

FRONTIER

EPISODE 101 - PILOT

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SECOND POLISH: June 24, 2015

POLISH: May 18, 2015

THIRD DRAFT: March 30, 2015

TEASER

FADE IN:

TEXT ON SCREEN:

IN 1670 KING CHARLES II GRANTED THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS TO A LAND MASS IN NORTH AMERICA THAT WAS MORE THAN FIFTEEN TIMES THE SIZE OF ENGLAND.

WHAT FOLLOWED WAS NEARLY A HUNDRED YEARS OF UNINTERRUPTED PROFITS.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY THE CLASS SYSTEM IN ENGLAND COULD BE BROKEN BY GOING TO THE NEW WORLD AND FORGING ONE'S OWN FUTURE IN THE FUR TRADE.

BY THE LATE 1700'S SMALLER COMPANIES COMPRISED OF ABORIGINAL, FRENCH, SCOTTISH AND AMERICAN INTERESTS BEGAN TO UNDERMINE THE DOMINANCE OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY. AT THIS TIME, 70% OF THE SUPPLY OF FURS TO THE HBC WAS BEING CUT OFF BY SEVERAL AGGRESSIVE COMPETING INTERESTS.

WHAT ENSUED WAS A BLOODY BATTLE FOR CONTROL OF THE WEALTH.

CUT TO:

GRAPHIC ON SCREEN:

A MAP OF NORTH AMERICA, CIRCA 1700'S, CENTERED ON JAMES BAY -- BRITTLE SEPIA PARCHMENT, HAND DRAWN, THE MAP IS ACTIVATED WITH ANIMATED GRAPHIC ELEMENTS ILLUSTRATING --

THE SHORES OF JAMES BAY LINED WITH SYMBOLS OF ENGLISH ENCAMPMENT. HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY SYMBOLS OVER UNION JACK COLOURS DOT THE SHORELINE.

INLAND POCKETS OF NATIVE CAMPS DOT THE INTERIOR. SYMBOLS OF NATIVE CANOES RUN UP AND DOWN THE ARTERIES OF RIVERS -- LEADING FROM THE WILDERNESS TO THE SHORELINE TO MEET WITH HBC ENCAMPMENTS.

A SYMBOL OF THE FRENCH, THE FLEUR DE LIS, INTERSECTS THE PATHS OF THE NATIVES. MÉTIS "INFINITY FLAGS" EXTEND UP THE WATERWAYS. A STAR-SPANGLED BANNER CIRCA THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, ENCROACHES FROM THE SOUTH.

GRAPHICALLY RENDERED ARROWS AND MUSKETS INTERSECT IN THE INTERIOR ON A REGION OF THE MAP IDENTIFIED AS -- "THE DISPUTED TERRITORY".

A HUGE TITLE FILLS THE SCREEN: **FRONTIER.**

CUT TO:

1 EXT. WILDERNESS OUTPOST - NIGHT

The Wilderness Outpost is a cluster of a FEW LOG BUILDINGS SURROUNDED BY BLACK SPRUCE FOREST. This small facility is a desperate grasp at order and stability at the dark edge of a wild continent. This is an English outpost in a region dominated by French Voyageurs and Métis.

BEAVER PELTS hang drying on a line -- dripping with BLOOD. SKINNED BEAVER CARCASSES lay in a heap.

A CORPSE, partly covered in a gray wool blanket lays face down in the mud.

AGAINST A WALL:

THREE ENGLISH SOLDIERS ARE TIED UP, RESTRAINED, THEIR ARMS BOUND AND HELD TIGHTLY OVER THEIR HEADS. THEIR SMASHED AND BLOODIED FEET AND TOES MINGLE WITH THE DIRT.

THE SOLDIERS' CLOTHES ARE TORN APART AND SOAKED IN BLOOD. ONE SOLDIER'S HAND IS PARTIALLY DISMEMBERED -- ONLY THREE FINGERS REMAIN.

A TORTURED ENGLISH SOLDIER makes panicked pleading sounds as A LARGE KNIFE IS SHARPENED ON A STONE BY THE FIRE.

ANOTHER FINGER IS CUT OFF AS -- SNOT, BLOOD, AND TEARS COVER THE SOLDIER'S SWOLLEN FACE. He WHIMPERS and pleads --

ENGLISH SOLDIER
Please... just kill me.
(yelling)
Please!!!

LATER:

A BROAD FIGURE WALKS AROUND THE COALS OF A DYING FIRE.

He walks over to the English Soldiers, and paces in front of the three mutilated men. The Figure inspects their wounds -- ONE SOLDIER HAS HAD BOTH HANDS REMOVED. ANOTHER SOLDIER HAS BEEN DISEMBOWELED. All three cling to life but would welcome death.

One of the English Soldiers tries to speak but HIS TONGUE HAS BEEN CUT OUT, so the words just comes out as a guttural, gurgling BARK.

The Broad Figure picks up a larger than fist-sized STONE.

FIGURE (O.S.)
You boys have wandered a little far
from home. You shouldn't be here.
This is not your land.

He raises the stone and --

FIGURE (CONT'D)

I promise this won't hurt a bit.

THE FIGURE BASHES IT AGAINST THE SKULL OF THE ENGLISH SOLDIER, killing the man on impact. Then -- THWACK! THWACK! HE KILLS THE OTHER TWO MEN. He turns, and we see:

DECLAN HARP (30s), our blood-spattered antihero. Harp is bearded, oily-skinned, with long black hair down to his broad shoulders, and has piercing light eyes. Harp is an Irishman out of Boston and a former Hudson's Bay Company man, but he seems more like a wild predator. Then Harp turns to someone off-screen --

HARP

Take the pelts, guns, powder, and supplies. Leave nothing.

A Scottish HIRED GUN approaches with a captive, YOUNG SOLDIER (20s), who is visibly shaken.

HIRED GUN

We found him hiding.

HARP

You know who I am boy?

Harp takes out his KNIFE, the Young Soldier trembles in terror.

YOUNG SOLDIER

Declan Harp.

Harp CUTS Young Soldier's bonds and SHOVES him. He stumbles to the ground, gets up and RUNS into the forest.

HIRED GUN

If you let him live, they will come after you --

HARP

I'm counting on it.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

2 EXT. LONDON CITYSCAPE - DAY

A striking skyline of London in the late 18th Century. Trails of SMOKE rise from chimneys as a heavy MIST wreaths the city.

A HORSE AND MESSENGER gallop up to the front of A BUILDING. The Messenger DISMOUNTS, holding a SEALED SCROLL. He enters passing a sign that reads: THE HUDSON BAY COMPANY.

3 INT. HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY OFFICE - SHOWROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Messenger passes by -- A MERCHANT displaying opulent FUR CLOTHING.

AN AFFLUENT WOMAN stands in front of A MIRROR with a spectacular MINK COAT.

ANOTHER CUSTOMER adorns A BEAVER FELT HAT, as her HUSBAND counts an obscene STACK OF MONEY, paying for the transaction.

CHESTERFIELD (pre-lap)
-- Declan Harp then bound the three
Englishmen and began torturing them.
He cut off most of their skin, removed
their fingers, disemboweled them --

4 INT. HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY HEAD OFFICE - DAY

CAPTAIN JONATHAN CHESTERFIELD (40s), a square-jawed, formidable and iron-fisted military man, reads from the SCROLL --

CHESTERFIELD (CONT'D)
(reading)
-- and while they still lived, removed
their genitals.

LORD BAKER (50s), a former naval officer turned senior Hudson's Bay Company official, sits at a table EATING ON FINE CHINA. Lord Baker is a heavy-set and ambitious Company man.

His plate is adorned with WILD RABBIT and SMALL RED POTATOES. Baker delicately handles his silverware as a FIRE RAGES behind him.

He listens intently as he STRUGGLES TO CUT THE MEAT on his plate.

CHESTERFIELD (CONT'D)
(reading)
Once he was finished, he executed
them --

Lord Baker pauses, then takes a STONE from a drawer, SPITS on it and begins to SHARPEN the knife, running it back and forth on both sides.

CHESTERFIELD (CONT'D)

(reading)

-- He made off with the entire cache of pelts from the outpost, as well as twelve kegs of gunpowder, sixteen muskets, two weeks worth of provisions --

Chesterfield walks to Baker and places the scroll on his DESK.

LORD BAKER

Impressive --

CHESTERFIELD

High praise indeed, coming from you Lord Baker.

Baker stops sharpening the knife and looks at Chesterfield.

LORD BAKER

Is that so?

CHESTERFIELD

I just mean that your methods are somewhat legendary.

Baker smiles as he finishes working the blade.

LORD BAKER

Anyone can remove a body part, Captain Chesterfield --

He then expertly begins to SEPARATE THE MEAT FROM THE BONE with surgical precision.

LORD BAKER (CONT'D)

The trick is to be able to do it while keeping the captive alive so as to obtain the information they withhold.

CHESTERFIELD

One of the tongues of the slain was removed.

Baker's eyes grow cold, he's perplexed.

LORD BAKER

Defeats the purpose, don't you think.

Baker stabs a SMALL POTATO with the knife.

LORD BAKER (CONT'D)
Remove the genitals and the tongue
will move.

CHESTERFIELD
I could have Harp and his men drawn
and quartered within two days of
landing in the New World.

Baker becomes uneasy, almost defensive.

LORD BAKER
What do you know of Declan Harp?

Chesterfield adjusts his tone.

CHESTERFIELD
I know you trained him yourself.
And that you held him in high esteem,
before his betrayal of the Company.

A beat. Baker is deep in thought.

CHESTERFIELD (CONT'D)
Send me and I'll bring back whatever
part of him you want.

LORD BAKER
No. Declan Harp took advantage of
everything I taught him. Now he's
directly responsible for our declining
profits. It's costing us millions,
Chesterfield. This is a matter I
must personally see to.

THE BLADE BREAKS AND CUTS HIS PALM. Lord Baker squeezes the
BLOOD in his hand, watching as it trickles down onto his
plate.

LORD BAKER (CONT'D)
Besides, just killing him would be
pointless. We need what he has.
Namely those trade routes. We must
take back what is rightfully ours.
Then you may do what you want with
Mr. Harp.

Off a smiling Chesterfield --

5 EXT. LONDON DOCKSIDE - DAY

The London Docks are a CHAOTIC MELEE OF ACTIVITY -- A SMALL
BUNDLE OF 10-12 FUR PELTS is counted at a trading DESK. A
MASSIVE STACK OF SILVER is exchanged for them. ARMED SOLDIERS
OVERSEE THE TRANSACTION.

SHEEP, GOATS, AND CHICKENS are ushered onto ships. BARRELS of supplies are hastily rolled up gangplanks.

A TERRIER chases RATS.

6 EXT. LONDON DOCKSIDE - DAY

MICHAEL SMYTH (19), a streetwise Irish teen, RUNS with CLENNA DOLAN (18) and her older brother Tom (19), also Irish. Tom carries a BURLAP SACK. The three weave through the busy dock, dodging and darting as they go. They are being chased by A SHOP OWNER.

SHOP OWNER
Stop! Thieves!

MICHAEL
Come on, Clenna. I thought you could keep up with the boys.

CLENNA
Shut yer arse, Michael Smyth.

TOM
(sarcastic)
Good, say our names out loud and all --

Tom dodges through the CROWD and they separate.

Michael and Clenna take cover under a LARGE SAIL CANVAS -- they watch the shop owner's legs run by. They laugh reflexively, enjoying a private moment together. Michael notices her hair is covering one of her eyes.

MICHAEL
(whispering)
No wonder you were so slow, you can't see a thing under there --

Michael gently moves Clenna's hair from her face but she SMACKS his hand away and puts a CLIP in her hair.

CLENNA
One eye is all I can handle with your ugly mug.

They share a flirtatious look and Clenna leans in to kiss Michael just as -- Tom flips up the edge of the canvas and catches the two of them. He shoves Michael away from Clenna.

TOM
What's going on here, now?

MICHAEL

Saving your sister is all. You're welcome.

CLENNA

That'll be the day --

They emerge from under the canvas.

TOM

Merchant's gone. T'inks we headed into the market --

(gesturing to the sack)

What'd we get?!

Michael OPENS THE SACK -- removes two ROTTEN APPLES.

CLENNA

That's it?

Tom turns the bag upside down in disbelief.

The three of them sit briefly, the picture of poverty. Dejected, deflated and angry. Michael THROWS the apples in disgust.

MICHAEL

We can't keep doing this, if we can't make a big score, we're not gonna survive another winter here --

TOM

You make it sound so easy --

Michael hears SHOUTING and his eyes lock onto a crew of STEVEDORES as they haul VAST QUANTITIES OF GOODS -- AXES, BEER, FOOD, GUNS AND GUNPOWDER ONTO A LARGE SHIP MOORED TO THE DOCKS NEXT TO A HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY SIGN.

MICHAEL

I never said it was gonna be easy --

Clenna and Tom look on with concern.

CLENNA

The ship?

TOM

Where would we hide it?

MICHAEL

Not the whole ship, ya dimwit. We're going to rob it.

Michael leads them to get a closer look.

7 EXT. LONDON - HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY DOCK - CONTINUOUS

They speak in hushed tones as they watch MEN LOAD WOODEN KEGS ONTO THE GALLEON.

CLENNA
This is rubbish. That boat is guarded
by the Royal Navy.

MICHAEL
It's perfect.

TOM
No. It's pretty fucking far from
perfect.

CLENNA
There is no way we can get to the
gold.

TOM
Even if there's any onboard, it'd be
guarded like a virgin's honey pot.

Clenna ELBOWS her brother in the stomach.

MICHAEL
We're not going for the gold.

CLENNA
Then what are we going for?

MICHAEL
Gunpowder.

CLENNA
Gunpowder, is it? Could you pick
something that won't blow the face
off ya?

MICHAEL
Do you know what we can get for a
keg of black powder?

Michael stands back up.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
I'm done with this shite. Even if
we're caught and hang, we're no worse
off.

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

If we can't summon the courage to take one keg of powder from a bunch of fat, English arseholes, then we deserve to die in this hell.

CUT TO:

TEXT ON SCREEN:

NORTH AMERICA, SOMEWHERE IN THE DISPUTED TERRITORY.

8 EXT. LAKE SHORE - DAY

CANOES TRAVEL IN UNISON ON THE WATER. SEVERAL MÉTIS (NORTH AMERICAN NATIVE) AND SCOTTISH MEN FROM HARP'S CREW PADDLE LARGE BIRCH CANOES TO THE SHORE. THEY ARE LOADED TO THE GUNWALES WITH FURS.

They are being watched by JEAN-MARC RIVARD (40s), a French-Canadian Voyageur and entrepreneur. He raises his MUSKET, scanning the canoes as he aims.

RIVARD
(to himself)
Bang... bang...

HE'S SUDDENLY KNOCKED TO THE GROUND.

He flips around and pulls a KNIFE but a HATCHET meets his throat. It's held by Harp. Rivard lowers his knife.

RIVARD (CONT'D)
Easy, mon amis.

Harp takes the knife, admires it before SLIPPING IT INTO HIS BELT.

HARP
Never point a gun unless you plan to fire it --

RIVARD
Right on time, Harp.

As Rivard stands he sees Harp's men pull up in their canoes, and begin UNLOADING THE FURS.

RIVARD (CONT'D)
You are good to your word.

HARP
You better be good to yours --

Rivard smiles as he holds up a POUCH OF COINS.

9 EXT. LAKE SHORE - LATER

Rivard counts out COINS on top of A LOG. Harp watches him closely and SIGNALS for his men to place the pelts on the beach at Rivard's feet.

RIVARD

How many more of these are you able to get?

HARP

For you? None.

RIVARD

I'm confused. Perhaps you don't understand my French accent so well. I said --

HARP

I understand you --

Harp puts the coins in his POUCH.

RIVARD

Then why would you refuse a paying customer?

HARP

That is a conversation that I need to have with your investors.

Rivard shakes his head --

RIVARD

I work for no investors, I work for no mans. I work for the fleurs de lis.

Harp leans in.

HARP

You work for Samuel Grant.

Rivard thinks for a moment, forms his thoughts and --

RIVARD

I trade with Grant from time to time, but he is one of many individuals with whom I do business. There is nothing special about him.

HARP

I want to meet him.

RIVARD

Impossible. Grant is my customer,
not yours.

Harp changes his stance and steps MENACINGLY CLOSE to Rivard.

HARP

Don't overestimate your standing.
You're just the middleman, feasting
on the scraps we throw you --

RIVARD

I cannot do business like this --

HARP

Then no more scraps. I'll get to
Grant with or without you --

Harp turns to leave.

RIVARD

Okay, okay! I can try to set a
meeting with you and Grant, but
remember only one thing --

Harp stops, turns to face Rivard --

RIVARD (CONT'D)

If you cut me out --

Harp walks up to stand next to Rivard, their faces are only
a couple of inches apart. Harp raises an eyebrow, inviting
Rivard to finish.

RIVARD (CONT'D)

-- You will very badly hurt my
feeling.

HARP

Set it up, Rivard --

Harp and his men walk off.

10 EXT. SAILING SHIP - GANGPLANK/MAIN DECK - NIGHT

Michael and Clenna step off the gangplank and onto the main
deck of the ship but as soon as they do, they have to quickly
DUCK behind A CRATE as TWO LARGE MEN WALK TOWARDS THEM: THE
MULE (30's, Soldier), a giant muscular man, and a scrawny
NIGHT GUARD (40's).

THE MULE

What's all this fuss about pushing
off tonight?

NIGHT GUARD

Lord Baker is in some kind of hurry,
and I ain't going to be the one who
gets in his way, Mule.

MULE

Bloody pain in my ass.
(scratching his balls)
I'm taking a piss.

The Mule walks down the gangplank and OFF THE SHIP as the
Night Guard heads toward the the main deck's BOW.

NEARBY, BEHIND THE CRATE:

CLENNA

(re: The Mule)
You see the size of that one?

MICHAEL

This changes nothing. If anything
its just more reason not to get
caught.

Michael looks to the dock where Tom stands with A LIT LANTERN.
He WHISPERS to Tom.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Any sign of trouble, snuff the lamp.
We'll sneak off.

Tom nods and Michael and Clenna proceed to the ship's LADDER
THAT LEADS BELOW DECK. Michael takes a look to the bow,
then gestures for Clenna to move down.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(whispering)
Be careful, Clenna --

He helps her down.

CLENNA

Don't act like you care, Michael
Smyth. That's how babies are made.

Off Michael --

11 INT. SAILING SHIP - BELOW DECK - CONTINUOUS

Michael gestures at A DOOR at the bottom of the stairs which
is LOCKED -- Clenna removes the CLIP from her hair, slips it
into the lock and CLICK -- picks the lock.

She throws a flirtatious glance at Michael as she opens the
door and they ENTER:

12 INT. SAILING SHIP - CARGO HOLD - CONTINUOUS

Michael scans the PACKED cargo hold.

A Night Guard's FOOTSTEPS THUD towards them.

Michael pulls Clenna into the shadows as the Night Guard steps into the hold, looking around with his LAMP. Michael and Clenna press very close together, and silently wait with bated breath.

Not spotting them, the Night Guard moves back up to the deck. Michael and Clenna breathe a sigh of relief and hurriedly inspect BARRELS.

Searching, Michael identifies MARKINGS ON A GROUP OF BARRELS. He SMELLS them --

MICHAEL

Powder.

Clenna goes to grab it but Michael stops her.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Gently, or the last thing to go through your mind will be your arse.

They get their hands on the barrel and CARRY it carefully to the base of the ladder -- Michael peeks out A PORTHOLE: TOM'S LANTERN STILL LIT.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

All clear.

Michael quickly HOISTS THE HEAVY BARREL onto his shoulders, as Clenna climbs up ahead of him to receive it at the top. Michael begins to follow with the barrel --

13 EXT. SAILING SHIP - MAIN DECK - CONTINUOUS

Michael carries the barrel to the top, waiting for Clenna or Tom to take it.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Clenna? Tom? Some help.

Michael manages to get the barrel to the top rung. A SET OF HANDS GRAB THE KEG and lift the weight off his shoulders.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Thanks --

Michael climbs out only to find -- The Mule standing there. TWO OTHER NIGHT GUARDS have Clenna and Tom.

THE MULE

Now, what are we gonna do with you
shitrats?

Michael KICKS THE MULE IN THE KNEE, who recoils in pain.

Michael PUNCHES THE GUARD HOLDING CLENNA IN THE FACE.

MICHAEL

(to Tom and Clenna)

RUN!

THE MULE TAKES A SWING AT TOM -- AND HITS HIM, KNOCKING HIM
BACK. TOM LOSES HIS FOOTING AND FALLS OVERBOARD. THE SWAYING
BOAT CRUSHES TOM AGAINST THE DOCK, KILLING HIM INSTANTLY.

CLENNA

Tommy!?!

The Mule pulls a MUSKET but MICHAEL GRABS A CHAIN AND CRACKS
HIM IN THE HEAD, KNOCKING HIM DOWN as TWO MORE GUARDS arrive.
Michael is trapped, he backs toward the hatch as the Guards
rouse The Mule.

MICHAEL

Run, Clenna!

Clenna dodges down the gangplank, looking back at Michael.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Go!

Clenna RUNS along the dock AS TWO MORE GUARDS RUSH MICHAEL
and he heads across deck.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SHIP:

MICHAEL SPOTS A PORTHOLE. HE QUICKLY TOSSES A SECTION OF
CHAIN INTO THE WATER, making a loud SPLASH. He SLIPS through
the porthole, out of sight.

The Mule LIMPS around the corner with the two guards in tow,
and looks over the gunwales where the chain hit the water.

GUARD

Where is he?

THE MULE

He jumped, filthy little bastard.

GUARD

Should we report this?

THE MULE

Fuck no. Last thing I need is Lord
Baker hearing about this.

14 INT. SAILING SHIP - NIGHT

Michael CRAWLS through the cargo hold of the ship, laying low, and staying out of sight. VOICES and FOOTSTEPS can be heard above, clamoring around in the commotion. He listens, but can't decipher what is being said.

15 INT. SAILING SHIP - BELOW DECK - NIGHT

Michael slips under LARGE BALES OF HAY and hidden, he waits...
Off Michael --

16 INT. SAILING SHIP - DAY

Michael awakens as he feels the ship MOVING. The large timber galleon CREAKS AND SWAYS as it rides the waves -- Michael panics and runs to a PORTHOLE -- he sees that THE SHIP IS AT SEA.

MICHAEL

No. No. No....

Michael silently climbs through the cargo and tucks between the BARRELS. He peers out and hears bits of a conversation between The Mule and a DECK HAND (30s).

DECK HAND

What happened to the little bastards?

THE MULE

One got off, the other got crushed
when he tried to run.

DECK HAND

What about the girl?

Michael listens intently.

THE MULE

Got nabbed. She's under lock and
key at Bow Street, pretty little
thing, they're gonna eat her alive
in there --

Michael, still in the shadows, gestures to punch his knuckles against the wall but holds up before striking.

17 EXT. SAILING SHIP - MAIN DECK - NIGHT

GIANT WAVES wash over the ship as it is tossed about in a raging STORM.

18 INT. SAILING SHIP - CARGO HOLD - NIGHT

Michael, hiding, wakes up to a conversation between -- Galley Boy (20s) and Cook (40s).

COOK

Did you get those plates?

GALLEY BOY

Yes, sir, the ones from Lord Baker's cabin.

Cook clocks Galley Boy's nervousness.

COOK

And did you get the other thing I asked for?

A beat.

GALLEY BOY

Yes --

COOK

Then give it here --

Galley Boy hesitates before he reaches in his POCKET and removes -- a CRESTED GOLD RING.

COOK (CONT'D)

Very nice.

GALLEY BOY

You can't keep making me steal things, they'll find out --

COOK

Shut your gob. No one will find out. And if you tell, boy, I'll slit your throat --

COOK POKETS THE RING.

Michael watches silently in the shadows.

19 EXT. OCEAN - DAY

The seas have calmed and the ship moves gently on the open ocean.

20 INT. SAILING SHIP - CARGO HOLD

Michael VOMITS, seasick.

CHESTERFIELD (O.S.)
All hands on deck!!!

SHOUTING can be heard as the crew gathers on deck.

AN OLDER DECK HAND (45) finds Michael.

DECK HAND
What we have here? A dirty stowaway.
Alright, you bugger, on your feet!

He grabs him by the collar and YANKS him to his feet. Michael is too seasick to fight back.

21 EXT. SAILING SHIP - MAIN DECK - DAY

Lord Baker stands on the BRIDGE, looking down over the crew. Chesterfield stands close by.

LORD BAKER
Someone among you has taken something
that belongs to me. This is your
opportunity to step forward, if you
wish to have mercy shown.

Silence. The Galley Boy and Cook exchange glances.

LORD BAKER (CONT'D)
No one?

The Deck Hand emerges from below deck with Michael in tow. He THROWS Michael down hard. The Mule is surprised to see Michael on board.

DECKHAND
A bloody stowaway --

LORD BAKER
Toss him.

The Mule helps the Deck Hand DRAG Michael to the gunwales.

LORD BAKER (CONT'D)
(to Chesterfield)
I want everyone on this ship searched.

The Cook steps forward.

COOK
(re: Galley Boy)
The boy took it, I found it on him
this morning. I didn't know it was
yours, My Lord --

Cook produces THE RING and passes it to Chesterfield.

GALLEY BOY
He's lying! --

CHESTERFIELD
Did you take the ring, boy?

GALLEY BOY
Yes --

LORD BAKER
Throw him overboard.

GALLEY BOY
(pointing to the Cook)
But he made me do it! --

Michael summons his strength.

MICHAEL
He's telling the truth. I overheard
it all.

The Mule SLAPS Michael across the face.

THE MULE
Shut up!

The Mule GRABS Michael and is about to throw him overboard
when Lord Baker raises his hand -- A beat -- Cook steps
tentatively forward.

COOK
You don't believe a dirty little
stowaway, My Lord?

Ignoring Cook, Lord Baker focuses on Michael.

LORD BAKER
Where are you from?

MICHAEL
Ireland.

LORD BAKER
The West Country by the sounds of it --

MICHAEL

Yes. My Lord --

Lord Baker internalizes this information.

LORD BAKER

And you say the Cook put the boy up to it?

MICHAEL

Check his bunk, he has more.

COOK

Lying bastard!

Lord Baker gives a nod and THE MULE RELEASES MICHAEL. Lord Baker walks up to Michael and stares into his eyes. Reading that he is telling the truth.

LORD BAKER

(to Chesterfield)

Check his bunk --

COOK PANICS AND PRODUCES A KNIFE FROM UNDER HIS SHIRT AND BRANDISHES IT, DESPERATELY, FOCUSING ON LORD BAKER. BUT MICHAEL INTERCEPTS HIM AND THROWS HIM TO THE GROUND. TWO DECK HANDS GRAB THE COOK.

Baker walks up to Cook, picks up the knife and RUNS HIS FINGER OVER THE BLADE.

LORD BAKER (CONT'D)

Now here's a man who appreciates a sharp blade.

BAKER STICKS THE KNIFE IN COOK'S CHEST, REPEATEDLY, UNTIL HE FALLS OVERBOARD. Chesterfield passes the ring to Baker and he slips it on his NOW BLOOD-COVERED FINGER, adjusting it to sit just right. After admiring the ring for a moment, he turns his attentions to Michael.

LORD BAKER (CONT'D)

Strong lad, aren't you? What's your name, boy?

MICHAEL

Michael Smyth.

LORD BAKER

(to Chesterfield)

Take the Galley Boy below deck, we'll deal with him later. And get young Michael here some food and a bunk.

Baker walks off. The Mule shoots Michael a look, then walks off.

22 INT. SAILING SHIP - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - DAY

Chesterfield enters and pauses for a moment as he looks surprised to see THREE WOMEN -- CHARLENE (27), EVELINA (20) and IMOGEN (30's) -- lounging in Lord Baker's quarters. The women are dressed only in SLIPS and their bodies can be seen easily through the thin material.

Chesterfield is "preoccupied" by the situation.

CHESTERFIELD
Should we talk later, when you're
less distracted?

Lord Baker stands at the TABLE with his back to the women, all his attention given to A MAP OF JAMES BAY.

LORD BAKER
Do I look distracted to you?

Behind Baker's back, Imogen OPENS her slip, showing Chesterfield her enormous breast. Chesterfield smirks to himself.

CHESTERFIELD
(under his breath)
No, My Lord --

Chesterfield tries to force his attention on the MAP.

LORD BAKER
At last count, there were nearly a dozen small parasitic companies, including Harp's, all with interests operating here -- in the rivers and lakes of the interior. The Scottish Brown Brothers, the so-called coureurs des bois, even the Bostonian Samuel Grant is involved. Their operations in the interior are what's choking off a critical amount of our trade --

CHESTERFIELD POINTS TO THE SHORELINE OF THE BAY.

CHESTERFIELD
This is all our territory.

LORD BAKER
It's only ours if we control it.
In order to do that, we must first
infiltrate and destroy Harp's Company.
(MORE)

LORD BAKER (CONT'D)

With his rebellion crushed, the others
will soon fall.

Imogen begins CARESSING Charlene as a display for
Chesterfield. He CRACKS HIS NECK, as he tries to remain
focused on the conversation.

CHESTERFIELD

How do you intend to execute such a
plan?

A KNOCK on the door.

LORD BAKER

A Trojan Horse.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Lord Baker, it's Michael.

LORD BAKER

(re: Michael)

Which has just arrived.

(To Michael)

Enter.

Michael enters.

MICHAEL

You wanted to see me, Lord Baker?

Michael is surprised to see the three women in Lord Baker's
quarters.

CHARLENE

Oh, this one looks young and
strapping.

LORD BAKER

(stern, without looking)

Some respect, ladies. This man saved
my life.

Charlene recoils.

MICHAEL

Should I come back?

Michael rubs his hands nervously.

LORD BAKER

No, no. Stay. Did they feed you?

MICHAEL

They did, thank you --

LORD BAKER

And you had a chance to rest properly.

MICHAEL

Yes, thank you --

LORD BAKER

Good. Now, it's come to my attention that you and your friends tried to rob a keg of powder from my ship?

Michael gets nervous.

MICHAEL

Right. That. Bit of a misunderstanding, My Lord.

LORD BAKER

I'm certain of it. You risked your health to disarm a dangerous man today. I am obliged to repay you.

Michael perks up.

MICHAEL

Really? Not necessary, but if you insist. I find gold to be the easiest for such transactions --

Chesterfield laughs, incredulous.

CHESTERFIELD

You've never seen a piece of gold in your worthless life, boy.

LORD BAKER

Pay no attention to Captain Chesterfield, he's still upset about you doing his job.

Chesterfield scowls at Michael.

LORD BAKER (CONT'D)

A man needs to make his own way in this life. No handouts.

MICHAEL

(taken aback)

Are... are you're offering me a job?

LORD BAKER

Yes.

(MORE)

LORD BAKER (CONT'D)

Not just any, one with the largest company in the world, son. You see, I need someone to make contact with a man who is having a disagreement with the way we do business. A Declan Harp -- originally from your part of the world.

Chesterfield smiles, catching on to Baker's plan.

MICHAEL

Make contact, then what?

LORD BAKER

Tell him that you were a stowaway on this ship and want to make your fortune in the fur trade and that you'd heard he's the man to help you do it.

CHESTERFIELD

Countrymen helping each other out. That's your way, isn't it?

LORD BAKER

I need you to show me exactly on this map where he is encamped, and in return you'll be paid handsomely. In gold.

CHESTERFIELD

And we'll forget about those robbery charges --

A beat.

MICHAEL

I assume that includes the ones against Clenna as well. Her brother died in the attempt, she's paid her debt with the loss.

Lord Baker throws a look to Chesterfield.

LORD BAKER

Yes, of course. I'll send word back. Clenna, you say?

Michael nods.

MICHAEL

Clenna Dolan. I heard The Mule say she is locked up at Bow Street.

Lord Baker WRITES the name down.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
And the Galley Boy, he goes free.

CHESTERFIELD
Don't push it --

LORD BAKER
Done.

Lord Baker offers his hand, Michael SHAKES it.

LORD BAKER (CONT'D)
You'll have a guide to get you inland,
close to Harp's last known
whereabouts. And some silver for
your pocket --

MICHAEL
Thank you. I won't let you down.

LORD BAKER
I know, son. But remember, our
agreement regarding your friend,
Clenna, depends on your success. I
hope you understand what is at stake,
for both of us.

This lands on Michael, his smile disappears.

MICHAEL
I do --

LORD BAKER
Good. Charlene, show Michael back
to his cabin.

MICHAEL
It's okay, I can find my way --

Michael exits.

Chesterfield and Lord Baker share a look and LORD BAKER
FOCUSES BACK ON THE MAPS. Chesterfield looks to Imogen --
she smiles seductively.

LORD BAKER
(without looking up)
That will be all, Chesterfield.

Chesterfield quickly exits. Baker senses what's happening
but only smirks.

23 EXT. MONTREAL - DAY

Exquisite skyline of the bustling city in the late 1700's.

24 INT. MONTREAL - DINING HOUSE - DAY

The opulent dining room is decorated with SILVERWARE and CRYSTAL GLASSES, but is otherwise EMPTY OF PATRONS.

SAMUEL GRANT (30s) is sharp-eyed and shrewd but has a rugged quality. HE'S DRESSED IN A SILVER-COLOURED SEALSKIN COAT.

Grant reaches into his POCKET, takes out A WRAPPED NAPKIN, and from there takes out his own PERSONAL CUTLERY.

Rivard enters and is met by TWO LARGE ASSOCIATES of Grant.

RIVARD

Jean-Marc Rivard to see Mr. Grant.

Grant signals for his men to allow Rivard to approach.

RIVARD (CONT'D)

Mr. Grant. Thank you for seeing me.
(re: the coat)

That is a beautiful coat. I do not believe I've ever seen its source --

GRANT

It's seal.

RIVARD

From the ocean? Hard to set a trap there --

Rivard's attempt at humour falls short.

GRANT

What do you want?

RIVARD

I need you to come meet someone with me.

GRANT

You asked me to meet with you, so that you could ask me to meet with someone else?

RIVARD

Ah, when you put it that way it seems somehow a bit silly -- but -- these are no ordinary circumstances.

(MORE)

RIVARD (CONT'D)

The man I want you to meet with is a special supplier who is looking for a particular type of buyer.

GRANT

Well, why didn't you bring him here?

RIVARD

We have to go to him.

GRANT

Where?

RIVARD

Ah, it's a long journey.

GRANT

I pay you to meet with these suppliers so that I don't have to. Perhaps I should find someone else who understands my needs.

RIVARD

Like a wife, eh?

Again, Rivard's attempt at humour falls short. He recovers.

RIVARD (CONT'D)

He will only speak with you. Mr. Grant, I would hate for you to miss an opportunity to make a lot of money.

GRANT

Who is this supplier?

RIVARD

Declan Harp.

GRANT

The one who skinned and murdered English soldiers at their own outpost? The man who used to work for the Hudson's Bay Company and now steals from them?

Rivard squirms in his chair.

RIVARD

It sounds bad when you put it like that.

GRANT

And what assurances can you give me that I can trust him?

RIVARD

I cannot. But I can tell you that
he has always delivered.

A WAITRESS delivers A STEAMING PLATE OF DELICIOUS FOOD to
Grant. Grant carefully examines it as he speaks --

GRANT

Good for him, but I have no intention
of traveling into the wilderness to
meet with a notorious cutthroat,
when there is no obvious benefit to
me. Now let me eat.

RIVARD

You need him. Harp is the only man
in the region whose power continues
to grow.

Grant stops.

RIVARD (CONT'D)

If you were to work with him, you
could be a real threat to Lord Baker
and England's great Company -- I
believe, with Harp's assistance, you
could have the greatest company this
world has ever seen.

A beat.

GRANT

Okay Rivard. I'll meet with Declan
Harp. But on one condition -- he
comes to me.

Off Rivard --

25 EXT. SAILING SHIP - GALLEY - DAY

Michael and the Galley Boy are preparing FOOD.

VOICE (O.S.)

LAND HO --

The boys drop everything and rush off to...

26 EXT. SAILING SHIP - MAIN DECK/GUNWALES - CONTINUOUS

... the GUNWALES. Michael looks to the shore and sees --
THE SEASIDE FORT. From the ocean, the sprawling frontier
fort and surrounding area is exotic, striking and beautiful
from a distance.

GALLEY BOY

It's the New World, Michael!

MICHAEL

I've never seen anything like it.
She really is a thing of beauty.

27 EXT. SEASIDE FORT - DOCK - DAY

NO, SHE'S NOT. NOT UP CLOSE. THE DOCKSIDE IS A MUDDY,
CHAOTIC DEN OF FILTH. FILLED WITH DOZENS OF PEOPLE MILLING,
BARTERING, LOADING AND UNLOADING SUPPLIES.

Michael steps off THE GANGPLANK accompanied by The Mule and
the OTHERS FROM THE VOYAGE.

The fort is a rough-looking cluster of several BUILDINGS in
a large area cleared from the surrounding black spruce forest.
PEOPLE IN MILITARY UNIFORMS are dispersed among throngs of
OTHERS CLAD IN WILDERNESS GEAR.

The entire scene is completely unfamiliar to Michael.

28 INT. SAILING SHIP - ADMIRAL'S DECK - DAY

Lord Baker stands with Chesterfield, watching as Michael
leaves the ship.

CHESTERFIELD

What makes you think he won't just
take your silver and try to make a
run for it?

LORD BAKER

The same thing that stops most men.

Baker's three ladies/house staff -- Imogen, Charlene and
Evelina -- walk past. Chesterfield watches as they glide
by.

LORD BAKER (CONT'D)

Take your soldiers and follow him.
Do not engage him or Harp. Let's
see what this boy can do.

29 EXT. SEASIDE FORT - DOCK - DAY

Michael and The Mule walk briskly along the MUDDY GROUND.

MICHAEL

You're the reason my friend Tom died,
you piece of shite.

The Mule stops, looks back to make sure that no one from the
ship can see them. He GRABS Michael.

THE MULE

Yeah. I'm glad the little shitrat got what it deserved.

MICHAEL

He had a name, and you better show him some respect.

THE MULE

I should just stick my blade in your chest and let you bleed out like a little piggy --

MICHAEL

Then Lord Baker will have you hanged --

Michael motions to A GALLOWS standing near the centre of the fort. The Mule stares at Michael.

THE MULE

All I gotta do is bring you to the Company office and your guide, then you can go die out there --

The Mule turns abruptly and SLAMS into A SMALLER, WEATHERED FRONTIERSMAN.

FRONTIERSMAN

Watch where you're going --

Michael clocks a wild look in the Frontiersman's eyes.

MICHAEL

We're not looking for trouble --

THE MULE

(to Michael)

Stay out of this.

(to Frontiersman)

And you, get out of my way, little man, or I'll snap you in half.

The Mule pushes his way past the Frontiersman, SPINNING him around in the process. FRONTIERSMAN REMOVES HIS KNIFE AND STABS THE MULE IN THE THROAT. THE MULE FALLS INTO MICHAEL, SPILLING BLOOD ON HIS CLOTHES BEFORE FALLING TO THE GROUND, CLUTCHING HIS NECK.

The Frontiersman SLIPS into the GATHERING CROWD. The Mule grabs onto Michael, who STRUGGLES to get free of his grip as he spots TWO SOLDIERS APPROACH THE MAYHEM.

OFF MICHAEL --

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

30 EXT. SEASIDE FORT - DOCK - DAY

A CROWD has gathered at the scene of the murder.

A HAND firmly grabs Michael's shoulder and pulls him from The Mule's grip.

Michael finds GWEN EMBERLY (mid 30s), a woman comfortable in this wild environment, staring him in the eyes intensely --

EMBERLY

Move on.

MICHAEL

I didn't do this --

EMBERLY

Doesn't matter. Move on. Nothing can be done for this fool now. Go!

Emberly PUSHES Michael away from the scene. Both she and Michael quickly disappear into the crowd as --

Chesterfield and THREE ENGLISH SOLDIERS approach The Mule, who lies DEAD. Chesterfield clocks the NECK WOUND. He steps over the body as he scans the crowd for Michael.

31 EXT. SEASIDE FORT - DAY

Michael, still reeling from the murder he just witnessed, rounds a corner of the fort and is astonished to see --

THOUSANDS OF PELTS are on hand in an incredible display of wealth and exploitation as the Hudson's Bay Company amasses its acquisitions. With the vast quantity of animal hides, SIGNS OF A PRICE PAID IN BLOOD ARE EVERYWHERE -- MISSING FINGERS FROM HANDS AND DEEP SCARS ON THE SMILING FACES OF THE TRADERS -- WHO APPEAR TO BE GETTING RICH BEFORE MICHAEL'S EYES.

MÉTIS CAN BE SEEN IN SMALL GROUPS EMERGING FROM THE WILDERNESS WITH LARGE QUANTITIES OF FURS TRADING WITH THE ENGLISH, SCOTTISH AND IRISH HBC MEN. Michael also notices that there are MÉTIS DRESSED IN EUROPEAN CLOTHING WHO ARE WORKING AMONG THE ENGLISH.

He does not notice that he is being FOLLOWED BY EMBERLY THROUGH THE CROWD.

Michael finds A SIGN FOR THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY TRADING POST. He watches as both ENGLISH TRADERS and NATIVE MEN roll up with CARTS AND BARRELS OF PELTS and exchange them for GUNS, GOLD, OR EVEN PAPER, the currency of the West.

Michael follows the path of the furs to the trading post where they are being STACKED IN A WALL of wealth. A small number of BUSINESSMEN and others with interests in the trade are nearby -- including FATHER JAMES COFFIN (40s), A JESUIT BLACK ROBE, who watches young Michael curiously.

TWO ARMED SOLDIERS stop Michael from entering --

ARMED SOLDIER

Are you simple? Only company men in there. So Step back, or I'll smash your head in.

MICHAEL

I'm supposed to meet someone here.

ARMED SOLDIER

And who might that be?

MICHAEL

I don't know his name. The guy who did was killed on the way here. Lord Baker made the arrangements --

ARMED SOLDIER

Sure he did, and afterwards you're meeting the Queen for some tea --

MICHAEL

My guide is in there --

Michael tries to walk by but the other Soldier lifts his MUSKET and CROSS-CHECKS MICHAEL -- he goes down hard, his COIN POUCH SLIDES FREE in the dirt.

Father Coffin catches a glimpse of the change purse.

Michael recovers his coins while THE SOLDIER AIMS HIS GUN AT MICHAEL AND COCKS THE HAMMER.

Coffin steps between them, speaking to Michael --

COFFIN

There you are, my son.

ARMED SOLDIER

What do you want, Black Robe?

Coffin searches for a priestly thing to say --

COFFIN

The goats always wander from -- the other goats.

Coffin helps Michael to his feet.

COFFIN (CONT'D)

A shepherd's work is never done, but rest assured, we will help this lad see the light, through the Good Word.

The Soldiers share a look and begin to LAUGH.

ARMED SOLDIER

Good luck with that, Father. Now get your stupid goat and bugger off.

COFFIN

Bless you, my son. May the sun set on you for good.

Coffin and Michael step away --

MICHAEL

Are you my guide?

COFFIN

(lying)

Indeed I am. Father James Coffin, at your disposal.

MICHAEL

Michael Smyth.

Coffin escorts Michael through the THRONGS OF PEOPLE --

COFFIN

You must tread softly in this place, Michael. The soldiers have only one thing on their minds -- protect the gold. And the fur is the gold.

MICHAEL

What is a Jesuit doing in this part of the West?

COFFIN

My calling. And because of it, I've seen a great deal of this savage land.

MICHAEL

You don't sound French. I thought the Jesuits were French?

COFFIN

French. English. They are always bickering over one patch of dirt or another, but as a man of God I don't see the world in that way.

(MORE)

COFFIN (CONT'D)

The English are here, but the farther you get from the water the more French you find. Now, what are you doing here?

Michael becomes guarded.

MICHAEL

I'm looking to make my fortune and I heard Declan Harp was the man who could help me do it.

Coffin stops, suddenly serious.

COFFIN

Then you've heard wrong. Harp is a wild, unpredictable murderer.

MICHAEL

I've heard. But Harp controls the inland, and that's where I need to be.

Coffin reads Michael's firm stubbornness and determination.

COFFIN

Alright... alright. A job's a job. At least let's rest up before our long journey. I know a quiet little place --

32 INT. ALE HOUSE - NIGHT

DEBAUCHERY. LIVE MUSIC PLAYS AS VOICES SHOUT, WOMEN ARE SPUN ON A MAKE-SHIFT DANCE FLOOR BY DRUNKEN FRONTIERSMEN, AND ALE IS CONSUMED AS FAST AS IT IS Poured.

Michael turns to see the BARTENDER SWING A CLUB at a PATRON trying to help himself. He is surprised to see TWO FIDDLERS, ONE CLEARLY AN IRISH MAN, ONE A MÉTIS WOMAN. The Irish fiddler is SHOVED by a DRUNKEN PATRON but plays on. An argument turns to BLOWS and is subsumed into the mayhem as quickly as it started.

COFFIN (CONT'D)

Another drink, Michael?

MICHAEL

Look, I have already paid for our ale, and I am not giving you any more until you get me to Harp.

Coffin nods with a smile and a wink, and SWIPES A COIN PURSE from an INTOXICATED MAN next to him.

He removes SOME SILVER PIECES.

The BARMAID, MARY (20's), a young American woman with secrets she keeps close, lays ALES down in front of Coffin. Coffin hands her the silver.

COFFIN

This should cover it and then some.

She nods, smiles and moves off.

MICHAEL

So, you're a thief too?

COFFIN

Just his price for salvation. We all have one, you know --

MICHAEL

So, will you rob me too, when I turn my back?

COFFIN

Of course not... you have so little.

Michael scowls.

COFFIN (CONT'D)

Which is good. Because it means you don't have the sickness. Yet.

MICHAEL

The sickness?

COFFIN

When you put too much gold in the hands of the kinds of people that come here, it awakens something.

MICHAEL

Drunkenness? Thievery?

COFFIN

Yes, among other things. And a need for more. Some people have no self-discipline.

Coffin DOWNS AN ALE in a single gulp. He nods.

AT THE FAR END OF THE BAR:

Emberly stands discretely watching them. She slides SEVERAL SILVER PIECES to Mary.

EMBERLY

Make sure the Priest and the boy
don't run out of ale.

MARY

Yes, Miss Emberly --

Mary takes the silver and POURS TWO MORE ALES.

Emberly leaves the Alehouse.

BACK WITH MICHAEL AND COFFIN:

COFFIN

Most think the sickness is about
money. But it's really about power,
Michael. Some want more power, and
some don't want to give up the power
they have, and when someone gains
more, someone else has to lose it.
You have to be careful here or you
will get pulled in by this sickness
too.

Coffin takes A SWIG of Michael's ale.

COFFIN (CONT'D)

And you have to know that going to
the interior to meet Harp may cost
you your life.

MICHAEL

I have no choice.

COFFIN

There's always choice. But, if you're
that dead set on meeting Harp, I'll
get you there.

Coffin and Michael are interrupted by MARY, delivering TWO
MORE ALES with a wink.

MARY

On the house --

COFFIN

Are you seeking salvation, my love?
Because I'm the only one in here
that can give it to you --

MARY

I'm afraid it's too late for me,
Father.

COFFIN

Nonsense. You'll be in my prayers tonight.

MARY

Then we should start praying --

She smiles and moves on. Coffin watches her go.

MICHAEL

Are you really a priest?

COFFIN

Excuse me. My calling.

Coffin moves in Mary's direction.

From his end of the bar, XAVIER (35), A French Voyageur with A NASTY FACIAL SCAR, watches Coffin walk away.

33 INT. SHIP - NIGHT

Gwen Emberly stands talking to Chesterfield.

EMBERLY

The Priest has befriended the Irish boy.

CHESTERFIELD

The Black Robe?

Emberly nods. A beat.

CHESTERFIELD (CONT'D)

Why?

EMBERLY

I don't know, probably looking for free ale --

Chesterfield tosses her A SMALL SACK OF COINS.

CHESTERFIELD

I need you to keep an eye on the boy tonight. One of my men is dead and the boy never met up with his guide.

EMBERLY

The kid didn't kill your man. I saw what happened.

CHESTERFIELD

I don't care who killed him. Stay with the boy --

Emberly nods and heads off.

Off Chesterfield --

34 INT. ALE HOUSE - NIGHT

Mary and Coffin are at a PRIVATE TABLE off to the side of the room. Mary lays another DRINK in front of him.

MARY

What's the story with your friend?

Mary smiles seductively. Coffin's eyes are on her breasts as he SLURS his words.

COFFIN

He is not able to hold his ale.

MARY

Tell me more.

NEARBY:

Michael SWIGS ANOTHER DRINK -- the ale is kicking in and Michael is drunk. Through his eyes -- THE CROWD OF DRUNKEN FRONTIERSMEN SEEMS LIKE A HELLISH MASQUERADE. Michael gets up to find some fresh air and staggers.

He sees Coffin whispering to Mary. Michael starts to say something but he FALLS OVER DRUNK AND AS HE HITS THE FLOOR

WE HARD CUT TO:

BLACK.

SLOW FADE UP:

35 EXT. RIVER - DAY

The sun rises through a morning mist.

SWEEPING OVER A MAGNIFICENT LANDSCAPE -- MOUNTAINS AND VALLEYS stretch in the distance sewn together by A SPARKLING RIVER. A CANOE FLOATS IN THE RIVER. INSIDE WE FIND A LONE OCCUPANT --

A NAKED, UNCONSCIOUS AND BRUISED MICHAEL --

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

36 EXT. RIVER - DAY

Michael wakes up in the canoe, naked and disoriented. He holds his head in his hands and groans -- HIS FACE IS SCRATCHED AND BRUISED and he is miserably hungover.

-- A NOISE, A POUNDING, is it in his head? He listens to the DISTINCT THUNDEROUS EXPLOSIONS and realizes -- GUNFIRE!

Michael lifts his head to see -- MUSKET SMOKE BILLOWING FROM THE SHORELINE. He surveys himself and the boat -- A PADDLE, SOME TWINE, but otherwise nothing. He takes cover as more SHOTS ring out -- looking over the gunwales of the boat, he can see that the shots are directed up the shoreline, not at him. Then he sees --

-- COFFIN RUNNING ALONG THE SLIPPERY ROCKS.

MICHAEL

Coffin?

Michael takes a breath to shout out to Coffin but hesitates, and watches as A GROUP OF FRENCH VOYAGEURS EMERGE FROM THE FOREST, LED BY XAVIER, CHASING COFFIN. Michael looks down the river and spots a bend. He reaches for a paddle and begins PADDLING.

37 EXT. RIVERBEND - CONTINUOUS

As Michael approaches the bend in the river, Coffin catches a glimpse of him approaching --

COFFIN

Son, where have you been?

MICHAEL

Where have I been?! Where are my clothes?

Michael brings the boat close to the shoreline. Coffin PULLS UP HIS ROBES AND WADES into the water.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Hurry up!

COFFIN

There's only one man to ever walk on water, and I'm not Him, so shut up and give me your hand.

Michael helps him aboard and Coffin tosses him A SATCHEL.

COFFIN (CONT'D)

Your clothes.

MICHAEL

Why do you have them?!?

The current picks up and the two men move DOWNSTREAM, away from the pursuing French voyageurs who FIRE SHOTS FROM THE SHORE.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Christ!!!

COFFIN

Watch the language! And while you're at it, paddle like your life depends on it, because it does!

Michael and Coffin PADDLE FRANTICALLY.

38 EXT. RIVER - LATER

The two paddle through a CALM STRETCH OF RIVER.

MICHAEL

Why was I naked, and why were those French men trying to kill you?

COFFIN

Only the good Lord himself understands the mind of the French! But YOU had way too much to drink last night!

MICHAEL

Don't make this about me. You left me!

Coffin DRAWS A CROSS over Michael's chest and mumbles a prayer.

COFFIN

I absolve you of --

Michael SMACKS Coffin's hand away.

MICHAEL

Tell me what happened right now!

COFFIN

Last night, one of the ladies whose sins I tried to absolve indicated that her sister had taken an -- let's say -- interest in you.

MICHAEL

What?

COFFIN

She suggested that a group rate may be possible. I managed to find you out back, alone and spread out on a pile of hay with your clothes flung all about, not far from where you sprawled.

MICHAEL

I -- don't remember that --

COFFIN

Of course you don't, you were drunk. Shameful. I quickly gathered your clothes and with the help of the young maidens, I managed to get you to the canoe. Now keep paddling, let's put some distance between us and the ungodly French --

They plunge their paddles deep and fast.

39 INT. ALE HOUSE - DAY

Mary is alone, cleaning the empty bar. It's a mess, BROKEN TABLES AND CHAIRS. Chesterfield steps in silently and walks up behind her.

CHESTERFIELD

Quite a mess. Mary, is it --?

MARY

Yes, sir. If you're looking for Miss Emberly, she'll be here any second.

He TUTS as he easily UNTIES THE BOW at her cleavage -- paralyzing her with fear.

CHESTERFIELD

You don't want this to come loose too easily, encourage the animals that venture in here, do you?

Emberly enters.

EMBERLY

Chesterfield.

Mary puts a hand to her chest and steps back from Chesterfield.

CHESTERFIELD

So what is this news you have for me?

EMBERLY

Go ahead, Mary.

Mary regains her composure.

MARY

Father Coffin came in with an Irish boy. Michael. He said some things.

CHESTERFIELD

What things?

Mary hesitates. Emberly nudges her to continue.

MARY

Father Coffin told me that the boy needed to find Declan Harp.

CHESTERFIELD

Go on.

MARY

He told me that he's the boy's guide --

Chesterfield steps MENACINGLY CLOSER to Mary.

CHESTERFIELD

What else?

MARY

That's all.

Chesterfield internalizes this information. He stares in her eyes but Mary looks away. HE CLASPS HER BY THE THROAT.

CHESTERFIELD

WHAT ELSE!?

Mary begins to panic.

EMBERLY

Jonathan!

Chesterfield PUSHES Emberly back.

HE SLOWLY CLENCHES MARY'S NECK TIGHTER.

CHESTERFIELD

Speak! Where did they go?

MARY
(struggling for breath)
They were chased to the river by
some men from the bar --

CHESTERFIELD HOLDS HER NECK TIGHT. He stares into her eyes
as HER FACE REDDENS. Her eyes fill with terror as she
realizes -- he enjoys this.

EMBERLY
Let. Her. Go.

REVEAL -- EMBERLY HAS HER KNIFE BLADE PLACED BETWEEN
CHESTERFIELD'S RIBS. A SMALL SPOT OF BLOOD FORMS AT THE
TIP.

Chesterfield RELEASES his grip.

Mary gasps for breath.

CHESTERFIELD
(to Emberly)
You better watch your step.

EMBERLY
You got what you need, our business
is done --

CHESTERFIELD
No, my dear Emberly, it's just started --

Chesterfield leaves as -- Mary looks down and sees the BLOOD
at the tip of Emberly's knife.

OFF MARY --

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

40 EXT. RIVER'S EDGE - LATER

MICHAEL AND COFFIN PADDLE TO SHORE AND PULL THE CANOE IN.
Michael puts the last of his CLOTHES back on.

MICHAEL

You offered me your help, but you left me passed out drunk while you sat with a prostitute. What kind of priest are you?

COFFIN

What kind of priest are you in need of?

MICHAEL

I'm starting to doubt your wellness.

COFFIN

Open your eyes, Michael. This is no place for a boy like you --

Coffin hands Michael's SILVER POUCH back to him.

COFFIN (CONT'D)

Take it. Walk to the shoreline, pay for the next ship returning to England. Go home.

Michael looks thoughtfully at the pouch.

MICHAEL

I can't.

COFFIN

Of course you can.

MICHAEL

I can't go home! The girl I love, back in London, her life is in my hands. The silver would get me home, but it wouldn't free her from prison or keep her from being hanged. I made a deal, I have no choice. Now take me to Harp!

Michael's words sink in. Coffin is about to reply when --

RUSTLING IN THE TREES.

XAVIER (O.S.)

Black Robe, we can smell you!

Coffin realizes they have been caught.

COFFIN

Xavier?

Xavier and his FRONTIERSMEN step out of the forest, surrounding the two men.

XAVIER

I hate the smell of goat.

HE BASHES COFFIN IN THE FACE WITH THE BUTT OF HIS MUSKET, KNOCKING COFFIN OUT COLD. His Frontiersmen BIND COFFIN'S AND MICHAEL'S HANDS BEHIND THEM. He turns to Michael.

XAVIER (CONT'D)

Would you like to talk to my gun?

Michael shakes his head and watches as his hands are tied.

XAVIER (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Good.

(to his men)

Set up camp. We rest here.

AS THE FRENCH SET UP CAMP, ONE OF XAVIER'S COMPANIONS KNEELS TO BUILD A FIRE.

UNBEKNOWNST TO HIM, MUSKET BARRELS APPEAR IN NEARBY FOLIAGE, TAKING AIM.

SUDDENLY, A MUSKET BLAST ECHOES FROM THE FOREST -- THE BOTTOM HALF OF THE MAN'S FACE IS BLOWN OFF.

MICHAEL THROWS HIMSELF OVER COFFIN'S UNCONSCIOUS BODY, TRYING TO PROTECT HIM AS GUNFIRE RINGS OUT ALL AROUND HIM.

MICHAEL TRIES TO WAKE COFFIN.

MICHAEL

Coffin, get up for Christ's sake!

Coffin wakes up, disoriented.

COFFIN

Michael?

MICHAEL

We gotta move! Follow me!

Michael and Coffin SCRAMBLE LOW to get to a HOLLOW near an upturned tree root.

COFFIN

And I thought I would die in the
warm embrace of a fallen sister!

The shooting is between ENGLISH SOLDIERS on one side, and
Xavier and his French comrades on the other.

A MUSKET SHOT SPLINTERS THE TREE NEAR MICHAEL'S HEAD.

MICHAEL

We need to get these bindings off!

COFFIN

Can you reach my boot?

MICHAEL

What?

COFFIN

A blade -- you can never be too
careful!

Michael TWISTS, his back to Coffin, to reach into his boot
for the blade. Coffin CONTORTS to bring the boot to Michael's
hands.

MICHAEL

Got it!

MICHAEL HOLDS THE KNIFE FOR COFFIN TO CUT HIS BONDS. MICHAEL
LOOKS UP TO SEE A FRONTIERSMAN CHARGING AT THEM, RIFLE AIMED! --

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Coffin!

-- AS A MUSKET SHOT PUNCHES A ONE-INCH HOLE THROUGH THE MIDDLE
OF THE MAN'S FOREHEAD. HE DROPS DEAD IN FRONT OF MICHAEL.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Jaysus!

COFFIN

Oh come now, it's not that difficult --
There! Got it!

Coffin is FREE FROM HIS BINDS.

MICHAEL

Quick, cut me free!

Coffin CUTS MICHAEL'S HANDS FREE.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Let's get out of here!

Just as they move again, A FRENCHMAN LURCHES TOWARDS COFFIN AND MICHAEL WITH HIS BAYONET RAISED -- MICHAEL MOVES QUICKLY, AVOIDING THE BAYONET, AND BURIES COFFIN'S KNIFE IN THE MAN'S CHEST, KILLING HIM.

A beat. Michael realizes what he has done.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I killed him --

COFFIN

You had no choice, son --

ENGLISH SOLIDER (O.S.)

That's the last of them!

A HAND TAKES MICHAEL BY THE SHOULDER AND TURNS HIM AROUND TO FACE -- Chesterfield.

MICHAEL

Captain Chesterfield?

Michael looks around and realizes that a small number of English soldiers have successfully thwarted the larger number of Frontiersmen.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

It's a good thing you showed up --

He tries to get up but CHESTERFIELD KICKS HIM IN THE CHEST AND MICHAEL FALLS BACK DOWN.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

What the hell was that for?!?

CHESTERFIELD GRABS COFFIN AND LIFTS HIM TO HIS FEET BY THE NECK.

CHESTERFIELD

I ask the questions. Why were you attacked by those filthy dogs?

Coffin straightens his robe, regaining his composure.

COFFIN

Seems we're off on a bit of the wrong foot. Captain Chesterfield, is it? I'm Father James Coffin --

CHESTERFIELD

I know who you are. Answer my question.

COFFIN

Ah -- a bit of a misunderstanding.

CHESTERFIELD STICKS HIS BLADE UNDER COFFIN'S THROAT.

COFFIN (CONT'D)

Seems the French have a bounty on me, some ridiculous allegations about stolen goods. That wretch Xavier and his men were trying to cash in --

Michael scowls at Coffin.

CHESTERFIELD

So what are you doing with the Irish boy?

COFFIN

Well --

Michael jumps to his feet.

MICHAEL

He's my guide.

Coffin has a wave of panic -- he's caught.

COFFIN

Yes, well, it's all been very chaotic --

Chesterfield scans Coffin with an appraising look and smiles.

CHESTERFIELD

You haven't an honest bone in your body, Priest.

Coffin attempts a smoke screen.

COFFIN

Yes, well, it's true that God works in mysterious ways, but one mustn't blame the messenger --

CHESTERFIELD

(to Michael)

You're penniless and lost out here. I'm taking you back to Lord Baker.

MICHAEL

I was trying to get to Harp!

COFFIN

He -- we -- really were.

CHESTERFIELD

Make camp for the night. And don't
let these two out of your sights.

Chesterfield gets in Michael's face.

CHESTERFIELD (CONT'D)

Such a pity that you couldn't save
that poor little girl of yours --

Off Michael --

41 EXT. RIVERBANK - DUSK

Chesterfield's men tend to the FIRE as Michael and Coffin
look on.

Chesterfield walks down to the river's edge and begins to
URINATE into the river. Michael looks over to Coffin --
Coffin sits glassy-eyed, weary from the travel and lost in
his own thoughts.

Michael looks back at Chesterfield when -- TIME SEEMS TO
SLOW DOWN as Michael looks up to see a FEMALE FIGURE glide
from the bushes towards Chesterfield. Michael is paralyzed
as he watches the FEMALE FIGURE REACH CHESTERFIELD WITH TWO
BRISK STRIDES.

AND IN AN INSTANTANEOUS, ALMOST ELEGANT, ASSAULT, SHE STRIKES
A CLUB AGAINST CHESTERFIELD'S HEAD, IMMEDIATELY DROPPING
HIM, FACE-FIRST, INTO THE RIVER.

OVER MICHAEL'S SHOULDER --

A MÉTIS HUNTER AND A FEW SCOTTISH FRONTIERSMAN USE ENGLISH
BAYONET BLADES TO SLIT THE THROATS OF CHESTERFIELD'S MEN.

COFFIN

Oh dear Mother of Mary, we are in
the fire now.

Coffin drops to the ground, DRAWING A CROSS over his chest
and KISSING THE CRUCIFIX that hangs around his neck.

THE FEMALE FIGURE TURNS TOWARDS MICHAEL -- SOKANON (30),
WHOSE FACE IS COMPLETELY PAINTED IN OJIBWE-INFLUENCED WAR
PAINT, WALKS DIRECTLY TOWARDS MICHAEL. She is a lean,
statuesque hunter and warrior who is both beautiful and
terrifying to Michael.

Michael stares at Sokanon, speechless. Coffin begins to
MUMBLE sentences of a prayer.

COFFIN (CONT'D)

Deliver me, Lord, of all people,
your loyal shepherd in this time of
great peril --

Sokanon approaches, with BLOODIED CLUB in hand --

SOKANON

Follow me.

COFFIN

No, no, no, no!

MICHAEL

Who are you?

COFFIN

We can't go, Michael!

The other Métis Hunter and Hired Gun walk up behind Michael and Coffin.

SOKANON

Come with me now.

Without waiting, Sokanon turns and disappears into the forest. Michael turns to see Hired Gun standing behind him. He gestures for Michael to follow Sokanon.

OFF MICHAEL -- WHAT THE FUCK IS GOING ON?!

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

42 EXT. FOREST - DUSK

Michael and Coffin argue as Michael follows Sokanon through the forest. They are trailed by HARP'S MEN.

COFFIN

I've seen men like this before, they are ruthless. They take what they want, they cannot be trusted.

MICHAEL

Then you both have something in common -- and we have no choice but to follow. Did you see what she did to Chesterfield? Did you see what those men did to the other soldiers?!

COFFIN

I was too busy fearing what they might do to us --

Michael follows Sokanon. Coffin reluctantly drags himself behind Michael.

The group picks up and pushes onward through the wilderness.

MONTAGE TO SHOW PASSING OF DAYS:

SOKANON, NOW A HUNDRED FEET OR MORE AHEAD OF THEM ON THE TRAIL, STOPS AT A CREEK AND STANDS ON A STONE IN THE RIVER. SHE PAUSES, LOOKS BACK AT MICHAEL. HE STOPS IN HIS TRACKS. SHE STANDS, SILENTLY, A PERFECT LINK TO AN UNKNOWN PAST AND, IN THE SAME MOMENT, THE MOST MODERN WOMAN MICHAEL HAS EVER SEEN. SHE STEPS OFF THE ROCK, OUT OF HIS SIGHT. HE PURSUES, TERRIFIED AND MESMERIZED.

THEY TREK OVER BREATHTAKING LANDSCAPE. MICHAEL CLOCKS UNIQUE QUALITIES OF THE LAND, MEMORIZING WHERE HE IS GOING.

THEY CANOE ON A VAST RIVER, SO STILL THEIR REFLECTION A PERFECT MIRROR.

THEY MOVE THROUGH AN EXQUISITE FOREST TRAIL. MICHAEL SUBTLY TAKES NOTE OF LANDMARKS. COFFIN STEPS TOWARDS THE FOREST'S EDGE, CONSIDERING ATTEMPTING AN ESCAPE -- UNTIL A MÉTIS WARRIOR STEPS UP BEHIND HIM. COFFIN HURRIES BACK TO MICHAEL AS THE GROUP KEEPS MOVING.

THEY WALK ALONG A MOUNTAIN RIDGE. MICHAEL STOPS BRIEFLY AS HE SEES A LARGE ENCAMPMENT AT THE RIVER BEND BELOW.

END MONTAGE.

43 EXT. HARP'S CAMP - DAY

Sokanon, Michael and Coffin round a bend and they see --

THE LARGE CAMP. FIRES BURN AS ANIMAL HIDES ARE STRETCHED.

HARP'S MEN ARE MÉTIS, AND DRESS IN A MIX OF CLOTHING THAT BORROWS FROM THEIR EUROPEAN AND NATIVE ANCESTRY. PRACTICAL FRONTIERSMEN BOOTS AND PANTS ARE OFTEN DECORATED WITH FEATHERS AND CREE-INFLUENCED AND INSPIRED NATIVE DRESS.

OTHER MEMBERS OF HARP'S MEN INCLUDE EUROPEAN (SCOTTISH) FRONTIERSMEN, GUNS FOR HIRE. THEY GATHER IN CLUSTERS, SHARPENING TOOLS AND EATING MEAT.

COFFIN

This is a far worse place than I
have ever seen --

The Hunters PUSH the men forward.

MICHAEL SEES -- A SILHOUETTED MAN CLAD IN A WOLF-HIDE STANDING BY THE FIRE, IN THE PROCESS OF SKINNING A DEER. THE MAN TAKES THE DEER'S HEART AND HANDS IT TO ANOTHER HUNTER, COVERED IN BLOOD LIKE A BUTCHER. HARP TURNS TO MICHAEL --

Michael is stricken with fear.

Sokanon approaches Harp and speaks to him in A NATIVE TONGUE.

Harp looks over his shoulder, then walks toward Michael.
Coffin stands several feet behind him.

COFFIN (CONT'D)

(to Michael)

I've done my work, Michael, brought
you to the interior. My job here is
done. If we survive this, you should
know that I expect full payment, and
a little extra for my trouble.

Michael hesitates, looks at Coffin, then at Sokanon --

HARP

What were you doing with English
soldiers?

Coffin takes a few steps back.

COFFIN

I had nothing to do with those hateful
pigs, their leader threatened to
kill me. I just want to be paid per
my contract with young Michael here,
and I'll be on my way.

HARP

You're not going anywhere, Priest.

MICHAEL

The soldiers found us wandering the wilderness, lost. They were going to bring us back to the fort.

Coffin starts to try and back away, but Sokanon STOPS him.

HARP

And why were you wandering in the wilderness?

MICHAEL

I am looking for a man -- Declan Harp.

Harp's men look at him. Michael picks up on this.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You're him --

HARP

What's your name?

MICHAEL

Michael Smyth.

Harp stares intensely.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

(lying)

I wanted to meet you. I want to make my fortune in the fur trade and I hear you're the man to help me do it.

Harp sees through the lie.

HARP

You'll have to do better than that, lad. Why are you with this... Priest?

MICHAEL

I hired him as my guide.

Coffin, desperate, tries another tactic.

COFFIN

Mr. Harp, I am man of many contacts. Many of them are great suppliers of fur. I could easily connect you to them, upon my return to civilization, of course.

The conversation is interrupted by SHOUTING. A GROUP OF HARP'S MEN RETURN TO THE CAMP, and ONE POINTS TO COFFIN while he speaks to DIMANCHE (50's) a tall, broad-chested Métis hunter. DIMANCHE RUSHES TOWARDS COFFIN, SHOUTING WITH HIS HATCHET IN HAND.

Dimanche is stopped by Harp.

DIMANCHE

He has to die! He was at Green Rock.

MICHAEL

What's going on?

COFFIN

No, no. I was not. He is mistaken.

DIMANCHE

He brought the disease --

COFFIN

No. That was not me. He's lying!

Harp clocks Coffin's accusation.

HARP

Dimanche has never told a lie in his life.

Dimanche and the Hunters walk over briskly. Coffin turns desperate. He DRAWS A CRUCIFIX IN THE AIR over Harp.

COFFIN

Harp -- I am a man of divine communion, keeping me in your company will put God on your side! I can be of great value to you! Many groups prefer trading with those that have a man of God among them!

HARP

You have nothing of value to me, Priest.

THEY GRAB COFFIN AND BEGIN DRAGGING HIM AWAY.

MICHAEL

No, no, no. Wait!

Michael tries to stop them.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You can't just kill him!

Sokanon watches the exchange. Remains calm. Everything calls for her to do something, to take a side or make a move, but she does nothing.

DIMANCHE DRAGS COFFIN ALONG. MICHAEL RUNS OVER AND GRABS HIS ARM.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

I won't let you kill him.

HARP GRABS MICHAEL BY THE FACE, SMEARING BLOOD ALL OVER HIM, AND SHOVES HIM TO THE GROUND.

HARP

Take them both.

HARP MOTIONS TO SAMOSET (40s), a hunter and warrior with an intense, warm gaze. HE IS DRESSED IN FRONTIERSMEN CLOTHING, BUT HIS FACE AND HEAD ARE DRESSED IN TRADITIONAL PAINT AND FEATHERS.

DIMANCHE AND HARP'S MEN DRAG COFFIN DOWN TOWARDS THE RIVER.

SAMOSET GRABS MICHAEL AND STARTS TO DRAG HIM, TOO.

MICHAEL

I have information on Lord Baker!

Harp RAISES HIS HAND to Samoset, gesturing for him to wait. He turns to Dimanche --

HARP

Take the Priest to the river and kill him, but leave the boy.

DIMANCHE DRAGS THE CURSING AND YELLING COFFIN AWAY.

Michael is speechless.

Harp turns to him.

HARP (CONT'D)

Alright, boy. You found me. You have my attention. Tell me about Baker or join the Priest --

OFF MICHAEL --

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FIVE

END OF THE FIRST EPISODE