TURN

Written By

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based on
"Washington's Spies"
by
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ACT ONE

EXT. CONNECTICUT COAST - **AERIAL** - DAY

Skimming the waves of the Atlantic toward a sandy beach, a green coastline. Rising up above the trees to look out across raw, untouched land that stretches for miles.

AMERICA before it was ours.

We FLY over forest, over farmland. Massive, GREEN, sun-kissed. Bursting at the seams with promise.

EXT. CLEARING - **AERIAL** - DAY

We GLIDE above the treeline, like God inspecting his good work. The FOREST drops away to reveal a pastoral clearing. Green grass turned Rust Red with spilled blood.

23 DEAD MEN lie scattered below a HILL. We slow our flight and circle the massacre.

CLOSER - the dead are soldiers in blue coats, light breeches, knee-high black boots with silver spurs. CONTINENTALS.

Morning FOG mixes with powder smoke still fresh in the air. A KILLER moves along the fallen like a grim reaper, shoving a bayonet in each one to make sure they're dead. He's dressed in a green double breasted coat with dark brown leggings. A SCOTS BONNET on his head. A QUEEN'S RANGER.

STAB. On to the next. STAB. That body groans. STAB STAB. On to the next. Like raking leaves.

RACK FOCUS to a corpse ten feet away. Its eye OPENS. Sees the Ranger coming this way. STAB. Walk. STAB. Walk.

Face still pressed to the ground, the eye looks up to the HILL, where figures of MEN sing in the smoke of cook-fires.

The eye closes, playing possum. The RANGER STABS the corpse next to us. Then walks to us. Moccasins on his feet. Looming over, he casts a shadow. Raises his bayonet. STABS-

As this corpse TURNS - the bayonet drives into the earth, as ANOTHER BLADE DRIVES UP INTO THE RANGER'S GROIN. He doubles over, wheezing in shock, coming face to face with BENJAMIN TALLMADGE, 23, very much alive. Ben pulls his bayonet free and JAMS IT through the Ranger's chin, piercing his vocal cords. Blood runs out his mouth and down Ben's wrist.

The Ranger hits the ground next to Ben, who stays down. Ben begins to wrestle his own blue coat off, and grab for the Ranger's green one. He looks quickly back to...

ATOP THE HILL

Where FORTY RANGERS clad in Green and Brown relax after the battle, paying no attention to the clearing below. Not a man among them has been wounded in the skirmish. In addition to their muskets, they carry TOMAHAWKS and KNIVES.

CAMERA finds their leader, ROBERT ROGERS, 43, weathered muscle over an alchoholic's gut, eyes that you never want to look directly into. The ultimate hunter/killer. He lights a steatite pipe, listens to his men singing songs.

A rough-looking Ranger walks to slope, looks down the hill.

The man among the dead is walking to the treeline.

RANGER
Welsh! Welsh!

IN THE CLEARING

Ben freezes, his back to the hill. He's wearing the Green Coat and the Scots Bonnet and carrying the bayoneted rifle. He turns slightly to regard the figure atop the rise.

RANGER (CONT'D)
You done yet?!

Ben makes the universal gesture for "I'm hurrying already, shut up!" He looks down at a fallen comrade, grits his teeth and STABS the already-dead body to ensure his cover.

Walks to the next. A 20 year old boy with lifeless eyes. Ben STABS him in the chest, tears in his own eyes. Moves on to the next - STAB - working his way to the treeline through a hell he will never forget...

ATOP THE HILL

The rough-looking Ranger walks back to the cook fire.

RANGER (CONT'D)
Fool starts from the center and works his way out. Takes double the time.

Chuckles around the camp. Robert Rogers does not smile.

He puts his pipe in his mouth and walks to the slope.

Sees a figure in the fog, heading for the treeline.

Rogers watches him. Then WHISTLES loudly. Ben turns back. Rogers knows. He shoulders his musket, pipe still in mouth.

Ben RUNS, enters the forest. Rogers FIRES. His men TURN. The round whistles through the branches and CLIPS Ben on the shoulder (even at this range). Ben stumbles, keeps running.

RANGERS stream down the hill past Rogers as he reloads.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Ben RUNS through the forest, breathing hard, branches whipping at him as the foreground blurs and the sound drops away...

BEN (V.O.)
They were waiting for us. They knew where we'd be.

GENERAL SCOTT (V.O.)
They couldn't have known.

BEN (V.O.)
They were <u>waiting</u>.

CUT TO:

INT. COLONIAL HOUSE - NIGHT

Ben, his shoulder wound dressed, but dirt still on his face, stares defiantly at his superior, GENERAL CHARLES SCOTT, territorial and traditional.

Scott sits across a simple dining room table converted into a desk. He does not react to Ben's emotion.

GENERAL SCOTT
How.

BEN
These weren't Tory Militia, or Regulars.

With his good arm, Ben rustles up the Green Jacket and Bonnet and dumps them on the table.

BEN (CONT'D)
They were Queen's Rangers, and this was an ambush planned in advance.

Scott feels the wool bonnet. Disturbed by this revelation.

GENERAL SCOTT
Robert Rogers?
(Ben nods)
It was luck, then. Bad luck, that you ran into him.

BEN
Luck had nothing to do with it.

Beat. General Scott begins to fill out a commission.

GENERAL SCOTT
After you see to that shoulder, I'll assign you new men, new horses.

BEN
No, Sir.

Scott stops his quill, looks at Ben.

GENERAL SCOTT
You're resigning your commission?

BEN
I won't head another reconnaisance south of Westchester. I have no wish to quietly lead more men to their death.

GENERAL SCOTT
You think that's my aim?

Scott angrily draws out a letter from his drawer. Reads it.

GENERAL SCOTT (CONT'D)
"I earnestly entreat you to spare no effort to come at early and true intelligence regarding British troop strength, supply levels, naval reinforcements..."
(slams letter down)
These are *orders*. From General Washington.

BEN
The truth on the ground is that scouting runs are suicide. We need to do better. Sir.

GENERAL SCOTT
Define better.

BEN
All I need to begin with is one man, to serve as courier between myself, and a friend in New York.

GENERAL SCOTT
New York. After Washington has burned it to the ground upon our retreat.

The General scoffs. This kid doesn't know what he's talking about.

GENERAL SCOTT (CONT'D)
Captain Tallmadge... you want the truth on the ground?

EXT. WOODHULL FARM - DAY

GENERAL SCOTT (V.O.)
You have no friends in New York.

The SUN RISES over well tended fields of green. A FARMHOUSE sits in the distance, chimney smoking. Cool blue dawn.

SUPER: INK SCRIPT writes across the bottom left of the screen:

Setauket, Long Island

Along the planted rows of cabbage and kale, ABRAHAM WOODHULL, 22, plays with his one-year-old son, THOMAS. Abe is a tall and lean farmer, intelligent and humble.

Right now he's on all fours, just like Thomas, who hasn't learned to walk yet. Abe stands up, acting a bit wobbly, and takes a few steps, hoping Thomas will do the same.

ABE
See? It's easy. You just... walk.

Thomas stares at him, transfixed. Then laughs.

THOMAS
Jus' ba!

Abe patiently smiles, properly chastised for his efforts.

INT. WOODHULL HOUSE - DAY

MARY WOODHULL, 20, cooks breakfast. A BRITISH REDCOAT walks into the kitchen, fastening the buttons on his jacket. He nods to Mary, respectfully. She returns the nod, which is directed at an iron urn. The Regular pours his own coffee.

They maintain the unique distance, posture, and tension of someone living in your house who is neither friend nor family.

EXT. WOODHULL FARM - DAY

The Redcoat, BAKER, exits the house and walks through the field with his rifle and haversack, on his way to duty.

Abe's smile fades. He picks Thomas up into his arms.

Thomas happily CALLS OUT to the Redcoat, and waves to him.

The Soldier waves back. As he disappears around the bend, Abe sets Thomas back down, to get him to try again.

Mary walks up, wiping her hands on her apron.

MARY
Sure you want him to walk so soon?

THOMAS
He's almost a year old.

MARY
Faster he learns to walk, the sooner he learns to march.

ABE
Good point.

Abe lies back on the soil next to Thomas.

ABE (CONT'D)
You're a smart one, Thomas. Just like your Ma'.

Thomas happily crawls on to Abe. Mary smiles at her men.

EXT. WOODHULL FARM - LATER

Later in the day, Woodhull tends to his crop, along with two AFRICAN SLAVES.

One of the Slaves shows him a head of cabbage that is being devoured by MAGGOTS. Abe, worried, looks out over the field - about half of his crop seems affected.

Abe nods, ruefully accepting this fate, and then explosively HURLS the head of cabbage as far as he can throw it.

EXT. SETAUKET - EVENING

A small coastal town halfway out on Long Island. Abe drives his wagon past the central feature - a Presbyterian Church converted into a military barrack. The graveyard has been overturned and the building fortified with an earthwork topped with sharpened wooden poles, built to withstand a frontal attack. Swivel guns are set in the church windows. REDCOATS DRILL in a march outside.

EXT. ROE TAVERN - EVENING

Abe brings his wagon to a stop outside of a white two story house converted into a tavern. He can hear laughing inside.

Abe takes a deep breath, steels himself for what he must do.

INT. ROE TAVERN - EVENING

Several rough tables are set up. A staircase leads to the second floor, where there are rooms to let.

BRITISH REGULARS mix with TORY TOWNIES at one table, getting drunk and sharing stories. One of the Tory farmers, WILL ROBESON, walks away laughing and approaches the kitchen where the drinks are served. Waiting there is SELAH STRONG, 30, quick tempered and proud, the owner of this Tavern.

ROBESON
Mr. Strong. Four ales, please.

SELAH
Four shillings, please.

ROBESON
Be a good man and put it on Captain Joyce's account.

He nods to the Redcoats behind him. CAPTAIN JOYCE is rosy cheeked and holding court. Selah watches them, silent.

Robeson grins and takes the now free drinks, singing his way back to distribute them. Selah glares after him.

Abe enters the tavern. Eyes turn to him. He removes his tricorne hat and nods politely to the guests.

He makes eye contact with Selah, who registers surprise and suspicion at Abe's presence. Abe crosses to him, hat off.

ABE
Good evening, Selah.

SELAH
I thought you didn't drink.

Abe slides a burlap pouch across the bar. Selah, wary, peeks inside - it is filled with a mishmash of various currencies - British pound sterling, Spanish and Portuguese coins, German guineas.

SELAH (CONT'D)
What's this?

ABE
I said I would repay my debt.

SELAH
We're only halfway through the season...

ABE
This is only half of what I owe.
(beat)
And all that I can do for now.

Selah stares at Abe. The table of British bursts into laughter (at some other joke - they can't hear Abe). Selah ignores them, fixing his stare. Abe looks down.

ABE (CONT'D)
Harvest isn't coming in as I hoped.

SELAH
Loopers? Or Maggots?

ABE
I just need more time.

SELAH
(considering)
More time.
(as if it's a new concept)
More time. Why don't you just wait till next season? Perhaps by then Major Hewlett will have confiscated the rest of my plantation, and signed it over to your father. Then you could just... pay me back with my own cauliflower.

Before a stung Abe can respond...

ANNA (O.S.)
Abraham?

Both men turn. Descending the stairs is ANNA STRONG, 22, Selah's wife. Time seems to stop for Abe as Anna's radiant smile traps him where he stands. Selah looks frustrated.

ANNA (CONT'D)
To what do we owe the pleasure?

SELAH
(edged)
Abe and I were just discussing maggots.

ANNA
Maggots?

CAPTAIN JOYCE (O.S.)
Mrs. Strong! Here! Here!

The Redcoats and Robeson TOAST to Anna. She smiles and nods her hospitality, while under her smile she sweetly asides-

ANNA
I hear they've been dethroned as Setauket's reigning pests.
(louder, to Redcoats)
Your rooms are ready, Gentlemen!

Abe smiles at her, then catches Selah looking at him.

ABE
I should be off.

ANNA
Now, wait. We hardly see you anymore. How is Mary? And Thomas?

ABE
They're well, thank you. I...

ANNA
You should come for dinner. At our house. The three of you.

SELAH
Anna-

ABE
That wouldn't feel right.

Anna's smile retreats to quite alarm, as if she fears what Abe will say next.

ABE (CONT'D)
I owe your husband a great deal of money, and would be shamed for you to cook for us while I'm in arrears.

Now it's Selah's turn to look surprised - didn't expect Abe to admit that. Anna turns to her husband, taken aback.

ANNA
I didn't know about this.

SELAH
It's a private matter.

ROBESON cries out, standing on his chair, drunk.

ROBESON
A poem! I have written.
(MORE)

ROBESON (CONT'D)
I should like to dedicate it to the brave Patriot commander, on the eve of his retreat, pardon me, his *charge* into northern New Jersey.

The British laugh. Selah fumes. Robeson reads from a paper.

ROBESON (CONT'D)
"Where are the rebels now? Pulled back from the line, a most propitious sign, for Mrs. Washington, that sow!"

Selah stares at Robeson, furious. The Redcoats laugh, all except one. LT. SIMCOE, black hair, dark eyes, quietly stares at Anna. She shakes off the chill, looks away.

ROBESON (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
"Alas, before his return, dear Georgie must discern, in what place will he sheathe his saber; I'll dare to opine, that many months from now - *nine*, the evidence will be found in another's 'labor'; Now a whole army could be made from this bastardized Kingdom. But surely you must all know; that the joke of it all, is that <u>his</u> scabbard calls for any puff's sword he can stow!"

The Redcoats pound the table. JOYCE laughing the hardest.

SELAH
(dark, to Anna)
Go upstairs.

ANNA
Selah, don't...

Selah crosses the tavern to Robeson.

SELAH
Get out, Robeson.

ROBESON
I'm sorry, did I offend your sensitive liberal twat?

SELAH
You offended my wife. And you offend me. Now leave.

CAPTAIN JOYCE
Come off it, man. We're celebrating your King's victory in New York.

Robeson jumps down from his chair, gets in Selah's face. Abe tenses, steps in front of Anna.

ROBESON
Though we understand how that might upset a certain *delegate* to the Provincial Congress-

SELAH
Drunk.

ROBESON
Whig.

His breath wafts into Selah's nose. Selah grabs his wrist, crumpling the poem. Robeson swings with his beer clutching hand and Selah bats it away. The beer SPILLS onto Joyce's lap, staining his breeches. Joyce goes red in the face.

The Redcoats chuckle, taunting their comrade.

SIMCOE
(in an official voice)
Uniform soiled: twenty lashings.

Joyce EXPLODES out of his chair and grabs Selah by the collar, pulls him close. Selah SHOVES Joyce with BOTH HANDS. He falls back onto the table.

Robeson swats at Selah who turns and PUNCHES his teeth out.

The table stands. Joyce flies into a rage at Selah, charging him. He knocks Selah off his feet. Selah lands hard.

Joyce draws his CAVALRY SABER. It sings out of his sheathe with the sound of no turning back. Anna SCREAMS.

Joyce rears his elbow back to run Selah through. Just then he is GRABBED from behind by ABE.

ABE
He's down! He surrenders!

Abe pins his arms back and Joyce grunts in pain, dropping his sword. Captain Joyce struggles but Abe pulls his arms tighter, draws him away from the fight. He backs right into a PISTOL pointed at the back of his head. Held by SIMCOE.

SIMCOE
Release the Captain. Please.

Abe does. Captain Joyce turns and gut-punches Abe. Simcoe looks disappointed - he might've blown Abe's head off if given another moment. Joyce throws Abe to the ground.

Abe locks eyes with Selah. Joyce begins to kick the shit out of Abe as the Redcoats and Robeson CHEER AND ROAR.

CUT TO:

EXT. SETAUKET - DAY

A noose is thrown over a tree, and the rope is fastened to the trunk by Will Robeson and three other TORY TOWNIES.

Behind them, a horse and RIDER canters into the village green. The rider wears a black coat, is a stern looking man in his forties, with deep set eyes and the bearing of a Dean or Professor. This is JUDGE MAGISTRATE RICHARD WOODHULL.

The Tories stop what they are doing and nod respectfully to the Judge. Richard fixes Robeson with a withering stare. He continues on toward the church.

Richard approaches the REDCOAT GUARDS at the church doors.

RICHARD
Is the Major in?

One of the Guards nods, but gives a signal to wait. We recognize this man as the one who was billeted at Abe's farm.

INT. SETAUKET CHURCH - DAY

The pews and pulpit have been torn out so that horses may be stabled inside. MAJOR HEWLETT himself is calmly disciplining Captain Joyce, who stands at rigid attention. Hewlett is 37, confident in his intellectual superiority.

HEWLETT
Law. Order. Authority. We are the *beacon* of authority in these colonies, Captain. And we bear the burden of that authority.

CAPTAIN JOYCE
Yes, Sir.

HEWLETT
"Because authority, thought it err like others, hath yet a kind of medicine in itself that skins the vice o' the top." Do you understand?

CAPTAIN JOYCE
(not at all)
Yes, Sir.

Hewlett sagely nods. Self-satisfied. Then, briskly:

HEWLETT
Conduct Unbecoming. One hundred lashes. Drunk and Disorderly. One hundred and fifty lashes. Colonel Price shall administer the discipline. Dismissed.

Joyce looks straight ahead, imagining the public humiliation.

EXT. SETAUKET CHURCH - DAY

Joyce exits quickly past Judge Woodhull, who is allowed entry.

INT. SETAUKET CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Major Hewlett is attending to his dappled gray horse as Richard enters and removes his hat.

HEWLETT
I knew you would come.

RICHARD
I just wished to offer my assistance, for whatever it may be worth.

HEWLETT
This is not a matter for the provincial court. One of my men was assaulted, and this must be redressed.

RICHARD
Without question. But by the look of Captain Joyce just now, I can tell there's more to the story. I thought I might be able to shed light on a few facts, in the service of clarity.

Hewlett respects Richard, considers him a near equal. He also knows why Richard is truly here. He sighs.

HEWLETT
You weren't there, Richard.

RICHARD
True. Direct evidence and testimony matter most. But I thought I should... disclose what I know no matter how circumstantial or embarrassing it might be.

HEWLETT
Embarrassing?

RICHARD
Well, it involves some social history of Setauket. Provincial ephemera, and the passions of young people. Probably worthless--

HEWLETT
What history?

Richard, a subtle manipulator, hesitates before moving on, letting Hewlett get more and more hooked on his lead.

RICHARD
Anna Strong, the wife of Selah Strong, was engaged three years ago to marry Abraham Woodhull, when her name was Anna Smith...

HEWLETT
You mean Abraham your <u>son</u>.

RICHARD
(moving right past it)
Yes they were childhood friends, you see. And the Smiths were also good family friends. Until Joseph Smith's patriot politics drove us to disagreement. Anna, unfortunately, took her father's views to heart, and so broke the heart of my son, who was raised to love the law above all else.
(beat)
"Love will not be spurred to what it loathes."

Richard waits. Too far with the Shakespeare?

HEWLETT
So then why would he rush to the aid of her husband? A suspected patriot?

Richard sucks his tooth. This is the embarrassing part.

RICHARD
Abraham has a... dreamer's heart. A romantic heart. His mother's heart, to be honest. And he keeps room in there for Anna, in spite of her betrayal.

Hewlett nods, finding kinship with that kind of character.

HEWLETT
Chivalry.

RICHARD
The passions of young people.

HEWLETT
Alas, that love, so gentle in his view...

RICHARD
...Should be so tyrannous and rough in proof.

HEWLETT
...Should be so tyrannous and rough in proof.

Not too far. Just right.

INT. ROE TAVERN - CELLAR - NIGHT

Abe and Selah are bound with rope, under guard.

The cellar door opens and boots stomp down. It is SIMCOE.

SIMCOE
Your room is ready.

EXT. ROE TAVERN - NIGHT

Abe and Selah are marched out by four Tories. Suddenly, Abe is stopped, and Selah is pushed on.

Simcoe pulls a knife and walks behind Abe.

ABE
What are you doing?

Simcoe cuts through his binds. Abe spins and backs away, but Simcoe just ignores him and follows the men marching Selah off into the night.

ABE (CONT'D)
Where are you taking him?

SIMCOE
It's past curfew. Run home to your father.

Selah looks back at Abe with a terrified glance as he is pushed away into darkness.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. WOODHULL FARM - NIGHT

Abe walks home under the moonlight. Candles flicker in the windows of his house. He holds his bruised rib cage.

Rain starts to patter on the cabbage leaves.

INT. WOODHULL HOUSE - NIGHT

Abe's wife Mary and his father, Richard, turn as Abe enters. Rain begins to hit the window panes.

MARY
Let me see you.

Mary stands and quickly crosses to Abe. She impatiently checks Abe's damage as if inspecting a sick horse.

ABE
I'm alright.
(to Richard)
What are you doing here?

RICHARD
I heard you'd been arrested....

ABE
How did you find out?

RICHARD
Mary sent for me. Should I not have come?

Abe grunts in pain as Mary presses on his ribs.

ABE
I said I'm fine.

MARY
I don't know how you're going to work in this condition.

ABE
(to Richard)
You didn't speak to anyone? Major Hewlett, perhaps?

RICHARD
I spoke to your *wife*. She told me about the problem with your crop, and the way you chose to solve it.

Abe looks at Mary, angry. She returns his look, righteous and unapologetic. Abe needs to sit down.

He sags into a chair. Mary quickly goes to the stove and takes off a plate of warm food and puts it on Abe's lap.

MARY
I warned you about Selah Strong. He's choleric by nature.

ABE
He was defending Anna. He was defending his wife.

MARY
I don't know why a woman would be in that house, at that hour...

ABE
The Strongs own the Tavern. It's her tavern.

Mary makes a shrug, judgmental, infuriating to Abe.

ABE (CONT'D)
It's <u>her</u> Tavern.

RICHARD
Abraham. You should have come to me, if you needed specie or credit.

ABE
'Neither a lender nor borrower be.'

RICHARD
I wouldn't have lended. You would have worked. I know butchers on York Island who'd buy my hogs at double the market value. All I need is someone to run the product into the city for me...

ABE
That's your farm. This is mine.
(beat, softens)
Besides... I already owe you everything.

Richard notes his powers of deflection have been passed on.

THOMAS (O.S.)
Da da?

Thomas, hearing Abe's voice, has crawled into the room.

Richard smiles, delighted to see his Grandson awake.

RICHARD
You've been paying me back with interest.

Mary picks Thomas up, who calls for his Dad. Richard moves to hold him. Mary hands him over. Thomas WAILS in his Grandfather's arms, reaches for Abe.

Abe stands with a pained grimace.

ABE
Here.

He takes Thomas from his father. Thomas throws his arms around Abe's neck, holds him tight.

MARY
He must've heard your voice. He was asking for you earlier.

ABE
Bed time. Bed bed time.

Thomas groans, having gotten what he wanted, transfers back to Mary, who exits to put him down, leaving the other father and son to face each other.

ABE (CONT'D)
Tell me what's happening with Selah Strong.

Richard sighs.

RICHARD
Insurrection is a serious charge.

ABE
Even without evidence...

RICHARD
More serious is assault on an Officer. That is a matter for military court, I won't be involved.

ABE
Assault?! The Captain was drunk. He attacked Selah.

RICHARD
There were witnesses.

ABE
I witnessed it. And I'll testify.

RICHARD
No.

ABE
No?

RICHARD
No. You will stay as far away from this as you can.

ABE
The hell I will.

RICHARD
I've already come to an understanding with Hewlett.

There it is. As Abe suspected.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
They want Strong. They'll overlook your involvement.

ABE
What understanding?

EXT. SETAUKET - NIGHT

RAIN POURS DOWN. Selah is locked into a wooden stockade, shivering to the bone.

He hears a faint splash behind him. Someone coming.

SELAH
Who is that? Who's there?

Abe appears, clothes soaked. He kneels before Selah.

SELAH (CONT'D)
What are you doing? There's a sentry-

ABE
He's staying dry. Listen well, we don't have much time. They are planning to charge you with insurrection.

SELAH
I struck a Redcoat. That's all that matters.

ABE
Not if you plead guilty to the first charge.

(MORE)

ABE (CONT'D)
Everyone knows Joyce is a brute. They don't want to hang anyone in Setauket. Not in "secure territory." They'll send you instead to the Jersey-

SELAH
The Prison Ship?

ABE
Where you have friends. You know others who have gone, and others who have *gotten out*. If you bribe the right person-

SELAH
Is that why you came here? To tell me this?

ABE
I came to warn you.

SELAH
And to have me forgive your debt, no doubt.

ABE
I will repay my debt. In full.

SELAH
How? How when your crop is half dead.

ABE
The London Trade. Cabbage is in high demand.

SELAH
On the black market?!

ABE
I've already made arrangements with someone I trust.

SELAH
It's too much risk.

ABE
Not your concern.

SELAH
Yes, it is. I'll make you a new deal.
(swallows)
Take care of her for me.

ABE
What?

SELAH
Take care of Anna when I'm gone, and I'll forgive you your-

ABE
I don't need your forgiveness.

Silence. The rain pours.

ABE (CONT'D)
You are her husband, Selah. And I'm going to repay my debt.

Abe walks off. Selah hangs his head.

EXT. WOODHULL FARM - NIGHT

The rain has ceased. Water drips off cabbage leaves.

A sawing sound brings us to Abe, who cuts cabbage heads from their stalks with a harvest knife. He inspects the blade in the moonlight, breathing through his nose.

We begin to hear the chorus of a SPIRITUAL HYMN.

EXT. WOODHULL HOUSE - DAY

Mary's eyes flutter open. She sits up in her bed. Thomas sleeps beside her.

Abe's side of the bed is empty. The AFRICAN HYMN continues.

EXT. COVE - DAY

Abe pushes out in a boat across the Long Island Sound. It is a beautiful morning. His boat is stuffed with cabbage under a tarp. The AFRICAN HYMN continues.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

AFRICANS work the field. JORDAN, 25, walks up slowly to something in the tall grass.

As soon as he gets a good look, he reacts and runs.

Captain Joyce lies in the grass, eyes staring at nothing. His throat is cut and maggots swarm around the wound.

The African Hymn swells to an apex as we...

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. BROOKLYN HARBOR - DAY

Several large WARSHIPS from the greatest naval power on Earth tilt like giants in the fog off the Sound. SUPER inks out:

Brooklyn Harbor, New York

On the dock, a trunk of money escorted by two Redcoats is inspected by Robert Rogers. He nods, and it's hefted by two Rangers up a gang-plank to the HMS VULTURE, an armed sloop.

One of the Redcoats whispers to Rogers, nods to a nearby alley. Rogers almost rolls his eyes, and struts over there. Tomahawk, powder horn and pistols rustling on his belt.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Rogers materializes from the fog, mud and blood clinging from his clothes.

A British Officer, MAJOR JOHN ANDRE, distractingly handsome in an immaculate uniform, waits patiently down the alley.

ROBERT ROGERS
This is all *very* secret.

JOHN ANDRE
This is war. You never know who's listening.

ROBERT ROGERS
Some intelligence for you, John?
(loud whisper)
England controls the Harbor. Bunch of blokes in red out there. Big Navy behind them.

JOHN ANDRE
Thank you. This is why you're worth every penny - no matter what General Clinton says.

Andre hands him a note.

ROBERT ROGERS
What's this?

JOHN ANDRE
A test.

ROBERT ROGERS
Not for me.

JOHN ANDRE
For my source within the rebel camp. It's the location of a secret store in Connecticut. A safehouse. We'd like you to give it the treatment you gave the Continental Dragoons.

Rogers hands the address back.

ROBERT ROGERS
Scraps. Feed it to your Regulars.

He turns to leave.

JOHN ANDRE
If the intelligence proves true, I can trust his word on targets with higher value. Like Washington.

Rogers considers this. Something personal there.

ROBERT ROGERS
Who is this mythical source of yours? Someone I know?

Andre is silent, enigmatic.

JOHN ANDRE
You won't do it?

ROBERT ROGERS
For double we will. Recompense for the last *test*.

JOHN ANDRE
Recompense? You lost one man.

ROBERT ROGERS
And a coat. And a bonnet.

No love lost between the Officer and the Mercenary.

EXT. CONNECTICUT INLET - DAY

Abe guides his little scow into a nondescript inlet. A WHALEBOAT, sort of like a reinforced canoe with a collapsible mast, is already "docked" on the shore. SUPER inks out:

Connecticut Coast

Abe splashes aground, drags his boat up. He whispers.

ABE
Caleb?... Caleb?

Nothing. Abe tries to whistle... which is cut off as he is roughly grabbed from behind, a KNIFE on his throat.

CALEB
Give us a kiss.

Abe struggles to get free, but he's being held by a much larger man. The man laughs, and releases Abe. Scrambling around, he sees CALEB BREWSTER, 25 - burly, hair slicked back by salt water. A permanent grin plastered on his face.

ABE
Never do that again.

CALEB
You always enjoyed a good laugh.

ABE
You don't know me that well, Brewster.

CALEB
I've known you your whole life, Woodhull! Never figured you for a black marketeer, though...

ABE
This is a one-time deal.

CALEB
Well, then let's see what we have.

He tears back the tarp on Abe's boat.

CALEB (CONT'D)
Cabbage!
(tears off a piece)
Mmm. Fresh. Heavily rationed. They'll pay top coin for this in the Bowery. All that fine china and no healthy greens to set on 'em.

ABE
That what you have? Fine China?

Abe gestures to Caleb's whaleboat cargo.

CALEB
Oh, ho. A challenge. Witness...
(pulls back his tarp)
Gloucester Cheese. Ceylon Tea. Cathay Silk, by way of London...

ABE
You said top coin, not top silk. My haul's worth twenty pounds sterling.

CALEB
That's funny, you don't look like King George. Do I look like King George?

ABE
There are other buyers...

CALEB
Ten.

ABE
I have a whole bushel!

CALEB
I can pay you double that in Continental Dollars.

ABE
And I'd be the only idiot to take it. Pounds, Caleb. Fifteen-

CALEB
Twelve. When did you get so *vicious*?

ABE
Twelve, and that silk.

Caleb tosses him the silk, counts out the money from a purse.

CALEB
Silk for the missus, eh? How are things back home?

ABE
Thomas is almost starting to walk.

They start loading cabbage into Caleb's boat.

CALEB
How old is he now?

ABE
It will be one year, next month.

CALEB
Is he bothered by all the new guests in town?

ABE
No.

CALEB
They still maintain a full garrison? In Tallmadge's old church?

Abe is silent.

CALEB (CONT'D)
How many stationed there?

ABE
I keep my eye to my crop.

CALEB
When you're not smuggling it.

ABE
This is a one-time deal.

CALEB
I'm just making talk. I miss our old stomping ground, is all. Don't like the idea of those bloody-backs stompin' on it.

ABE
They're no trouble.

Caleb watches Abe...

EXT. FIELD - DAY

The area around Joyce's body has become a crime scene of sorts. Major Hewlett stands by, supervising. An ARMY CHAPLAIN kneels over the body, administering last rites.

Richard Woodhull approaches Hewlett and Lieutentant Simcoe.

RICHARD
Jonathan Lewis is the owner of this field. Claims he heard nothing. He's loyal to the crown. I believe him.

Hewlett looks down at the corpse with disappointment.

HEWLETT
Captain Joyce led many successful raids, but had a reputation for brutality. He was an obvious target for assassination.

SIMCOE
Sir, don't you wonder if this may be linked to the incident at the Tavern?

RICHARD
Perhaps if Selah Strong was a suspect, but he was locked in the stockade all night. His wife, howev-

SIMCOE
I didn't ask you.
(to Hewlett)
What about the farmer, who was also there? Woodhull.

RICHARD
Another question may be, what was Captain Joyce doing out of his barrack in the middle of the night?

HEWLETT
Thank you, Judge, but this is a military matter. You may return to your duties.

Richard nods respectfully, fits his hat on his head and walks away. We TRACK WITH him, as he grows worried - knowing that Abe is nowhere to be found at the moment.

Hewlett turns to Simcoe.

HEWLETT (CONT'D)
Captain Simcoe, any suspicious persons are to be brought directly to me. Is that clear?

SIMCOE
Captain...?

HEWLETT
Unless you wish to remain Subaltern.
(nods to Joyce's corpse)
There is a vacancy.

SIMCOE
Yes, Sir.

Hewlett mounts his horse. Simcoe stares down at Joyce.

EXT. CONNECTICUT INLET - EVENING

Abe waits for nightfall, chewing on a piece of contraband cheese. He watches the sun dip behind the horizon.

Abe gets up and begins to unmoor his sailing scow.

EXT. LONG ISLAND SOUND - ABE'S SCHOONER - NIGHT

Abe runs the Sound, the only sound is the water splashing against his hull.

He spots a shape out on the water. Dark. Hulking. A SLOOP. Sails snapping in the night.

Abe swallows and turns his tiller slightly, tacking to the dark and silent shore.

The Sloop is moving the other direction. Hundreds of yards away. Passing like, well, ships in the night.

And then it is fully past him. Abe exhales.

And then it begins to turn. Shit.

Abe heads into the wind and trims the sail to try and catch some speed. But the bigger boat is gaining, quickly, aiming straight on his stern.

A sound on the wind... a yell... faint... Abe ignores it.

A SPARK from the Sloop. CRACK! A HOLE is punched in Abe's sail. It begins to luff like crazy.

The armed Sloop pulls up next to him, its hull knocking his with bullying confidence. A LANTERN on board backlights THREE MEN pointing muskets down at him.

ABE
I'm not armed!

MEN
Identify yourself.

ABE
Abraham Woodhull. From Setauket.

MEN
Nice night for a sail, Woodhull?

ABE
I thought so...

MEN
What's under the tarp.

Abe hesitates. Knows he is screwed. Fuck it.

ABE
Can I interest you gentlemen in a bolt of silk?

They throw him a rough rope.

MEN
Yer under arrest, by order of the Continental Congress. Charge is illegal trade.

Abe has run straight into the Continentals.

EXT. STRONG MANOR - DAY

The largest estate in town. A plantation surrounds a colonial manor house, which has been converted into soldier's barracks.

A REDCOAT rides his horse up the path to the manor.

EXT. STRONG MANOR - BACK LAWN - DAY

A giant black KETTLE boils with soap. Anna Strong pulls some soaking shirts out of it, doing laundry.

In a series of CUTS, she lays the shirts out on a long wooden table. She takes a washing stick (like a cricket bat) and begins to beat the laundry on the board. Anna is all business. No emotion.

What begins as a rhythmic beating becomes more intense as she pounds the stains out. She grits her teeth, pouring her anger into the task. THWACK THWACK THWACK THWACK.

We hear a voice from somewhere, but it's not clear. We are close on Anna's face, as she fights back tears while beating the hell out of Selah's clothes. THWACK THWACK THWACK.

SIMCOE (O.S.)
Mrs. Strong!

Anna turns, startled, to see SIMCOE standing there. She tries to catch her breath, bat the tear off her cheek.

SIMCOE (CONT'D)
Are you alright?

ANNA
I'm sorry, Lieutenant, I didn't hear you.

SIMCOE
Captain.
(off her look)
I've purchased Captain Joyce's commission, in the wake of his death.

ANNA
Death?

SIMCOE
His body was found this morning, on the Lewis property, with his throat slit.

Shock, confusion, and relief course through her in waves. Simcoe catches every note.

SIMCOE (CONT'D)
You haven't heard?

She sets the laundry bat down.

ANNA
I... I was here, in my bed. Where else would I be?

SIMCOE
Have you seen Abraham Woodhull?

ANNA
What? No... not since the tavern. Why are you asking me this?

SIMCOE
An officer in his majesty's army is dead, following an altercation with your husband and Mr. Woodhull, and Mr. Woodhull is nowhere to be found.

Anna stares at him, trying to process this. Selah gone to prison. Joyce murdered. Abe vanished. The implications overwhelm her.

She turns away, begins to break down. Simcoe fidgets.

SIMCOE (CONT'D)
Ma'am, I meant no...

She waves her pardon, and moves to retreat to her house. He stops her.

SIMCOE (CONT'D)
Wait. Accept my apology.

Still choking up, she nods her assent but still tries to move past. He stops her again, tight grip on her arm.

Simcoe is close to her now, intimate. She looks down, keeping her eyes on the grass.

SIMCOE (CONT'D)
I didn't mean to...
(beat)
I know how you must feel. With your husband gone. In your house alone. I can only imagine your distress.

Anna looks up into his eyes. He is giving her the same disturbing look that he did at the Tavern.

SIMCOE (CONT'D)
You need someone to protect you.

ANNA
Captain, I beg you. If you are a gentleman, let me attend to my house, in peace.

He can only press, or let her go. He lets her go, proving he is a gentleman, and hating every second of it.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Thank you.

She heads off. Simcoe is now cold.

SIMCOE
I shall have my laundry ready for you at week's end.

Anna stops. Turns back to look at him, confused.

SIMCOE (CONT'D)
This is my house, too. I'm to be quartered here by order of Major Hewlett. I have already chosen which room.

His tone is flat. Inevitable. If he added "and no one will hear you scream" we wouldn't be thrown. He nods formally, then walks off. Anna watches him go, shaken.

INT. COLONIAL JAIL - DAY

Dark, claustrophobic. Iron-barred windows set in solid brick. Shafts of light strike through dank must, finding Abe on a bed of hay inside a jail cell. Miserable.

A KEY works a lock. A door opens, more light stabs in. Abe squints at the silhouette of man in a metal helmet with white horsehair plume sprouting from its crested peak.

VOICE (O.S.)
You look thin, Mr. Woodhull. Is the harvest that bad?

Abe recognizes the voice.

ABE
Ben?

A face emerges from the dark. Ben Tallmadge, our survivor from the opening. In full Dragoon battle dress.

ABE (CONT'D)
Tallmadge, thank God it's you!

Ben gives him the sign to pipe down.

BEN
Your name came through on a dispatch. I set out immediately from camp.

ABE
Can you get me out of this? Of course you can, look at you...

Ben takes off his helmet.

BEN
Slow down.

ABE
Ben, you know me. I'm no smuggler. This is the first time I've ever...

BEN
I know.

ABE
Even attempted...

BEN
I told them you were a man of integrity, and that you would make every effort to cooperate.

ABE
Thank...
(beat)
Cooperate?

BEN
They need to know who your contact was. To make sure you weren't giving aid to the enemy. I told them that you would never-

ABE
The enemy? Who is the enemy? The families in New York who are starved for fresh produce or the farmers outside who are starved for...

BEN
Fresh silk? I hope that's for you wife...

ABE
Oh, come on Ben, you know <u>both</u> sides close an eye to this trade. Trust me, the "enemy" did not benefit here.

BEN
I do trust you, Abe. And I can get you out. Just tell me who your contact was at Frog's point.

Abe stares at Ben, grows suspicious. Paranoid.

ABE
What's your true purpose here? You didn't ride all this way just to get me out of trouble...

Ben produces a sheaf of paper. Oh, yeah?

BEN
This is a pardon, for your release. Signed by Governor Trumbull, who I convinced that you were a friend.

ABE
If I tell you who I traded with.

BEN
This shouldn't be a negotiation.

ABE
Good. Because I'm not giving the name of someone who's just trying to get by. And who doesn't deserve to be thrown in a cell by the same Congress that declares for our freedom.

Ben regards Abe, then nods to himself. Satisfied. Calculating. Abe can tell he's keeping a secret.

ABE (CONT'D)
Tallmadge. Why are you really here?

BEN
As I said, I have a permit signed from the Governor, for you to return home. He signed it after receiving word from General Washington himself.

Abe sits back. What the hell is going on here? Ben notes his reaction, and leans closer to the bars.

BEN (CONT'D)
We're of the mind that if you can smuggle cabbage, you can smuggle something more valuable. Information.

ABE
You've come to *enlist* me?

BEN
To recruit you. Congress doesn't just declare for your freedom, they fight for it. I fight for it. And men die for it.

Abe sees the real Ben now, his anger and pain.

ABE
I don't ask anyone to fight for me.

BEN
I ask <u>you</u>. We grew up together, Abe, and I remember who you are, even if you've forgotten.
(off Abe's look)
I remember three summers ago, sitting with you and Anna on the bay and watching you rage like a lawyer against the bloody Stamp Act. You went straight for two hours. No one can speak the way you did and not believe in the cause. I ask you to fight for what *you* believe in.

Abe is silent.

ABE
I don't know what information I could--

BEN
Military. Number of men, number of cannons. Naval transports, whether they're moving. If so, where. What arrivals. Whether with men, or provisions-

ABE
Ben-

BEN
You won't have to risk crossing the Belt again. Instead, you'll signal for a courier. I have a system worked out.

ABE
Have you worked out how to explain my absence? I was supposed to be back yesterday, with no one knowing I was gone.

BEN
Use the truth. You were on the black market. Both sides close an eye...

ABE
I'll need proof of that. The silk.
And the twelve pounds.

Ben stares at Abe. Then stands, UNLOCKS Abe's cell, and tosses the money purse at his feet. It lands with a RATTLE.

ABE (CONT'D)
So that's it?

BEN
(pointed edge)
You're free.

The door stays wide open, but neither man moves his stare.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. COVE - DAY

Abe lands his boat, splashes out. Looks down at his clothes... and then SUBMERGES himself under the water.

A beat later, ABE EMERGES from the cold water, soaked through.

TIME CUT TO:

ABE feverishly digs a hole in the sand near the reeds, drops his MONEY SACK in there, and begins to cover it up again.

Abe then pulls off his boot, stuffs the shimmering bolt of silk into it, struggles to pull it back on.

He stands, shivering from the cold water, working up his courage. What the hell is he doing?

Abe pulls out his knife, grits his teeth, makes a tentative CUT into his forehead. Blood runs down. He winces. Holding his hand to the cut.

EXT. SETAUKET - VILLAGE GREEN - LATER

Will Robeson, the Tory farmer, walks through the village with a net of clams over his shoulder. He slows as he sees-

Abe Woodhull limping up the way. Soaked, bleeding, fucked up. And he leans into it, acting dazed.

ABE
Robeson... help...

Robeson's eyes go wide, and he backs up, turns and RUNS.

Abe hesitates for a moment, doubting. That wasn't the reaction he expected.

He keeps walking, rounds a building, and sees Robeson leading a brace of REDCOATS his way, Simcoe among them. Robeson excitedly points to Abe. The Soldiers hustle toward him.

SIMCOE
Stand fast!

Abe sure does, surprised and beginning to panic inside. Simcoe walks up to him.

ABE
I... I've been mugged...

Simcoe slams Abe against the building.

SIMCOE
And now you'll be hanged.

INT. SETAUKET CHURCH - DAY

Richard sits across a desk from Major Hewlett, as they go over a ledger together. Hewlett points to a name.

HEWLETT
Floyd. To Colonel Floyd we should give at least ten. He's always first to volunteer service.

RICHARD
Ten...
(checking a list)
There are only fourteen field hands at Strong Manor. Plus two house boys and two Maids.

HEWLETT
So?

RICHARD
So if we're to divide up property amongst friends, we must be fair and even in the giving. No favorites.

HEWLETT
I suppose that's wise...

RICHARD
We also need to leave some labor to work the confiscated property.

WHAM. The door guard, BAKER, hurries in.

BAKER
Sir, Captain Simcoe at the gates. With a Prisoner, Sir. Related to Captain Joyce... er...

HEWLETT
(to Richard)
We'll finish this over dinner.

Richard nods, rolls up the ledger. Hewlett motions to Baker.

Simcoe marches in with Abe and four Redcoats.

Richard rises from his chair, stunned.

SIMCOE
We found him wandering. Looks like he's been in a fight.

HEWLETT
(dubious)
From three days ago?

RICHARD
Abraham, where have you been? I've been looking all over for-

SIMCOE
We'll ask the questions, Judge.

HEWLETT
I'll ask the questions.
(to Abe)
Captain Joyce was found murdered this Tuesday morning. And you haven't been seen since...

He looks to Simcoe.

SIMCOE
Monday evening, when he was released from holding.

HEWLETT
Can you explain your absence?

ABE
Captain Joyce is dead?

HEWLETT
I'll ask once more. Where were you?

ABE
With the Americans, Sir.

Surprise all around. Richard goes pale. Somehow this is worse than admitting to murder. Abe hangs his head.

ABE (CONT'D)
I set out early Tuesday, before dawn, to cross the Sound with a cargo of cabbage from my field. I aimed to... barter on the London Trade, and did so for twelve pound sterling and a bundle of cathay silk. On my return that night, I was overtaken by a brig sloop off the coast. The crew claimed they were Patriots, and that I defied the authority of Congress. Their justice was to beat me, rob me, and throw me overboard.

SIMCOE
Seems they also robbed you of any proof of your tragic tale.

Abe takes a beat, then begins to reach for his boot. The Redcoats close in. He pauses.

ABE
With your permission, Sir?

Hewlett nods. Abe painfully takes off his boot, reaches in and pulls out the long stash of silk.

ABE (CONT'D)
I concealed it before they boarded my scow. The money they took.

Richard bows his head in shame. An Ensign walks the silk to Hewlett, who inspects it. Simcoe glares at Abe.

HEWLETT
Why not just sell your cabbage direct to stores on York Island? The market for healthy greens favors the seller tremendously.

ABE
Because the prices are even higher on the black.

RICHARD
You damned fool. Given to greed, and deserved what you got.

Abe can't meet his Father's eyes - not because he's ashamed, but because he's pretending to be.

Baker enters again, breaking the tension.

BAKER
Sir. Marked dispatch just arrived for you.

Hewlett grunts. Busy day. He nods, distracted. A COURIER, red-faced from his ride, but buttoning up his exhaustion, walks across to Hewlett and hands him a sealed dispatch. Hewlett's eager to read it, but first...

HEWLETT
Did you take note of the identity of your assailants?

ABE
I know some of them...

Hewlett holds up his hand. Abe shuts up.

HEWLETT
Smuggling is a crime, and you *will* answer for it. But more pressing are the activities of these privateers.

RICHARD
Major...

Richard whispers something low to Hewlett, who nods.

HEWLETT
(to Abe)
Return to your home, see to your family, then report to your father's at seven o'clock. There we'll discuss names, and other details.
(to Simcoe)
Captain, escort Mr. Woodhull out of the fort. Unmolested.

SIMCOE
Yes, Sir.

Simcoe walks Abe out. Abe looks at Richard who looks away.

Hewlett sits down and slices open the dispatch. He reads it with interest (we may recognize it as the same piece of paper that Andre tried to hand Robert Rogers in the alley).

EXT. SETAUKET CHURCH - DAY

Simcoe marches Abe out of the fortified Church, and across the green. Curious NEIGHBORS mill about with raised eyebrows. Simcoe speaks casually to Abe.

SIMCOE
Very clever, but all really you did back there was prove you're a criminal.

ABE
Pardon?

SIMCOE
Just 'cause you confess to smuggling doesn't give you an alibi for Joyce.

ABE
I've never killed anyone.

SIMCOE
I have. Plenty just like you. May have fooled the Major, but not me.

Simcoe stops, and lets Abe walk on. Louder, for everyone else, he call out...

SIMCOE (CONT'D)
Travel safe.

STAY with Abe as he walks on, his desperate mood now matched to his ragged appearance.

EXT. SETAUKET BAY - DAY

STRONG MANOR as seen from the shimmering water of the Long Island Sound. The brilliant white colonial home looks peaceful and private at this distance.

Several colorful lines of laundry in the back lawn bob in the wind off the bay.

EXT. STRONG MANOR - BACK LAWN - DAY

Abe hides in the trees ringing the perimeter of the vast estate. He watches a Soldier heading for the ice house, a small octagonal shed on the manor grounds. It's a hot day.

Abe finally spots Anna. She is too far away to signal or yell to without attracting attention. He watches her for a moment, as she scoops water from the ewer and splashes her face. The Soldier enters the ice house.

Abe cups his hands over his mouth, and mimics a raven call.

Anna slows, then stops, wondering if she heard what she did. Abe smiles to himself, does it again.

She turns, knows exactly where to find him. He keeps his eye on the ice house as she crosses the grounds to the trees. She finds him in the thicket underneath the tree shadows.

ANNA
What are you doing here?

ABE
Giving you this.

He presses the purse into her hands. It's dirty from where he dug it up. She looks inside, gasps.

ABE (CONT'D)
It's what I owe Selah. You could use it to buy his parole. I have to go.

ANNA
Wait. I can't take this.

ABE
Yes, you can.

ANNA
I can't take this, he'll find it!

He's halfway gone. He turns back.

ABE
Who?

ANNA
Simcoe. The Welshman. The one who put a pistol to your head.

Abe begins to nod. He knows him. Too well.

ANNA (CONT'D)
He's been billeted here, and...

ABE
What's he done to you?

ANNA
He... I can hear him outside my door at night. And he's been in my room when I haven't, I'm certain of it. If he finds I'm hiding silver you took off a dead soldier, then he--

ABE
Wait... dead Soldier?

Anna searches his eyes. Abe registers what she's thinking.

ABE (CONT'D)
Anna you don't think I killed Captain Joyce?
(she doesn't answer)
Also, what soldier do you know carries twelve quid on his person?

ANNA
None. And no farmer, either. Where did you get it?

He looks at her for a long beat.

ABE
Caleb Brewster is running a shop out of his whaleboat, on Devil's Belt.

ANNA
Caleb?
(her face lights up)
You saw him? How is he?

ABE
Giant. Crude. The same.
(beat)
I saw Ben Tallmadge, too.

The truth comes as a relief to him. Anna is excited.

ANNA
They were together?

ABE
No. No, Ben's a Connecticut Dragoon now. Shiny helmet and all. Tried to recruit me for a secret mission.

ANNA
Against the British?

ABE
Don't worry, I won't do it.

ANNA
Why not?

That takes him by surprise. Anna presses, quietly outraged.

ANNA (CONT'D)
What are you waiting for? What more do they need to take from us?

The "us" is raw, intimate. Abe stares at her. THUNK-

The Soldier exits the ice house, cold wisping out after him.

Abe presses the money back into her hands. Then quickly darts out the way he crept in.

Anna watches him go, then looks down at the money purse. Biting down on her anger, she finds a hollow in the tree and stuffs it in there to conceal it.

EXT. JUDGE WOODHULL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A Two Story Colonial. Candles flicker in the windows. TWO REDCOATS stand guard outside the front door.

INT. JUDGE WOODHULL'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Major Hewlett, Richard Woodhull, and Abe are finishing dinner (roast pork). Abe has cleaned up, wearing a black coat,

black breeches, and a lace band at his throat. He stares at his plate. Hewlett pushes back from the table as a HOUSE SERVANT pours from a cask of Madeira wine.

HEWLETT
Excellent, as always.

RICHARD
Credit goes to Aberdeen. I merely raise the pork, she performs the alchemy.

HEWLETT
(to Abe)
You've hardly touched yours.

ABE
Hard to eat on a guilty stomach, I suppose. My apologies.

A glance is exchanged between Richard and the Major, who nods "let me take this." He leans forward, paternal.

HEWLETT
Abraham. This is what I could not say earlier from my... pulpit, as it were. I view your crime as a mere symptom of a more serious disease afflicting these colonies. Anarchy.

ABE
You mean self-rule?

HEWLETT
I mean chaos. Masquerading as freedom. An excuse for criminal activity, and every-man-for-himself.

RICHARD
Well said. And it <u>is</u> an illusion. Because if these upstarts were truly concerned for your liberty they wouldn't encourage smuggling with one hand and then roll you with the other.

Abe nods along.

ABE
We all must pay a tax, the question is just who will collect.

Hewlett wonders if he should like that response. Richard takes a gulp of wine, looks out across the room.

RICHARD
'O God... that one might read the book of fate, and see the revolution of the times make mountains level. And the continent, weary of solid firmness, melt itself into the sea...'

Hewlett smiles.

HEWLETT
Your father is the only man I can find here with an affection for the humanities.
(to Richard)
Did you pass your trivium onto your son?

RICHARD
Abraham had to concern himself with the business of our land, after his Mother passed, and his brothers...

Richard trails off.

ABE
No man is above the law.
(to Richard)
That's what you taught me.
(to Hewlett)
And I'll gladly accept whatever punishment you deem fit for my forgetting it.

HEWLETT
I doubt you can afford to pay the fine. It pains me to recommend imprisonment, but...
(to Richard)
We must have no favorites.

Not a dig. More of a "help me out here." Richard ponders.

RICHARD
There may be a... temporary salve. The Carlisle Commission has decreed all those who swear an oath to their sovereign will be pardoned after Congress' defeat. Which appears imminent.

HEWLETT
A public oath. Yes. That is ideal.

Abe looks at his father, who smiles genuinely.

HEWLETT (CONT'D)
And when it's made clear your cooperation assisted in the capture of the enemy, any doubt among your neighbors will be put to rest.

ABE
Sir?

HEWLETT
The names. Of the men who attacked you. Remember?

Hewlett beckons to a servant, who brings him paper, and quill and ink. Richard nods his encouragement to Abe.

ABE
They were boys from Hempstead. Presbyterians. They used to trade at Betts Tavern near the Jamaica Pass. Matthew Mitchell, William Washburne, Daniel Taylor. And then another one they called... Simon, I didn't catch his family name, but he was a fat one. Mean. With his head shaved to the scalp.

While Abe reports, Richard's smile slowly fades, as he realizes that his son is lying. He alone is attuned to what that sounds like. Hewlett is busy scribbling down the names.

HEWLETT
Excellent. I shall pass this on to Captain Simcoe, with instructions that if he should encounter these men on his raid, he will give them no quarter.

Both Abe and Richard are surprised.

RICHARD
Raid?

Hewlett sits back and swirls his wine.

HEWLETT
The dispatch I received today was from headquarters. Intelligence regarding a rebel safehouse across the Sound, where the insurgents are launching their attacks from.

Abe starts to feel sick as Hewlett goes on, excited.

HEWLETT (CONT'D)
We'll cross at night, just like your attackers. Silent approach, bayonets fixed. Give them their own medicine.

RICHARD
Are you alright, son? Not feeling true?

Abe looks at his Dad. Knows that he was lying.

ABE
Just exhausted... from the whole ordeal.

HEWLETT
Recalling it can't be of help. Why don't you get home to your bed?

Abe nods his thanks, queasy. Maybe he better. Richard watches him shuffle out, saying nothing.

EXT. JUDGE WOODHULL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Abe trudges down the porch steps under watch of the Redcoat Guards. We can still see the dining room, lit up.

Abe shuffles down the path into darkness. When he is farther down the path, he straightens up - not sick at all - and darts to the side, keeping low, and circles around the back of the house.

EXT. JUDGE WOODHULL'S HOUSE - BACK - NIGHT

Abe creeps to the side of his Father's house, below the windows. He feels along the house, as if from memory, and finds a loose sideboard. He pries it back a bit, and removes a rusted old CALIPER TOOL.

He smiles. Hasn't had to use this since he was fourteen.

Abe approaches a dark window, and uses the Caliper to access a well-worn hole just below the latch.

If there's one place Abe has experience breaking in and out of - it's his old childhood bedroom. He slides up the sash, stashes the Caliper, and climbs in the house.

INT. JUDGE WOODHULL'S HOUSE - ABE'S OLD ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Abe sets down lightly into his childhood room. His old bed is still here. He sneaks through, and then stops.

Stares at a few TOY SOLDIERS on a dresser, along with a CHESSBOARD. He has a sudden pang of guilt.

INT. JUDGE WOODHULL'S HOUSE - HALLWAY

Abe peeks out into the hallway. He can hear the conversation between his Father and Hewlett from down the hall. They're still in the dining room, now onto dessert.

Abe steps out carefully, then snaps back as a SERVANT crosses through the hall on the way to the kitchen.

Now he creeps down to his Father's room...

INT. JUDGE WOODHULL'S HOUSE - HEWLETT'S ROOM

...Which has now become the Major's room, as Richard has moved upstairs. The Major's wardrobe is in trunks.

Abe crosses to a desk, pulls the drawers. Finds the DISPATCH. He carefully opens it, and moves to the window, unfolds it, begins to read and memorize it by the moonlight, eyes searching out the details...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. TREES - NIGHT

Abe is a shadow RUNNING through the trees, a mirror to Ben Tallmadge's run from the opening. His breathing fades UNDER-

As we hear a drunken chant RISE:

REDCOATS (V.O. PRE-LAP)
Don’t want the Sergeant’s shilling,
Don’t want to be shot down / I’m
really much more willing / to make
myself a killing...

INT. ROE TAVERN - NIGHT

DRUNKEN REDCOATS revel in coarse song.

REDCOATS
Living off the pickings of the Ladies
of the Town!

Anna, running the place on her own, collects pewter mugs to clean, tries to ignore the dregs of North London or worse. And Captain Simcoe, who comes here just to watch her work.

REDCOATS (CONT'D)
Don’t want a bullet up my bumhole /
Don’t want my cobblers minced with
ball / For if I have to lose ‘em
then let it be with Susan / Or Meg
or Peg or any whore at all!

They laugh and cheer. Simcoe catches Anna's attention.

SIMCOE
Another round of cider for my boys.

Anna forces a smile. Simcoe watches her go into the back.

INT. ROE TAVERN - CELLAR

Dark. Anna creaks down the steps, sets her candle on a cask. She goes to grab a quarter barrel of cider...

When a HAND grabs her wrist and another CLAMPS over her mouth before she can scream.

ABE
Shhh. It's me. It's me.

Abe holds Anna until she nods. He turns her to face him.

ABE (CONT'D)
You only have a few moments to bring that cider back so listen close.

ANNA
Yes.

Doesn't even know what she's saying yes to. She's ready. It trips Abe up for a second, and then he presses on.

ABE
Tallmadge devised a way so we could signal him in secret.

ANNA
He's coming here?!

ABE
He'll send a courier. We'll meet on one of the coves along the bay.

ANNA
Which one?

ABE
Whichever one is not being watched.

ANNA
How will he know?

ABE
<u>You</u> signal him. Your home can be seen from the bay.
(MORE)

ABE (CONT'D)
When you hang a black petticoat from your peg-line, they'll know I'm ready to meet. Six coves, left to right. You'll pin up white handkerchiefs to designate the safe one. That's where they'll sail. Tomorrow you'll put out four.
(beat)
And Hope to God someone's watching.

Anna is thrilled and scared at the same time.

The stairs CREAK.

SIMCOE (O.S.)
Need help down there?

Abe shows Anna FOUR fingers, then ducks back behind the barrels of rum, cider, and beer. Anna smooths her dress as Simcoe steps down into the candlelight.

ANNA
Yes, Captain, thank you. A bit heavy for me...

She puts the barrel in his arms and quickly heads back up the stairs. He glances around the cellar, then follows.

A moment later, Abe sneaks out and heads for the trap double doors to the surface.

FADE TO:

EXT. STRONG MANOR - BACK LAWN - DAY

CLOSE ON A BLACK PETTICOAT being pegged to the laundry line.

Anna looks out to the water, squinting, as she pins up four WHITE LINEN HANDKERCHIEFS on the line next to it.

ANGLE ON A MAID

ABIGAIL, watching her from the porch, troubled. CICERO, a House Boy, steps next to her, curious.

CICERO
'She doin'...?

Abigail's concern begins to slide into suspicion.

EXT. WOODHULL FARM - DAY

Abe works his field. The sun is hot, but the full moon still hangs in the blue sky. Abe stares at it.

Behind him, Mary exits the porch door, sets a bowl on a bench, and walks back in, giving a quick tug on the cast iron dinner bell as she goes, pointedly never looking at Abe.

He turns at the CLANG, in time to see her enter the house.

MOMENTS LATER - Abe picks up his supper. Cold cornmeal mush.

INT. WOODHULL HOUSE - DAY

Abe walks inside with it. Mary is sitting near the stove, nursing Thomas.

ABE
I'm sorry.

MARY
Whatever you're doing... don't. We can't afford to lose you.

ABE
We?

MARY
I can't.

She turns to look at him, with a flicker of vulnerability. Then turns back to the heat of the stove. Abe watches her.

INT. WOODHULL HOUSE - NIGHT

Abe lies in bed, staring at the ceiling, counting the seconds.

He turns his head, looks at Thomas, sleeping. Mary too, turned away from him. He runs a finger across Thomas' cheek.

Abe carefully extracts himself from bed.

EXT. COVE - NIGHT

Abe stealths down to the shore, stops when he sees...

A familiar WHALEBOAT pulled into the reeds. Empty.

Abe recognizes it, surprised. Then confused. Then angry. He quickly pulls his hop knife, WHIRLS to face--

CALEB BREWSTER sneaking up on him, with a cheshire grin.

CALEB
Quicker this time.

ABE
You. <u>You're</u> the courier?!

CALEB
Lower that butter knife, will ya?

ABE
Did... did Tallmadge catch you? How did he find you?

CALEB
He didn't find me. We found you.

Abe stares at him, mind racing.

ABE
Back at Frog's point...

CALEB
That was the first interview. Second was Ben's. You passed muster when you refused to give up my name. Just want you to know I was touched by that.

ABE
You set me up? You're a... you're a devil. A liar, a--

CALEB
Lieutenant. Second Continental Artillery, assigned to Captain Tallmadge for special detail.
(steps closer, menacing)
Who the hell are you?

ABE
Someone tricked, now expected to trust.

CALEB
Whatever you give me goes straight to Ben. No one else knows your name. No one.

ABE
Or hers.

CALEB
Of course. Now she hung out that Petticoat for a reason. What?

ABE
A detachment's being readied, to strike a safe house on Meeg's Harbor. Kensington's farm.

Caleb nods, blood pumping.

CALEB
When.

ABE
Tomorrow. There was a dispatch, from York Island, signed by a Major Andre.

CALEB
Anything else?

ABE
The man leading it is Simcoe. Captain. I think he suspects me.

CALEB
Simcoe. I'll keep an eye out.
(grins)
Trust me, Woody. Once you get a taste for boiling these lobsters, you'll want more.

ABE
Don't call me that.

CALEB
An' after I pass this up the ladder, *they'll* want more. Washington's been trying to get a man <u>inside</u> the city since Clinton took it over.

ABE
He'll have to find someone else. I don't have any business that would take me to the city.

CALEB
Then maybe you make some.

ABE
This is a one-time deal.

Caleb smiles.

CALEB
Just like the last time.

Caleb hops into his boat. Pushes off.

Abe stands there for a moment, watching him disappear. Then turns back and heads into the reeds.

<u>END ACT FOUR</u>

ACT FIVE

EXT. SETAUKET - VILLAGE GREEN - DAY

A SMALL CROWD is gathered near the Church, and the Stockade, to witness Abe swear his oath of allegiance. MAJOR HEWLETT and FIVE REGULARS are the only military presence. Mary is dressed up, and holds Thomas in her arms. Will Robeson watches, and Judge Woodhull administers the oath to his son.

Abe puts his hand on his father's bible.

ABE
I, Abraham Woodhull, do sincerely and faithfully promise and swear that I will bear true allegiance to His Majesty King George the Third.

EXT. CONNECTICUT FOREST - DAY

A WOOD HOUSE sits back in trees, hidden from view.

ABE (V.O.)
And that with heart and hands, life and goods...

SIMCOE leads a detachment of 30 REDCOATS through the trees, quietly. He gives them the sign to drop into firing position.

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...Maintain and defend His Majesty's Government.

The first line takes a knee.

EXT. SETAUKET - VILLAGE GREEN (INTERCUT)

Abe's eyes wander to the left, making contact with ANNA in the back of the crowd.

ABE
And the laws of the Province of New York...

Mary follows his look to her.

SIMCOE (V.O.)
FIRE!

IN CONNECTICUT - a volley EXPLODES out. Shattering windows and blasting the hell out of the building.

The front line primes and loads while the back advances - and waits to let loose ANOTHER burst.

ABE (V.O.)
Against all traitorous conspiracies and attempts...

Both units CHARGE toward the house. An ENSIGN kicks in the front door... it's EMPTY.

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
..Which shall be made against his person, Crown or Dignity.

BOOM! MUZZLE FLASHES light up the trees all around them. Several Regulars FALL, caught in an AMBUSH.

Redcoats scramble and die in the CROSSFIRE. Simcoe PULLS HIS SWORD.

BEN TALLMADGE leads his Dragoons and some Connecticut Militia including CALEB in a charge out of their hiding spots.

They engage the Redcoats at point blank range, FIRING pistols and STABBING with bayonets. It's a slaughter.

ABE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And I will do my utmost endeavor to disclose and make known to His Majesty and his Successors...

EXT. SETAUKET - VILLAGE GREEN (INTERCUT)

ABE
All treasons, and traitorous conspiracies, which I shall know to be against, or any of them.

Richard looks on his son with grave, official scrutiny.

EXT. CONNECTICUT FOREST (INTERCUT)

Powder smoke in the air. Dead King's Men litter the ground.

SIMCOE, shot in the stomach and knee, pulls himself on his belly. His new "Captain" epaulette dangling off the uniform. A pair of muddy boots stop in front of him.

CALEB (O.S.)
Captn' Simcoe?

He looks up to see Caleb looming over him. Pistol leveled.

CALEB (CONT'D)
Abe Woodhull says hello.

Caleb's SHOT echoes through the trees.

EXT. SETAUKET - VILLAGE GREEN - END INTERCUT

ABE
God save the King.

The neighbors give cheers. Some are half-hearted. Robeson, staring at Abe, turns and quickly walks away.

EXT. CONNECTICUT FOREST - DAY

The Continentals search the dead. Caleb approaches Ben, who still looks like he's in a rage.

BEN
Regulars.

CALEB
Just like we expected.

BEN
Thought they might send Rangers to link up with 'em. Was hoping for Rogers.

CALEB
We'll get him soon enough.

Ben looks at Caleb, nods. Then reaches into his shirt and takes the RANGER BONNET out. Tosses it on Simcoe's corpse.

CALEB (CONT'D)
What's that for?

BEN
Send my regards.

Ben walks off. Caleb looks down. PUSH IN on the green woolen Ranger Bonnet on Simcoe's chest...

EXT. SETAUKET - ROAD - DAY

Cicadas sing as Abe drives a wagon back to his farm, with Mary, Thomas, and Richard in the wagon seat.

MARY
I thought you presented yourself well.

Abe looks at his wife, surprised. An olive branch?

ABE
Thank you. I thought Thomas did well.

RICHARD
Not so much as a peep.

ABE
That's my boy.

MARY
Well, there was everyone quiet while you went ahead and said more than two words.
(hugging Thomas)
He likes to listen to his father.

RICHARD
A lost art.

Abe shakes his head, as they bump around the bend...

EXT. WOODHULL FARM - CONTINUOUS

Where they are confronted by a horrific sight: his cabbage field TRAMPLED by someone (or a group of someones).

ABE
What... what...

RICHARD
Dear God.

Abe yanks the reigns. The horse stops. Abe hops off and runs into the rows of sabotaged crop. The <u>entire</u> crop.

MARY
Abraham! Abraham!

Mary is in a panic, running toward Abe, holding Thomas.

MARY (CONT'D)
What happened? Why is this happening?

ABE
Mary, go inside.

MARY
No! This is... everything!

She spins to take in the field, then turns back too fast. Thomas begins to cry. Abe steadies her, then grabs Thomas gently into his arms.

ABE
Go inside and wait for me. Now!

Mary suddenly imagines *inside* and then picks up her dress and runs for her house.

Abe calms Thomas down. Richard slowly approaches.

ABE (CONT'D)
Two... three, maybe four horses. Must have taken them at least a half an hour.

RICHARD
While we were in town.

ABE
Who. Who did this?

RICHARD
(quiet)
You did.

Abe turns to Richard in disbelief. Richard is ice.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
You brought this on yourself. Many around here don't trust you.

Abe carefully sets Thomas down on the soft soil.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
I know you lied. To Major Hewlett. <u>In my house</u>. In front of <u>me</u>. Do you think I don't know my own son?

Abe is speechless. JUDGE Woodhull peers at him.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Why did you give those names? There are no boys down in Hempstead with those names. Tell the truth.

ABE
Father...

RICHARD
Did you kill Joyce?

ABE
No!

RICHARD
Tell the truth!

ABE
I kept the money!

Richard stares. Abe lies with the truth.

ABE (CONT'D)
There was no arrest by rebels. I cut my own scar. I buried the silver by the shore, and used the silk to sell my story.

RICHARD
You thought the Major would take your profit...

ABE
The way he took your house.

RICHARD
I *invited* him to billet-

ABE
Under threat of law.

RICHARD
Where is your take now? Eh?

Abe steps toward him. Richard steps back.

ABE
With Anna Strong. I used it to pay my debt, <u>that's</u> why I went.

Richard searches Abe's eyes. Sees truth there. He's furious.

RICHARD
I thought we decided you would stay away from-

ABE
I never decided. You decided for me.

RICHARD
You're a grown man, you can make your own decisions.
(then)
But you are also my son and I will <u>always</u> tell you what I think is right. And what is right... now... is we return the proceeds to Hewlett.

ABE
No.

RICHARD
Son, I have protected you up to this point. I will not go any further.

Abe nods. He looks around - too much to risk, too much to lose, too much already lost. He slowly settles to the ground, forearms on his knees.

Richard feels both sympathetic, and satisfied. He resumes a wise, encouraging tone.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
No matter how dark the night, God grants each of us the chance to begin anew, every day.
(beat)
It's not too late for you, Abraham.

Abe picks up a leaf of uprooted cabbage. Maybe he's right. Maybe it's time to make a choice.

ABE
Your butcher stores. In the city. You still need someone to run product to them?

Richard nods. Glad that Abe has made the right decision, not knowing that Abe has taken a step against the cause his Father believes in.

Richard steps up behind Abe, and puts a hand on his shoulder.

Abe feels the low ache of betrayal in the pit of his stomach.

At that moment, THOMAS STANDS UP, wobbly. Abe doesn't see him. Thomas takes his first steps - one, two, three... and puts his tiny hand on Abe's other shoulder.

Richard and Abe look at Thomas.

Both Woodhulls smile at the same time.

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW