

***GREAT NORTH*** <sup>TM</sup>  
***LE GRAND NORD*** <sup>MC</sup>

Large Format Film

SCRIPT - VERSION 9.1  
Written by David Homel

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**STORYBOARD**  
Drawn by François Couture,  
Couture Gagnon Illustration Inc.

Motion International (1999)  
March 5, 1999

**GREAT NORTH- Script Version 9.1 94 scenes**  
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Scene 1:

Blizzard scene. The howling and roaring of the wind. At first we are not sure where we are, or what we are seeing, but we feel the disorientation and the danger. A white-out, but with growing colors as the sequence continues. These will be the colors we will see later: mineral greens and blues.

Scene 2:

Blizzard slowly lifts. Forms slowly appear out of the whiteness. Slow process of definition.

Scene 3:

The forms are those of a caribou herd. At first there is one animal. Then several. Then the truth emerges: the herd is enormous. Passive strength in the face of the storm. A sense of enduring and triumphing over the elements.



*These are the caribou of northern Canada. This strange, silent animal that most of us have never seen is one of the most important for the history of human beings. Following the caribou, men and women first ventured across the land bridge, from Russia to Alaska. They spread out, always in search of the animals that provided them their livelihood. These men and women were the first Americans. They came to a territory that was one of the last ones to be populated by human beings.*

Animated maps might help situate audiences: Canada, Quebec, Labrador, the zones we will be traveling through and exploring.

*The oldest evidence of human beings in America is a caribou bone, nicked by an arrow: 25,000 years ago. And the oldest caribou remains on this continent date back some 1.6 million years, to the Yukon. This is one of the most important animals in human history. And the greatest concentration of them are here, on this territory.*

Scene 4:

Caribou moving through the winter landscape. Vastness, harshness are evident. Also, the great scope of the herd. A very large quantity of animals. Shots from air, but also from ground level to feel their mass.

It is important to be as close to the animals as possible. To be among them.

*In northern Quebec lives the largest caribou herd in the world: the George River herd. One of the largest groupings of animals on earth, these caribou travel some 5,000 kilometers every year, making them the greatest migrating mammal on our planet. This is their story -- and the story of the humans who live with them.*



Scene 5:

An Inuit building an igloo under the clear winter sky. As traditional dress as possible. The igloo builder is using a steel saw to cut the blocks of ice. Close-up of man's face. Then shots of the process: cutting blocks out of the snow, stacking them, using loose snow as mortar.

Scene 6:

A family affair: this man is with his family, several kids. They run up, they want to be part of the action. They speak Inuktituk. He shows them how to cut or stack the blocks, some part of the work they can be part of. Or maybe they are just "supervising." The atmosphere is light-hearted.

*We are here, looking for the caribou. We know they are nearby. We know they are waiting for us, to give themselves to us.*

Scene 7:

Very quickly, the igloo takes shape. The final shot is from within the structure: the man places the last block to complete the dome. We are within the igloo, sheltered.

*When we are out here, far from home, looking for the animals, we build these shelters.*

Scene 8:

The entrance to the igloo. The man, with his snow-saw, is working on the igloo.

Scene 9:

Close-up on the man and his work. Slowly, as he speaks, we realize that he is making sculptures on the front of his dwelling, and that these are sculptures of caribou and other animals.

*But it's not enough just to have shelter. Shelter is necessary, of course. But so is magic. If you sculpt the caribou, the chances are better that he*

*will come.*

*Our people have always lived with the caribou. We have hunted them since we came to this land. When we take one, we waste nothing. There is no room for waste in these lands.*

*The caribou gives us everything we need. In your world, you have the grocery store. We have the caribou. He carries every vitamin and every mineral we need. He is the natural food for us, here in this place.*

*In a land where no food grows, that's very important.*

*Starvation used to be a tradition with our people. But not when the caribou is near.*

*We build these houses when we have to. We don't mind leaving them behind when it's time to move on to follow the caribou. A man can build a snow house in thirty minutes if he's good.*

*Of course, not everyone decorates his the way I do!*

#### Scene 10:

The children whom we saw earlier come crawling out of the entrance, where the man is working, and they rush off into the saw to play.

There is conversation in Inuktituk between children and man. The man is more than just our narrator; he has an independent life.

#### Scene 11:

Night. The igloo from the outside. There is a glow coming from within. The only sign of human life on the tundra. Quietly, then rising in volume: a strange sound, human, but not completely human. A haunting atmosphere.

(If possible, aurora borealis.)

#### Scene 12:



Interior of the igloo. Lit by lamplight. We recognize the man who built the igloo, as well as his children. They are sitting on furs. They could be eating, too: some sort of meat. Caribou or seal. Part of the feast.

His wife is there too, as well as an older woman, who could be her mother.

The sound we have heard, it turns out, is throat singing.

The two women stand close, face to face, arms

on each other's shoulders. The music begins.

Scene 13:

The man watches them with pride and pleasure in his eyes.

*Only women do throat singing. In our language we call it "katajjaq." The sounds come from animals, even from the Northern Lights.*

*They say we learned to sing this way a long time ago from the Tunnitarruit, creatures who are half-human and half-bird, and all covered with tattoos on their faces. They have no bodies, just legs and heads.*

Scene 14:

Inuit art -- depictions of these creatures -- accompany the narrator's descriptions to add visual reality to them.

*The Tunnitarruit live in the dark corners of deserted igloos. Since they could not speak, Katajjaq was the only way they could express themselves.*

*We're luckier than they are: we have language. For us, katajjaq is mostly just for fun.*

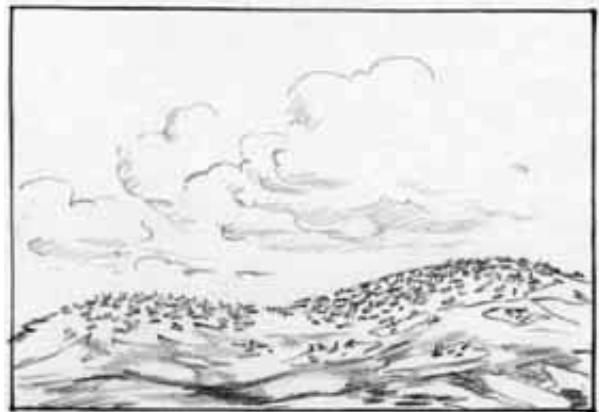
Scene 15:

The igloo from outside again. Music. A glow from the lamps inside. Eerie night.

Scene 16:

Day. Harsh light of winter. Helicopter shot of a great caribou herd. The herd in graceful movement. We feel the large size of the herd, a sense of plenitude. Inuit voice-over.

*This herd, the George River herd, is the largest in the world. Some say up to 800,00 animals. When you add the Leaf River herd and the herds of the Torngat Mountains, you have a million and three hundred thousand animals. That is a lot of wealth for us.*



*Now we are using modern ways to keep track of the animals. Why not use the best tools if it will make our lives easier?*

Scene 17:

The capturing sequence as seen from the helicopter. The helicopter catches up to the stream of

animals, the shooter chooses a caribou, shoots the net-gun and a caribou is brought down.

Scene 18:

Helicopter lands and two men emerge, running. The scientist and the Inuit. They are dressed in different ways in order to identify who is who: who represents the South, who the North. They remove the net and sit on the caribou to apply the satellite collar. Both scientist and Inuit take an active part in the job.

*The animal is a female, and she is pregnant. She will be heading for the calving ground as soon as spring comes. We'll be able to follow her with the satellite transmitter that we put on her.*

Scene 19:

The procedure is finished. The caribou gets to her feet and immediately runs to join the herd. We see that the animal is unharmed.

*She might not like wearing the collar at first, but she'll be doing a big favor for our people -- and for her kind, too. Where is the herd travelling to? Is there enough food for all of them? How many calves are being born? How many will survive? The satellite collars help us answer all these questions.*

Scene 20:



The herd again, from above, majestic in the landscape. Softly, then more insistent, we hear the *beep-beep!* of the satellite transmitter.

*We are living in a time of plenty now, but it wasn't always that way.*

Scene 21:

Views of Hebron. The wind, the desolation. The camera peeks into the open doors and windows of the Hebron mission to discover the snow-filled interior. Scenes of abandonment. The sound of bells from the belfry in the wind.

*The North is a place where nothing is permanent. Missionaries from Germany came here in 1830. They named their mission Hebron, after a place in their Bible.*

*We'd called it Kangikluksok a long time before. The people are gone now. Now this place belongs to the wind again.*

*There is a saying here: God created Labrador in six days. On the seventh, He filled it full of rocks.*

Scene 22:

Views of the Torngats. The sense of solitude and desolation should be very strong. These are “end of the world” landscapes. The desolation is majestic.

*The name of the mountains near here says it all: Torngat. In our language, it means “Mountains of the Evil Spirits.”*

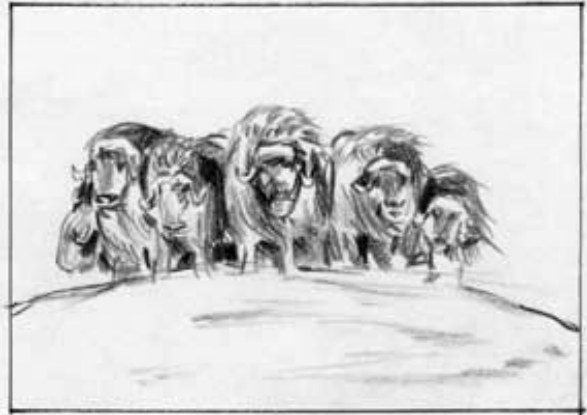
Scene 23:

Caribou herds in this landscape. They add the only living element to the scene. That, and the muskox.

The sheer strength and resistance of the muskox sum up what it takes to live in this setting.

Other wildlife segments, as available. If possible a bird of prey hunting and capturing a lemming. To show that hunting is the way of the land.

Views of the caribou feeding, pushing aside snow with the hooves to get at food, but not in great detail. We hear the click-click of their tendons as they move.



*The caribou are plentiful now, but we know they won't always be so generous for us. Their population rises and falls, and ours does the same, along with them. Fifty years ago, before I was born, the George River herd was down to 5,000 animals. Now there are 800,000 of them, in just this one herd alone.*

*No one knows what the exact numbers are, despite the satellites.*

*The caribou are always on the move, looking for food, in their great migration. In the past, we would go with them, always on the move as well.*

*But our lives have changed much recently. We are not the wanderers we used to be.*

*In some ways, the caribou are their own worst enemy. They always follow the same migration routes, and they like being together. Sometimes they will use up all the food in the area. Some will grow weak, and be killed off by predators that are waiting for just such a moment.*

Scene 24:

Weakened caribou falling behind the others. The wolf moving across the snow spots the animal. When it is sufficiently far from the herd, the wolf attacks, going for the caribou's legs to bring the animal down, then snapping its neck between its jaws.

*The wolf depends on the caribou, the way we do. Everything depends on everything else in this land.*

Scene 25:

The rest of the herd flees, leaving the wolf with its prey.

*In the past, there were times when the caribou didn't come at all. There were none for us. What is a hunter to do when there are no animals?*

*Luckily for us, we could turn to the sea.*

Scene 26:

Under the ice: mussel-fishing scene. The hole in the ice has already been made, the camera is under it, and we see the fishermen descending into the cavern from above, on their ladder.

The impression is other-worldly, as if they had entered the Hall of the Mountain King. One of the two fishermen is our Inuit narrator. The other can be his son from igloo-building scene.

Scene 27:

The two fishermen begin to gather mussels, choosing the good ones, separating rocks from mussels.

Conversation between the two in Inuktituk.

*In the spring, when the tide is low, that is the only time we can fish for mussels. We don't have much time, maybe 90 minutes. The tides are very great here, up to 10 meters, and they come in very quickly. And there's always a danger the ice will cave in on us.*

*This is one of the dangers we live with, because we need the food. And the mussels taste very good, too!*

Scene 28:

The camera explores the inside of the ice cave. Music up: it is throat-singing. The camera travels up to the surface as the music rises.



Scene 29:

It is suddenly bright, brilliant day. Close-up of strange, abstract faces. These are rock carvings of human figures and faces. If there are rock carvings of caribou, fade from them to real animals.

Scene 30:

Camera pulls back to take in landscape. The two women throat-singers -- the same ones as in the igloo in scene 12 -- are standing face to face. A throat-singing competition. Their singing involves



animal sounds.

Scene 31:

Inukshuks nearby: the real human form and the abstract human form. End on inukshuk: the strangeness of the landscape.

*We call these monuments inukshuk -- "what resembles a man," we say in our language. The inukshuk is our way of marking the landscapes where everything is temporary, where nothing stays. An inukshuk will stay, at least, for a little while. Long enough to be useful for us.*

*"Good fishing here" -- that is what this inukshuk says. Others may point to a cache of food, or give directions, or remind us that an important event happened here. Sometimes we may build an inukshuk to make the caribou go in the direction we want them to -- in our direction.*

The singing fades, and there is the *beep-beep!* of the satellite collar taking us back to the migration.

Scene 32:

Scenes of migration, moving up to calving ground. The land upon which the caribou move looks more like spring: the snow is melting, there are places where there is no snow.

The rivers are high. The caribou move through the rivers with no problem. The rivers are like roads for them.



Scene 33:

Underwater shots of caribou swimming.

Scene 34:

Caribou come up on river bank after successfully fording the river. They shake themselves off dry.

*Every spring, the females travel to the calving ground to have their young. This herd has been using this ground for as long as anyone can remember, for centuries, at least. How do the females know to find this place again, the place where they were born? That, no one knows. That's one of the mysteries of the tuktu .*

*Nothing stops their migration. Rivers, swamps, mountains -- they cross anything that the landscape puts in their way. Their hooves are made for swimming, and their fur, that contains tiny bubbles of air, helps them*

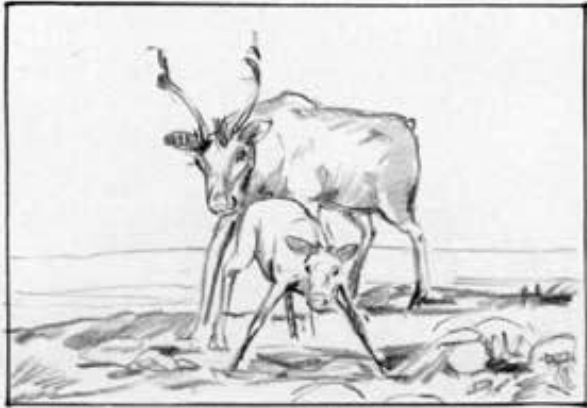
*float. All animals that live in the North have what they need to live up here. Not not just live -- thrive, and prosper. That includes us, too.*

Scene 35:

The caribou on the calving ground. The young are born.

*We say that this is the world's biggest maternity ward. It's as big as some countries in Europe.*

Scene 36:



The caribou calves stagger around, trying to walk. The mothers attend to them, getting the young on their feet, teaching them how to move. (Some "cute" scenes of the young animals would be desirable.)

*The calves are born very quickly. In this calving ground, up to 240,000 of them come into this world at the same time. They have no more than 48 hours to learn how to walk and how to follow their mothers. Then it's back onto the path of migration. The journey will be hard on them. One-third will die in the first six months.*

Scene 37:

Caribou on the highlands. We see the position of the calving ground in relation to the territory around it.

*The mothers have chosen this spot well. It is on high ground, in the wind. The mothers can sniff out danger on the wind and defend their young.*

Scene 38:

Wolves, snowy owls, other predators. They keep their distance.

Scene 39:

The caribou herd moves off the calving ground. Mothers and their young together. It is another step in their migration.

*The animals are on the move again. The mothers and their young go in search of food. The males are in a separate group. Among the caribou, the females have all the work when it comes to raising the children.*

Scene 40:

Caribou migrate past an inukshuk. It stands silent, watching them. If possible, one that is made of snow and ice, and mostly melted to indicate change of season.

Scene 41:

Summer on the tundra. There are countless flowers, blooms of lichen, running water, brilliant light. Enough shots of this to convey a sense of richness to the audience.

Scene 42:

Close-up of the lichen. Their shapes and colors are that of an abstract painting.

*Lichen is the favorite food of the caribou. The Mane lichen. The sunburst lichen. The map lichen. For us, beautiful colors and shapes. For the caribou, their livelihood. Things grow slowly here, in the North. This map lichen can be up to 4,500 years old.*



*The jewel lichen might only grow 3 centimeters every century. Time has a different rhythm up here.*

Scene 43:

Close-up of the caribou lichen.

*The caribou lichen is their favorite. But it might take up to 25 years for it to come back once the animals have grazed on it. That is how our land is: everything takes time. The rhythm is slow. Except for one thing . . .*

Scene 44:

The caribou are grazing on this feast. Suddenly there is a troubling note. The caribou start to twitch, as if they were nervous. The buzzing of flies and the whir of mosquitoes becomes louder.

*Summer should be the best time for the caribou. But it is the worst. Of course, there is plenty to eat. The caribou love lichen, but they will eat roots and buds, and the dwarf birches and willows they can find.*

*But when the temperature rises to 13 degrees Celsius for two or three days, something comes to torment the animals.*

*The flies and mosquitoes.*

Scene 45:

The nervousness and the torment of the animals grow. So does the volume of the fly buzzing. We begin to see the flies around and on the caribou.

*In our short summer, the biomass of the flies can become greater than the biomass of the caribou. A caribou can lose up to a liter of blood every day to the mosquito alone. And that doesn't count the other sucking, stinging flies.*

*The warble fly lays its eggs on the animal's fur. The eggs will hatch, and the larva will puncture the skin and live a whole year on the caribou's back. Next year, it will emerge to become a fly.*

Scene 46:



Close up. We should feel the discomfort of having parasites on our bodies.

*The nose bot lays its eggs in the caribou's nostrils. The larva will stay in its nasal passages until it reaches adulthood, and then be sneezed out.*

*The mosquito is the worst of all. After giving birth to their calves, the females need to fatten up and become strong for the fall migration. But the mosquitoes would leave them alone.*

Scene 47:

“When the mountains move” -- the caribou begin to run, in a single movement, towards higher ground. Camera on ground level, to avoid the repetition of too many helicopter shots, where we're at a distance from the animals.

*There's only one thing for the caribou to do: get on the road again. There might be 100,000 of them in this group. They head for higher ground, where the wind will help keep the insects at bay, and where they might find some snowy patches, where fewer flies and mosquitoes will torment them. For these great migrators, there is no rest, even during our short summer.*

*They will stick together for protection from the flies. The more caribou there are together, the less danger each individual animal will suffer.*

*Because of the structure of the caribou's heart, with its extra coronary artery, it can run up to 40 kilometers an hour for over an hour. It can outdistance any of its predators, including the flies.*

Scene 48:

Caribou on high ground, grazing. Sniffing the wind, alert to danger. There is a feeling of greater peace after the torment of the flies.

Some of the other animals that share the Arctic environment with them, subject to availability. Foxes, lemmings, owls, etc., preferably not species seen in earlier predation sequences (wolves).

Shots of flowers and lichen can be used here as well.

End with caribou in movement, or mid-summer Arctic light.

Scene 48-A:

If you can film the petroglyphs during the summer, when they are exposed, they could be combined with a sea-mammal hunting scene, either before the flies or after (scene 41). This is a

hunting spot, where the hunters carved petroglyphs as they waited. See André Ouellet's story for details. A past-present scene using gun/harpoon à la Bill Reeve could be used here. Also a way of indicating dependence on the sea.

Scene 49:

Transition to Samiland. Could be a night scene, with constellations in animated movement, in the manner of *The Arctic Sky* (if September; no stars in mid-summer). Or using the moon instead. Or animation involving inukshuk as an icon, or other visual art elements, or music.

Using the circular movement of the caribou, that mimes the earth's spinning, or the movement of the wind around the globe. The transition is visual, not narrative.

If you want narration, it could run something like this, over the visuals. Inuit voice:

*We hunt, while others herd. In other parts of the world, men have learned to make the animals theirs in a way different than we have. Perhaps their lives are easier than ours. But their world is still the world of the North.*

Scene 50:

The top section of the September corral seen from above. The shape of the corral is visible: it is an arena, a stage.

The corral is empty except for one man in the center: the Singer.

Zoom in: the man is joyking. Our first introduction to Sami language. As with Inuktituk at the beginning, there is no commentary or translation at first.

Scene 51:

Close-up on the singer: Apmut Ivar Kuoljok, the joyk singer from Jokkmokk. His face as he sings. He is in some form of "traditional" Sami dress.

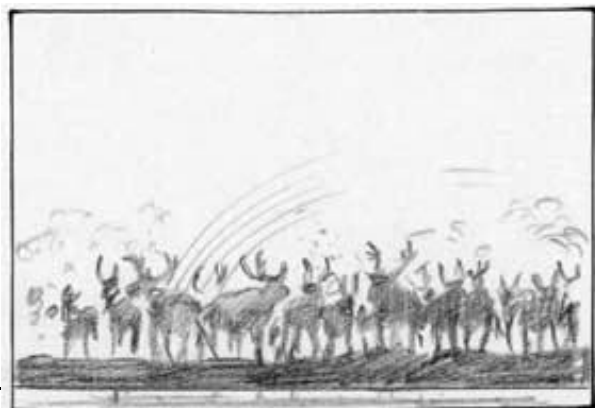
He ends his song and begins to speak.

*We are the people of the reindeer, we Saami of northern Sweden. Like the others who live in the north, we, too, depend on the animals.*

*Our herds of reindeer live in the wild most of the time. But on several occasions during the year, we bring our animals together in the corral. When we do, it is always a great event.*

Scene 52:

Along the edges of the corral, men are setting up tipis. Sami tipis made of birch poles and reindeer skins, or sheets of cloth. The primary colors of Sami textiles: blue, red and yellow. A sense of anticipation and occasion.



Scene 53:

Singer's POV, up the meadow into the mountains at the top of the September corral. The sense of the Sami landscape in autumn. More domestic than what we have seen of the Quebec and Labrador north. Joik music continues softer.

*My song is to the mountains. I will sing the reindeer out of the meadows and mountains, and into our corrals, so the the herd will be strong and healthy and fruitful, and that our families will live well.*

Scene 54:



Men on horseback and on foot, with dogs, herding reindeer among the trees. Yellow autumn colors of the birch. Traditional dress, as much as possible. Could combine with herding in the mountains, higher up.

Scene 55:

Moving animals into the corral. Much more noise and activity than in earlier scenes to indicate the culmination of the herding. The reindeer are being driven into the funnel-shaped opening of the corral.

*September is our harvest time. Our lives have changed much over the years, though the September corral is still the big event of the year for us. When I was little, my family followed the reindeer from the mountains to the lowlands as the seasons changed. Now we live in houses and go to the reindeer when we need them. Though we have new ways of working, reindeer herding is still how we Sami people express ourselves. Our language, and our traditions, and our way of living are bound up with the animals.*

Scene 56:

In the corral: the whirlpool of the herd. Animal-level shots of the dizzying circular movement.

Scene 57:

The singer is standing in the center of the turning herd. He is watching the animals intently.

Action all around. Herders throwing lassos, catching calves, pointing, watching for their animals.

The singer concentrates.

*In September, we look for the calves that belong to our herd. When one of our females goes by, and she is with a calf, we know it's our calf, because mother and child always stick together. We know it's our female because of the ear markings. So we catch the calf and put our mark on it, too.*

*Every reindeer belongs to someone in the community.*

### Scene 58:

Lassoing scene. Singer indicates to daughter (A. I. Kuoljok has 2 daughters who are reindeer herders) that a certain calf is theirs. The daughter throws the lasso and catches the calf. She reels it in. At this point, the narrator could be Kuoljok's daughter, since she is doing the work.



Make sure there is enough background conversation in Sami among the herders.

*You have to have a good eye to do this job. In a herd of 8,000 or 9,000 animals, you might see your calf only once as it goes by. A good eye, and a good lasso, too. If you can't find your calf in the corral, or if your lasso misses, then your calf will go back to the wild with its mother.*

*Many of my reindeer live in the wild, and I've never seen them, or put my mark on them. But I know they're there.*

### Scene 59:

Lassoing and marking the animals. The POV is from above. Lots of action and noise: the shouts of the herders, the reindeer bells, the animals moving in tight circles.

*Nobody knows where our markings come from. They belong to the centuries, and they have been in our families for that long. My family has a mark, and I and each of my brothers have ours. My daughters have theirs. The marks are all listed in a registry. They're like the deed to your house.*

### Scene 60:

Animated sequence: the ear markings in different colors and designs. An abstract montage. Joyk music accompanies the sequence.

*The mark is like the reindeer herder's fingerprint; it describes his personality. No two herders will mark in the same way. The mark says who owns the reindeer, but we say that the reindeer really belong to the mountain.*

### Scene 61:

Corral. Animal-level shot.

Several herders pick out a male and grab it by the antlers. One slides open a gate while the others push the male through it. The gate slides shut after the bull. The singer is with his daughters, along with the other herders.

*In September, we harvest some of the bulls. Not too many, only about one in ten. They will give our people sustenance for the winter to come, and hides to wear, and antlers and bones for our tools. Nothing is wasted.*



*There are not as many reindeer herders as there used to be, and not as many reindeer either. Maybe the Sami way of living is disappearing, I don't know.*

*We don't know how the reindeer came to us. We Sami say that having a herd is like a state of grace. They are a gift to us. Without them, the time is long -- "as long as a year of hunger," we say. A Sami without reindeer has to turn to the sea for food. We call the sea "the*

*poor man's helper."* Though for us, fishing is not a worthy way to make one's living.

#### Scene 62:

The bulls moving down the corridor. A forest of antlers. The impression is one of plenitude: no one will be starving this year. The POV is from below, foot of the corridor, the bulls moving toward camera. The bulls pass by or under camera.

#### Scene 63:

The singer is in the smaller mother-and-calf corral, at the top. He opens a gate and some of the mothers and calves move into it.

*After the marking, it is time for the mothers and calves to find each other. They call out to one another. "I am looking for you," their voices say. They find each other through the sense of smell. The calves and mothers recognize each other through smell, then the calf bonds with the mother again.*

#### Scene 64:

Calves and mothers together in their corral. The atmosphere is calmer.

#### Scene 65:

It is night. Moon over the landscape, mountain and lakes. The sound of reindeer bells. Music is soft.

(Depending on availability, if there are festive occasions among the Sami herders at night, we will film them. Check with John Utsi before. Examples: joyking, cook-outs, activities around campfires, etc.)



Scene 66:

Next morning, at dawn. The singer enters the mother-and-calf corral with a castrated bull on a leash. The bull wears a loud bell.

*Now that the mothers and calves have found each other, and they have rested up, they are ready to go back to the wild.*

Scene 67:

He opens the gate to freedom. There is no movement. Then he walks the leashed bull through the open gate. The other animals follow, slowly, then en masse.



Scene 68:

Animal-level shot. Snorting, bells, the click of their hooves. A river of movement seen from within.

Scene 69:

The herd moves up the slope, above the corral, into freedom, over the burning autumn colors. An image of freedom. The shot widens to show the landscape: mountain peaks, etc.

*The herd returns to the mountain. They are ours, yet part of them belongs to nature. We share them. We have to trust them when they are far from us, and follow them with our songs.*

Scene 70:

Music up. The Lapland Gate or other landscape features (e.g., the fjords, to express crossing the sea) will convey movement, and return us to the Canadian North.

Throat-singing and snowy landscape indicates that we have returned to Quebec, and have moved on to the next season. The *beep-beep!* of the satellite collar can be used.

Scene 71:

Some of the eerie landscapes of northern Quebec, suggesting winter light, change of season: the low clouds, the early sunsets.

Male caribou, rubbing its antlers against a tree to remove the velvet (*velours*), which falls to the ground in strips.

*When the antlers grow, they are covered with a tissue we call velvet. It's full of blood vessels. The male's antlers grow and fall off with the seasons. Female caribou have antlers, too, the only animals in the deer family to have them.*

Scene 72:

Caribou fording a stream. Antlers against water. Inuit voice returns.

*The autumn brings the rutting season, the only time when males and females come together. That time lasts only 48 hours, the only time when the female is fertile. Here in the North, she must save her energy the rest of the year.*

*But first the caribou must decide who will mate with whom.*

Scene 73:

Battle between the males for dominance. Head to head, antlers to antlers. They clash quickly, then move on. The battles are very brief, establishing a pecking order. No animals are injured.

Since these scenes are not necessarily dramatic, emphasize the comic aspects, if possible.

Scene 74:

The males mount the females. That action is also quite brief.

Scene 75:

The migration continues. The caribou move through a variety of landscapes: swamp, rivers, plateau. They eat as they go.

*The autumn is a very important time for us. It is when the hunt takes place.*

*We choose the autumn because the meat is at its best. It is solid, rich and tender. We eat it raw, or boiled just a little, so as to keep all its food value. Some of it we dry for later. It is good to keep some meat for later on, but we share among ourselves. We have a saying: your neighbor's stomach is the best place to store your excess food.*

Scene 76:



The Inuit and his son on the tundra. They are waiting. Inukshuks are visible, marking the way the men hope the caribou will go. The man and boy carry rifles.

*We do not go out into nature to hunt the caribou. The caribou decides whether to give himself to us. Animals are naturally good and generous, and they want to give themselves to us. Only we must be ready to receive their gifts. Our hearts must be pure and to be worthy of the animals.*

Scene 77:

Man and boy, motionless on the tundra. Their eyelashes are white with frost. The man's mustache is white, too. Waiting. A zen atmosphere, watched over by the inukshuk. Throat-singing increases the atmosphere of meditation. Sense of anticipation, wordless suspense.

Scene 78:

Hunting scene. Fade from snowmobile to dogsled, rifle to spear, to express the continuity with the past, and attenuate the effect of the actual killing of the animal. The technology of the hunt, old and new.

Use music, perhaps visual animation, briefly, to emphasize magical aspects of the hunt.

*For our hunt to be successful, we must become one with the caribou.  
That is the hunter's magic.*

*Sometimes the caribou don't come to give themselves to us. Because though they are generous, they are capricious, too, and their spirits are easily offended. If that happens, there is nothing the hunter can do. He must beg the animals' pardon and get on their good sides again. If that doesn't work, the offended animal might tell the other ones to stay away.*

*And if that happens, he risks starvation.*

Scene 79:

Build up suspense of waiting using throat-singing very softly, then rising in rhythm and volume. It ends the sequence.

Scene 80:

We see the outcome of the hunt. Man and boy each on his snowmobile, or on the same snowmobile, moving across the landscape. On the sled towed behind is the carcass of a caribou.

*One of the ways we make sure we don't offend the caribou is by using the animals wisely. That means we use everything. The furs will keep us warm. And the bones and skins will make flutes and drums, and both will make magic to bring the caribou back to us again.*

Scene 81:

The man and his son ride into a blizzard. They disappear in the whiteness. Fade in to a small group of caribou in the snow-squall. The winter season begins. The tundra is swept with blue snow.



Scene 82:

Blizzard lifts to show caribou on the move again. Crossing a frozen lake, their weight causes the ice to break. A struggle as they swim among the large chunks of ice.

*The great winter migration begins. The caribou are in constant search for food. The cold does not bother them, nowhere as much as the flies do in the brief summer. That's because of their fur.*

Scene 83:

Close up or animated sequence of caribou fur.

*The fur of the caribou is the best insulation known on this earth. Every part of the animal, from its feet to its nose, is covered and protected. Each strand of its dense fur swells into a bulb at the end, and it contains air pockets kept warm by the animal's own body heat. The caribou is comfortable at temperatures as low as -40 degrees Celsius. The air pockets in their fur help them float, too, when it comes time to cross frigid rivers.*

Scene 84:

Caribou in a blizzard or other harsh winter conditions. This short illustration of the northern environment moves quickly into the next scene. If possible, steam rising off the caribou's bodies. They create their own fog around them due to the contrast between their warmth and the extreme cold.

Scene 85:

A group of caribou, cratering. They use their hooves to dig through the snow to get at the lichen, sometimes buried under several feet of snow. Their faces all but disappear as they try to nibble on the plants.

*Caribou hooves are concave, and they feature sharp edges ideal for slicing through the snow. They're excellent snow-shovelers. The Micmac Indians call the animals "xalibu," which means "shoveler" in their language. The caribou's hooves also let them stick to icy surfaces without falling, a form of year-around winter tires.*

Scene 86:

Feeding and cratering show different aspects of caribou society. One of the mothers is "teaching" her young how to crater and feed by urging the young animal towards the craters she's prepared. Other times there are short battles for the feeding spots.



*The female caribou are the only ones in the deer family equipped with antlers. The females who have given birth the previous spring retain theirs, while the males have long since shed them. That way, the females have a better chance of protecting their feeding ground -- and their young.*

*It's not easy being a male caribou in the winter!*

Scene 87:

The caribou digging holes, not necessarily finding food, moving on, digging more holes. The young animals follow.

*During the coldest time of the year, in February, an adult can spend 12 hours a day digging craters. Sometimes up to 100 holes a day are needed to provide the 10 to 15 pounds of feed that the animals need.*



Scene 88:

The way the Inuit pass these winter months. A variety of domestic winter activities, depending on availability: making of the caribou-fur suits, visiting the stocks of fur, sculpting bone and antler tools and artwork.

Emphasize activities that feature movement, especially games of skill.

Create a sense of community within the shelter, either house or igloo. Conversations in Inuktituk.

Make special reference to the *amauti* -- the backpack for carrying children.

Show babies in the packs, or women making one. This will allow us to use

André Ouellet's story:

*As the caribou work hard to get through the winter, we tell stories, we prepare for the coming year, we have time to think about ourselves. Often we talk about the caribou, where they come from, and what are chances of finding them are. We talk about them, because this is the only time of the year when we are separated from them.*

*We say that the caribou taught us how to use and make the amauti, the pack the women use to carry our children. Long ago, a hunter was hunting a caribou, and to his surprise, the caribou turned into a beautiful woman. She fell onto her knees in front of the hunter and gave birth to a boy. She put the boy in the amauti she was wearing on her back. Then she told the hunter to go back to his people and report what he had seen.*

*Ever since then, we, too, have used the amauti. It protects our children from the cold, and keeps the mother and the baby close, which is a good thing for both.*

Scene 89:

Animals on the move again. Across a frozen lake or through woods. We see the world outside the Inuit shelter.

Scene 90:

The Arctic Sky: animated sequence with constellations. Combine with animated artwork if desired to follow the Innu stories.

Music up, softly.

The atmosphere is mysterious, in contrast to the winter harshness.

*All over the world, when people look up at the stars, they all see different things. What they see in the sky reminds them of what they see on earth.*

*When we look up at Ursa Major, the Great Bear or Big Dipper for people in the South, we see caribou calves, waiting to come down to earth. The other stars near them are like a wolf pack.*

*In the North we have different stories of where the animals come from. The Innu talk about a man who followed the herd, and married a female caribou, then became a caribou himself. He turned himself into the Caribou Master and led the animals to his people, so that they could have meat and hides, and live good lives. No one knows this man's name, but he was very important to his people.*

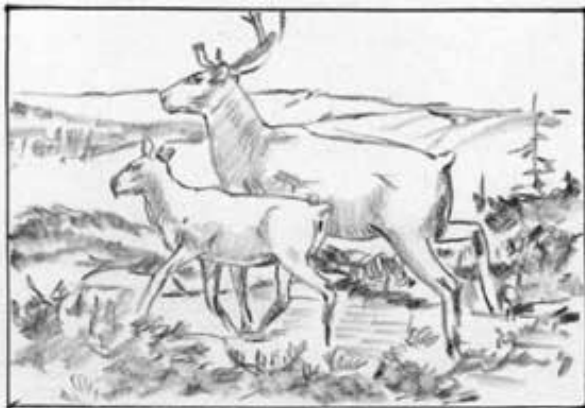
*Other stories speak of Atiku-mitshuap, the Caribou House, the place where caribou come from, and where no man is allowed to go. The House is guarded by ferocious beasts. But once a man did go there, traveling through the air, to find the caribou and bring them to his people. He died doing that; he knew he was going to die. But he brought the caribou to his people.*

Scene 91:

The *beep-beep!* of the satellite.

The atmosphere is lighter. A new season is about to begin.

Music indicates transition. Or inukshuk standing in front of the sun that is just about to break over the horizon line.



The calving ground again. Mother and young.

*The caribou house for us, today, is the calving ground. At the winter's end, the pregnant females return to the same spot. A great cycle of up to 5,000 kilometers, and they find their way back to the same spot.*

*How do they do it? How do they know where to return to? No one knows. It is as mysterious as any of our stories.*

Scene 92:

The females urging their young away from them. They push them away, so that they go one way, and the adult females go another.

*Last year's young are adults now. Now they will find their own way through the land. A hard job when you're only one year old, but they have all the knowledge and all the instincts they need to live here.*

*And if they don't want to go, their mother make sure they accept their new-found freedom.*

Scene 93:

A group of young caribou on their own. Inuit man and his family watch them. It is not hunting season.

*Long ago, we depended on the caribou for our survival. These days, things have changed. The roles are reversed.*

*We don't have to wait for the caribou -- we know where they are thanks to the satellites.*

*No, these days, the caribou depend on us.*

*We have to protect our land and keep the environment in good condition for them.*

*We have become the guardians of the animals. That's a big responsibility!*

*Now we are the keepers of the Caribou House.*

Scene 94:

The throat-singers from the beginning, the younger woman (narrator's wife) and the older one (her mother or mother-in-law).

They are face to face in a throat-singing competition. We feel the competitive aspect.

The throat-singing competition goes on until the older woman runs out of breath and loses.

She laughs after she realizes she's lost.

Her laughter causes her "competitor" to laugh, too, stopping the game. They both dissolve in laughter.

