

Excerpt from *The Drifter in 4-D* screenplay

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EXT. FIELD - DAY

It's late afternoon but still sunny. Wade's Cadillac is one of many parked at the end of a long, freshly mown field, but his is the only car we see with horns on the grille. He's putting up the convertible top and folding the green flyer from earlier.

Then Wade is walking through a CROWD OF PEOPLE at the other end of the field. He's carrying his guitar case and is surrounded by TALK, LAUGHTER and BOOMBOX RAP MUSIC. He stands out because of his Dalmatian hat, yellow western suit, red shirt and red cowboy boots. He also stands out because he's the only white face in the crowd. Everyone else is black.

A WOMAN Wade speaks to points to an old army tent beside a wooden stage at the far end of the field. Wade heads toward the tent and passes a group of KIDS gathered around an OLD MAN.

OLD MAN

Word of Lincoln's
Emancipation Proclamation
reached Texas on June 19,
1965, so we made that date
a holiday. Juneteenth.

KID

The Emancipation
Proclamation was 1865,
grandpa, not 1965.

OLD MAN

Yeah, well, 1865 was when
black folk heard about it.

INT. TENT - DAY

It's semidark inside the tent. Muffled CROWD NOISE outside.

WADE (O.S.)

Hello? Is Mr. Tater in
there?

We hear a GRUNT and a COT CREAK. A light CLICKS on. DICK TATER is standing with his hand on a dim bulb dangling from a cord in the center of the tent.

Tater is black and nearly seven feet tall. He stoops so his head doesn't brush the top of the tent. He's about forty and muscular, but putting on weight around the middle. He's dressed in a white undershirt, black slacks and black shoes.

TATER

Come in.

The tent flap opens, creating a bright triangle of light, and Wade enters. The flap closes behind him.

TATER

Well looky here. I was
afraid you wouldn't make it.

Wade blinks as he adjusts to the change in light. He looks at Tater, then around the tent. A cot's against one wall, two folding chairs against another. A suitcase and a guitar case are on the ground between the chairs. Wade and Tater are alone in the tent.

TATER

Do you remember me?

WADE

No. Are you Dick Tater?

Tater chuckles and points to one of the chairs. Wade sets his guitar case on the ground, removes his hat and fans himself with it as he takes a seat. Tater picks up the suitcase and walks to the cot.

TATER

Call me Big Dick.
That's my name now,
thanks to you.

Wade watches Tater lay the suitcase on the cot and SNAP it open.

WADE

Uh...I'm afraid you
have the wrong man,
Big...uh...Tater.
We've never met.

TATER

(as he digs
through his
suitcase)
Think back. You played
with a band called The
Tail Wagoneers.

WADE

Well, you got that part
right. That was the first
road band I was ever in.
I was a teenager.

Tater takes a long-sleeved white shirt from the suitcase and slips it on. He faces Wade and buttons the shirt as he speaks.

TATER

You were young, alright,
and one night you played
a club in Arkansas where
I was the bouncer. I was
trying to get started
with my own music at the
time, so I went backstage
during one of the band's
breaks to ask a few
questions. Get some
pointers on touring. But
you were all busy, so I
didn't bother anyone.
The rest of the boys were
taking naps and playing
poker, but you...you were
off by yourself, picking

guitar and writing a
song. I sneaked a
listen, and the first
line of the song went,
"All you big dictators
and generals, and all you
commander-in-chiefs."
(tucks in shirt)
And that's where I got
my name.

WADE

Oh. "Big dictators."
You took your stage
name from my song.

Tater nods. He pulls a black tie from the suitcase,
puts it around his neck and begins tying a knot.

WADE

I remember that song. Kind
of. "The Big Bang
Solution." That was the
one where I ask all the
people that make their
livings with guns to come
to a party I'm throwing and
bring their firearms. And
one bullet each. I get
them drunk and then, at the
stroke of midnight, they
all put their guns in their
mouths and pull the
triggers.

(pause)

One of my pacifist
songs.

Wade stares off into space, remembering. Tater
finishes with his tie and takes a black suit coat from
the suitcase. He steps to the empty chair as he puts
on the coat.

TATER

You still writing?

Tater turns the empty chair so it's facing Wade. He sits, opens his guitar case and takes out a black semi-acoustic.

WADE

Sure. I'm working on a song right now. Planning it.

Tater produces a handkerchief and begins wiping down his guitar. The CROWD SOUNDS outside the tent fade to silence during the following. The action Wade describes is silent too.

WADE

The song's called "The Drifter in 4-D," and it starts out with a drifter sitting around a motel room. Room 4-D, as in the fourth dimension. Time. And he's playing his guitar on the couch one night when some cops kick in the front door and open fire with shotguns and pistols.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

We see Wade, dressed in his yellow western suit, sitting on a couch. The pillow at his elbow EXPLODES in a burst of stuffing, and he tosses his guitar aside. He jumps up and runs to the back door. POLICE in S.W.A.T. gear and black ski masks follow him through the door in hot pursuit. All this in silence.

WADE (Voiceover)

The cops follow the drifter into the past...

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Wade stops to look around and sees he's in a dimly lit, rock-walled cave. He's dressed from shoulder to knee in bear skins, caveman-style.

WADE (V.O.)
...only now they don't
have guns...just clubs
and spears.

A spear flies past Wade's head and he takes off running again.

WADE (V.O.)
They chase the drifter
and almost catch him,
but then they stop to
beat up a kid painting
graffiti on a cave wall.

The police, in bear skins now too, are clubbing a BOY beneath a picture outline of a mammoth on the cave wall.

WADE (V.O.)
So the drifter escapes
and runs through a hole
in the wall, and then
he's in the future.

INT. STAINLESS STEEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Wade stops running. He's wearing a body stocking made of black material with multicolored electrical wires woven through it. A satellite dish hat is on top of his head. He's standing in an empty, brightly-lit silver corridor that curves away ahead of him and behind. We don't hear anything, but suddenly he does, and he takes off running again.

WADE (V.O.)
The cops enter the future
right behind him, and now
they have laser guns.

Bright red beams shoot past the future Wade and ricochet off the walls. He drops to a crouch as he runs.

WADE (V.O.)
They chase the drifter

down a steel hall,
shooting, but they only
manage to castrate
themselves with the laser
beams bouncing around,
and one even loses his
pecker.

Wade runs until he comes to a door in the side of the
corridor. He opens the door and ducks through it.

WADE (V.O.)

Then the drifter escapes
back into the
present...the motel
room...but things aren't
right.

INT. DRIFTER'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Wade reenters the motel room, but he's still dressed
in the futuristic body stocking and satellite hat. He
doesn't slow down in his running, and as he turns a
corner, he comes face to face with himself--his
present self, wearing the yellow western suit.

INT. TATER'S TENT - DAY

Wade is leaning forward in his chair. He's gesturing
enthusiastically with his hands as he talks to Tater.
There's no return of the crowd noise outside the tent.

WADE

You see, the first person
the future drifter runs
into in the present is
himself. His present
self. Naturally both
drifters are surprised,
and they try to talk to
each other, but they're
duplicates, so whenever
they open their mouths,
they say the exact same
thing. Together.

INT. DRIFTER'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Back to the drifter's motel room. The two Wades are looking at each other and moving their lips in sync. We can't hear them, but they both look frustrated.

WADE (V.O.)

This makes it impossible
to hold a conversation,
but it's a great device
for harmonizing.

The drifter from the present notices his guitar where he left it on the couch. He picks it up and begins to play and sing what is obviously an upbeat song, though we can't hear it. The drifter from the future joins in, and the two Wades move their lips in perfect sync. They turn and look at the camera, then the CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal a HUGE ORCHESTRA swinging in time to the song. Lots of energy, lots of motion, all in silence.

WADE (V.O.)

So, the song turns into
a duet with the two
drifters singing
about...something or
other. I haven't got
that far yet.

INT. TATER'S TENT - DAY

The CROWD NOISE outside the tent returns. Tater's sitting motionless in his chair. He's still holding his guitar in his lap, and he's staring at Wade. It takes him a moment to speak.

TATER

Damn, boy. You think
too much.

The tent flap opens and TWO BEAUTIFUL YOUNG BLACK WOMEN enter.

TATER

Ah! My escort.

Tater gets to his feet and smiles at the women. He hands his guitar to one and holds out his arm to the other.

TATER

(to Wade)

I sent for you so we could play together. I wanted to play at least one gig with the man who gave me my name before I die.

WOMAN ON TATER'S ARM

He named you Big Dick? I was hoping you liked girls.

WADE

Huh? No, you don't understand.

TATER

(chuckling)

Your name's done wonders for my social life, too. Get tuned up. I'll call you onstage later. There's a bottle under the cot if you're thirsty.

Tater and the two women exit the tent.