

# FOSSIL RIVER

## BEAT SHEET

### ACT I

- Butch Giselson (40's) is a fisherman enjoying dinner and a drink as he looks for a guide to take him into the previously unreachable Fossil River running through Noatak National Park, Alaska. He's asking around. If he can't find a guide, he's going it alone.
- Head Park Ranger Brave Wolf Whitman (early 40's) shows month-old Park Ranger Scott Chandler (late 30's) around the restaurant. It's like an initiation to the recently-arrived Chandler.
- The two overhear Giselson. Both are intrigued. For untold eons Fossil River has been running under the Noatak Glacier, but a sudden breakup of the glacier due to global warming has opened it to the world. But the Fossil is still uncharted territory, and Chandler the zoologist is interested. Over Wolf's protests, he agrees to fly Giselson in the next morning. Though they don't have a permit to enter that part of the park, Wolf insists on going with Chandler. He has to admit to his own curiosity.
- Chandler and Wolf in the cockpit, Giselson in the back, gearing up. Chandler is an expert flyer—and it's revealed that he has a prosthetic arm. He lost it on a Marine mission in Afghanistan.
- We learn through conversation that Chandler was recently brought into Noatak by veteran ranger Brave Wolf from Montana because of both his knowledge as a zoologist and his flight expertise. Noatak has been experiencing a strange and severe drop in Caribou numbers over the past few years and Wolf needs more speed to get to the dying animals to determine what's taking them down.
- They head for the Fossil, but because the fog becomes too thick even for Chandler to navigate further, they start to head back. But Giselson's protests prevail, and Chandler finally touches down at the edge of the fogged-in area. Giselson is determined to hike the rest of the way into the Fossil.
- Giselson has been trudging through the tough and tangled underbrush all day. As he gets higher and deeper in, he starts to smell something that smells strangely like oil.
- Suddenly, as evening approaches, it starts to rain. He still hasn't reached the Fossil. In front of him--a series of signs: "Uncharted Territory," "Enter at Own Risk," a skull and crossbones. As the downpour worsens, Giselson pitches his tarp over the signs-- to camp out for the night.
- As the sky darkens with sunset, he hears an airplane engine high overhead—but it's not Chandler. V/O of a pilot asking permission to return to base. "Negative," is the response. "Mission is highest priority. Remain on course until sunset plus sixty."
- A small team of scientists and Army men (maybe 4-7 people total) are all busy tending to high-tech equipment as the ultra-modern reconnaissance jet passes over

the area. Their high tech equipment is scanning the mountains for something (it's ambiguous right now). This is brand new equipment, a first in-the-field test run. Personnel on board include a White House rep.

- All the equipment comes to life at once, shocking and exciting everyone. We see underground colors on the screen, the ORANGE vibrating urgently.
- “Get the Energy Secretary on the phone. We’ve hit the fuckin’ motherlode.”
- The next morning, the storm has passed. Giselson is back on the trail. He continues to smell oil, maybe even sees a small pool or two.
- He finally reaches the Fossil and begins fishing. He hooks an unbelievably huge, strange, almost prehistoric-looking fish—a species he’s never seen before.
- He hears a preternaturally high-pitched shrieking, starts blasting blindly with his handgun.
- But in a flurry of suspense and speed, he’s killed by unseen creatures.
- It’s 3 days later, and Chandler and Wolf have been asked by the police to search for the missing fisherman. They express their disdain for this “big waste of time,” because they “could have let the police take care of it.” But they also foster some excitement about taking a closer look at Fossil River. The fog has finally cleared so they can chopper in.
- Landing in a clearing high up near the source of the Fossil River, Chandler and Wolf follow the same path Giselson took days ago, with Wolf tracking his trail and leading the way. They discuss the disappearing Caribou and the newly opened region around the Fossil.
- They get to the river and find a shredded human thigh-bone with teeth and claw marks they’re unable to identify. What looks like an unidentifiable black claw is embedded in the bone.
- Chandler and Wolf have brought the bone to the coroner. He can’t tell if it belongs to Giselson, but is shocked by the marks on the bone—he’s never seen anything like them—the savagery is mind-numbing. And the claw is from no species either he or Chandler are familiar with.
- The Coroner says the only hope of coming to a conclusion about what might have attacked Giselson is to identify the claw. Chandler thinks he has just the person.
- A day later, establish the dinosaur exhibit within the Museum of Natural History in New York.
- Dr. Kimberley Fulton (late 40’s) is the go-to scientist for anything dinosaur-related, and the awards on her office walls are evidence of that.
- She sits at her desk and opens an overnighted package from Chandler. The note he’s written to her evokes some memory and emotion—some confusion.
- She unwraps the bone and claw and is as stunned as Chandler, Wolf, and the coroner were. She rushes to her lab, where she examines the claw under a microscope and finds microscopic traces of pin feathers.
- Her instant DNA test on the claw findings confirms that *Deinonychus Antirrhopus*, a living fossil, is apparently alive and thriving in Noatak Park.
- She calls Chandler at the number he provided, and tells him she’ll be on the next flight out to Noatak.

## END ACT 1

## ACT II

- Chandler and Wolf arrive back to their cabin from the coroner's office to find that they've been invaded by a small group of geologists, oil emissaries, and a handful of army men. They're there to confirm the presence of oil in the Fossil.
- Meanwhile, cut to Kimberly Fulton on the plane to Alaska, accompanied by her son Ken (16), who she's had to bring along with her (nowhere to leave him on short notice).
- He's been asking if his girlfriend Meghan can come, but Fulton says no. Display some electronic detail about the two of them as a couple—stuck in “puppy love,” and Meghan is not only stubborn, but she's a trust fund baby. She always gets what she wants.
- Back in Noatak, Chandler warns the newly-arrived team against going into the forest, but they refuse to listen. In fact, they have orders that Chandler must be the one to fly them in, because he's the best pilot around. Wolf sticks around “base camp” to oversee those not heading into the forest.
- Chandler carries the team in and they touch down and equip themselves with trackers, detectors, and other equipment, and fan out. Just as the team collectively confirms the presence of oil, they're attacked by the dinos.
- Chandler, who's been waiting with the chopper, now runs into the brush and attempts to save the only survivor, a male scientist named Cooper (28) to make it back, but by the time his helicopter touches back down at the cabin, he's dead too.
- Chandler and Wolf report the attack to the Secretary of the Interior/Joint Chiefs of Staff, the people running this oil-escapade.
- Wolf tells Chandler all about his people's legend of “evil dragons in this region.” Introduces the conch as a way to ward off the beasts, but it's really just a joke—there's no proof that it actually works. Chandler records the sound on his iPhone.
- The next day Chandler picks up Fulton and Ken at the airport. The reunion is happy, romantic undertones. Establish that Chandler and Fulton dated when they both worked in Montana. Begin to establish that Ken is oddly a lot like Chandler (unknown father and son).
- They arrive in Noatak to find that the next round of invaders has already arrived—an army battalion sent to take down “whatever's lurking in the Fossil.” Fulton and Chandler convince them to wait until Fulton can confirm what the dinos are.
- Fulton and a reluctant Chandler head into the forest. We get our first genuine look at the dinos: big Velociraptor-like reptiles with feathered wings. But we don't see that they can fly just yet—Fulton “urges” one to fly, but no luck. She mentions that “just because something has feathers doesn't necessarily mean it can fly.”
- They're spotted and attacked. They barely escape—thanks to the low steady moan of the helicopter powering up, which sounds similar to the conch (a point that they don't quite connect yet). They've confirmed living fossils in Noatak.
- Meanwhile, Wolf and Ken get to know each other a bit. We learn more about Wolf's life and the legends, and also learn that Ken comes from a broken family

(a small hint at a missing father). Ken gets a call from Meghan—she’s at the Noatak airport. Surprise! They go pick her up.

- Fulton and Chandler come back and brief the soldiers about the dinos, which Fulton now has video proof of. The army actually agrees to hold off until they’re able to relay this info and receive further analysis.
- Chandler and Fulton return to the cabin, exhausted and exhilarated. Ken and Wolf reveal to Fulton that Meghan is “in town.” Fulton is pissed, but nothing she can do about it now. They have a pizza dinner, pleasantries are exchanged. The calm before the storm. Some small resurfacing feelings between Chandler and Fulton.
- The next morning, the army has been ordered to head in and drive the dinos out of the area. Proceed with caution, preserve the dinos as much as possible. Chandler, Fulton, and Wolf are pissed—they know the army is trigger-happy. They go in with them.
- In the forest, the guns put up a bit of a fight, but it’s really no match—and here is where, much to their horror (and some delight, from a “missing-link” standpoint) they discover that the dinos can in fact fly. Chandler, Fulton, and Wolf are the only ones to escape—barely.
- Meanwhile, Ken and Meghan are bored. They hijack an ATV, pack some supplies, and take their own trip into the forest. They’re attacked, but get away by rolling around in the ATV oil. But now they’re lost and a storm drives them further into the forest.
- Chandler, Fulton, and Wolf barely arrive to find that the teens are missing. Wolf tracks them into the forest. Even though both night and a storm are approaching, they have no choice but to go in after them. Fulton reveals that Ken is Chandler’s son (?).
- Cut appropriately between Ken and Meghan’s trek in the woods, and Chandler, Fulton, and Wolf’s mission to follow and find them.
- Eventually, Chandler’s party is attacked by a dino—but in a miraculous turn of events, a grizzly bear comes into the mix and there’s a spectacular Grizzly vs. Dino showdown. Wolf is killed in the scuffle. Now Chandler and Fulton have lost their forest guide—and most likely any chance of finding the teens.

END ACT II

ACT III

- The storm is under way—it’s a torrential downpour of cold rain. Ken and Meghan’s oil is washing off fast, meaning they’re losing any protection they had. Supplies are also starting to run low. But they need to find shelter, so they continue on. Ken leaves markers, sticks and stones making arrows to point which direction they’re traveling.
- Things are just as bad for Chandler and Fulton—they find some temporary shelter and get to talking. They form a theory about the noise from the chopper that scared off the earlier dino attack.

- When they realize that they're being followed by a small group of dinos, they test their theory—Chandler plays the conch recording from his phone, and the dinos scatter.
- Meanwhile, Ken and Meghan have finally stumbled upon a large cave where they can spend the night. They discover pools of oil, cave paintings left by Wolf's people, and, unfortunately, a nest of hatching dino eggs and their angry mothers.
- Ken lights one of the pools of oil on fire as a distraction—which catches the attention of Chandler and Fulton. Just as the dinos are descending upon the teens, Chandler and the conch noise burst into the cave, saving them.
- They reunite and wait out the storm until morning, playing the conch recording as necessary. Chandler and Fulton decide to give their “family” a chance by getting back together.
- Time jump to roughly one month later. Noatak Park is bustling with the activity of oil companies safely draining Fossil River of its reserves. Specialized conch recordings play from the perimeter of the oil site to keep the dinos away.
- The dinos have been strategically herded to a “new,” thriving section of the park that has been named “Brave Wolf Park” (or something of that nature). Chandler, Fulton, Ken, and Meghan enjoy the ribbon-cutting ceremony and honor Brave Wolf's memory.

END ACT III

END SCRIPT