

Tribal - Episode 11: Brothers ©



A foot long millipede makes its way between Bill's feet, startling him and almost making him tip over.

39 INT. YANOMAMI DWELLING - MORNING

Bill is lying in his hammock again, wearing just a pair of shorts. He has been cleaned up but each of his cheeks has a squiggly black line painted on it. A hazy sun beats down but Bill is in the shade. The loud, shrill screeching of a band of howler monkeys pierces the air and awakens Bill.

BILL (V.O.)

I didn't know what had happened or where I was but I did know that I felt more relaxed than I had for a very long time. Aside from those monkeys, it was quiet. Real quiet. Those voices were gone.

Bill looks around and sees Young Yanomami who smiles slightly at him. Bill smiles back and then looks down, noticing that around his neck is a piece of cord from which hangs a small, tooth-shaped talisman made from a hardened amber-like resin. He picks it up and looks at it briefly. Something within it glistens. Young Yanomami approaches with a bowl of porridge.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

You eat?

BILL

Thanks.

Bill eats from the bowl. The black dog shows up and sits next to Bill looking up at him, wagging his tail, waiting for a handout. Old Yanomami shoos the dog away and says something to Young Yanomami who snaps back (as usual).

YOUNG YANOMAMI

Can you walk?

BILL

I think so.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

No more voices?

BILL

(puzzled)

No. How did...

YOUNG YANOMAMI

We know. He know.

Young Yanomami points to Shaman about fifty yards away who is talking with Old Yanomami and a few other men.

BILL

Who is he?

YOUNG YANOMAMI

He is a holy man.

Bill finishes the bowl, laying it down at his side.

BILL

So, you like the Red Hot Chili
Peppers?

YOUNG YANOMAMI

Yes, I like them.

BILL

Me too. I like all kinds of music.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

Music?

BILL

Yeah, you know, like... "Give it away,
give it away, give it away now?"

Young Yanomami looks puzzled.

BILL

"Sometimes I feel like I don't have
a partner, sometimes I feel like my
only friend"?

BILL (V.O.)

I could tell from his vacant stare
that, to him, red hot chili peppers
were exactly that.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

Can you walk?

BILL

Yes, I think so. Why, are we going
somewhere?

YOUNG YANOMAMI

Yes, here stand.

Bill sits up laughing. Young Yanomami helps him stand. Bill is a little wobbly but steadies himself and stretches, taking a deep breath and smiles broadly. His stomach gurgles loudly. He rubs his belly and looks around.

BILL
 I believe I have to
 (gestures)
 Where?

YOUNG YANOMAMI
 Back there.

Young Yanomami hands Bill a branch with broad leaves on it.

BILL
 You're kidding, right?

YOUNG YANOMAMI
 (deadpans)
 Kidding?

Bill stares open mouthed for a few beats and then laughs and walks through an opening back to a fly infested clearing obviously meant for this purpose. He pulls down his shorts and starts about his business. While squatting, a foot long millipede makes its way between his legs, startling Bill and almost making him tip over.

40 EXT. YANOMAMI VILLAGE CLEARING - LATER

Bill and Young Yanomami walk across the clearing, approaching Shaman and the others. Shaman speaks to Bill and smiles.

YOUNG YANOMAMI
 He says you look much better.

BILL
 Yes, I feel much better, In fact
 better than I have felt in years.

Young Yanomami is apparently the only one in this tribe who speaks any Spanish and translates everything Bill says for everyone else. Shaman approaches Bill, places his hands on his shoulders and recites a brief sing-songy chant and then raises up Bill's talisman, kisses it and says something to Bill, glancing sideways at Young Yanomami.

YOUNG YANOMAMI
 We must go now.

They all continue walking.

BILL
 Where to?

YOUNG YANOMAMI
 (nodding toward a hut)
 When you go in don't talk until he
 talk.

BILL
 Who?

YOUNG YANOMAMI
 Nothing. No name him.

Young Yanomami hands Bill two cigars.

BILL
 What's this for?

YOUNG YANOMAMI
 We take from your truck. You give
 as respect. Then you both smoke.

BILL
 Roger.

YOUNG YANOMAMI
 Roger?

BILL
 OK.

YOUNG YANOMAMI
 Aah, roger.

41 INT. YANOMAMI COMMUNAL DWELLING - LATER

Bill is sitting cross-legged on the dirt floor next the CHIEF, 50s. On the other side is Shaman. Old Yanomami and a few other men are seated in a circle, all facing in towards Chief. Young Yanomami alone sits inside the circle facing in towards Chief and Bill. Other men stand and a few women with children stand at a distance out under the now blazing sun. Bill and Chief smoke cigars in silence. Everyone is motionlessly silent as the jungle wildlife cacophony drones on.

Chief stares into the distance. Bill uncomfortably glances sideways at the chief and then at Young Yanomami who with his eyes instructs Bill to avert his eyes. After an eternity, Chief emits a big sigh, lowers and raises his head and speaks to Young Yanomami.

YOUNG YANOMAMI
 I will tell what he say and tell him
 what you say.

Bill nods. Young Yanomami speaks to Chief who suddenly smiles at Bill catching him off guard. Chief speaks.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

Where are you from?

BILL

Do you mean originally or now?

Young Yanomami speaks to Chief, who answers.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

Now and before.

BILL

Now I live in Buenos Aires in Argentina. Before that I lived many years in New York in the United States. But before that I lived in Caracas Venezuela where I was born.

Young Yanomami speaks to Chief who nods and smokes, finally smiling again and speaking.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

Do you have family?

BILL

Just a daughter in New York but I haven't seen her in many years.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

You are home.

BILL

(puzzled)

What do you mean?

YOUNG YANOMAMI

We travel three days back here. We are in Venezuela but close to Brazil.

BILL

Three days? Venezuela? Did I sleep the whole time.

Chief speaks and Young Yanomami replies, turning back to Bill.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

You had fever. Yell and scream about the voices.

Chief speaks to Bill directly, cupping his hands over his ears, swaying his head back and forth, imitating Bill's

screams. He then speaks softly, touching his thumbs together and then reaching up to the sky, then looking back down at Bill, putting a hand on his shoulder and his other hand on Shaman's shoulder and smiling gently.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

Shaman use medicine and yopo to break fever and stop voices.

Chief speaks.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

You feel better now?

Bill places his hand on his chest, smiles at Shaman and then Chief and then nods affirmatively.

BILL

I am alright. Thank you.

They smoke some more. Shaman speaks, pointing to the talisman around Bill's neck.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

He says keep this talisman always close to your heart. It imprisons evil from your head and has power to protect you.

BILL

Evil from my head?

YOUNG YANOMAMI

Yes, Shaman scare it out.

BILL

Do you mean the voices?

Young Yanomami holds up the talisman in front of Bill's eyes.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

Yes, see in there it...

But Shaman says something curt and Young Yanomami lets go. Chief speaks to another man who Bill remembers as the Yanomami Leader from the truck raid. He replies to Chief who nods at Young Yanomami. While this exchange is going on Bill holds up the talisman to the sun, peering into it. Inside he sees a small computer circuit and looks puzzled.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

(smiles)

He said you were heavy to carry those three days. And noisy.

He says "and noisy" in Yanomami, prompting laughter. Bill continues staring at the talisman and remembers a couple things. Bill looks down thinking, then feels his ear which still has dried blood on it.

BILL
When you said "evil from my head"
did you mean this thing inside the
talisman?

Young Yanomami looks concerned and speaks to Shaman who calmly replies.

YOUNG YANOMAMI
Yes. It come out of your ear so
Shaman curse it and imprison in yopo.

BILL
Yopo?

YOUNG YANOMAMI
Do you remember what they put in
your nose?

BILL
Yes and things got crazy after that.

YOUNG YANOMAMI
That is called yopo. Is holy. Shaman
make resin to imprison evil and dry.
Now you keep as good luck and
protection. If you need in the future
you can bite some off and swallow,
OK?

Bill is thinking back. First to the note slipped to him by Horacio:

HORACIO (V.O.)

It's in your head. Rio Negro north to Caracas.

Next, the voicemail from Leather Man:

LEATHER MAN (V.O.)
...You have six days, until noon
November 6, to confirm. After that
there will be...difficulties. Look
forward to hearing from you. Good
bye.

BILL
What is today, November what?

Young Yanomami looks at his knock-off Rolex.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

November 6.

Bill has one more memory...of Horacio on the floor, with blood flowing out of his left ear and his head exploding. His eyes widen.

BILL

What time is it?

YOUNG YANOMAMI

It's, ah, eleven fifty eight.

Bill throws down his cigar, jumps up, removing the talisman from around his neck and runs into the central clearing and flings the talisman away. Everyone is startled and babble amongst themselves. Bill lays face down on the ground, signaling the others to do same. A few actually do but the rest just watch Bill, astonished.

In the clearing an extreme micro-closeup penetrates into the talisman and the circuit itself. The various switches and transistors of the circuit are all gummed up with the yopo resin, but there are a few small air bubbles here and there. Within one there is a switch poised.

Young Yanomami's Rolex ticks down: 11:59:58, 11:59:59, 12:00:00. The poised switch in the circuit flips forward but never reaches the connection due to resin blockage. An explosion has been avoided.

Bill lifts his head up and looks toward the clearing, puzzled that nothing has happened. Chief stares in disbelief for a few beats, then starts laughing hysterically and everyone joins in. He speaks.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

He says your mind is gone. Is it?

BILL

No. I thought...I just thought it would...nevermind.

Chief laughs some more and speaks, prompting more laughter from the others.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

He says...

Chief stops Young Yanomami with a touch to his arm, stands and helps Bill stand. Suddenly, he speaks in Spanish, startling Bill.

CHIEF

Come, it won't hurt you. Come.

He holds Bill's hand and leads him into the clearing. He looks back, saying something in Yanomami, causing everyone to disperse, except Young Yanomami who follows behind Bill and Chief.

BILL

You speak...

CHIEF

Your language? Yes, enough. You don't get to be my age without leaning a few things.

He speaks to Young Yanomami who picks up the talisman and hands it to him. Chief holds it up in front of Bill.

CHIEF

Boom!

Bill jumps a little and Chief laughs but then gets serious, not wanting to hurt Bill's feelings. He places the talisman back around Bill's neck and then performs the same little ritual Shaman had performed earlier, placing his hands on Bill's shoulders and reciting the same chant, raising up the talisman and kissing it.

CHIEF

This is holy. It will protect you here in the jungle or wherever you go. Someday may save your life.

BILL

Thank you. It's an honor. I'm sorry. I meant no disrespect.

Chief waves him off.

CHIEF

No worries. You thought we were in danger and tried to protect us.

They approach another dwelling and Chief motions Bill inside. They enter a large cluttered room. Behind a few hammocks a woman is cooking at a hearth. Chief notices Bill looking around.

CHIEF

This my space. This my wife. She prepare a meal for us. Sit.

Bill notices a shelf with some books and a photograph on it.

BILL

That's some book collection. Do you like to read?

CHIEF

No but my son does.
(points to Young
Yanomami)

He reads to me. He went to school
at the mission in Esmeralda. He
teach me your language.

BILL

Son? I didn't realize he was your
son.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

Yes. Shaman and other old man my
uncles, his brothers.

BILL

So you have your whole family here.
That's nice.

CHIEF

I have two sisters, one dead. And
two other brothers, one dead in a
fight and one went away.

Bill reflects for a few beats.

BILL

I had one brother. He was killed.

CHIEF

Who killed him?

BILL

I don't know. I did not love my
brother in life so they thought I
killed him.

CHIEF

So you come here to get away?

BILL

Kind of. Not by choice. But I am
now grateful to be alive.

CHIEF

And now you love your brother?

Bill chokes up a bit.

BILL

Yes.

CHIEF

My older brother is shaman. He is good and loved. He helps people. My other brother was a great hunter when he was young. Still good. Now he helps me watch over the people. My dead brother was a great warrior. We had a fight with a another group and he was killed.

A few beats.

BILL

What about the other brother? The one who went away?

Chief reflects.

CHIEF

He was my, how you say, double?

YOUNG YANOMAMI

Twin.

CHIEF

Yes, twin. But he was sick in the head. Always happy, then sad. But he was very smart. He also went to school in Esmeralda. And liked cameras. See the picture?

BILL

Why did he go away?

CHIEF

One time we had a big fight with another group. We had many battles but finally I said no more. Too many people die. So I send the other chief a woman for a wife. And he send me my wife and other gifts. We met and called a peace and became friends.

Chief lights a cigar and hands it to Bill, then lights one himself.

CHIEF

My brother was not happy with the peace. Not happy at all.

BILL

Why? It sounds like it was a good thing.

CHIEF

My brother liked the woman I gave to the other chief. And I think she liked him. He wanted to have her for himself as a wife.

BILL

So why give her? Why not another?

CHIEF

She was strongest and cousin to other chief. To give any less would have been an insult. Also, my brother had to learn. He acted always from here

(pounds chest)

, not here.

(taps head)

We can't always fight. Sometimes we need to talk. And love.

BILL

So what happened?

CHIEF

My brother disappeared into the jungle for many days. Then one day some men from the other tribe brought my brother back. He was tied up. They said he had killed the woman I gave to the chief.

Chief smokes a while.

CHIEF

The only reason they did not kill him is because the other chief knew he was my brother and that he was sick in the head. Anyway, I thanked the men and send them back with five pigs. We are still friends.

BILL

What happened to your brother?

CHIEF

Our custom is to kill a man who does that. But because he was sick in the head we just send him away. I was very sad to do that but I had to. He was evil.

BILL

Do you know where he is now?

CHIEF

Hei at bebi

Bill looks puzzled.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

The underworld. He is with the
Amahi-teri. Bad spirits.

Chief says something to Young Yanomami who fetches the picture from the shelf. It shows a man who looks like the Chief standing under tiled arches.

BILL

Your brother?

Chief nods somberly.

BILL

Where is he in this picture?

YOUNG YANOMAMI

We don't know. Someone from the mission gave it to us but we don't know where it came from.

BILL

It looks like an old church.

Young Yanomami shrugs.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

We think he's in the underground spirit world.

BILL

Dead? Why do you think that?

CHIEF

Not dead. Amahi-teri. Spirits. My brother was to be a shaman himself until his mind went bad, but not before spirits inhabited him. So we believe he is with the amahi-teri of the underworld and has cursed us.

BILL

Cursed you?

YOUNG YANOMAMI

Many in our tribe, mostly children, have been dying from fever since he left. We believe he cursed us before entering the earth.

Bill continues looking at the picture. The man looks disheveled like a homeless person and has a serious expression on his face. Bill is in a fog. Chief and Young Yanomami look at each other.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

You alright?

Bill looks at him, still pondering, then at Chief.

BILL

Yes, I'm OK.

Chief swallows, looks at Young Yanomami and says something. Young Yanomami stands and quickly leaves.

CHIEF

Smoke a while.

It has started raining again. Bill and Chief smoke for a while and then Young Yanomami returns with Shaman and Old Yanomami, who both sit. Chief speaks to Shaman, handing him the picture of his brother. Old Yanomami interrupts, agitated, but Chief abruptly silences him. As Chief speaks, Shaman looks alternatively looks at the picture and then at Bill.

Shaman nods at Chief, speaks and stands, approaching Bill. He squats in front of him, lifts the talisman, pressing it and the snapshot against Bill's forehead. He chants for a few seconds then stops, his head drooping, inaudibly mumbling. After a few beats he sits back and speaks to Chief who looks at Young Yanomami.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

Shaman says your brother met his brother.

BILL

What? How?

CHIEF

This is why you were sent to us. You must find my brother and destroy him. This will end the curse.

BILL

Destroy him? How am I supposed to do that? You don't even know where he is. I have to say no.

Chief turns and speaks to the others, apparently upset. He, Shaman and Old Yanomami rise and walk to the edge of the dwelling and converse in hushed tones. Young Yanomami leans over to Bill, whispering.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

We saved your life. You owe him a service. You must do as he wishes or it will be viewed as an insult. Please...you are in danger now.

Bill looks concerned as the three continue talking, looking back at him. He rises.

BILL

Excuse me? Please.

They walk back.

BILL

You have saved me so I will try to do as you wish.

Chief smiles.

BILL

You have also given me guidance in my life. Before you saved me I did not know what I should do next. Now I know what I must do.

Chief puts his hands on Bill's shoulders and then lifts the talisman.

CHIEF

You will be protected. Sit, we will eat.

BILL

I need to go north to Caracas. How can I get there from here?

YOUNG YANOMAMI

Rio Negro will take you.

BILL

Rio Negro? But that goes down to Manaus and the Amazon. How far north does the Rio Negro go?

YOUNG YANOMAMI

To Orinoco.

Chief's wife brings food. They eat.

BILL

Orinoco? That's a whole different river.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

There is a way. Once you get up far enough you can get a road north to Caracas.

BILL

Really? And how far is the Rio Negro from here?

CHIEF

It is a three day walk. My son and a few other men will guide you. You can leave tomorrow.

YOUNG YANOMAMI

You can get a boat in Barcelos.

Bill eats and reflects for a few beats.

BILL

Well, I'll be damned.

CHIEF

No, you be blessed.

Bill is surprised and the others laugh.