

Part 3 - We don't need statues to our dead; our dead never die. We remember the deeds that our people did in our hearts, where heroes should be remembered.

Part 4 - But it's not just the whites. Some of the Indians on the mainland who started with us want to end this as well.

Part 10 – What do they know? We're the ones on the island now. It's ours to decide.

All - We must vote to reject the proposal.

Passage of time

LP - And now the final part of the Alcatraz drama had begun, just as it had at Wounded Knee and just as it would at Pine Ridge. Federal agencies had decided to solve the Indian problem with force and violence, taking away the things that people needed to survive on the island.

Multiple conversations taking place at a similar time on different parts of the island.
Conversation 1

Part 7 - Well, that's it. They cut off the electricity to the island and took the water barge. Now it's going to get tough.

Part 2 - What happened in the fire last night?

Part 6 - We lost the warden's house, the clinic and most of the lighthouse.

Part 2 - How did it start?

Part 8 - Who knows?

Part 7 - I heard the government sent people in overnight to set the fire and drive us out.

Part 6 - Maybe, but I heard it started after one of the drunks got in a fight and then went back to set it to get the guy that hit him.

Part 8 - With no water, we just couldn't fight it.

Conversation 2

Part 4 - The government keeps trying to go around us.

Part 10 - Now they're meeting most of the time with Indians on the mainland.

Part 1 - But they offered new land as a trade for Alcatraz, and money for schools and for jobs. And they said they'd rebuild the community center in San Francisco.

Part 4 - Maybe it's time for us to take that offer, think how much it would mean for our people

Part 10 - We have to say no, the island is all that we have, if we give it up, they'll go back on their word and we won't get anything.

Conversation 3

Part 5 - I don't understand why we don't have more food and water. When I was back on the mainland last week, someone told me we got a check for \$16,000.

Part 2 - I heard the same thing. I heard there were envelopes just filled with cash and checks.

Part 5 - You'd never know it by what we have here. No fuel, no water. If someone is sending money, we're sure not getting it.

Conversation 4

Part 8 - The last meeting with the government on the mainland was terrible.

Part 3 - Everyone seemed ready to give up. Even the Indians on the mainland no longer seem to care.

Part 4 - Everyone asked why we wanted to keep Alcatraz. If the government can't afford to keep it up, how can the Indians?

Part 8 - They said they want the government money to go for other things, not for the island.

Part 1 - (*Reading from a newspaper*) Here's the latest. The purpose of occupying Alcatraz was to start an Indian movement and call attention to Indian problems...it has served its purpose...it has turned from an Indian movement to a personality thing,

Passage of time

LP - In the last few months of the occupation, when the residents were down to about 20 people, they tried to get back to the old ideals. Those who remained still spoke about establishing some type of school, where Indians could come and learn about their heritage. They sent the troublemakers off the island, and went back to the lifestyle they had in the beginning. But America had forgotten them. To the rest of the country, the occupation was over. The lighthouse had quit working, city officials wanted to take the Indians off the island and bring things back to the way they used to be.

Part 8 - We cannot stop trying, we have given so much.....A man and his child both died as part of this...many others gave up their jobs or their families to help us...we cannot forget our hope in the beginning... that ships from all over the world, entering the Golden Gate, would first see Indian land.....and thus be reminded of the true history of this nation...this tiny island would be a symbol of the great lands once ruled by free and noble Indians.

What we're trying to say is this....we want to determine our own destiny...we want to make our own decisions...and for better or worse we can do that here...

Sometimes we do not know the way...but here we are able to create our own way.

Sometime we make mistakes, but they are our own mistakes.

Sometimes we do not speak with one voice...but we do speak with our own voices, not the voice of a white man.

Life on the island may not be easy...but at least it is always our own.

Part 3 - (*Reading from a newspaper*) Now this is what they're saying about us. The dream is over; tragedy has come to Alcatraz. Leadership has failed, there is no organization, and crime plagues the island.

Part 6 - I'll answer that one. The dreams are not shattered. It would be good if you could see our dreams. Yes, there are fewer people, but this is not a reservation where you can force us to stay.

Part 3 - This whole thing was about telling the government that they aren't going to steal our land anymore. We cannot let Alcatraz die.

Part 2 - And it did work. Look at all the other occupations that have been taking place.

Part 8 - And now when they write about us in the paper, they talk about our real issues.

Part 6 - We're not just people in headdresses any more.

Part 3 - And who knows how many people had their lives changed by all of this.

Part 5 - (*Off to one side of the stage, writing a letter*) This letter is just to let you know I'm doing fine...boy, is this a big island...there is no heat or electricity so you have to have a sleeping bag and firewood... our boat sank a few days ago and we have a problem getting food and water...but this has given me a goal in life...I will be able to look back and say that I did something worthwhile...

(Screen displays newspaper headline telling of the removal of the remaining Native Americans from Alcatraz)

LP - In the end, the occupiers left and moved on to other things. But Alcatraz inspired people to do greater things. The march to BIA headquarters in Washington, the occupation of Wounded Knee, and the events that happened at Pine Ridge can all be traced to Alcatraz. All of these were either led by people that had been at Alcatraz, or by people who gained strength from our new found powers that Alcatraz created. There were many opinions about the occupation, but they were probably best summed up by the newspaper headlines, and the thoughts of two individuals who were very involved in the movement.

(Each of these final statements are displayed on the screen)

The long 19 month takeover of Alcatraz had to end sometime...the relighting of the Alcatraz light is literally, the brightest event in this affair,...its steady rhythm welcomed most by mariners, to whom for more than a century it has been an important safety beacon. (June, 1971 - San Francisco Chronicle)

To view Alcatraz from its end is a mistake. It must always be known that, more than anything else, Alcatraz brought us together. And it brought the problems of Native Americans to national attention. It may seem strange to someone in the future to imagine that we could have been unified and inspired by a bleak and inhospitable old prison that was used to punish and ruin so many other lives. (Adam Fortunate Eagle)

The memory that remains with me is that wonderful feeling of freedom when you landed on the rock. Everyday problems were swept away with the realization that we could do anything if we got together and did it. (Vine Deloria)

Back projected screen shows:

*Wounded Knee
February 27, 1973 - May 8, 1973*

LP - In February 1973, a group of Native Americans gathered at Wounded Knee, site of the massacre 80 years before. At the time, it was a rare coalition between the tribal elders on the reservation, the traditionalists, and the American Indian Movement, the new warrior society better known as AIM. They were frustrated at the government's support of a hard line, local tribal leader. These two groups made the decision to bring national attention to the situation and attempt to force a change. But what began as a symbolic takeover to protest long standing mistreatment of Native Americans, was quickly turned by the government into a full fledged siege that lasted for months. On May 8, the occupation ended with an agreement by the federal government to discuss other tribal issues, but the meetings failed to result in any concrete action.

At the close, it was simply another incident of broken government promises, and unfulfilled Indian dreams. Wounded Knee was to be a revival of Lakota traditionalism but it really marked the beginning of the end of a coordinated program of Native activism in the 1970s.

ACT ONE, SCENE FOUR (PINE RIDGE)

Character Breakdown

Parts 1-10: Native American (Parts 2,4,6,7 are Pine Ridge residents, Parts 1,3,5,8,9,10 are AIM members named below)

Part 1: Nilak Butler

Part 3: Angie Long Visitor

Part 5: Dino Butler

Part 8: Mike Anderson

Part 9: Bob Robideau

Part 10: Norman Brown

Back projected screen shows:

*PINE RIDGE, SOUTH DAKOTA
March – June, 1975*

LP – Following Wounded Knee, the situation on the reservations became increasingly violent. Despite the presence of hundreds of FBI agents and police from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, or BIA, more than 60 Indian murders were reported on the Pine Ridge reservation over the next two years. The Justice Department reneged on their promise to prosecute local officials who were responsible, and traditionalists were forced to fight to preserve their way of life.

Political violence continued to increase on the reservation. There were random shootings and people were afraid to go out of their homes. They had lost all faith in the government agents to protect them. And the hard line tribal leader hired locally recruited young native men, called “goons,” who were paid to harass local people fighting to protect their traditional ways of life. Members of the American Indian Movement had been asked to come in and provide protection for the local people. But the reservation was badly divided. Even with all the trouble, Indians on the reservation did not all agree with bringing in the AIM defenders. Many were afraid that it would result in even more violence.

Part 6 - We cannot continue to let our people be treated like this.

Part 4 - We tried doing this by peaceful means, but it has not worked. We must try another way.

Part 2 - But the men you want to bring in are just another kind of fighter. Have you seen them? What do they know or care of our traditions? They are just like the goons; they drink, they fight, they treat women like cattle.

Part 7 - For many years we have not fought any kind of war, we have not fought any kind of battle, and we have forgotten how to fight

Part 2 - Where are the real men, defenders who are worthy of our ancestors?

Part 6 - My brother went to Vietnam. He went two tours and got a Bronze Star. He got all kinds of medals. And you know what? When he came back he saw the very government he fought for killing and fighting his own people. He grabbed all his medals and he threw them outside. And from that day on he became a Lakota warrior again to defend his land and his people.

LP – So even without the full support of the traditionalists, my brothers and I came to Pine Ridge.

Part 9 (Bob Robideau) - I've had it, 7 people were killed last month and two of them were kids. The brutality and violence on the reservation is going to stop right now.

Part 1 (Nilak Butler) - I know they had to call AIM in here to help with security, but it doesn't help things. Now it looks like Indian fighting Indian.

Part 5 (Dino Butler) - But we know that's not the real problem. It's when white people come in and buy ammo and booze for them. The goons think that they have power over us because of a badge and a gun.

Part 9 (Bob Robideau) - I hate fighting with them. It seems like they hate us, and all we're trying to do is live the way our ancestors lived.

Part 1 (Nilak Butler) - But why do they hate us? The reservation is all we have left, and now the whites want that too. They run their cattle on our land, they take our water

Part 3 (Angie Long Visitor) – And they poison our people with drink, all while we sit by and do nothing.

Part 9 (Bob Robideau) - But we did do things. We tried everything else. The BIA won't help, half of their cops are with the goons anyway.

Part 8 (Mike Anderson) -But you saw what happened before we came. Jeanette was killed, King's house was fired on, Fools Crow's house was burned to the ground.

Part 1 (Nilak Butler) - Face it, nobody cares about us anymore. We're just a tourist stop to most people.

Part 3 (Angie Long Visitor) - Right now there's no other way to stop the violence and still protect our people. We have to defend ourselves.

LP – Some continued to believe that AIM was simply becoming part of the violence. The high hopes and lofty words that were spoken at Wounded Knee were being lost in the fight. Bob Robideau and Dino Butler were two of the AIM warriors there with us.

Part 5 (Dino Butler) – Bob, I don't like the way this is going. AIM didn't here come to fight. We said we came to stand with our people, to protect them. We didn't come to hurt people.

I carry a rifle and would use it because I hate them.
But why do I hate them?
Do I hate them because of what they believe in?
Do I know what brought them here to fight me?
Do I know what brought me here to fight?

People said our ancestors were brought onto reservations as survivors,
But they were really brought to live as prisoners.
All of the bitterness and confusion is passed on to our children through generations
Unresolved and growing larger all the time
Taking us away from our true identity.

I don't really know what brought me here to fight,
I only know that I am here now.

Part 9 (Bob Robideau) - Dino, you know why you fight. You fight for those who were killed at Oglala. I know we said we wouldn't fight, but it's not working. It's time we get ready to shoot back if we have to.

Part 5 (Dino Butler) - We keep getting further and further away from who we are. A thousand years ago our people knew their identity. They knew their relationship to the earth and all life. I remember a story that an old man taught me when I was a kid...

LP - It was a story that many of us had heard from our elders. In the beginning, the Creator made this universe and created Mother Earth. Four families were put upon the earth to live in harmony and respect to life. The Black people, The White People, The Red People, and the Yellow People. He put each of these People in a different part of the world and he gave them a way of life to live upon that land. He also gave them instructions about their way of life and the instruction was that no one People would force their way of life upon another People. No people should accept anything that is being forced upon them in that way. He said if these ways weren't followed that the People would become confused and there would be a lot of pain among them. But he never said that we should fight or hate.

Part 5 (Dino Butler) - ...He never said we should fight or hate.

Part 9 (Bob Robideau) - But the Feds and their goons are going crazy on the reservation. If you don't fight they'll kill you.

Part 5 (Dino Butler) - I don't care if I die, but I don't want to die for hate. And that's what it would be.

Part 9 (Bob Robideau) - That's not what we've learned the last few years. Look at all the things that happened to us.

Part 5 (Dino Butler) - But look where we learned it. Prisons, reform schools, group homes, and bars; most of them run by the white people and the goons we've come to hate. What do we know that we learned from our ancestors... a few words, a few dances... that's nothing.

LP - Even within the AIM movement, there was confusion and deceit. The movement seemed to have many leaders, and not all were in agreement.

Part 3 (Angie Long Visitor) - It's hard to know who to trust. Some people are so hard up for cash, or so afraid, they could be on both sides.

Part 5 (Dino Butler) - Remember that AIM guy in California? We thought he was our friend and it turned out he was working for the FBI. He had everybody fooled.

Part 1 (Nilak Butler) - I hate what they've done to us, turning us against each other.

Part 8 (Mike Anderson) - (*Changing the conversation*) So what about last night?

Part 9 (Bob Robideau) - Me and Leonard went down to Ted's house. He came back at night from town and the house was shot up. He was afraid to go back alone in case the shooters came back.

Part 8 (Mike Anderson) - What happened?

Part 9 (Bob Robideau) - We went back down, but no one came back. And yes, I took my gun.

Part 1 (Nilak Butler) - You know that's what they're counting on us to do.

Part 9 (Bob Robideau) - But it would have been crazy to go back down there without guns. Would you have gone down there without a gun?

Part 8 (Mike Anderson) - No, but we've got to be careful. They're looking to set us up in any way they can. We all know that. They all know that AIM is here now, so we've got to be careful with everything.

Part 9 (Bob Robideau) - Look, I know it's important. Without us, the Indians on the reservation are at the mercy of the goons and the whites. But we can't just walk away. We're here to give our people a chance to live.

Part 5 (Dino Butler) - But what have we really done? When AIM first came, we were here to tell people they didn't need to lease their land to the white man. That they could buy their own cattle and live free of the government.

Part 8 (Mike Anderson) - Yeah, and AIM also came to guarantee a fair election for tribal leader. Look what happened there. Who won? The people with the guns, not us.

Part 9 (Bob Robideau) - And what about all those lawyers that were supposed to defend us? They were run off by the guys with guns.

Part 1 (Nilak Butler) - And remember that government guy who tried to help us. They got to the politicians in Washington, had him removed last month, just when it looked like he might actually get something done.

Part 8 (Mike Anderson) - For whatever reason, it's time to fight back. People are ready to die, and they may die, but that's going to happen anyway. Hell, we're struggling for our lives already, we're struggling to survive.

Part 9 (Bob Robideau) - I'm tired and I have run out of patience...

Our grandfathers went to Washington, over and over. All they ever got were lies. Someday I will have a son and no one will tell him lies. I'm tired of living this way and I don't want to do it anymore. What we do today we do for our children. Some day, thousands of us Indians will walk back to the Black Hills and say, "We have come home and you will not take us out of here. We have come home, and we will live as we wish. We have come home, no you will not take us out of here. We have come home, to our home."

I may not live to see that day.
For me, life has always been and will always be hard.
I will always be a warrior.

Few that are with me now will be with me at the end,
But some day all will come home.

LP – By late June, life on the reservation became even worse. Word was passed that we had been targeted for obliteration, and that all of us AIM warriors were to shoot back when shot at, even by law enforcement officers. A group of us had been camping on the property of the Jumping Bull's for about a month. We had to set it up like a military camp. We had a few tents as well as a sweat lodge in the woods along White Clay Creek. But it was also a spiritual camp, an oasis for us from the violence and fighting everywhere else.

Part 5 (Dino Butler) - It's great that we have this place to stay

Part 3 (Angie Long Visitor) - Well, we needed a spot for all the AIM folks to live and my grandparents had a lot of room on their property.

Part 1 (Nilak Butler) - They told me they're glad to have us here. They feel a lot safer when we're around.

Part 5 (Dino Butler) - I'm glad we can help them out as well. Leonard got that old truck of theirs running again.

Part 3 (Angie Long Visitor) - The past few weeks have been wonderful. It's so peaceful out here, not at all like the rest of the reservation.

Part 9 (Bob Robideau) - I feel like we're starting to understand what it could be like if we returned to the old ways.

Part 1 (Nilak Butler) - The younger kids seem happier too, and a lot more relaxed.

Part 10 (Norman Brown)- I'm still worried though.

Part 3 (Angie Long Visitor) - What about?

Part 10 (Norman Brown)- Those FBI guys that came out yesterday

Part 3 (Angie Long Visitor) - The ones who were looking for Jimmy Eagle?

Part 10 (Norman Brown) - That's what they said, but it seemed like they were more interested in seeing how many of us were here

Part 8 (Mike Anderson) -Yeah, and today they stopped Dino and Leonard coming back from town...thought that one of them was Jimmy.

Part 5 (Dino Butler) - They've got no reason to bother us out here.

Part 9 (Bob Robideau) - Norm, you've got security tonight. Wake us up if you see anything strange. But I doubt if anyone would come out tonight. It looks like we're going to have quite a storm.

Stage darkens, then returns to early morning light.

Back projected screen shows:

*PINE RIDGE, SOUTH DAKOTA
JUNE 26, 1975*

LP - What I remember most clearly is the smell of breakfast. I'd slept late in my tent after being up until the early morning hours. It had rained hard the night before.

I heard the shooting, but I was very confused about where it was coming from and what it was all about. Everyone was worried, not knowing how it had started or what was the cause. To this day, I can't say for sure how many people were there.

We ran up to the top of the ridge and located the source of the firing. Once there, we began to fight back and a full scale shoot out began. We thought they must be some type of law enforcement or the FBI.

As the shooting went on, we realized that at least two of those firing at us were dead. Once that happened, we knew that nothing could save us. There would be no negotiations, no tradeoffs, no explanations, our only hope was in flight.

More firing came and suddenly helicopters appeared. As they started to move in on us Joe Killwright was shot. I wanted to drive out in the van, but Nilak told me there were roadblocks everywhere. So we gathered what we could carry and started to make our way out of the woods towards what we thought was safety.

We heard them in the woods and at times it seemed like we were surrounded. The agents told us to throw down our weapons and come out. They had killed Joe and we knew we were next. It looked like there was no way out.

We sat down to pray for guidance and an eagle appeared to show us the way. Angie saw it ahead of us, by the creek. We went that way, towards the creek. Through a drain pipe, across fields, and up the hill into some other woods. From there, we got away.

The eagle led us safely; I believed that then and I continue to believe that now. The Great Spirit had helped us to escape. He knew it was not our time, so He did not call us.

Despite all the talk, all the trials and all the investigations, we will never know for sure what happened that day, no one will ever admit to how or why it started and no one will ever admit to the deaths of agent Williams, Little Joe Killwright, or agent Coler. I tell you this, I did not see the agents die, and would have done anything to stop it had I known in time.

After that, we were never all together again. To attract less attention, our group split up. At the beginning, we were able to move around to different safe locations, but after a time word began to spread about our whereabouts. Dino was the first to be picked up in an FBI raid while staying with friends near Crow Dog's. Bob and several others had left before the raid, but were picked up after a bad muffler set their car on fire and they had to seek medical help. I managed to stay free the longest, but was arrested after making it across the border to Canada.

The stage becomes dark and the following poem is sung by the entire ensemble:

Listen to me!

Listen!

I am the Indian voice.

Hear me crying out of the wind,

Hear me crying out of the silence.

I am the Indian voice.

Listen to me!

I am the Indian voice.

I am a chorus of millions.

Our eagle cry will not be stilled!

Hear us!

ACT TWO, SCENE ONE (THE TRIALS)

Character Breakdown (all of Act Two)

Parts 1,2,3 are women at a Leonard Peltier Rally, present time

Parts 4-10 play roles in the trials of Dino, Bob, and Leonard, seen in flashbacks

Part 1: Young Native woman

Parts 2,3: Older Native women

Part 4: Myrtle Poor Bear

Part 5: Dino Butler

Part 6: Defense Attorney

Part 7: Prosecution Attorney

Part 8: Mike Anderson

Part 9: Bob Robideau

Part 10: Judge

Present time: Three women at a rally being held to free Leonard Peltier. The scene continually shifts between the women's conversation and the events of the trials. The conversations of the women introduce and/or comment on what is taking place in the trial scenes.

Parts 1, 2, 3 – Free Leonard Peltier! (4x)

Part 1 – No justice, no peace! No justice, no peace!

Parts 1, 2, 3 – Free Leonard Peltier! (4x)

Part 1 – Red people, united, will never be defeated! Red people, united, will never be defeated!

Parts 1, 2, 3 – Free Leonard Peltier! (4x)

Part 1 – Never forgive, never forget! Never forgive, never forget!

Part 2 – (to Part 3, gesturing to Part 1) So much anger, so much hate.

Part 3 – Remember, we were like her once, fighting against the world.

Part 2 – I guess time has taken the edge off my anger. All those years...

Part 3 – More than thirty since Leonard was put in prison.

Part 2 – Thirty years...It's hard to keep people interested for that long.

Part 3 – We're still here, still marching.

Part 2 – But we need young women and men, strong young women like this one.

Part 3 – Not just for Leonard's cause, but to keep us fighting as a people. (To Part 1) Excuse me, hello, it's great to see you here. How did you hear about the march?

Part 1 – From friends who really care about Leonard, not those people who just talk about him. Why are you both here?

Part 2 – We were on the Reservation during Pine Ridge. We stayed through all of the trials. We're still working to get Leonard freed.

Part 1 – I wish I could have been there. I would have fought by his side.

Part 3 – It wasn't always fighting. Lots of the work was getting ready for the trials, or waiting while they took place. *(Pause)* It's so different now than it was at the trial. There wasn't much in the news. And there was so much anti Indian stuff going on. None of us thought Bob or Dino had much of a chance at the first trial.

Part 2 – *(agreeing and speaking to part 1)* We didn't know if it would help that Leonard was still in Canada, so it was just the two of them on trial.

Part 1 – Why waste time with that thinking? You knew the white man would win in the end. You should have shut down the whole damn town, brought in hundreds of people, blocked the streets.

Part 2 – You sound like some of the people who came over later at Alcatraz. They didn't listen or ask any questions, but they always thought they knew everything.

Part 1 – That would have showed them that we wouldn't ever back down.

Part 2 – Don't you see? That's the point. They were already trying to make us look like communists or terrorists. That would have played right into their hands.

Part 3 – We wanted them to understand what was happening on the reservation.

Part 1 – Why would they care what you had to say? You're an Indian.

Part 3 – That's not fair. Some people did care. We had some great attorneys like William Kunstler on our side. He made it hard on those government witnesses.

Shift of focus to trial scene. Montage of William Kunstler interrogating witnesses and making arguments to the jury.

*Cedar Rapids, Iowa
July, 1976*

Part 6 (Defense Attorney) – Did you tell the witness that if she didn't cooperate with you she would be dead within a year?

Part 6 (Defense Attorney) – We want to show the court that this FBI agent fabricated testimony

Part 6 (Defense Attorney) – Did you ever tell the witness that you wouldn't prosecute him if he would testify against Leonard Peltier?

Part 6 (Defense Attorney) – Did you believe that the special agent would hurt you if you didn't do what he wanted?

Part 6 (Defense Attorney) – The government has presented no real evidence on how those agents died. They have not produced even one real witness to the killings.

Shift of focus to women.

Part 3 – By the time the jury was sent off, I thought we might have a chance.

Part 2 - I was so worried, the jury was deadlocked but the judge kept sending them back to reconsider.

Part 3 – There was nothing we could do but wait.

Part 2 - Five days, we waited for five days. I kept thinking, “When are they going to come back with the verdict?”

Shift of focus to trial scene.

*Courtroom of Judge Edward McManus
July 16, 1976*

Part 10 (Judge) - In the case of the killing of two FBI agents at the Pine Ridge Reservation, the jury finds the defendants, Robert Robideau and Dino Butler, not guilty of the charges of murder...An atmosphere of fear and violence existed on the reservation...The defendants could have been shooting in self defense...The government just did not produce sufficient evidence...The jury just did not believe that the charge had been established.

Shift of focus to women.

Part 2 - I didn't believe it when I first heard it. The jury was so brave; the feds looked like they wanted to put them in jail.

Part 3 - The people in Cedar Rapids really changed too. They started to see all that FBI stuff was just propaganda.

Part 1 – How could you be happy? Bob was still in prison on another phony charge.

Part 2 – Don't you see? We had won, we'd won in the white man's court.

Part 3 - It know it sounds crazy, but I thought the FBI might just give up the case with Leonard and Jimmy Eagle.

Part 1 – How could you be so naïve? There were two dead FBI agents at Pine Ridge. Someone had to be guilty of that...some Indian had to pay.

Part 2 – Don't call her naïve. What would you know, what have you ever done?

Part 3 – Remember, she's young and wasn't even there. It's hard to tell young people what that day was like.

Part 2 – We needed some hope. For so long we had always lost in battle, and now we had won.
No one can live without hope.
Hate is not bread for the body, hate is not food for the soul
Without hope, life is empty
For vengeance was what drove the white man

But I wanted to hope, I wanted to hope
I wanted to believe in the day when I could tell my child about our ancestors
I wanted to believe in the day when her school books would tell the true Indian story
I wanted to believe in the day when our lands would be returned, and we could live on
them as we wished, with no interference from the white man
I wanted to believe in the day when I could live without fear
I had to believe that day would come

Shift of focus to trial scene.

Washington, DC
August 9, 1976
Offices of the Federal Bureau of Investigation

Part 7 (Prosecution Attorney) - In light of the recent setback in the case of Robert Robideau and Dino Butler, the case against Jimmy Eagle will be dismissed, so that the full prosecutive weight of the federal government can be directed against Leonard Peltier. We must have a conviction in this case. The American Indian Movement is growing. Other movements are spreading around the country. We must show that Peltier is guilty. The next step is to extradite Peltier from Canada.

Shift of focus to women.

Part 2 – We knew that the government lawyers had to find a way to convince the judge in Canada that Leonard was one of the killers.

Part 3 – They went back to Myrtle Poor Bear, an Indian woman who they scared into testifying.

Part 2 - I couldn't believe what they did to Myrtle.

Part 1 - What do you mean, that woman betrayed the movement? Will you defend her?

Part 3 - She was sick and easy for the FBI to manipulate.

Part 2 - That wasn't the first time she was used by them to put an Indian in prison.

Part 1 – Other women went to prison because they wouldn't cooperate, some with young kids.

Part 2 – What do you know? You've only heard the stories. We were there.

Part 3 - We were all angry then, I promise you. Angry at Myrtle, angry at the system, at all of white America. But now all I feel for her is pity and compassion. She was a pawn, used like they used so many of our people.

Part 2 – And once they used her for the extradition, we couldn't use Myrtle's testimony for Leonard's trial. First the government used her to get Leonard out of Canada, then the prosecution said we couldn't call her as a witness since she was “mentally unstable.”

Part 3 – I remember how confused she was...

Shift of focus to trial scene.

*Fargo, North Dakota
March - April, 1977
Chambers of Judge Paul Benson*

Part 6 (Defense Attorney) - What is your name?

Part 4 (Myrtle Poor Bear) - Myrtle Poor Bear.

Part 6 (Defense Attorney) - Do you know Leonard Peltier?

Part 4 (Myrtle Poor Bear) - No.

Part 6 (Defense Attorney) - Did you ever see him?

Part 4 (Myrtle Poor Bear) - No.

Part 6 (Defense Attorney) - Why did you say that you did?

Part 4 (Myrtle Poor Bear) - I was afraid.

Part 6 (Defense Attorney) - What are you frightened of?

Part 4 (Myrtle Poor Bear) - The government.

Part 6 (Defense Attorney) - Why were you signing these affidavits?

Part 4 (Myrtle Poor Bear) - I was forced to sign both of these papers.

Part 6 (Defense Attorney) - By whom?

Part 4 (Myrtle Poor Bear) - They said one of my family members was going to be hurt if I didn't do it.

Part 6 (Defense Attorney) - Permission to discuss these suspicions regarding the documents for the extradition of Leonard Peltier from Canada.

Part 10 (Judge) - Denied.

Shift of focus to women.

Part 3 – It looked bad for us. New judge, new location, and it seemed like a lot of the evidence that helped Dino and Bob at their trial was disallowed.

Part 2 - Our lawyer told me that they wouldn't let us introduce evidence about all the things that were going on at the reservation right before the shoot out.

Part 3 – That was crazy, if you don't know the history of life on the res, you don't understand how people could shoot back without thinking, why people were so scared of the government.

Part 2 - It never changes, if you don't know our history, you'll never understand our anger, you'll never know the fear we felt.

Part 1 – Why do you both keep talking about helping whites understand our history? They created our history. War, disease, living on the reservations, poisoning us with alcohol.

Part 2 – But not all whites see that.

Part 1 – If they don't, it's their fault. Did you see anyone at Leonard's trial that wanted to know our history?

Part 3 – There were some. There have always been some who would listen to us.

Part 2 – There were a few, but not as many as we had at Cedar Rapids

Part 1 – A few make no difference. It will always be the same. They don't care what we think, and to tell the truth, I don't care what they think.

Shift of focus to trial scene. Now the trial proceeds quickly with the government in firm control.

*Fargo, North Dakota
March - April, 1977
Courtroom of Judge Paul Benson*

Part 6 (Defense Attorney)	Part 10 (Judge)
Permission to enter testimony from the trial at Cedar Rapids.	Denied
Permission to discuss the historical pattern of violence against Native Americans on the Pine Ridge Reservation.	Denied
Permission to enter FBI radio transmissions from the day of the killings as evidence.	Denied
Permission to discuss the not guilty verdict of the other defendants at the trial in Cedar Rapids.	Denied
Permission to discuss supposed FBI misconduct.	Denied

Shift of focus to women.

Part 3 - The government put a lot of pressure on the other guys at Pine Ridge.

Part 1 – The jury was a bunch of fools. They couldn't see that the government threatened all the Indian witnesses. They couldn't see that all of this was set up to just get Leonard.

Shift of focus to trial scene.

Part 10 (Judge) - The Prosecution may proceed.

Part 7 (Prosecution Attorney) - Did you see any individuals down at the agents' cars at any time?

Part 8 (Mike Anderson) – Yes.

Part 7 (Prosecution Attorney) - And tell us who it was you was at the agents' cars.

Part 8 (Mike Anderson) - Butler, Robideau and Peltier.

Part 10 (Judge) - The defense may proceed.

Part 6 (Defense Attorney) - What happened at the end of your interview in jail?

Part 8 (Mike Anderson) - I was refusing to talk until the agent said, “If you don’t talk, I will beat you up in the cell.”

Part 6 (Defense Attorney) - Did that make you afraid?

Part 8 (Mike Anderson) – Yes.

Part 6 (Defense Attorney) - Did you understand that you would get beat up if you didn’t give him the answers that he wanted?

Part 8 (Mike Anderson) – Yes.

Part 6 (Defense Attorney) - Did you give him the answers that you understood he wanted?

Part 8 (Mike Anderson) – Yes.

Shift of focus to women.

Part 3 – It was so sad, people who had been our friends for years were turning against Leonard and the rest of us.

Part 1 – If they were real friends, they wouldn’t have given in, they would have told the truth.

Part 3 – It wasn’t their fault, they were threatened with a long time in prison if they didn’t tell the story how the government wanted. Sometimes their families were threatened.

Part 1 - That’s not an excuse. They sold themselves. They were like the Indian scouts who worked for the white man and betrayed their people.

Part 2 – They might have been old men by the time they came out, if they ever came out.

Part 1 – Leonard grows old in prison as a result of their lies. I know that I would never betray anyone.

Part 2 – So easy to say. Wait ‘til it happens to you, then see what you do.

Part 3 – It might not have made any difference, the whole trial was different than Cedar Rapids.

The following phrases are projected on the back screen.

A new judge is appointed
The trial is moved to a new location
Old witnesses are gone
New witnesses appear for the government
Memories on the day of the event become fuzzy
Evidence disappears
Stories change

Part 3 - Two weeks of testimony, and they disallowed most of it.

Part 2 – It wasn't a fair trial, it was a kangaroo court.

Part 1 – I was right, they just needed to find a guilty Indian. Again and again, it has to be our fault. Some Indian always has to pay.

Part 2 – For once, I agree with you. That's how they keep us in fear. They try to tell us that what we remember didn't really happen.

ACT TWO, SCENE TWO (THE VERDICT)

*Fargo, North Dakota
April 18, 1977
Courtroom of Judge Paul Benson*

Part 10 (Judge) – The jury finds the defendant guilty on two counts of murder in the first degree.

Leonard Peltier is standing on stage, addressing the judge.

LP - There is no doubt in my mind, or in my people's minds, you are going to sentence me to two consecutive life terms. You are and have always been prejudiced against me and any Native Americans who have stood before you. You have openly favored the government all through this trial and you are happy to do whatever the FBI would want you to do in this case...

I'm not the one guilty here. I'm not the one who should be called a criminal---white racist America is the criminal for the destruction of our lands and my people. To hide your guilt from the rest of the decent human beings in America and around the world, you will sentence me to two consecutive life terms without any hesitation...

I believe you made up your mind long ago that I was guilty...You are part of the white racist American establishment which has consistently said, "In God We Trust", while they went about the business of murdering my people and attempting to destroy our culture. To cover up your part in this, you will call me a heartless, cold blooded murderer who deserves two life sentences.

You are about to perform an act which will close one more chapter in the history of the failure of the United States courts and the failure of the people of the United States to do justice in the case of a Native American.

Part 10 (Judge) - Leonard Peltier, having been found guilty by the jury, I sentence you to two consecutive life terms in Federal Prison.

Shift of focus to women.

Part 2 – So there it was...no different than Wounded Knee, no different than every time the Indian had something that the white man wanted.

Part 3 – They told such lies, so many of the witnesses were afraid of the government, their government that was supposed to protect them.

Part 2 – They wouldn't let us tell what it was like to be on the reservation, to live in fear of everyone.

Part 1 – But why didn't you do something?

Part 2 – I don't think I knew what to do. I was beyond anger, beyond sadness, I had nothing left.

Part 1 – Then where is the hope for my generation?
All I see is bitterness, confusion, rage, despair.
In an America that's just as cruel and racist as ever.
What are you doing for our people?

What have you really done?
You teach a few songs, a few dances; that's nothing.
We're enslaved, why can't you see that?
And the only way slaves have ever won freedom is to fight.
Leonard knew this. Leonard lived this.
He stood up to the system. He named the true criminal: white racist America.
Why aren't you still fighting? Fighting for our people?

Part 3 –How can you ask what we're doing for our people?
We are defining who we are in our own terms, and it's not just songs and dances.
Some of us have gone on to live in the other world, but we have not forgotten who we are.
We haven't given up what we believe, just because we don't live on the reservation.
Don't you see that your hate will just keep you where you are, and that's just what they want to do.

Part 2 - There was a time when I was so mad at them, but now it seems so much harder to blame them for what they did.

Part 1 – How can you say that? I could never forgive that judge, he was the one person who was supposed to be fair.

Part 3 – You're right, maybe there are some people I will always blame. But I don't want that hate to be what defines me.

Part 2 - Dino said the same thing, that if we're always ruled by anger over what happened in our past, we will never be able to go on. We'll never regain our old beliefs and traditions.

Part 3 - So few of us are really in charge of our lives, free to get our own facts and make our own decisions.

Part 2 - Everyone who died that day was a victim, trapped in a role that someone else determined for them.

Part 1 – That's not really true. Maybe everyone who died that day was a victim, but there were still bad people. The people in government who tried to control us, they made Pine Ridge happen. And they are still the same today.

Part 2 - Even within our movement there are good and bad people. That was true then, it's still true today.

Part 1 – But this is different. People still look down on me because I'm Indian. All around the world, people are hated just for the color of their skin.

Part 3 - Mitakuye Oyasin. Do you remember that old Lakota prayer? Mitakuye Oyasin, we are all one.

Part 1 – How can we all be one with Leonard still in prison? How can we be one when people still beat him? How can we be one when white people still hate him?

Part 2 - (to part 1) You just said you hate being seen by just the color of your skin. Being one means you can't do that to other people.

Part 3 - It doesn't mean that we forget what happened. It means we don't define ourselves by our anger.

Part 2 – Being one has to start somewhere, it has to start with all of us.

Part 3 - No, it has to start with me. I need to believe these words before I can ask anyone else to believe them. Mitakuye Oyasin, we are all one.

Part 2 - Even Leonard changed the way he saw things. He looked beyond the Indian struggle to see others who are oppressed.

Part 3 – His hate was keeping him from seeing. I'll always remember the poem he wrote in prison.

Let us forgive the worst among us
because the worst is in ourselves,
the worst lives in each of us,
along with the best.
Let us forgive the worst
in each of us
and all of us
so that the best
in each of us
and all of us
may be free.

Part 2 - It was over thirty years ago that it all happened. So much has changed, and for many of us, things have gotten better.

Part 3 - Most people have forgotten all about it, it seems like such old news.

Part 1 - If all of that is true, then why do you still march? Why do you still care?

Part 2 – Leonard told us to forgive the worst in each of us, but he also told us not to forget, not ever.

Part 1 – I believe what you're saying. But I feel like I'm giving up if all I do is remember. A part of me wants someone to pay for what's been done to us.

Part 3 – Nothing will ever make up for what's been done to us. But to remember is to resist, to know that we'll be free one day. We will not be here forever. So it is up to you to carry on the fight.

Part 1 – It is hard for me to accept help from people who haven't lived my struggle.
It is hard for me to replace the anger that's sustained me in my fight.
But I will try.
And no matter what happens, I will always remember

Part 3 - You have to remember. If you forget Leonard, you forget Wounded Knee, Alcatraz, and everything else that happened to us.

Part 2 - If you go silent on one, you go silent on all...

The stage becomes dark and the following poem is spoken and sung by the entire ensemble.

Silence is the voice of complicity
But silence is impossible
Silence screams
Silence is a message,
just as doing nothing is an act.

Let who you are ring out and resonate
in every word and every deed.
Become who you are...

What you do is who you are
You are your own comeuppance
You become your own message
You are the message

Silence is the voice of complicity

LP is writing in his cell for the closing comments. Part 1 is reading to herself from his book.

Part 1 - Out of death comes life, out of pain comes hope...this have I learned these long years of loss...I have never lost faith in the rightness of my cause, which is my People's survival. Never cease in the fight for peace, justice and equality for all people...the struggle is ours to win or lose.

LP – Out of death comes life, out of pain comes hope...this is what I've learned over these long years of loss...But I have never lost faith in the rightness of my cause, my People's survival. Never cease in the fight for peace, justice and equality for all people...the struggle is ours to win or lose.

Mitakuye Oyasin
Don't forget, not ever.