

THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS

by

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Based on the novel by

James Fenimore Cooper

FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY

FADE IN

The screen is a microcosm of leaf, crystal drops of precipitation, a stone, emerald green moss. It's a landscape in miniature. We HEAR the forest. Some distant birds. Their sound seems to reverberate as if in a cavern. A piece of sunlight refracts within the drops of water, paints a patch of moss yellow. The whisper of wind is joined by another sound that mixes with it. A distant rustling. It gets closer and louder. It's shallow breathing. It gets ominous.

We're interlopers on the floor of the forest and something is coming.

SUDDENLY: A MOCCASINED FOOT

rockets through the frame scaring us and ...

EXTREMELY CLOSE: PART OF AN INDIAN FACE

running hard. His head shaved bald except for a scalp-lock. Tattoos. He's twenty-five. He seems tall and muscled. Heavy, even breathing. We'll learn later this man is UNCAS, the last of the Mohicans.

PROFILE: UNCAS' ARMS

flash as he runs. One carries a flintlock musket. Sweat on the man's skin. A calico shirt is gathered at the waist with a wampum belt of small white beads over a breechcloth. He wears leggings to protect his legs. A long-handled tomahawk is stuffed in his belt.

CUT TO ...

ANOTHER PART OF THE FOREST - MASSIVE WAR CLUB - DAY

in the hand of another running man. He's heavier, older ...

CHEST

A green bear claw is tattooed there. Silver armband. A snake is tattooed over his left eyebrow. Silver rings in his ear. He's forty to forty-five. His head is shaved into a scalp-lock. It says: "Come and lift this from me. Take it, if you can ..." That prospect strikes us as extremely unlikely. This man is CHINGACHGOOK.

The French call him "Le Gros Serpent," the Great Snake, because "he knows the winding ways of men's nature and he can strike a sudden, deathly blow."

WIDE ANGLE: CHINGACHGOOK

runs, disturbing no leaves, no branches; making no sound. He's running parallel to Uncas through the cathedral of mature forest. It's heavily canopied. There's very little brush. The girth of the trees is huge. Shafts of light illuminate motes of dust and turn leaves emerald where the sun breaks through. Sometimes there's ferns; rhododendron, sometimes pale grass and outcroppings of rock.

These men run the forest streams, over boulders, fallen trees and down into ravines as if they own them. They do.

CUT TO ...

ANOTHER PART OF THE FOREST - LONG BLACK HAIR - DAY

rocketing through trees. His torn buckskin shirt is tied at the waist with a wampum belt holding a tomahawk and a large knife. A long rifle in which is carved the name "Killdeer" is in his right fist. Indian tattooing on his chest.

His name is NATHANIEL POE. He's a few years older than Uncas. The French and the French-speaking tribes know him as La Longue Carabine (Long Rifle). Other frontiersmen in New York colony and the Iroquois and Delaware-speaking tribes know him as Hawkeye. Sweat stains his shirt. He flashes through the tree branches disturbing nothing. Making no sound.

HAWKEYE'S POV: A PIECE OF TAN

two hundred and fifty yards away, a few square inches buried in the foliage ...

SUDDENLY HE STOPS

Killdeer's at his shoulder ...

HAWKEYE'S THUMB

cocks the lock holding the piece of flint: click.

UNCAS

stops dead, holding out his hand ... no sound.

CHINGACHGOOK

slips through young trees and stops, shouldering his smoothbore musket. Is this an ambush?

HAWKEYE'S POV: RACK FOCUS THROUGH THE GUN SIGHT

Five feet and fourteen pounds of rifle is elevated a half inch and shifted left, off target. It's a precise, smooth movement. No human quiver.

KILLDEER'S TRIGGER

tighter ...

THE COCK

holding the flint hits the iron file of the frizzen, shooting sparks into the pan of priming powder which flashes and ...

TAN

is a huge elk that leaps at the sound.

KILLDEER'S MUZZLE

CRACKS like lightning.

AN ELK

leaps where the .59 caliber round was programmed to intercept him. On the moment of impact ...

WIDE

three men approach the fallen elk and each other. We realize they're hunting together. Hawkeye steps aside for Chingachgook. His massive war club is flat and angles to one side with a stabbing blade. Hawkeye is stepson and stepbrother.

The two younger men treat Chingachgook with an easy deference and affection.

Hawkeye's a dialectic of two cultures. In his coloration and worldliness he's more the Anglo-Saxon frontiersman. In his independent views and candid manner and in his combat skills and woodsmanship, he's more native American (Mohican).

As Chingachgook takes out his long knife and they approach the fallen elk ...

CHINGACHGOOK

(low Mohican; sub-titled)

We're sorry to kill you, Brother.
Forgive us. I do honor to your courage
and speed, your strength ...

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR - INTERIOR CAMERON CABIN - JOHN CAMERON - NIGHT

roasts potatoes on a stick in the stone fireplace next to CAPTAIN JACK WINTHROP, an American in very worn quasi-military gear. On a rough table in the tiny cabin ALEXANDRIA, his wife, is kneading bread. Three children climb on their father.

He grabs their wild seven year old son, JAMES, who shrieks laughter and dodges away. The cabin has two primitive rooms, waxed paper windows, log walls. O.S. a dog barks. Others pick it up. Cameron & Jack are suddenly alert, reaching for weapons ...

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR CAMERON CABIN, DOORWAY - CAMERON - NIGHT

appears warily, musket in hand.

FENCE: CHINGACHGOOK

CHINGACHGOOK
Halloo! John Cameron!

Doorway: Cameron towards the interior ...

CAMERON
Alexandria! Set three more places.
(to the fence)
How is Chingachgook, then?

Behind him, emerging from the dark trees are Hawkeye, Uncas, cradling flint locks, blankets and packs over their shoulders, leading a mule laden with skins and the elk carcass. Crossing the splitrail fence ...

CHINGACHGOOK
The Master of Life is good. Another
year pass ... How is it with you,
John?

CAMERON
Gettin' along. Yes, it is.
(warm)
Nathaniel.

HAWKEYE
Hello John. Cleared another quarter,
I see.

CAMERON
(shakes hands with
Uncas)
Yes, I did.

JAMES CAMERON

tears past his father & runs full bore. Just before he's going to collide into Uncas, he leaps into the air and Uncas snatches him with one hand and swings him up onto his shoulders. The kid screams with delight and rides back towards the cabin that way. Alexandria comes to the door.

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR CABIN - CHINGACHGOOK - EVENING (LATER)

lights & smokes a clay pipe. The scene says: this is a rustic, frontier home and these people have known each other & live in dangerous circumstances.

ALEXANDRIA

If Uncas is with you, that means he has not found a woman and started a family yet.

CHINGACHGOOK

Your eyes are too sharp, Alexandria Cameron. They see into my heart.

UNCAS

Your farm good to you this year, John?

CAMERON

It was a good year for corn.

UNCAS

Mohawk field we saw was 5 mile long on the river. Chief Joseph Brandt's field.

CAMERON

You take much fur?

HAWKEYE

That we did. John. But the horicane
(sic)
is near trapped out.

JACK

Tradin' your skins in Castleton?

UNCAS

No, Schylerville. With the Dutch for silver. French & English want to buy with wampum & brandy.

Pause, then ...

HAWKEYE

So what is it, Jack? What brings you up here?

JACK

A French & Indian army out of Fort Carillon's heading south to war against the English. I'm here to raise this county's militia to aid the British defense.

HAWKEYE

Folks here goin' to join in that fight?

JACK

We'll see in the morning ...

CHINGACHGOOK

Fathers of England & France, both, take more land, furs, than they need. They're cold & full of greed ...

JACK

Few'd deny that? Where you headin'?

HAWKEYE

Trap over the fall and winter among the Delawares in Can-tuck-ee.

UNCAS

So I can find a woman and make Mohican children so our father will leave my brother & me in peace.

Alexandria laughs. So do Hawkeye & Chingachgook.

JAMES

A son like me?

Uncas grabs James & suspends him upside down.

UNCAS

No. You are too strong. Turn me old too fast!

Hawkeye grabs the kid from Uncas. The kid's laughing & can't stay still.

Chingachgook watches, content, smoking his clay pipe.

ALEXANDRIA

That's what he's doin' to his mama...

She ruffles his hair and lifts the heavy iron pot off the tibbet. Uncas goes to help her, she shrugs his hand away and carries it to the table herself. The men gather around. There's pan-baked bread, a dish of salt, and the pot has venison and yellow cornmeal in a kind of stew. Everyone waits.

CAMERON

Dear Father, thank you for rewardin'
the fruits of our labor with plenty.
Amen.

As they start to eat ...

CUT TO ...

CAMERON'S CABIN - (DAY)

EXTERIOR CAMERON CABIN - MOHAWK BOY & JAMES CAMERON - MORNING

slam into other kids as they battle through a Lacrosse game. In the background are sixty men, women and children. It's a community gathering held out of doors.

We've entered mid-scene. Captain Jack is standing on a box. Some women and kids mill around some tables and boards laid over barrels. Cooking fires. Smoke.

Most but not all around Captain Jack are men, nine settlers, 3 hunter/trappers, eight Mohawk farmers in mixed European and native clothing. Off to the side are an English Lieutenant on horseback and a ten-man escort from whatever regiment's in Albany. A man named HENRI speaks in French. His son, MARTIN, translates.

HENRI

(O.S. in French)

MARTIN

(translates)

My father says he was driven out of
France by the black robe priests and
he would fight them now but he lost
his arm and so I will go in his place.

Meanwhile ...

ONGEWASGONE

is an unusually large Mohawk in a blue match coat with a little girl holding his hand. He says something to Chingachgook who nods. Hawkeye and Uncas are a little apart in an outer grouping of the men. Ongewasgone is a war chief and wears a white plume and is tattooed. As Martin finishes, he steps forward.

ONGEWASGONE

John Cameron, thank you for your
hospitality ... Twin River Mohawk
got no quarrel with Les Francais.
Trade furs with Les Francais. Now
Les Francais bring Huron onto Mohawk
hunting grounds ...

These people are English, Scots-Irish and Dutch farmers;
some French Huguenot "mechanics" (craftsmen). They're in
shirt-sleeves and Indian moccasins & leggings. The Mohawks'
vast lands and corn agriculture border the settlement. They
've been acculturated for over a hundred years. Some wear
European calico hunting shirts.

Their heads are shaved to scalping locks and many are
tattooed. They've politically and commercially played France
& England against each other very adroitly for over a hundred
years because of their military power and geographic position.
Their relations with working farmers and settlers and their
families has been mostly one of co-existence because there's
always been more than enough for all. This is a WPA mural of
ethnic diversity and plurality of frontier America. The
Europeans are former indentured laborers, farmers exiled by
economics or religious persecution, frontier hunters and
trappers ... working people.

ONGEWASGONE

(continues)

Now Mohawk will fight Huron and Les
Francais. My brothers have asked me
to lead them in this war so I speak
for the Twin River Council.

The importance of this commitment is apparent to the
lieutenant.

LIEUTENANT

His Majesty King George II is very
grateful for your support.

IAN

How far up the valley?

LIEUTENANT

To Fort William Henry.

COLONIAL #1

... two days from here.

Some don't like this.

LIEUTENANT

It should be enough to remind you
France is the enemy.

HAWKEYE

Your enemy ...

Heads turn to Hawkeye at the periphery of the crowd.

LIEUTENANT

What did you say?

HAWKEYE

(loud)

I said ... France is your enemy. Not ours.

LIEUTENANT

Really? Do you want them to overrun all New York colony?

HAWKEYE

First place, you started it with the French over fur-trapping claims to the head waters of the Ohio.

(smiles)

Now you're sayin' these people have a fight on their hands ...

LIEUTENANT

(ignoring Hawkeye)

Will you men help us stop the French?

HAWKEYE

... and while they are cooped up in your fort, what if the French send war parties to raid their homes?

IAN

What then, Lieutenant?

LIEUTENANT

For your own homes, for king, for country, that's why you men ought to join this fight!

HAWKEYE

You do what you want with your own scalp. Do not be tellin' us what to do with ours.

LIEUTENANT

(furious; to Hawkeye)

You, sir! You call yourself a loyal subject?

HAWKEYE

... No ... Do not call myself much of a subject at all.

Light laughter.

COLONIAL #2

Nathaniel's right. But if I got to fight, figure I'll try and do it fifty miles north of here instead of my bean field.

AD LIBS

Yes. Yeah. No ...

CAMERON

I am stayin' on my farm. And any man who goes, his family is welcome to fort-up with us 'til he comes back.

JACK

Boys. My sense of it is enough of us will join-up to fill the county's levy. But only if General Webb accepts a few terms I got in mind ...

HAWKEYE & UNCAS

cross through the people. A few men drift off to their women at the tables.

It is apparent two-thirds of the men will join. A couple of jokes, light banter, no hostility.

AD LIBS

(O.S.)

Webb? what's that, Jack ...?

As they cross through they start removing their shirts and weapons.

IAN

You boys marchin' with us? What do you say?

UNCAS

We had our say, Ian.

They approach the Lacrosse field. Chingachgook stands with Cameron in the background, watching.

LACROSSE FIELD

Uncas joins James. Hawkeye goes on the other side. A couple of young Mohawks and a young blonde farmer shout hallo's and as the bodies crash into each other ...

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR BRITISH ENCAMPMENT, PARADE GROUND - SIX HUNDRED
62ND REGIMENT OF FOOT - DAY

in two rows. At each command the crack troops respond en masse. Their hands slap the stocks of their brown bess muskets in unison. These men are drilling in preparation for war.

We witness a state-of-the-art, 18th century, precision killing machine.

REGIMENTAL SGT. MAJOR

(shouts)
Shoulder arms!
(slam)
Order arms! Handle cartridge!
(men bite the paper)
Prime!
(powder dropped in
pan)
Load! Draw ramrods! Ram cartridge!
Return ramrod!
Make ready!
(muskets at chest
height)
Pre-sent!
(muskets shouldered)
Make ready!
(muskets returned to
chests)
Pre-sent!
(muskets returned to
shoulder)
Fire!

Like a single shot, two hundred fifty black powder muskets fire .65 caliber lead shot at chest height in a scythe of death.

SERGEANT MAJOR

Prime! Load!

The Dutch roof lines of Albany are in the distance. Nearer, a coach races past.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR ROAD - HORSES GALLOP - DAY

Six horses, wide with dumb, mute strain. Foam, manes fly, their hooves pound the yellow road into dust. Military outriders are on the three left side horses.

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR COACH - MAJOR DUNCAN HEYWARD - DAY

sits erectly in the brilliant scarlet coat of the First Royal Regiment of Foot with gold braid, blue-black facing and blue-black breeches, cavalry boots, spurs, a tricorne, white wig (?) and a gorget (large medallion) around his neck. He's 28-30 and tough. He is self-sure, principled reactionary. He believes human society is static & layered into hierarchies of class and they are absolutely impermeable. He opens a simple gold-clasped case & contemplates its contents ...

HEYWARD'S POV: CASE

an enameled portrait of a dark-haired young woman.

HEYWARD

as a soldier is militarily first-rate in his milieu: the open battlefields of Europe.

Right now, however, he is about to enter the forests of North America. He closes his clasp and glances out the window as we enter Albany and as a facade of buildings & people pass.

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR BRITISH HQ, ASSEMBLY ROOM - DOOR - DAY

Four Grenadiers come to attention as Heyward enters mid-scene.

JACK (O.S.)

... if they are not allowed leave to defend their families if the French or Hurons attack the settlements, no colonial militia is goin' to Fort William Henry.

HEYWARD

(low)

You, there. Help my man outside with the baggage.

GENERAL JEROME WEBB sees Heyward and nods. Three of Webb's Adjutants are on either side. Three remaining Grenadiers in bearskin-covered mitred caps are at the door. Facing Webb are a half dozen colonial representatives, including Captain Jack Winthrop. Heyward watches Jack ...

LIEUTENANT

They will report or be pressed into service!

LARGE COLONIAL REP

Any of the boys worth havin' can disappear into forest ... time it

LARGE COLONIAL REP
takes you to blink. Where's that
leave ya, then?

Heyward, preparing to hand over dispatches, is interrupted
by the insubordinate tone.

Equally wound tightly is the Lieutenant.

LIEUTENANT
They will be found! Arrested ...

WEBB
(cuts in)
I cannot imagine his Majesty, in his
benevolence, would ever object to
his American subjects defending their
hearth & home, their women & children,
if threatened by the "scourge" of
attack from savages, aroused to such
excess by our enemy, the ever-
perfidious French.

JACK
Does that mean they will be granted
leave to defend their homes if the
settlements are attacked?

WEBB
Of course.

Heyward's more amazed by what he's just heard from Webb.
These Americans, including Jack, are streaming past him on
their way out.

JACK
You got yourself a colonial militia,
General.

HEYWARD
Major Duncan Heyward reporting, Sir!

Webb's pouring gin.

WEBB
Duncan. How was your journey?

The door closes. Dispatches are passed. They are now alone
except for the General's two Adjutants and a shadowy form
waiting patiently in a corner. He's MAGUA. In the dim light,
he's motionless. Webb slides a glass across to Heyward.

HEYWARD

I didn't experience anything so surprising from Bristol to Albany as what I witnessed here today.

WEBB

And what is that?

HEYWARD

The Crown "negotiating" the terms of service?

WEBB

I know.

(assuming a co-commiserator)

One has to give Americans "reasons" and make agreements to get them to do anything at all. Tiring, isn't it?

(throws up his hands)

But that's the way of it here.

HEYWARD

(tight)

I thought British policy is 'Make the World ... England', sir.

A chill. Majors don't upbraid Generals.

WEBB

You will take command of the 62nd Regiment of Foot. At Fort William Henry under Colonel Munro. I will march the 33rd to Fort Edward.

HEYWARD

Sir! ... Might I enquire if General Webb has heard from Colonel Munro's daughters? I was to rendezvous with them in Albany and escort them to the fort.

WEBB

Yes. You may.

(to Magua, after a glance at Heyward)

You there. What does Munro call you?

(to Heyward)

The "Scotsman" has sent one of his Indian allies to guide you.

MAGUA

rises and slowly walks into the light. He is reserved and over six feet tall. His head is shaved into a mohawk. Rings, beads & feathers pierce his ears. A blanket is worn as a shawl over his left shoulder exposing his right arm and heavy tattooing. A long tomahawk is in the belt of his breechcloth.

WEBB

The Scotsman's daughters are at the Poltroon's house. A company of the 33rd will accompany you and Magua will show you the way.

HEYWARD

By your leave, sir.

Webb holds Heyward a moment

WEBB

(to Adjutants)

Explain to the Major we care little about toying with colonial militia because we have little to fear from the French. They have not the nature for war. Their Latinate voluptuousness combines with their Gallic laziness and the result is: they would rather make love with their faces than fight.

Webb's Adjutants laugh uproariously at his wit. Heyward's stiff, perfunctory smile. He's been made the butt of the joke. He does not share Webb's derisive view of the French.

Webb doesn't like Heyward's manner. We don't like Webb. Then:

WEBB

(continuing)

Dismissed.

Heyward stiffly salutes. Webb casually, perfunctorily salutes the younger man in return.

HEYWARD

(to Magua)

Dawn. At the encampment. Six a.m. sharp. See to it you're there.

Beneath Magua's barely deferential manner we sense intelligence & menace. None of these Brits see it. We do.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR POLTROON'S HOUSE - DUNCAN HEYWARD - DAY

brushed clean, his wig freshly powdered, his tricorne in his hand with a crimson sash and sword and his cavalry boots, walks through the gate after knocking. He enters a small courtyard. Suddenly he hears ...

CORA

(O.S.)

Heyward! Duncan Heyward.

Heyward looks to the side. An inner light turns on. In this mode, this is a man we could like.

REVERSE: CORA MUNRO

enters from the garden. She's vivacious, dark-haired, unconventional in that she's educated, but with conventional values and attitudes. She hugs Duncan to her and then pushes him away to look at him.

HEYWARD

My God it's good to see you.

He takes her hand in both of his and kisses it. He is open and lit up.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR POLTROON'S HOUSE, BACK YARD - CORA & HEYWARD - DAY

A vegetable plot behind the Poltroon's house is a provincial substitute for a formal garden setting. Heyward and Cora sit on rough wooden chairs. Wind blows. In the background a servant hangs laundry. The white sheets billow. A table holds a tea setting. They're sitting close to each other, talking seriously and quietly. Duncan's jacket is removed. Time's passed. Long pause. Then:

CORA

I'm embarrassed to be so indecisive
... after so long apart and after
you've traveled so far ...

HEYWARD

And by sea!

CORA

You still have an aversion to the
water?

HEYWARD

Aversion? No. ... "Hatred" ...
"Loathing" ...

Cora laughs.

HEYWARD

But it was worth it all to end in a garden by your side.

She looks askance at him. Then the banter drops.

CORA

(difficult)

Dear Duncan, my affection is as towards a closest friend. Alice and I depend on you and respect you immensely ... I wish they did, but my feelings don't go beyond that. Do you see?

HEYWARD

Isn't respect and friendship, a reasonable basis for a man and woman to be joined? And all else may grow in time ...?

CORA

Some say that's the way of it.

HEYWARD

"Some"?

CORA

Cousin Eugenie, my father, but ...

HEYWARD

(interrupts)

Cora, in my heart, I know once we're joined, we'll be the happiest couple in England. Let those whom you trust, your father, help settle what's best for you. In view of your indecision, why not rely on their advice and judgment as well as mine?

Cora stares directly at Heyward. Then she looks away. She has no answer. Something subterranean disturbs her about delegating judgment over the fate of her life.

HEYWARD

Will you consider that?

CORA

(pause; smiles)

Yes. Yes, I will.

She's still unsettled.

ALICE

(O.S.)
Duncan!

REVERSE: ALICE MUNRO

eighteen years old, white-blond hair, wide blue eyes. She's effervescent and runs to hug him. Heyward is taken aback by her enthusiasm and laughs.

HEYWARD

My God, you've grown up.

ALICE

We leave in the morning?!

HEYWARD

(rises)
Yes, miss.

ALICE

I won't sleep tonight. What an adventure! I absolutely cannot wait to return to Portman Square, having laid eyes upon the full-blooded, red men in the wild!

CORA

My God, Alice.

HEYWARD

(smiles)
It can be dangerous ...

ALICE

Nonsense. Papa wouldn't have sent for us if it were dangerous.

Alice takes Heyward's hand. Cora pours Heyward more tea. The white sheets billow.

AMBROSE

(O.S. - barks)
Atten-shun!

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR BRITISH ARMY HQ - TWENTY BRITISH REGULARS - DAY

jolt upright as if electrified.

AMBROSE

(entering)
Shoulder arms!

AMBROSE

a sergeant major of forty-one is wide and deep and built like a fullback. You do not mess with Sgt. Major Ambrose.

(barks)

Form two companies of nine ... MARCH!!

THE MEN

march in perfect drill into two groups, each three across and three deep.

MILITARY HQ, ENTRANCE - MAJOR DUNCAN HEYWARD

steps out. Rigid salutes.

HEYWARD

climbs onto his white military charger. It's spirited. Cora & Alice are in riding dresses and veils. The veil doesn't completely cover Alice's golden hair and blue eyes and the flush of her complexion. They're riding two sidesaddled Narragansetts. The tight traveling dress reveals that Cora, two or three years older than Alice, is fuller and more mature. All three ride to the front of the column. The baggage horses and mule are in the gap between the two companies.

MAGUA

cradling his musket.

REAR SHOT: THE COLUMN

down the path that leads into the wall of forest looks impressive.

WIDER: THE COLUMN

marching. Now they look brave but smaller. The forest - with all its mysteries and dangers - now impresses us as a towering dark, sinister, and it's immensity swallows up the living mass which slowly enters its bosom.

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR FOREST

TRACKING the Redcoats, their faces now filmed with dust, cut with lines of perspiration. They march in perfect formation.

We TRACK PAST the pack horses, the first company, Sgt. Major Ambrose and on to Cora & Alice. Alice seems fatigued.

Cora's turned, looking up into the forest canopy, astonished at the deep beauty of the place.

CORA'S POV: FOREST CANOPY

of trees is dark, except for spots where leaves are sparse, and there the light is golden.

It's the forest of childhood.

In a ravine a buck disappears into a deeper stand of trees.

CORA

(O.S.)

Alice, did you see that ...?

CORA'S

reverie's broken by Heyward entering the frame.

CORA

Alice?

Alice rouses from fatigue.

HEYWARD

Are you alright?

ALICE

Can we rest soon?

HEYWARD

Absolutely.

Heyward rides to the front of the column to Magua, who's twenty to thirty yards ahead of everybody else.

HEYWARD

You there, Scout!

Magua slowly turns towards Heyward.

HEYWARD

(overly articulated)

We must ... stop ... soon. Women are ... tired. You ... understand?

MAGUA

(perfect English)

I understand. This is not good place to stop. Two leagues from here. No water 'til then. That's where we stop. Better place.

HEYWARD

No. Stop in the glade just ahead!
When the ladies are rested, we will
proceed. Do you understand?

MAGUA

(in Huron: English
subtitle)

"Magua understand paleface is a dog
to his women. When his women want
to eat, he lay aside his tomahawk to
feed their laziness."

HEYWARD

Excuse me. What did you say?

MAGUA

Magua say: "Yes. Good idea."

As they begin to stop ...

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR MOUNTAINS & FOREST - WIDE - DAY

Silently entering on either side of us come Chingachgook,
followed by Hawkeye and Uncas. Even relaxed, they carry
themselves with a degree of alertness. They're eighteenth
century Viet Cong moving through the rain forest. The Maxfield
Parrish/Hudson Valley of tall trees, ravines and streams is
idyllic in front of them. All three cradle their long guns
and move silently on moccasined feet.

FRONTAL: CHINGACHGOOK

in a stream - relaxed but attentive, abruptly stops. The
others freeze in their tracks.

Chingachgook sees and then stoops to examine ...

ROCK

under the water in the stream. It's been turned from its
bed. Chingachgook finds another. Uncas, moving up on his
flank, climbs the bank and moves off into the trees, searches
and then he gestures ... he's found another sign of something.

CHINGACHGOOK

has headed off further down the stream and discovers nothing.
Rapidly he rejoins Uncas and Hawkeye who've become extremely
alert. They move up the bank into the forest ninety degrees
from their previous path.

TRACKING: HAWKEYE, UNCAS & CHINGACHGOOK

moving. Fast. Nearly soundless. They hardly disturb a blade of grass. The impression: expertise, deadliness and an impression something's wrong.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR FOREST, TRAIL - MAGUA - DAY

on point. The trail cuts the side of a hill. The ground on one side rises into a forest acclivity and on the other falls off into a forested ravine. Magua walking towards camera.

CLOSER - MAGUA'S

slid his tomahawk out from the front of his belt that girdles his waist. He lets the shaft drop into his hand. He shrugs off his blanket. There is a solidity to his dark, tall figure we didn't see before. Magua turns about face and advances on the column.

TRACK WITH Magua.

Heyward and the Munro girls pass the camera as does Sgt. Major Ambrose, marching in advance of the men. Magua is approaching the soldier on the left in the first row.

We see Magua has caught the Redcoat's eye.

REDCOAT

is curious, starts to smile. What does the Huron want to say to him? When Magua is two steps away he caves in the side of the infantryman's head at the temple with the spike end of his tomahawk and, backhanded, hacks the blade through the side of the neck of the center man in the first row.

SIMULTANEOUSLY

thirteen muskets EXPLODE from the wooded rise.

FIVE REDCOATS

are blown off the path, two others are wounded ...

AMBROSE

AMBROSE

Form company! Left face! March!

ALICE

shrieks. Cora grabs Alice's reins and her own.

HEYWARD

pulling his fusil (short musket), seeing, firing, reaching for the women ...

CORA'S HORSE

bucking.

ALICE'S HORSE

bolting, dodging sideways, spilling Alice to the earth.

AMBROSE

AMBROSE
Company make ready!

The regulars slam into a firing line, stepping over the bodies of their comrades. All thirteen face the incline.

FORESTED RISE - HURONS

flash downhill through the trees. Partnered in two-man teams, one loads and prepares and fires while the other advances to the next cover. He, then, prepares and fires covering his partner's advance. Leaping fallen trees and boulders, they're athletic, fast and rapidly closing.

Even though the disciplined English regulars are a killing machine, we now see their tactics in the dense forest are grossly inferior to the Hurons' ...

AMBROSE
Present!!

CORA

covers Alice with her body, holding the reins of their bolting horses.

HEYWARD

from horseback aims his horse pistol, FIRES ...

AN ATTACKING HURON

leaping at him past Alice & Cora drops.

MULE

with baggage crashes off, down the ravine. Another two Redcoats drop. Nine left.

Then eight.

AMBROSE

AMBROSE

Fire!!

A musket volley as eight muskets go off as one shot, sending a lead scythe through leaves. But ...

REVERSE:

Hurons were behind cover. Only one was exposed and hit.

AMBROSE

(continuing)

Load! Prime!

The English rush to complete the reload. Will they do it in time?

AMBROSE

(continuing)

Present! Present!

Suddenly, Hurons - en masse - CRASH down onto the Redcoats line with tomahawks, war clubs and point-blank musket fire.

ALICE

on the ground, screaming insanely, covered by Cora who's protecting her little sister, and ...

HEYWARD'S

horse shot from beneath him, the animal folding, falling straight to the earth, and ...

MAGUA

shoots Ambrose in the chest, and ...

HEYWARD

by the Munro daughters spins, swinging his fusil like a ball-bat, upending one Huron and lunges with his bayonet in his left towards another. But this Huron easily slips the thrust and slams Heyward with his rifle butt.

BRITISH

dead and dying.

AMBROSE

blood gushing from his chest wound, fires his pistol, dropping a Huron; slashes a second with his sword.

Then he's chopped down. Hurons begin scalping the British while four race towards Heyward and the two women.

HEYWARD & CORA & ALICE

ready to die. Heyward has only his fusil as a bludgeon. He readies ...

THREE LOUD SHOTS

BLOW three of the Hurons sideways, head over heels down the rise.

REVERSE: THREE MEN

barely seen, running diagonally across the fall line of the ravine. In parts, we recognize Nathaniel, recharging Killdeer on full run, and Uncas.

HURON'S

not sure where the shots came from. Suddenly Chingachgook slams him, head first into the ravine with the war club. He didn't even slow down.

HURON

warrior spins. Uncas tomahawks his shoulder. The Huron swings downwards. Uncas ducks beneath the swing and slashes his throat, sending him downhill into CAMERA as ...

HAWKEYE'S

momentum and thrown tomahawk spread-eagles one Huron, near a couple of wounded Redcoats who fight on ...

MAGUA

calmly sees the odds have changed. His attention becomes focused. He commits a very revealing act seen through the blurred foreground action of struggling bodies. We will remember it. He raises his musket and aims at ...

CORA MUNRO

who's unaware she's a target. Why is he singling out a Munro girl to kill?

HAWKEYE

sees. Killdeer's at his shoulder ...

TIME SLOWS: MAGUA

senses Hawkeye. Moving through liquid, his eyes drift left. The moment is frozen.

Their eyes lock, each to the other's. Then ...

TIME UNFREEZES

Magua swings at Hawkeye and FIRES ...

HAWKEYE

shifts. The .65 caliber musket ball rockets past his ear and he's already squeezing Killdeer's trigger as ...

HAWKEYE'S POV OVER BARREL: SMOKE

from Magua's musket blast clears. Magua's gone. He almost shape-shifted, it happened so quickly. It's nearly mystical.

HAWKEYE

lowers Killdeer, impressed.

CORA

glances back at Hawkeye. She doesn't know why he's looking at her.

CHINGACHGOOK

pursues two fleeing Hurons up the incline. Two strides gain him the first man, who he hamstringing and runs over to pursue the second up the hill ... as ...

HEYWARD

in the confused melee, grabs a found musket and aims it at an Indian. We recognize that he's aiming at Chingachgook pursuing the second Huron up the hill ...

CORA

No, Duncan!

Duncan ignores her.

HEYWARD'S MUSKET

is jerked from his hands.

HAWKEYE

... case your aim is any better'n your judgment.

He's drawn his sword, reflexively. Hawkeye flips the musket around one-handed. It's pointed at Heyward's chest. And Hawkeye FIRES, killing an attacking Huron behind Heyward. As Heyward spins ...

CHINGACHGOOK'S WAR CLUB

flashes up the hill. It cleaves the second man's back and bowls him over. Chingachgook retrieves his club as his scalping knife slashes down ...

UNCAS

scalps the man he killed. Chingachgook dispatches the Huron he hamstrung.

WIDE

Sudden silence. Heyward's motionless. The women are frozen, as terrified of the savages and apparent half-breed rescuers as they were of those who attacked them.

ALICE

Cora, holding her, is stunned but functioning. Moments ago both women were clean and demure. Now their riding dresses are torn, mud-stained, blood-spattered and their baggage is gone.

HEYWARD'S

crossed to his slaughtered soldiers. Moments ago they were a testament to British military power. Now they're dead meat. Ambrose's body is against a tree. In the B.G. two of the wounded start to rise ...

ALICE

(O.S.)
Stop it!

Heyward spins.

UNCAS

just cut the throat of the second Narraganset. It drops into the brush. Alice attacks him.

ALICE

We need them to get out of here!

Uncas gently restrains her. Cora reaches Alice and grabs her away from the "savage".

Heyward runs in to protect the women ...

HEYWARD

(to Nathaniel)
 ... why the bloody hell he do that
 to the horses?!

Uncas, all business, is now reloading, lifting powder horns, scanning the trees.

UNCAS

(matter of fact)
 ... too easy to track ... they can
 be heard for miles ... find yourself
 a musket ...

Cora's surprised by Uncas' easy English. Hawkeye's scanning the forest.

HAWKEYE

(to Heyward)
 Your wounded should try walkin' back
 to Albany. They'll never make a
 passage north.

HEYWARD

(breathless)
 We were headed ...

HAWKEYE

(appropriating a knife)
 ... Fort William Henry.

CHINGACHGOOK

(to Hawkeye)
 Let's go ...

Then a fast exchange of Delaware. Cora's surprised to see it's Chingachgook's decision. Chingachgook looks at the survivors, gives his assent, starts off.

HAWKEYE

... take you as far as the fort.

Hawkeye throws Heyward a musket. Cora & Alice look towards Heyward. He looks at them: the women are totally terrified and do not move.

HAWKEYE

If we are goin' to take you, we need
 to move fast ... And the fort is
 well off our course. So if you all
 rather wait for the next Huron war
 party to come by, we'll be on our
 way.

Heyward quickly decides to go. The women follow. Hawkeye starts off after Uncas and Chingachgook.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR FOREST - HAWKEYE - DAY

moves through the trackless forest. Uncas is far out on the left flank. Cora, Alice & Duncan Heyward follow in Hawkeye's and Chingachgook's steps ...

HAWKEYE'S FEET

walking through a creek, stepping in the stream bed instead of on stones. The others follow. Hawkeye looks at Heyward.

HEYWARD

conforms. He's ill at ease not being in command, following the lead of some half-Indian frontiersman through a foreign wilderness.

HEYWARD

How far is it, scout?

HAWKEYE

Day and a half

(pause)

Where did you get ... the guide?

HEYWARD

Colonel Munro sent him. He was one of our Mohawk allies.

HAWKEYE

He is Huron and nothing else.

(checking the Munro
girls are not too
close)

Why would he want to murder the girl?

HEYWARD

What?!

HAWKEYE

Dark haired ...

HEYWARD

Miss Cora Munro. He never set eyes on her before today.

HAWKEYE

No blood vengeance? No re-proach or insult?

HEYWARD

Of course not!

(pause)

And how is it you were nearby?

HAWKEYE

Came across the war party, tracked
'em.

HEYWARD

Then you're assigned to Fort William
Henry?

HAWKEYE

No.

HEYWARD

Fort Edward, then?

HAWKEYE

No. Headin' west. To Can-tuck-ee.

HEYWARD

I thought all our colonial scouts
were in the militia?

Off to the side, Uncas smiles at the idea.

HAWKEYE

I ain't your "scout". And I am in no
damn militia.

HEYWARD

(stops)

Then you are one of those who would
allow England to fight alone while
she protects you from France?

HAWKEYE

England does not protect me and does
not war against France on our account.
She uses us to war against France on
her own account ... of greed for
land and furs.

CORA'S

appalled.

HAWKEYE

(turns)

Clear it up any?

HEYWARD

(loud)
I owe you gratitude or I'd call you
out!

HAWKEYE

(low)
Do not let gratitude get in the way...

Cora's hand holds back Heyward's sword arm because suddenly Chingachgook looms over him.

CHINGACHGOOK

(to Hawkeye)
Yengeese no good in woods. Make more
noise, I kill him.

Heyward spins. Hawkeye coolly watches Cora. Her attitude is hostile; aligned with Heyward. He turns away. Meanwhile ...

UNCAS

stops, alarmed. Something in the air bothers him. Hawkeye smells it, too.

CHINGACHGOOK

is already moving out front, low and fast ...

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR FOREST, TREE LINE - GREEN BRANCHES - DAY

After we HOLD, we realize Chingachgook's been there all along. Hawkeye and Uncas join him where the branches meet the ground. Smoke drifts through the trees.

Hawkeye sees and dips his head, then looks again ...

EXTERIOR CAMERON CABIN - WIDE - DAY

Burned, smoldering, having fallen in on itself. TRACK LEFT past what was the doorway. A dead child's hand protruding from the ruin. A fragment of a dress. Charred and smoldering wood. John Cameron's body in the wreckage. And then, through the collapsed posts and timbers, Hawkeye, Chingachgook and Uncas have advanced and are seeing what we've just seen; and then Cora and Alice.

ALICE

approaches and is frozen in horror. Cora shields her from the sight. Cora is affected but confronts it directly.

HEYWARD

(O.S.)
Anything to be done?

UNCAS

returns from under one part of the wreckage, ashen, stoic,
as they all are. We know the degree of their inner pain.

UNCAS

All dead ...

HAWKEYE

bends over a moccasin print that Chingachgook's examining.
They look at each other grimly. Heyward joins them.

HEYWARD

Who were these people?

HAWKEYE

(re: print)
Ottawa!

HEYWARD

Excuse me ...

CHINGACHGOOK

(to Hawkeye)
Ottawa.

UNCAS

enters, very careful where he places his feet ... Hawkeye
gestures to Heyward to stay where he is: on the periphery
with the women.

UNCAS

Mirrors ... tools ... clothes ...
all inside.

HAWKEYE

(to Chingachgook)
Movin' fast, not able to carry much
... this was a war party?

Chingachgook nods confirmation and indicates a direction in
Mohican. The significance is very ominous to them. We don't
know why yet. Chingachgook starts away ...

HEYWARD

Let us look after them ...

He starts approaching the bodies.

CHINGACHGOOK

Leave them.

Heyward stops. Hawkeye and Uncas follow Chingachgook, leaving the cabin.

CORA

(hasn't moved)

Though they are strangers, they are at least entitled to a Christian burial!

HAWKEYE

(shaking his head)

Let us go, miss.

CORA

I will not. I have seen the face of war before, Mr. Poe, but never war made on women and children. And almost as cruel is your indifference.

Hawkeye turns back and rapidly approaches her. She takes a step back, fearful.

HAWKEYE

(contained)

Miss Munro.

(pause)

They are not strangers

And they stay as they lay ...!

CORA

realizes Hawkeye knew these people and is deeply affected. She also realizes for the first time this is a whole new world with dynamics and complexities, behavior and rhythms she doesn't understand. He turns away from her and walks on. She hesitates a moment.

WIDE ON THE SMALL CLEARING IN FRONT OF THE FARMHOUSE

as Chingachgook and Hawkeye, extremely alert and cradling their cocked flintlocks, walk to camera, eyes sweeping the forest perimeter; they're followed by Cora, Heyward helping Alice and Uncas as rearguard.

The ruined cabin and the dead dream of a family smolders behind them.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR GLADE - PROFILE: HAWKEYE - NIGHT

moves through to where the trees seem sparse and are unnaturally white birch and some thin grass grows. The land rises into a mound. Chingachgook and the others avoid stepping on the grass and cross to the other side of it.

CHINGACHGOOK

mutters something to Uncas. He nods and disappears amongst the white birch, soundlessly.

HAWKEYE

throws Heyward a blanket. Heyward spreads the blanket below the top of the mound and - maintaining silence -he gestures for Cora & Alice to rest there.

ALICE'S HEAD

hits the blanket. She curls into a fetal position and she's out. Heyward is nearby on watch.

Hawkeye has taken a position two-thirds of the way around the crescent shaped mound.

Cora has sought him out.

HAWKEYE

doesn't react as Cora enters. He's scanning the trees; not looking at her.

They whisper ...

CORA

Why didn't you bury those people?

HAWKEYE

Anyone lookin' to pick up our trail,
would see it as a sign of our
passing...

CORA

You knew them.

Hawkeye looks at her and nods.

CORA

(stiffly)
You were acting for our benefit. And
I apologize. I misunderstood you.

HAWKEYE

Well that is to be expected. My father...

CORA

Your "father"?

HAWKEYE

Chingachgook. He warned me about people like you.

CORA

He did?

HAWKEYE

Yes. He said ... "do not try to make them understand you."

CORA

What?!

HAWKEYE

Yes. And "do not try to understand them. That is because they are a breed apart and they make no sense ..."

Cora's indignation is cut off because ...

UNCAS

moving fast. He gestures back the way he came and it means they're in jeopardy. Uncas disappears around the mound.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR BIRCH FOREST - TREES - NIGHT

Nothing. Imperceptibly we move closer and start to see shapes blocking out part of the white birch.

RED-PAINTED FACE

white eyes. A ruff of red hair stands straight up at the back of the large man's head.

Slit and monstrously elongated earlobes are weighted with silver. He's followed by others. Wary, silently, they hunt.

DEEPER: MORE OTTAWA

Towards the rear are two French Rangers ("Coureurs des Bois") from Le Regiment de la Sarre. They're bearded, dirty, dressed Indian-style in moccasins, leggings and breechcloths with hooded hunting shirts. There's nothing clumsy about them.

They're the 18th century version of Special Forces who've gone indigenous. If they and the Ottawa find our people, it's all over.

ALICE

seeing the red-painted Ottawa approach, starts to panic. Her hyperventilating and involuntary small sounds of fear will reveal their position. A hand covers her mouth and silences her struggling. WIDEN. It's Uncas. His other arm is around her, holding her, looking towards the advancing Ottawa.

HAWKEYE

on his back, his tomahawk within reach on the ground.

OTTAWA & FRENCH

are fifty yards away from the crescent mound behind which lie our people. Mist envelops them ...

CHINGACHGOOK

His massive arms spread revealing his war club in his left fist; his fusil in his right hand.

HAWKEYE

waiting for the attack. Cora's eyes are anxious, but there's no terror there. Nathaniel's impressed with her cool. He hands her a pistol. She takes it. He listens for the soft drop of moccasined feet ...

OTTAWA

through the grass. Thirty feet away they stop. They're motionless. Then their leader gestures and they start backing out. The French Rangers continue towards the crescent.

The Ottawa chief takes one's arm and stops him. The French Ranger whispers something inaudible. The Ottawa chief shakes his head, "Non. Pas possible ..."

And means it. They retreat.

SEPERATE SHOTS: HAWKEYE, UNCAS, CHINGACHGOOK, CORA

tensely monitor the Ottawa retreat.

UNCAS & ALICE

He slowly removes his hand from her mouth. She's a little shy, then she looks up, catches his eyes. Then she averts her face.

CHINGACHGOOK

sees all of it; doesn't like it.

HAWKEYE

The Ottawa are gone.

CORA

(quietly)

Why did they turn back?

In answer Hawkeye looks behind & above her head.

CORA

turns and makes out stilt platforms of skeletons and torn strips of buckskin silhouetted against the night sky in the distance. They have camped on sanctified ground, a burial place.

CORA & HAWKEYE

She thinks it would be a mistake to ever underestimate the skill of these men or the danger & complexity of this place. She hands the pistol back to him. Their hands almost touch.

CORA

(still pissed off)

"We're a breed apart and we make no sense" ...?

HAWKEYE

(smiles)

In your particular case, miss, I would make some allowance ...

CORA

(sarcastic)

Thank you so much.

Cora is angry. Hawkeye, staring at the trees, glances at her. She settles, looking at him.

Her mood changes. Then ...

CORA

You called Chingachgook your "father"?
Where is your real family?

Hawkeye's surprised by her question.

HAWKEYE

They buried my ma & pa and my sisters.

HAWKEYE

And Chingachgook - who found me with two French trappers - raised me up as his own.

CORA

I'm sorry.

HAWKEYE

I do not remember them. I was one or two.

CORA

How did you learn English?

HAWKEYE

My father sent Uncas & I to Reverend Wheelock's school when I was ten. So we would know both worlds ... though we were told only bother learning readin' & arithmetic from yous.

CORA

And what were the consequentialities of European culture you didn't bother with?

HAWKEYE

The Bible. Monarchy. Many wrong ideas about the government of men. My father's people already know each man is his own nation. And only he can have dominion over himself. Not kings. No man is better than any other man.

CORA

In London those radical ideas could land you in Newgate prison.
(changing the subject)
Why were those people living in this defenseless place ...?

HAWKEYE

'Cos frontier land's the only land affordable to poor people. So after seven years indentured service in Virginia, they headed out here where they are beholden to none and not livin' by another's leave ... Their name was Cameron. John & Alexandria.

Cora sees the slate grey clouds and, in between, the fields of stars. She looks at Hawkeye; then again up at the night sky.

HAWKEYE

(continuing; looking
up)

My father's people say ... at the
birth of the sun and of his brother,
the moon, their mother died ... so
the sun gave to the earth her body,
from which was to spring all life.
And he drew forth from her breast
the stars. The stars he threw into
the night sky to remind him of her
soul.

(the sky)

So there is the Camerons' monument
... my folks', too, I guess.

CORA'S

pensive. Hawkeye's watching her. Her reaction is enigmatic.
After a pause ...

CORA

(low)

You are right, Mr. Poe. We do not
understand what is happening here.
And it is not as I imagined it would
be, thinking of it in Boston and
London ...

HAWKEYE

Sorry to disappoint you ...

CORA

(eyes downcast)

On the contrary. It is more deeply
stirring ... to my blood ...

(then up into his
eyes)

... than any imagining could possibly
have been ...

She closes her eyes, turns slightly and prepares to sleep.
Hawkeye is the one left staring into the birch forest, a
little surprised. Some of his assumptions about her were
wrong ...

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR FOREST - WIDE - LATE AFTERNOON

Deep fog has set in. A hand entering the frame scares the
hell out of us. It moves a branch aside. It's Uncas. Spread
to the right is Chingachgook, far to the left is Hawkeye.
They hike up a steep forested slope in the heart of the
Adirondacks.

CORA
 Much further?

HAWKEYE

Top of this ridge. Fort and Lake George are downhill of it.

ALICE

Re-energized, her spirits pick up.

ALICE
 Will we be able to bathe?

Before Cora can answer they hear a deep, rolling roar. Alice is alarmed.

CORA
 Thunder ... Papa will arrange something.

UNCAS

looks over his shoulder, sees something in the far distance, gestures to Hawkeye and Chingachgook.

HAWKEYE'S POV: DISTANT HILLS

and the band of red-painted Ottawa and Coureurs des Bois, who have now split into two groups, are still on their trail. Meanwhile, oblivious ...

HEYWARD
 The men of the regiment will fetch water from the lake, build fires and provide every comfort you desire, Alice ...

ALICE
 Duncan, you are absolutely gallant. If Cora doesn't marry you, I shall.

CORA
 Alice!

Heyward laughs. Hawkeye sees them. It bothers us: will these Europeans, including Cora, shed their frontier experience?

ALICE
 I can't wait to see Papa ...

CORA
 And you, Duncan? What are you looking forward to?

HEYWARD
Posting to a different continent.

He and Alice laugh. Cora does not.

CORA
I think it's very important and
exciting.

Heyward looks at her. She's not kidding.

ANOTHER ANGLE: HEYWARD

helps Alice. As he does, he stares at Cora's separation and now her proximity to Hawkeye, who's walking on ahead, is something Heyward doesn't like. His dark thoughts are distracted by a FLASH of light and more ROLLING THUNDER.

WIDE FROM THE FRONT - HAWKEYE

drops and pulls Cora to the ground.

CORA
Lightning?

Hawkeye doesn't answer as he, Chingachgook, Uncas and Heyward make their way to the top of the ridge.

CLOSER ANGLES: CORA & ALICE

join them and look down upon their expectation of a secure piece of England in the wilderness, a safe harbor, a father's warm welcome.

THEIR POV: FORT WILLIAM HENRY

is none of those things. The thunder is the roar of French siege cannon clouded in dense smoke. The flashes of light are mortar bombs exploding and illumination rockets' red glare. Fort William Henry is under a massive siege by a French and Huron army.

UNCAS
looks over his shoulder.

HIS POV: OTTAWA

pursuing them. There's no way back. They're propelled forward.

DISSOLVE TO ...

EXTERIOR BATTLEFIELD, FRENCH BATTERY #1 - CLOSE SHOTS - DUSK

French cannons roar black smoke and gouts of red flame.

TRENCH

dug by sappeurs behind the cover of a huge gambio pushed toward the fort by two poles and fascis on the sides.

ENGLISH GUN CREW

searching the night.

POV: BATTLEFIELD

is black.

ENGLISH ROCKETS

light the battlefield revealing the French trenches.

ENGLISH GUN CREW

excited. Colonial militia and Mohawk snipers fire their rifles. The British gun crew scrambles to adjust their 18 pounders.

FRENCH BATTERY #1

FIRES.

FRENCH BATTERY #2

FIRES.

EXTERIOR FORT, WEST BATTERY

TRACKING. French cannon FIRE rips into the fortifications, exploding wood and earth, shredding the English gun crew with cannister. The English fight stubbornly, but we feel they're outgunned. Meanwhile ...

WIDE ANGLE FROM THE WATER

A new artillery duel erupts. The action is to the west side of the fort. On the north, the fire fight is reflected on the black water of Lake George in our foreground. Then a dark shape wiping to the right cuts off those reflections. We see in silhouette the outline of a birch canoe moving silently, barely rippling the mirrored surface of the lake.

EXTERIOR LAKE GEORGE BANK - DEBRIS

Behind it, two Canadiens and a Huron alternately snipe at the ramparts.

LOW & WIDE: SNIPERS

Behind them is black water. Its surface is broken by the rising mass of Chingachgook, followed by Uncas and Hawkeye. Muzzle flashes from the cannon reveal the canoe and the forms of the girls further out. Chingachgook's war club is held low. The Huron senses and turns and Hawkeye's thrown tomahawk knocks him back. Hawkeye's knife flashes in the night. Chingachgook drives the war club up, smashing a Canadien onto the debris. The second Canadien jabs bayonet at Uncas, slashing his side. Uncas jerks him forward by the musket, folds him over and tomahawks him.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR FORT WILLIAM HENRY, NORTH WALL - SALLY-PORT TUNNEL

NIGHT

Amidst the cannonade roar, ad-libbed shouts from Hawkeye and Heyward convince battle begrimed soldiers to open the sally-port. Our people rush in.

TORCH LIGHT

the group moves through the long, dank, tunnel. Enlisted men escorting them. Another torch from the other direction: CAPTAIN BEAMS is revealed.

HEYWARD

I'm Major Duncan Heyward!

BEAMS

Captain Jeffrey Beams. We didn't think you'd make it through!

HEYWARD

Where's Colonel Munro? His daughters are here, too.

Beams raises his torch, sees the muddied, soaked women. He is shocked that they traveled with Heyward.

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR FORT WILLIAM HENRY, PARADE GROUND - GROUP - NIGHT

emerges from a sally-port tunnel. It's smokey. NOISE is deafening. The group has traveled through a nightmare, only to arrive in hell.

HEYWARD WITH BEAMS, CORA & HAWKEYE, ALICE, UNCAS &

CHINGACHGOOK

runs diagonally past pyramidal stacks of cannon ball, smoldering beams and shrapnel, wounded men. Just then a mortar is fired and explodes, killing the gun crew. On the ramparts Mohawks and Colonial Militia, sniping at the French. Women huddle in corners next to the sick and dying.

UNDER RAMPARTS: MILITIA

AD LIBS
(shouts over roar)
Uncas! Nathaniel ...

HAWKEYE

waves. One wounded man, IAN, intercepts Uncas.

IAN
Thought you and Nathaniel weren't
joinin'-up.

UNCAS
(on the run)
Didn't!

HAWKEYE
Dropped in to see how you boys is
doin'.

COLONEL MUNRO

running from his quarters is shocked to see them.

ALICE
(hysterical)
Papa, Papa!!

MUNRO
(enraged)
Why are you here?!

Cora is stunned. Alice is decimated by her father's anger. Munro sees and whips off his coat to cover them and takes Alice under his arm. Bombardment resumes. Alice clings while they race for the cover of his quarters:]

MUNRO
(to Heyward; re: Alice
& Cora)
Why did you allow them to come? ...
And where the bloody hell are my
reinforcements!!

They race into the yellow lantern light of Munro's quarters and slam and bolt the heavy door. Heyward's confused ...

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR MUNRO'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

MUNRO
 (embracing his
 daughters; softer)
 Told you to stay away from this hell
 hole! Why did you disobey me?

CORA
 When? How?

MUNRO
 My letter ...

CORA
 There was none!

MUNRO
 What?

CORA
 There was no letter.

MUNRO
 I sent three men to Webb!

HEYWARD
 One called Magua arrived.

CORA
 He delivered no such message.

Munro's stunned.

MUNRO
 Does Webb not even know we are
 besieged?

HEYWARD
 Sir. Webb has no idea. And he
 certainly does not know to send
 reinforcements!

Munro has nowhere for his rage to go. Meanwhile, Alice clings to her father. At 45-55, the British Army has been his life. He blindly believes in its institutions, though officers like Webb would disdain his Scots origins.

FROM UNDER HIS FURY:

MUNRO

(flat)
What happened to you?

HEYWARD

(suddenly tired)
Ambush ... on the George Road. This
Magua led us into it.

(pause)
... eighteen killed. It's these men
who saved us. They guided us here
...

MUNRO

Thank you. How can I reward you?

No answer. Then ...

HAWKEYE

Help ourselves to a few horns from
your powder stores.

MUNRO

What else?

UNCAS

Some food.

MUNRO

(to Uncas)
I'm indebted to you. And get your
side sewn up, young man.

MUNRO

sees his exhausted and bloodstained surgeon in the doorway
that leads to the next rooms.

MUNRO

(bellows)
Mr. Phelps!

PHELPS' face lights up when he sees Cora Munro.

PHELPS

Miss Cora! How are you?

CORA

(smiles)
Fine, Mr. Phelps. Have you cat gut
and a suturing needle?

CORA
(for Uncas)
And we could use some rum, clothes,
and a place to wash ...

Cora tries to remove Alice from her father, but she clings to him. Munro holds her tighter. Then he whispers something to her. She nods her head. And Cora takes her.

They exit.

MUNRO

is moved beyond words by his daughters' presence. There's a break, a pause ...

MUNRO
(to Heyward over table
map)
What a place for them ...

HEYWARD
Might I inquire after the situation,
sir, given that I've seen of the
French engineering from the ridge
above?

MUNRO
(perfunctory)
Logistics are his guns are bigger
than mine and he has more of them.
They keep our heads down while his
sappers make thirty yards of trench
a day. His thirteen inch mortars
have a two hundred yard range, so
when they're close enough, they'll
move them in, lob explosive rounds
over our walls and pound us to dust.

HEYWARD
They look to be three hundred yards
out. You have three days.

MUNRO
Bloody murderers.

HAWKEYE
A man, here, can make a run straight
through to Webb.

MUNRO
... not enough time to get to Albany
and back with reinforcements ...

A Sergeant enters, snaps to attention, says something to Beams, exits.

HEYWARD

Webb's not in Albany. He marched the 33rd to Fort Edward two days ago.

MUNRO

Webb's at Edward?

HEYWARD

Yes, sir.

MUNRO

Only twelve miles away! He could be here day after tomorrow.

(to Hawkeye)

Find your man, sir! Captain Beams will give you the message.

Beams nods. Munro turns back to the map. Hawkeye has something else to say.

HAWKEYE

John Cameron's cabin. We come upon it last night. Burned out. Everyone murdered. And it was Ottawa. They're allied to the French.

Munro looks at him.

MUNRO

Yes, Mr. Poe? So?

HAWKEYE

It was a war party. It means they're on the attack up and down the frontier.

Munro turns to look at him for a long beat. Munro doesn't like what his response must be to this news. He turns to Heyward and the map.

MUNRO

(cold)

Thank you.

Hawkeye's dismissed, frozen out.

HAWKEYE

Many men here, their homes are in the path.

MUNRO

That's all, sir.

Hawkeye is furious. Chingachgook gestures Hawkeye out. He leaves Munro's quarters almost knocking over an entering Adjutant who backs way up to let Chingachgook pass.

HEYWARD

Things were done. Nobody was spared...

MUNRO

Terrible feature of war in the Americas.

(beat; a mantra)

Best to keep your sight fixed on our duty. Our duty is to defeat France. That hangs on a courier to Webb.

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR MONTCALM'S MARQUEE - CHORAL GROUP - NIGHT

of three Seneca women and five boys, led by a Jesuit, sing the Te Deum in the Iroquois language. This is a large tent that could sleep twenty. Montcalm's four personal guards are at the entrance as well as COMTE DE LEVIS in dirty lace, a facial wound and a braceful of pistols on a sash. Inside is simple campaign furniture and a six by eight foot battle standard and flag of France.

MONTCALM

stands with a huge and fearsome elaborately tattooed and robed Seneca chief in a silk turban ...

SENECA CHIEF

... and the Black Robes of Michilimackinac left us no time to put our cabins in order before telling us our French father had need of our aid. We rolled our blankets and were the first to be here. Yet we are not the first and closest to my father's campfire.

The Marquis de Montcalm is forty-five, wears a large wampum belt as a sash over his waistcoat. He has an acute intellect, an elegant manner. He is more aristocratic than Munro, but a consummate professional soldier. Over the Seneca's shoulder, Montcalm sees and nods to ...

MAGUA

entering with four Huron braves. This is not the Magua we saw on the trail. In his scalp lock, now red-stained and cut to a Huron roach, are three black plumes. A match-coat blanket drapes his left shoulder.

MONTCALM

(to Seneca Chief)

For my children and the children of
the true faith, my friendship and
esteem is boundless ...

I will give you three oxen for a
feast and tomorrow I, myself, will
sing the war song with you in the
great council house.

The Seneca Chief is satisfied and his people, plus the Jesuit,
exit. The look on Magua's face and the wry expression on
Montcalm's allows us to understand their relationship is
based on realpolitik.

MONTCALM

Le Renard Subtil, how are things
with your English friends?

Magua exhales in derision as he brings a chair to face
Montcalm and sits, European style ...

MONTCALM

(over his shoulder)

Louis Antoine, join us.

LOUIS ANTOINE DE BOUGAINVILLE enters. He wears a functional
melange of Indian moccasins over white linen breeches and an
officer's waistcoat.

MONTCALM

Hear what le Subtil has to tell us
...

Bougainville published a book on integral calculus at twenty-
five, at twenty-six was a secretary to the French Ambassador
in London, in January 1756 at twenty-seven he was elected a
member of the British Royal Academy of Science and at age
twenty-eight he's aide de camp to the Marquis de Montcalm
with the rank of captain. Later in life, he brought
"bougainvillea" from Tahiti to Europe to America.

MAGUA

English war chief, Webb goes to Fort
Edward with 33rd Regiment. He does
not know my father's army attacks
Fort William Henry.

BOUGAINVILLE

But by now Munro knows his couriers
didn't get through. He'll send
another.

MAGUA

The Grey Hair will try.

BOUGAINVILLE

Four or five, including two women entered the fort ...

MAGUA

The Grey Hair's children were under Magua's knife but escaped. They'll be under it again.

MONTCALM

Why do hate the Grey Hair, Magua?

MAGUA

When the Grey Hair is dead, Magua will eat his heart. Before he dies Magua will put his children under the knife so the Grey Hair will see his seed is wiped out forever.

Montcalm won't get a direct answer.

MONTCALM

My sappeurs are advancing the trenches through the night, now. You may have your opportunity soon.

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR SURGERY, ENTRANCE - PHELPS - NIGHT

exhausted, sitting on a low stool, taking a breath.

HAWKEYE (O.S.)

She know what she's doin'?

Phelps looks up, then he looks over his shoulder at Cora. She's in a borrowed launderess dress/blouse ... She looks different. He's a little indignant.

PHELPS

First assisted me in Austria when she was fourteen. I would say she does ...

Her apron is stained. Hawkeye sees this may be her first time in the New World, but it's not her first military campaign. Still angered at Munro's dismissive response, he's nevertheless falling for Cora.

HAWKEYE

She does not shy away from much ...

PHELPS

(elsewhere)
What's that?

HAWKEYE

Nothin'.

Alice Munro has caught Hawkeye's attention. Outside the surgery where a casement meets a wall, she sits, withdrawn. A catatonic older woman in a fine dress sits next to her.

PHELPS (O.S.)

Miss Cora? Gentleman looking for you.

HAWKEYE

enters. Cora's sewing up Uncas.

CORA

(looks up)
Mr Poe?

HAWKEYE

Miss.
(re: cotton)
May I?

Cora, curious, nods. Hawkeye cuts some pieces from her ruined and discarded dress that she now uses to bandage Uncas. We don't know why; neither does Cora.

HAWKEYE

(to Uncas)
You 'bout done holdin' hands with Miss Munro?

Uncas laughs, looking from her to Hawkeye. Then he's up and he hurts. Cora starts to tend another wounded man. As they start out, Hawkeye hesitates. Sensing it, Cora turns.

CORA

What are you looking at, Mr. Poe?

HAWKEYE

Why, I am looking at you, Miss.

Cora measures the directness of Hawkeye's manner. It's not insolent, only unsettling.

Feeling foolish; she turns. He leaves.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR FRENCH TRENCHES - SAPPEURS & ENGINEERS - NIGHT

having worked through the night, are still digging the diagonally-advancing trench. We note it's closer than it was.

EXTERIOR FRENCH TRENCHES - FRENCH PICKETTS

at their posts guard the sappeurs. Meanwhile ...

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR FORT WILLIAM HENRY, WEST SIDE - SALLY-PORT - NIGHT

opens. Ten Mohawks and Rangers crawl towards the French lines. Meanwhile ...

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR FORT WILLIAM HENRY, PARAPET - HAWKEYE & UNCAS - NIGHT

are low and out of French sight in the northeast battery. Four others are with them, including Captain Jack. Stacked rifles are against the casement. We don't know why.

Each rifle is within reach of Hawkeye's hand. Hawkeye is taking extra care loading Killdeer. He charges it once, then overloads the powder by a quarter charge.

UNCAS

You told him about the raid?

HAWKEYE

(nods)

He does not want to hear it.

(pause)

But he is gonna have to.

JACK

(to one man)

Get together by the West Battery
James & Ian, Sharitarish & William.

Hawkeye uses the fine cotton he took from Cora. Uncas sees it.

UNCAS

Tight weave.

HAWKEYE

Another forty yards?

Uncas nods. Hawkeye wets it to make a tighter gas seal and rams it home. The tighter fit requires more effort.

HAWKEYE

looks below to ground level ...

FRONTIERSMAN - COURIER

Two pistols are holstered in a sash around his chest. He wears no hat and carries no pack. He waits by the sally-port door.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR FRENCH TRENCH - THREE PICKETS - NIGHT

are suddenly tomahawked and knifed by stripped down 42nd Highlanders and Mohawks. Alarm is raised. French and some Huron run to advance. Shots are fired.

The Rangers & Mohawks fall back.

FRENCH

emboldened, pursue ...

TRENCH IN FRONT OF WEST WALL

suddenly Heyward and three companies of the 62nd regiment of Foot (60 men) are over the top in perfect formation ...

HEYWARD

Sergeant! Form three ranks!

SERGEANT MAJOR

Sir!

(bellows to troops)

Upon the center, wheel to the left-about! March!

(three motions; drums)

Rear ranks, proper distance!

(the rear ranks back
up six paces)

Front ranks, take your distance!

March!

(everybody moves)

Halt!

(in unison they slam
to a stop)

Make ready!

(muskets snap to port
arms)

MOHAWKS & HIGHLANDERS

dodge right & left of the 62nd's line of fire.

FRENCH

are coming forward. Their sergeants trying to stop and form their men in ad-libbed French.

62ND REGIMENT OF FOOT

SERGEANT MAJOR
 (dead cool)
 First rank! Second rank! Present
 arms!
 (muskets shouldered)

HEYWARD
 Fire!!!

Like one shot, lightening, smoke and .65 caliber death screams from the first two ranks like a scythe, cutting down ...

REVERSE: FRENCH

Fourteen wounded or killed ...

62ND REGIMENT OF FOOT - HEYWARD

exposed. He's oblivious to incoming rounds. A piece of hat is blown off, epaulet is shot off. The man next to him is killed and bloodies Heyward's coat.

HEYWARD
 Advance, Sergeant Major!

SERGEANT MAJOR
 Sir!!!
 (to soldiers)
 Third rank! Twelve paces! Forward
 march!

Drums. The rear rank walks through the first two ranks, who are priming and loading in perfect order to their Sergeant Major's commands. As the third rank becomes the first rank ...

SERGEANT MAJOR
 Shoulder arms!
 (slam)
 Present!
 (slam)

HEYWARD
 Fire!!!

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR FORT WILLIAM HENRY - COURIER - NIGHT

sprints for the trees during the diversion of Heyward's sally.

TWO HURONS

materialize from nowhere and charge at him ... both are BLOWN off their feet by ...

EXTERIOR FORT WILLIAM HENRY, CASEMENT - UNCAS & HAWKEYE

now handed already-loaded, primed and cocked rifles while the four men behind them reload the two just fired. Hawkeye gestures ...

EXTERIOR HILLSIDE - THREE HALF-SAVAGE CANADIENS

are running down the hill to intercept the courier. One fires...

COURIER

a near miss.

EXTERIOR FORT WILLIAM HENRY - HAWKEYE

FIRES. A half second later, Uncas FIRES.

EXTERIOR HILLSIDE

One Canadien's falling through the trees as the second one's hit by Uncas' shot.

HAWKEYE

reaches out his hand. Killdeer with the heavier load is slapped into it. Hawkeye aims.

Looks away a second and comes back to the sight in deep concentration. The world goes silent ...

HAWKEYE'S POV: COURIER & CANADIEN

pursuer are barely visible. Only patches appear momentarily between the trees. They're three hundred yards away: an impossible shot in 1757.

EXTERIOR FOREST - THE CANADIEN

will intersect the courier. His arm is back with his tomahawk to throw ...

EXTERIOR FORT WILLIAM HENRY - HAWKEYE

judges wind, elevates the long rifle ... and FIRES at us.

JUMP CUT BACK:

TREES

Hawkeye's heavy round rips through. We HEAR the ball cut air. A few leaves flutter ...

EXTERIOR FOREST - CANADIEN

whacked head over heels by the impact.

COURIER

looks over his shoulder. He didn't know the Canadien was there. He stumbles in the half light. Then he runs on ...

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR FORT WILLIAM HENRY - WEST SALLY-PORT

The three companies of the 62nd Regiment of Foot file back into the fort in perfect order. The sally-port is closed. Three men are wounded. The diversion worked perfectly.

HEYWARD

Sergeant Major!

SERGEANT MAJOR

Sir!

HEYWARD

Thank you, Sergeant Major. Thank the men.

SERGEANT MAJOR

Atten-hut!

TROOPERS & MILITIA

have seen no action for three days & nights. Heyward got their blood running and won their respect. They step aside and nod to him. Heyward keeps walking. He is home.

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR MUNRO'S BEDCHAMBER - DOOR - NIGHT

a knock and Heyward enters.

CORA & ALICE

Alice is in her father's bed. Cora is collecting and tearing linen into strips for bandaging.

HEYWARD

Cora ... I wanted to talk to you,
but I'll come back another time ...

Alice looks at the two of them and rises out of the bed.

CORA

Alice ...

ALICE

Talk to Duncan, Cora ... I must manage... I cannot be an invalid schoolgirl.

(starts for door)

I'll see if Mr. Phelps needs anything ...

She leaves.

HEYWARD

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to ...

CORA

Her nerves are shattered. She's trying to be brave.

There's a lot going on under Cora's surface. We don't know what it is, but it's disconcerting.

HEYWARD

Cora, I adore you and, when we come together, we will be the happiest couple in England ... I am certain of that. More than ever before.

(softens)

I believe you must trust the judgment of others who hold your welfare so close to their hearts ...

CORA

Duncan ...

(pause)

Duncan, I promised you an answer. You have complimented me with your persistence and patience ... But the decision I've come to is I'd rather make the gravest of mistakes than surrender my own judgment.

Heyward is stunned.

CORA

And it's been unfair to you, while I search myself for feelings, which, if they were there and as strong as they ought to be, would've made themselves known long ago ...

(pause)

Take my admiration and friendship, Duncan. And please take this as my final answer. It must be no.

Heyward' shattered inside.

HEYWARD

I see ...

CORA

I am sorry, Duncan ...

Heyward nods. He's speechless. He's erect as he leaves the room.

CLOSE: CORA

The tension rushes out of her and she shudders and leans against the quarter-timbered walls for support. Then she collects the linen and starts out.

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR FORT, INNER CORRIDOR - CORA

moving through the corridor past wounded. Two French mortar bombs explode above one of the casements. We hear shrill screams in the distance and ...

HAWKEYE (O.S.)

... it was no raidin' party out for pillage. The cabin was attacked by a war party. They are sweeping south down the frontier spreading terror among farms and Mohawk villages 'cos all the men are here.

IAN (O.S.)

And my cabin's not thirteen miles south of Cameron's!

Cora, passing the open door to Munro's crowded office, now hesitates.

CORA'S POV: THE ROOM

Hawkeye, Captain Jack Winthrop, Ian, seven or eight other militia spokesmen, Munro, Heyward, two adjutants, one lieutenant of Rangers.

MUNRO

(to Jack)

I must receive proof more conclusive than Mr. Poe's opinion before I weaken our defenses by allowing militia to withdraw.

JACK

Chingachgook's of the same opinion. Taken together, that's gospel. Your fort will stand or fall depending on Webb and reinforcements, not these colonials' presence.

MUNRO

I judge military matters, Captain Winthrop, not you.

HAWKEYE

That judgment is not more important than their right under agreement with Webb to defend their farms & families ... Major Heyward was at John Cameron's. He saw what it was.

MUNRO

(looking to Heyward
for confirmation of
his point of view)
What did you see, Major?

Heyward looks around the room. And he catches the doorway...

CORA

beyond the periphery of men, staring at him.

HEYWARD

Munro is expecting him to be the good soldier in defense of British military interests.

At the same time ...

CORA

examines him with a cool, level stare.

HEYWARD

looks at Munro. More French rounds detonate O.S. What if Webb gets here and they need to launch a counter-attack? They need every man they have. It's his moment of decision ...

HEYWARD

(to Munro)
I saw nothing that would lead me to the conclusion it was other than a raid by savages bent on thievery.

Jack Winthrop grabs Nathaniel.

HAWKEYE
You're a liar!

CORA'S

saddened. Heyward's stature has fallen irrevocably in her eyes.

HEYWARD

can't help it. He turns to look at Cora ...

HEYWARD'S POV: DOORWAY

She's gone.

HEYWARD

suffused with an inner sadness, turns to Hawkeye.

HAWKEYE
And the blood is on your hands!

Heyward reaches for his sword.

MUNRO
(to Heyward)
I'll have none of that!
(to colonials)
Montcalm is a soldier and a gentleman.
Not a butcher.

HAWKEYE
Easy for you to suppose. While it is
their women and children, not yours,
alone in their farms!

MUNRO
(exploding)
You forget yourself!

JACK
We are not forgettin' Webb's promise!

MUNRO
British promises are honored. And
the militia will not be released.
Because I need more definite proof
than this man's word!

JACK
Nathaniel's word been good on the
frontier a long time before you got
here!

MUNRO

This interview's over! The militia stays!

JACK

(to Munro)

Does the rule of English law no longer govern? Has it been replaced by absolutism?

This is very dangerous talk.

HAWKEYE

And if English law cannot be trusted, maybe these people would do better makin' a peace with the French!

HEYWARD

That is sedition! Treason!

HAWKEYE

That is the truth!

HEYWARD

(restraining himself)

I ought to have you whipped from this fort!

HAWKEYE

Major!

(changes down)

Some day I think you and I are gonna have a serious disagreement.

MUNRO

(steel)

Anyone fomenting or advocating leaving Fort William Henry will be hung for sedition. Anyone leaving will be shot for desertion.

(pause)

My decision is final. Get out.

Hawkeye and the others are not intimidated. Their rage smolders. The look on Hawkeye's face says this is not over.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR FORT, PARADE GROUND - BONFIRE - NIGHT

Sparks shower skyward. Impromptu music. Some Celtic proto-bluegrass played on fiddle & drums. It's stirring.

ANOTHER ANGLE: SOME WOMEN

laundresses, dance from soldier to soldier - English foot and American Rangers. A few people lit by the firelight are solemn. Most are stirred to lift their morale for a while.

THEIR FACES

underlit by the red firelight. They are a disposable people, a diverse plurality stuck in a postage stamp-size fort in an ocean of forest, locked into mortal deadly conflict because of the policies of cold and distant European monarchs.

A PLACE A LITTLE DISTANT FROM THE FIRE

We can barely make out the eyes and faces of a number of men behind logs, crates and new wreckage from the day's bombardment.

HAWKEYE

(low)
... got no kin in the settlements.
If I did, I'd be long gone.

IAN

You didn't think it right to be here
in the first place.

HAWKEYE

By my light that's how I saw it then
and I see it that way now ...

IAN

(low)
But we are under English military
authority.

JACK

(low)
I believe if they set aside their
law as and when they wish, their law
no longer has rightful authority
over us. All they have over us is
tyranny, then. And I'll stay here no
longer. No force on earth will keep
me here ... Anyone caught leavin'
the fort could be shot. So each man
make your own decision ... Those who
are goin', be back here in an hour.

HAWKEYE

Out the northern sally-port. Strike
for the east side of the swamp until
you clear the French picket line.

HAWKEYE

Head north over the ridge, then come about southeast and fork left in Little Meadow and you're free of the outpost and skirmishers ...

A COLONIAL

(grumbles)

Should've skinned outta this long ago.

COLONIAL #2

Got no families, Captain. Figured we'd stay and give 'em a hand even though ...

HAWKEYE

(to Colonial #2)

I'll cover them from the top of the casement.

JACK

(in amazement)

You're not coming with us?

Hawkeye shakes his head.

HAWKEYE

Got a reason to stay.

JACK

That reason wear a blue dress and work in the surgery?

Low laughter.

HAWKEYE

(dry)

It does and it is a better lookin' reason than you, Jack Winthrop.

(more laughs)

Push hard, 'cos you got to clear the French outpost by dawn.

(sticks out his hand

and grasps Winthrop's)

Good luck, Jack.

The men split up ...

CUT TO ...

FIRE - HAWKEYE

wanders among the dancers and musicians clustered in groups, lit by the firelight.

Someone catches his eye and he moves in that direction ...

HAWKEYE'S POV: CORA

in the shadows, leaning against the wall, searching ... we sense she's been looking for him. He comes up to her. She turns in surprise.

CLOSER

Somehow she breathes easier because he's there. She's in a white shirt with the sleeves rolled up. Hawkeye leads her away from some of the people.

CORA & HAWKEYE

Hawkeye takes Cora's hand. Cora is awakening to a new spirit, a new wind blowing through a new land, a new self-determination ... She's drawn to this rough yet graceful man with his direct manner. Hawkeye settles against a wall. She leans next to him.

Their shoulders touch.

CORA

To her everything about him seems to be somehow right. She's discovered that the passions and outrage that move him, move her ... And her readiness to give herself to what stirs the deepest resonances of her soul is the same as his.

HAWKEYE

looks at her. She's beautiful in the firelight. Cora's eyes find his and she folds into his arms. His lips find hers and tears stream down her face. She's suffused with an elation she can't explain. In the night before doomsday a romance is born in rebellion amid the huddled people in this small stockade ripped from the black earth of the forests of a wild continent.

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR BARRACKS - LOW & WIDE - DAY

door CRASHES inwards. Twelve British sentries storm in. Four bear torches.

REVERSE: HAWKEYE, UNCAS, CHINGACHGOOK, TWO COLONIALS &

SOME MOHAWKS

are out of the bunks and moving with them with tomahawks, knives, a flintlock ...

SERGEANT (O.S.)

You! Halt!

BRITISH SENTRIES

their muskets aimed mostly at Hawkeye.

SERGEANT

As you were!!

Hawkeye freezes. The others slow down, indecisive ... Hawkeye drops his tomahawk and says something in Mohican to restrain Chingachgook and Uncas. The British in the torchlight with the long muskets and bayonets are an image out of Goya.

SERGEANT

Take him!

Hawkeye's spun around and while his hands are bound.

CHINGACHGOOK

(Mohican; subtitled)

Why do they make my son prisoner?

HAWKEYE

(Mohican; subtitled)

I helped Winthrop and the others
leave ... This fight is not yours,
father. I love you and my brother.
And you should leave this place now
and go to Can-tuck-ee ...

CHINGACHGOOK

(Mohican; subtitled)

What will they do with my white son?

One of the guards - scared to death by Chingachgook - nervously fingers his musket.

GUARD

Get back from him!

HEYWARD

enters.

HAWKEYE

shrugs in answer to Chingachgook's question.

HAWKEYE'S

moved out. As he passes Heyward, his eyes lock on his.

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR MUNRO'S QUARTERS - CORA - DAY

CORA

He saved us! We are alive only because of him ...

WIDEN:

Heyward, Munro, Cora. We've entered mid-argument. An adjutant comes and goes.

Heyward and Munro are sensitive to appearances in front of the adjutant. Cora couldn't give a damn.

MUNRO

The man encouraged the colonials to desert in this very room, in my presence. He is guilty of sedition and must be tried and hanged like any other criminal, regardless of what he did for my children.

CORA

He knew the consequences. And he stayed. Are those the actions of a criminal? ... Duncan, do something.

HEYWARD

He knew the penalty for breaking regulations. He ought to pay without sending you to beg.

CORA

You know he wouldn't send me ...!
You misrepresented what you saw and caused this.

(frustrated)

I, too, was at that farm. It was as he said ...

MUNRO

Not with enough certainty to outweigh British interests in this fort.

HEYWARD

And who empowered these provincials to pass judgment upon England's policies in her own colonies? To come and go without so much as a "by your leave."

CORA

They do not live their lives "by your leave."

CORA

... They hack it out of the wilderness
with their own two hands, burying
their dead and their children along
the way.

HEYWARD

(distant)

You are defending him because you've
become infatuated with him.

Cora is having her intelligence written off as a hormone
attack. She contains her fury.

CORA

Duncan, you are a man with a few
admirable qualities. But taken as a
whole, I was wrong to have thought
so highly of you.

Heyward's shot through the heart.

MUNRO

But the man is guilty of sedition
and subject to military justice and
beyond pardon.

CORA

"Justice"? If that's "justice" ...,
then the sooner French guns blow the
English army out of America, the
better it will be for these people.

MUNRO

You do not know what you are saying!

CORA

(explodes)

Yes I do! I know exactly what I am
saying. And if it is sedition, then
I am guilty of sedition, too!

She exits, leaving them there.

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR FORT, STOCKADE - NIGHT

Heavy timbered door. A sentry. They stand at attention when
Cora passes as opposed to barring her entry.

INTERIOR CELL - HAWKEYE

comes to the door, grips the bars with his hands and looks
at Cora.

THROUGH THE BARS TO CORA

They are silent for a moment, then ...

HAWKEYE

Sorry ... can't ask you in.

Cora's pale smile.

CORA

They're going to hang you.

(pause; soft)

Why didn't you leave when you had
the chance?

HAWKEYE

Because what I am interested in is
right here ...

CORA

What would you have me do?

He touches her hand.

HAWKEYE

Webb's reinforcements will arrive or
not. If they do not arrive, the
fort will fall. If that happens,
stay close to your father.

The French will protect the officer class among the English.

CORA

No. I will find you.

HAWKEYE

Do not.

(pause)

Promise me.

Cora drops her forehead to Hawkeye's hands wrapped around
the bars. She acquiesces, nods. Then HEAVY SHELLING commences.
Cora & Hawkeye look up. Mortar bombs begin striking the
fortress. Still dark. The final French bombardment has
started.

CORA

The whole world's on fire, isn't it?

A pause.

HAWKEYE

This part of it sure is ...

Reaching through the bars set in the thick door, their hands clasp each others. On that image ...

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR FORT WILLIAM HENRY - VARIOUS CUTS - DAWN (2ND UNIT)

French cannoneers in Batteries #1 and #2 fire again and again. They work like precision drill teams.

FRENCH TRENCH

ending in Battery #3 is complete and surprisingly close to William Henry's walls. Crews reload the squat and massive newly arrived thirteen inch mortars.

MORTAR ONE

The flash-hole is primed. The burning fuse is jammed into the bomb. The primer charge is lit off and the crew ducks as the crude iron belches red flame and black smoke into the lightening sky. The second mortar ROARS. Then a THIRD.

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR FORT WILLIAM HENRY - ENGLISH CANNON CREW - NIGHT

tries to return fire but can't under the heavy French bombardment. The French mortar bomb arcs in and EXPLODES smoke, flame and shrapnel, wiping out most of the crew. The fortress is under the heaviest attack we've seen. Wounded are in shock or terrorized. Another mortar bomb arcs in and explodes part of a building and casement, starting a fire.

Another lands in the grounds. People scatter. It doesn't explode. One soldier dashes to rip out the fuse. As his hand is inches away ... EXPLOSION.

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR STOCKADE - HAWKEYE - DAWN - LATER

protects Cora through the bars as she half sleeps through the muffled roar. Then the thundering stops. Hawkeye separates himself from her and crosses to the window.

EXTERIOR FORT, MAIN GATE - HAWKEYES POV: CHEVALIER DE LEVIS

bows deeply to Major Beams. A French honor guard of five men is behind him. A white scarf is on his sword tip. The fresh destruction of the fort is apparent. Debris smolders.

INTERIOR FORT - STOCKADE - HAWKEYE

crosses to an awakened Cora. He touches her face. He's desperate to drill these next words into her brain.

CORA

What is it?

HAWKEYE

I don't know. Whatever happens you stay with your father. You stay among the officers.

Cora looks up at Hawkeye. We feel forboding. O.S. are heard drums ...

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR FRENCH LINES - MUNRO, HEYWARD, BEAMS - DAY

The drums are from Munro's honor guard. They stop.

REVERSE: FRENCH SOLDIERS

Marquis de Montcalm, immaculate, backed by his guard of honor in white, grey and medium blue with six foot by eight foot regimental colors and the French flag (gold fleur-de-lis on a field of blue).

FACES

They carried two hundred and forty-five bateaux across a ten mile portage, all their supplies and artillery, and then rowed down the length of Lake George to get here. To them, assaulting this fort is the easy part. The drummers of the honor guard play a tattoo behind them.

INDIAN FACES

Huron, Ottawa, Osage, Choctaw, Fox ... hear the drum of the honor guard and wait.

They're in war paint. Many tattoos. Split ears. The Osage scalping locks are hennaed red. Canadiens among them are bearded, dirty, half savage ... At their head ...

MAGUA

in full war paint, with a coterie of Huron warriors, silent, waiting. Drums.

INTERIOR FORT - ENGLISH TROOPS (TABLEAUX)

grim, silent, watchful.

COLONIAL MILITIA & MOHAWK INDIANS IN WAR PAINT (TABLEAUX)

watching the parlay from a blown apart battery. Silent.

WIDE: FRENCH & ENGLISH

and their honor guards. Montcalm steps forward and sweeps his plumed hat to the ground in a courtly bow. Munro bows coldly.

MONTCALM

Colonel Munro, I have known you as a gallant antagonist. I am happy to make your acquaintance as a friend.

MUNRO

And I to make yours, Monsieur le Marquis.

MONTCALM

Please accept my compliments for the strong and skillful defense of your fortress. Under the command of a lesser man it would have fallen long ago given the superior numbers and material ... mere chance has allowed me to array against you ...

MUNRO

Monsieur le Marquis, I am a soldier, not a diplomat. You called this parlay for a reason.

MONTCALM

You have already done everything which is necessary for the honor of your Prince. I will forever bear testimony that your resistance has been gallant and was continued as long as there was hope. But now, I beg you to listen to the admonitions of humanity. I beg you to consider my terms for your surrender.

MUNRO

However I may apprise such testimony from Monsieur Montcalm, Fort William Henry is strong and stands.

MONTCALM

Honor that is freely accorded to courage, may be refused obstinacy ... These hills afford to us every opportunity to reconnoiter your works and I am possibly as well acquainted

MONTCALM

with your weak condition as you are yourselves. Is Webb really en route and Montcalm hopes to take the fort by duplicity before British reinforcements arrive?

MUNRO

Perhaps the General's glasses can reach to the Hudson and he knows the size and imminence of the army of Webb ...?

Montcalm takes a moment to reply and appears genuinely sympathetic to Munro.

MONTCALM

(quietly)

My scouts intercepted this dispatch intended for you.

Munro is puzzled, suspicious.

MONTCALM

(to Bougainville)

Read the dispatch.

HEYWARD & MUNRO

BOUGAINVILLE

(O.S. - reading)

"Colonel Munro - Fort William Henry. I have no men available to send to your rescue. It is impossible. I advise you to seek terms for surrender. Signed Webb."

Munro is rocked, as if struck by a blow. Bougainville hands Heyward the letter.

HEYWARD

(confirming)

This is the signature of Webb.

(to Munro)

And I know the temper of our men. Rather than spend the war in a French prison hulk in Hudson Bay, they'd fight to the end.

MUNRO

(to Montcalm)

You have heard your answer, Monsieur le Marquis.

(salutes)

Munro starts off. Montcalm stops him.

MONTCALM

Sir.

(challengingly)

I am incapable of mistreating brave men. I beg you not to sign the death warrant of so many until you have listened to my terms.

Munro turns.

MUNRO

Such as ...?

MONTCALM

My master requires the fort be destroyed. But, for you and your comrades, there is no privilege that will be denied. None of your men will see the inside of a prison barge. They're free to go so long as they return to England and fight no more on this continent, and the civilian militia return to their farms.

MUNRO

Their arms?

MONTCALM

They may leave the fortress fully armed, but with no ammunition ... Other than that, ask what you wish.

Munro's impressed with Montcalm's generosity.

MUNRO

The honors of war?

MONTCALM

Granted.

MUNRO

My colors?

MONTCALM

Carry them to England to your King with pride.

MUNRO

Allow me to consult with my officers.

As he turns away something's been disconnected inside Munro that can never get put back together. As the men move away from the French ...

MUNRO

I have lived to see two things I never expected. An Englishman afraid to support a friend. And a Frenchman too honest to profit by that advantage.

HEYWARD

General Webb can burn in hell. We'll go back and dig our graves behind the ramparts! Our mission is to fight.

MUNRO

(flares)

Death and honor are sometimes thought to be the same. Today I have learned that they are not.

Munro looks at the fortress behind him.

HEYWARD

Sir!

MUNRO

(stops him with his eyes)

The decision is final.

A beat. Then Munro turns toward Montcalm. Their eyes meet across the churned, scarred earth of the battlefield.

MUNRO

I am deeply touched by such unusual and unexpected generosity ... The fort is yours under the condition that we be given until dawn to bury our dead, prepare our men and women for their march and turn our wounded over to your surgeon.

MONTCALM

Granted, Monsieur.

And Montcalm bows deeply and as he does so ...

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR FRENCH LINES - CLOAKED MAN - NIGHT

passes away from the little city of tents in the direction of the beach and towards William Henry. He seems to head towards a vantage point from which to observe the fort. As he approaches a sentry:

SENTRY

Qui vive?

MONTCALM

France.

SENTRY

Le mot d'ordre?

MONTCALM

La victoire.

SENTRY

C'est bien, vous vous promenez bien
matin, monsieur!

MONTCALM

Il est necessaire d'etre vigilant,
mon enfant.

The cloak parts. By the light of the moon the man's face is dimly perceived by us and the soldier as General Montcalm. The soldier snaps erect as Montcalm continues walking out beyond the line to a small stand of trees.

ANOTHER ANGLE: MONTCALM

The moon is broken into pieces of light on the water and behind Montcalm; from the front of the stand of trees emerges a tall figure.

MAGUA

Is the hatchet buried between the
English and my French father?

MONTCALM

Yes.

MAGUA

Not a warrior has a scalp and the
white men become friends.

MONTCALM

My master owns these lands and your
father has been ordered to drive off
the English squatters. They have
consented to go. So now he calls
them enemies no longer.

MAGUA

Magua took the hatchet to color it
with blood. It is still bright.
Only when it is red, then it will be
buried.

MONTCALM

But so many suns have set since Le Renard struck the war post. Is he not tired?

MAGUA

Where is that sun?! It has gone behind the hill. It is dark and cold. It has set on his people, they are fooled and kill all the animals and sell all of their lands to enrich the European masters who are always greedy for more than they need.

(threatening)

And Le Subtil is the son of his tribe. There have been many clouds and many mountains. But now he has come to lead his nation.

MONTCALM

That Le Renard has the power to lead his people into the light, I know well.

Magua grabs the hand of the French commander. Imperceptible surprise in Montcalm's eyes. Magua jams Montcalm's fingers to his chest.

MAGUA

Does my father know that?

MAGUA'S CHEST

A deep indentation and scar.

MONTCALM

That's where a lead bullet has torn you.

MAGUA

And this?

Magua turns his naked back to Montcalm and puts Montcalm's hand on his back ... deep ridges of a scar a half inch wide.]

MONTCALM

My son has been sadly injured. Who did this?

MAGUA

(laughs; sardonic)

Magua slept hard in the English wigwams. And the sticks left their mark ...

(pause; for real)

Magua's village and lodges were burnt.

MAGUA

Magua's children were killed by the English. Magua was taken as a slave by the Mohawks who fought for the Grey Hair. Magua's wife believed he was dead and became the wife of another. The Grey Hair was the father of all this.

(pause)

In time Magua became blood-brother to Mohawk to become free. In his heart he always was Huron. And his heart will be whole again on the day when the Grey Hair and all his seed are dead!

MONTCALM

My son Magua's pain is my pain.

MAGUA

Does the chief of the Canadas believe the English will keep the terms?

MONTCALM

Munro would. But General Webb will not send their soldiers across the salt lake. Having let them go, I fear I will only fight the same men again when I move south.

(pause; shrugs)

And yet, I cannot break the terms of the capitulation and sully the lilies of France ...

LONG PAUSE, WHEELS TURN. THEN:

MAGUA

Many things my French father cannot do, Magua can.

Montcalm reacts as if he hadn't thought of that.

MONTCALM

As the English march away, our soldiers and the Canadiens will be drawn to the looting of the fort ... except for a small guard ...

Magua abruptly leaves Montcalm.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR WOODS - MAGUA - NIGHT

walking back to the Huron camp. Reveal a Huron sub-chief has been in the woods, waiting for Magua. Now he joins him. They walk in silence. Then ...

MAGUA

(in Iroquois; re:
Montcalm)

I wonder at the blindness and pride
of the white man. He believes only
he knows how to speak falsely to
make other men do his bidding.

Magua exhales in derision.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR FORT, MAIN GATE - MUNRO - DAY

at the end of the column, rides out on his horse. Both sides of the gate are jammed with armed French troops standing at attention. The French colors and honor guard are just outside the gate along with Bougainville, Chevalier de Levis, both on horseback as is - at the head - Montcalm.

CLOSER: MUNRO

trots past his walking column out the gate. He does not look at the French.

MONTCALM

salutes Munro and bows gravely from the saddle.

CLOSER: MUNRO

salutes Montcalm.

MUNRO

(eyes forward)
Monsieur, the fort is yours.

MID-COLUMN - ON HEYWARD

marching with his 33rd Regiment of Foot well beyond the fort. The French troops have thinned out. Repressing shame, his backbone is rigid, his face is straight ahead. The 33rd marches in perfect cadence to the drum. In the B.G. Munro on his horse passes Heyward as he rides towards the front of his column. Heyward does not look at him.

FRONT OF COLUMN - CORA WITH ALICE

on the back of a mare. Alice, living through a wide-awake nightmare, is huddled under the arm of her sister. They ride behind the standard bearers. In the B.G. her father is seen approaching and takes his position at their side. Cora looks down the column, sheilding her eyes against the sun. We know who she's looking for ... Hawkeye.

CORA'S POV: THE COLUMN

The 62nd and 42nd Highlanders including Heyward ... thirty to forty women and a number of children - for safety - in the middle, some frontiersmen, Ongewasgone and many Mohawk, walking wounded. The column is still snaking its way out of the fort.

No Hawkeye.

CORA

straining to see.

EXTERIOR FORT - PRISONERS

being assembled, their hands shackled. Hawkeye is among twelve or thirteen. He stands erect, walking out of the gate. The French are starting to pour in to loot the interior.

Hawkeye looks to his left about twenty paces in front of him and sees ...

UNCAS & CHINGACHGOOK

on the other side of the column. Chingachgook cradles Killdeer as well as his own musket. They fall back to walk beside the prisoners on the other side of Hawkeye.

Their eyes connect... We don't expect Hawkeye to stay shackled for the duration.

RANK AND FILE FRENCH

A few insults. The British soldiers answer. Nobody breaks rank. It's just talk.

EXTERIOR ROAD - HAWKEYE

His eyes sweep the column snaking its way into the v-shaped valley. The path cuts through the forested hills ahead. He sees ...

HAWKEYE'S DISTANT POV: CORA

riding near the front where there are no more French soldiers. Only a few scattered and curious Huron and Ottawa. She does not see him.

PROFILE OF COLUMN - HIGH & WIDE

as it passes left to right below like a long snake through the narrow valley. We're shooting from inside the dark woods. Lower, in the light, we see a scattering on both slopes of a couple of hundred Ottawa and Huron. They are in no order, are spread out and don't constitute a threat. They watch the column.

SLOWLY THE CAMERA ... slides across the shoulders and back of a large man wearing black plumes in his scalp-lock and other than a breechcloth is almost naked. He is heavily war-painted ...

FRONTAL - MAGUA

and the left two-thirds of his face is painted red. The right third is painted black. Much silver is in his ears. His tomahawk is in his left hand. His cut-down musket in his right fist. Magua's attention is all focused to one point.

MAGUA'S LONG & TIGHT POV: MUNRO & CORA & ALICE

at the head of the column. This is the focus of Magua's attention.

WIDE FRONTAL: COLUMN, STANDARD BEARERS & MUNROS

Cora turns again to look for Hawkeye.

CLOSER: CORA

doesn't see him, but something else has caught her eye.

YOUNG HURON

running toward the column. Just one man. No musket. He's running and whooping like a dog charging from his master's front yard. Why?

CLOSER

the Huron arrives at the column, his tomahawk swings into his hand and he brains a British trooper who falls dead. The single Huron never breaks stride. He simply runs off again...

CORA

horrified, holds Alice tighter.

MUNRO

has seen it too. And now he sees ...

62ND REGIMENT OF FOOT

fixing bayonets. A large sergeant unsheathes a two-handed claymore, facing the Hurons and other Indians ...

TROOPERS

of the 33rd present arms. Did they violate the surrender by carrying ammunition? Locks are cocked. There's the answer.

MUNRO

Steady! No one fires!

EXTERIOR FORESTED HILLSIDES - OTHER TRIBES

are watching what happens.

HEYWARD

scanning them.

HEYWARD

(to Sergeant Major)

Men are to stay in file, Sergeant Major!

SERGEANT MAJOR

Yes sir!

Drums beat the cadence.

TROOPERS

step over the fallen soldier. Heads turn, they're on edge...

END OF COLUMN - HAWKEYE, UNCAS & CHINGACHGOOK

watching. They exchange looks. This is not good. Chingachgook cocks both Killdeer and his own musket.

HAWKEYE'S POV: FORESTED SLOPES

Hold. We start to make out details in the shadow. Tree trunks. We become accustomed to the dimness. Now in the lower light we see deeper in the forest.

CLOSER

Many Huron and Ottawa are hidden in the shadows. They're moving along parallel to the column, stalking it. Waiting

...

ANOTHER BRAVE

racing down the hill from the opposite flank towards the 62nd.

TWO SOLDIERS

look at their sergeant. He nods. They wait until he's within ten feet of the column. Both bayonet the Indian. He's dead.

EXTERIOR HILLSIDES - HURON & OTTAWA

saw what happened. But, they hold their ranks.

MOHAWKS

among the British are slipping tomahawks into their hands, surreptitiously. Some are cocking flintlocks.

MUNRO

gallops his horse away from Cora and Alice towards the scene of the last attack. We hear him from the distance ordering...

MUNRO

Do not break ranks! I want these ranks to hold ...!

Cora's frightened.

HAWKEYE'S

frustrated. He saw Munro leave Cora. He knows events have a momentum and it's accelerating.

CHINGACHGOOK & UNCAS

move next to the sergeant with the shackle keys who looks at them curiously as ...

WOMEN

with children nervously search the threatening trees, hoping against hope these are isolated incidents.

HEYWARD

draws his sword and is passing orders to his sergeant major, scanning the hills ...

EXTERIOR FORESTED SLOPE - MAGUA

His eyes see Munro.

WIDER & LOWER: MAGUA

raises his musket in his fist and emits a war whoop. WE NOW SEE ... hundreds have been stalking the column, hidden in the trees, maybe thousands. Then ...

WIDE: ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE

FIRE from the trees crescendos within seconds revealing a spontaneous and massive ambush of mostly Hurons. They appear from behind every tree and it turns to a ROAR of musket fire, war whoops and screams as ...

SOLDIERS & CIVILIANS

dropping like flies and seemingly thousands of Hurons attack down both slopes.

HAWKEYE

is being unshackled by Uncas. The sergeant is rising from the ground where Chingachgook knocked him. Chingachgook throws Hawkeye Killdeer and Hawkeye shrugs into his pouch and powder horn as he races with Uncas for the head of the column ...

EXTERIOR FORESTED SLOPE - MAGUA

charging down the hill ... with his coterie of twenty Huron warriors, heading for the area in which he saw Munro.

CORA & ALICE

at the head of the disintegrating column. Cora's holding Alice's head to her bosom, covering her ears as if to protect her from the sounds.

HEYWARD

shouting orders.

SERGEANT MAJOR

Right - about face! March! First rank present!

HEYWARD

Fire!

REVERSE:

The volley knocks down fifteen of a horde of attacking Hurons.

SERGEANT MAJOR

Prime! Load! Second rank six paces forward! Present!

Hurons are twenty yards away and closing.

HEYWARD

Fire!

As the line of muskets belch smoke and fire ...

WIDE: THE HILLS & PATH

We're shooting into the "v" of the valley with Hurons and other tribes pouring down from both sides. (IMPORTANT: the combined musket fire of Hurons, English and Mohawks generates tremendous clouds of smoke which obscure action, close off views, isolate pockets of combat into surreal tableaux that we'll move in and out of.

BRITISH TROOPERS

using their useless muskets as clubs or with fixed bayonets - as the smoke and fog swirls among the men - fighting for their lives ...

MAGUA

glides through the scenes, striking and hunting. Some of his coterie of braves near him.

He sees ...

BLONDE WOMAN

hugging the ground in fear. Magua throws her over. It's not Alice Munro. It's a woman protecting her baby. Magua walks on. One of the braves behind Magua raise his tomahawk. On his downswing ...

HAWKEYE

running through surreal patches, thinks he glimpses Cora two hundred yards away.

HAWKEYE

Cora!

Chingachgook, on Hawkeye's left, slams down two Hurons with his war club.

CORA & ALICE

running through the chaos and murder and British troopers and Mohawks locked in struggle with Hurons. Cora's dress is torn. She holds Alice to her. There's a pistol in Cora's hand.

ONE HURON

scalping a prone soldier, rips the trophy from his head, turns and faces us.

CORA

shoots him in the face.

EXTREMELY CLOSE: ALICE

and her eyes take it all in. And her affect starts to flatten. A blankness suffuses her expression and the girl withdraws from this reality into a deep dark cave inside her head.

HAWKEYE

locked in combat. He tomahawks one Huron's arm with a slashing downstroke and comes right back into the face of the second with his backswing while his right hand fires Killdeer at...

HURON

six feet from Uncas and about to shoot him in the back.

HAWKEYE

free for a moment, spins. He has no idea of direction any more. Everything is death in strange tableaux. Meanwhile:

MUNRO

hollering

MUNRO

Cora! Alice!

He cuts down a Huron with his sword who is trying to leap at him from the right. An Osage warrior with red scalp-lock leaps on the back of Munro's horse, reaching over to stab down into Munro's neck. The old man's left hand grabs the warrior's knife hand in an iron grip. His right hand pulls his horse pistol and under his upraised arm fires backward, point blank, blowing the Osage off the back of his horse.

WIDER

Just then Munro's mount is shot. His horse rears up, throws Munro and falls on him.

HEYWARD

shouting orders over the deafening noise.

HEYWARD

Second rank fire! Six paces back!
Prime! Load! Third rank! Present!

A well-oiled, well-drilled fighting machine, but there are fewer of them. They're getting cut off. They close ranks automatically as a man drops. They're retreating in perfect order.

HURON WARRIOR

about to strike a downwards blow is pushed aside by Magua.

CLOSER: MAGUA

His eyes drop to what's in front of him. The field goes quiet.

OVER MAGUA'S SHOULDER: MUNRO

his lower body is trapped under his dead horse. Magua leans in towards him.

MAGUA

Grey Hair. I will cut your heart
from your living chest in front of
your eyes. As you die, know that I
will put under the knife your children
and wipe your seed from this earth
forever ...

Magua pulls his knife and as he leans down towards Munro ...

MOHAWK & HURON

spin and flail furiously at each other with tomahawks and knives. The Huron goes down and then the Mohawk is shot. The Huron who shot him is cut down by a Ranger with tomahawk in one hand and bayonet in the other. Two Mohawks and three Rangers fighting back to back. They become an island swamped by Huron and Ottawa: amidst bodies and ground slippery with blood. As smoke obscures their image.

CORA & ALICE

in a group of civilian militia. Two of the militiamen are shot down. The third engages a Fox warrior. Cora & Alice run.

MUNRO'S FACE

frozen in agony by shock.

MAGUA

reaching down and up into something, emerges and jams an object we barely see into the air. But his arm and shoulder and half his chest are splashed red with blood.

LONG SHOT: MAGUA

seen from far away, holding aloft the heart of Munro.

REVERSE: HAWKEYE

saw him and fights his way to attack when ...

WHITE HORSE

crazed, CRASHES through men, knocking Hawkeye over ...

CHINGACHGOOK

protecting Hawkeye, slams his war club into one Huron, breaking his attack, his arm and his skull and swings the other way burying the bladed end into the chest of an Ottawa who's behind him. Then ...

HAWKEYE'S

up, looking wildly ...

CAMERA JAMS INTO CLEARING SMOKE:

33rd Regiment of Foot and Heyward. They FIRE into our face.

CLOSER: HEYWARD

HEYWARD

Six paces back! Prime! Load! Rank
two, present! Rank two, hold!

He grabs a partially loaded musket, the ramrod still in the barrel. They're taking fire.

Men are dying. They're being pushed back.

AN ABNAKI

wearing a large cross, attacks Heyward from the side. One-handed, Heyward fires the musket into the man's chest, sending the ramrod through him. Then Heyward's shot in the thigh and a thrown tomahawk hits him in the head and knocks him sideways.

Dazed. Barely able to stand. He uses the musket as a cane and ...

HEYWARD

Rank two, six paces back! Rank one,
present!

Rank two did not retreat six paces. They stand in confusion. Heyward looks to see what's wrong.

HEYWARD'S POV: THE REMNANTS OF THE 33RD REGIMENT OF FOOT

are standing in water. They're up against Lake George. Their backs are to the wall. Last stand. Heyward straightens.

TWO FRENCH OFFICERS

on horseback try to intercede in the slaughter of five women. One French officer is shot by a Huron. The other French officer runs through that Huron and shoots the second.

Then his horse is shot out from under him and he goes down...

JESUIT

pleads with an Abnaki to give up a child he's holding by the legs in one hand. He offers his cross. The Abnaki throws the baby to the Jesuit, Pere Roubaud.

UNCAS

sees a flash of something yellow. So does Hawkeye. They charge into the swirling chaos of attacking bodies. As we lose sight of them ...

ALICE

on her hands and knees. A massive Ottawa pulls her upright by her hair about to take her life and her scalp. He's struck by a rock in the hands of Cora which barely phases him. He bats her aside and returns to Alice, when suddenly ...

OTTAWA WARRIOR

is spun, punched and tomahawked into the ground by Hawkeye. Uncas has Alice and Cora ...

TWO RANGERS AND A MOHAWK WARRIOR

from the earlier group are nearby. They combine with Hawkeye to fight their way out with bayonets and tomahawks.

HAWKEYE, UNCAS, CHINGACHGOOK, TWO RANGERS, A MOHAWK &

MUNRO'S DAUGHTERS

back through the swirling smoke. There seems to be a lull. Then they're hit from the side by musket fire.

One of the Rangers is shot, the other wounded. Hurons attack. The Mohawk supports the wounded Ranger.

HAWKEYE

shields Cora as they back up.

CHINGACHGOOK

smashing his war club straight down on a Huron, reaches for the man's musket and shoots another. Then he sees ...

SMOKE DRIFTING OVER WATER

It's glass-smooth. And the bows are barely visible of three or four Huron war canoes.

THE SHALLOWS - HAWKEYE, CHINGACHGOOK, UNCAS, CORA, ALICE, THE RANGER & THE MOHAWK

back into the water. They're pursued by Ottawa and Hurons as they fight their way to the canoes.

CORA

held up by Hawkeye, suddenly screams.

ANGLE

something underwater is pulling her down. An Ottawa brave rockets out of the shallows. Before he's erect, Hawkeye slams him back into the water and FIRES.

WOUNDED RANGER

has shoved a large birch canoe at them.

HAWKEYE

Suddenly, the Mohawk fighting with them is shot and spins to face Hawkeye. His hands rest on Hawkeye's shoulders. Hawkeye looks into his face. Tries to hold him up, tries to rescue him. A frozen moment. Hawkeye's staring into his eyes and the man is staring into Hawkeye's as the light goes out ... Hawkeye lets him slide into the water and float away. He moves Cora and Alice towards the canoe ...

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR LAKE GEORGE - WATER & SWIRLING SMOKE - DAY

The bottom of the frame is water like glass. Smoke obscures the background. Fingers tendril towards us. Out of the mist we HEAR small splashing and then the high bow of a war canoe defines itself. It's paddled towards us.

HAWKEYE, CHINGACHGOOK & UNCAS

Cora's behind Hawkeye. Alice and the wounded Ranger are near Uncas.

CLOSER: HAWKEYE & CORA

Cora looks left. Her eyes go wide.

CORA

No!

HAWKEYE

spins.

HEYWARD & TWO TROOPERS OF THE 33RD IN A SECOND CANOE

have emerged from the smoke ten feet from them. Heyward's aiming a horse pistol at Hawkeye.

HAWKEYE

is non-plussed. He doesn't stop paddling.

HAWKEYE

You got nothin' better to do today
on Lake George than shoot me, Major,
then go ahead ...

Heyward's a hair's breadth from firing. Suddenly they hear the boom of muskets and rounds come in.

WIDE

They're being pursued by three boatloads - and then a fourth and fifth - of Huron.

HEYWARD

is indifferent to Huron musket balls. Hawkeye hasn't stopped paddling and pays Heyward no heed.

CORA

Stop it!!

Heyward comes to his senses. His head is gashed. A scarf, as a tourniquet, is tied around his leg. He lowers the gun.

HEYWARD

When you fall into British hands
again, Nathaniel Poe, I will have
you hanged.

HURON CANOES

paddle hard and deep and the canoes power across the lake.

HAWKEYE & HEYWARD'S CANOES

with less paddlers, plus wounded, are slower and will be overtaken.

HAWKEYE

looks to Uncas. They both realize the same thing. Hawkeye nods and he, Uncas & Chingachgook begin to paddle furiously. The others match the doubled pace. They're sprinting ahead but the effort is exhausting.

HURON CANOES

maintain their steady pace. Three or four Hurons fire.

HAWKEYE'S CANOE

Musket balls ricochet on the water's surface. One rips a hole through the bow.

Hawkeye sees one of the Redcoats in Heyward's canoe is giving out ...

REDCOAT #1
Can't ... keep it up ...

HAWKEYE
Pull!

He renews the attack on the water with the paddle.

HEYWARD
(shouts)
How long?

HAWKEYE
(shouts)
Only chance we got is ...
(breathless)
... to get more distance on 'em and
go to ground!

Heyward digs in. Like firecrackers in the distance, Huron muskets sound. A new hail of musket balls cut the fabric of the canoes. One Redcoat is shot in the back. He falls overboard.

HAWKEYE
(shouts)
Pull!!

HAWKEYE CANOE

sprints forward.

CLOSE: HAWKEYE

looks over his shoulder.

THE HURON CANOES

They're pulling away from them.

HAWKEYE

Pull ...!

More Huron musket balls hit water nearby.

REDCOAT

in Heyward's boat is shot. BUT ... the .65 caliber ball didn't penetrate his skin. The Redcoat - amazed - picks it off the floor of the canoe.

REDCOAT #2

Spent.

Distance caught up with eighteenth century ballistics. They're out of smoothbore musket range.

HAWKEYE CANOE

HAWKEYE

(to Heyward)

Head for ... for the white water.

HEYWARD

Do you hear me, sir!

(exhausted)

If you ever fall ... into British hands ...

(breathes)

What white water?

HEYWARD & REDCOAT'S POV: LAKE

divided by a spit of land. The right fork becomes a river with white water rapids.

HAWKEYE CANOE - HAWKEYE

paddling now, too, as they furiously jam for the white water that will shoot them way ahead of the Hurons.

UNCAS

leaps off the stern of Hawkeye's canoe and climbs up the stern of Heyward's and takes control. He roughly gestures to the Redcoat and the Major to stop paddling. He and Hawkeye will pilot the two canoes.

EXTERIOR WHITE WATER - WIDE - DAY

The canoes enter the white water and they're so light, they're jet-propelled.

CANOE POV: EIGHT FOOT WAVE

racing in the same direction they are. They hit it straight on and it shoots over them and they're drenched by two waves coming from the sides.

HAWKEYE & CHINGACHGOOK

paddle like fiends to get momentum and control.

UNCAS' CANOE

Same thing. When they crested the wave Uncas hollers at them to "pull" and they do.

As soon as they're through it, Uncas slams the paddle in the water and makes the canoe revolve a hundred and eighty degrees in a vortex so that now it's going through stern-first or the stern becomes the bow, so that Uncas could pilot it a different way through a hazard of ...

EXPOSED ROCKS

jutting out of the water.

WIDE - BOTH CANOES

Hawkeye didn't have to turn because Chingachgook, at the bow, uses his paddle to shove the canoe away from jutting rocks. Uncas does the same. Past the jutting rocks, Uncas swings it back around while ...

WHITE WATER

smashes into the camera.

ALICE & CORA

as the canoe roller-coasters and water bursts the bow. Then suddenly it's through and the water is miraculously smooth.

CANOES

The Ranger, the Redcoats and even Heyward feel the exhilaration of the ride. That's because they think they're home free.

HAWKEYE

Here's where it gets tricky ...

Heyward turns to look in front of him. He doesn't know what the hell Hawkeye's talking about.

HEYWARD'S POV: THE RIVER AHEAD

looks glass-smoth. Although there is a distant ROAR of sorts. Then Heyward realizes: something's wrong with this picture.

CLOSER: HEYWARD

The look on his face starts to change.

HEYWARD'S POV: TIGHTER

The glass surface of the river continues to a line then falls off the end of the world. The river just ends ...

BOTH CANOES: HEYWARD, REDCOATS, THE RANGER

realize they're heading for the lip of a waterfall. There's a couple of outcroppings of rock in the center at the very edge. We are at Glen Falls.

HAWKEYE

Don't move ...

AERIAL SHOT

from the other side of the falls. It's a two hundred foot high, death-defying cataract.

The canoes - slightly above us - will go right over.

TWO CANOES

At the last moment, Hawkeye & Uncas land both on either side of the larger rock outcropping. It is literally at the lip of the falls.

HEYWARD

grabs a rock to anchor the bow of the canoe. He loses his grip. The canoe rockets for the edge.

UNCAS

lurches sideways, grabs a tree root. He is the only link of the canoe to earth. The bow, with Heyward, is literally hanging over the edge. Uncas strains and pulls the canoe to the rock. He gestures to Heyward.

HEYWARD

crawls forward and makes the island. Then the two Redcoats. Finally Uncas. The canoe rockets over the falls. Meanwhile ...

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ISLAND

Hawkeye has beached his canoe and is camouflaging it with driftwood and brush. As they clamber over the high pieces of broken limestone, we see Hawkeye is slipping into a crevice. He motions to Cora. Uncas carries the wounded Ranger. Heyward helps Alice ...

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR GLEN FALLS CAVES - FISSURE - TWILIGHT

The irregular opening of medium blue sky is obscured by the black silhouetted forms of Hawkeye, Cora and then the others entering.

HEYWARD

Where do we go from here?

HAWKEYE

We don't.

HEYWARD

I don't understand!

HAWKEYE

This is it, as far as we can go ...
If we're lucky, they'll be figurin'
we can't have come this way and
must've beached our canoes and headed
cross land. If we're very lucky,
they'll figure we went over the falls.

HEYWARD

Then what?

HAWKEYE

Then we take the south rim down the
mountain and it's 12 miles cross
country to Fort Edward.

HEYWARD

And if we're unlucky?

HAWKEYE

You will have to forego the pleasure
of hangin' me.

REVERSE: WIDE

Hawkeye helps Cora; Heyward, the Ranger. Chingachgook carries Alice, down the rockface into a cave. We hear a distant ROAR reverberating off the walls.

ANOTHER ANGLE: THE WALLS

are scooped out, bone-like hollows eroded by tumbling water. At an earlier time the formation was part of the falls.

HAWKEYE & CORA

reach the irregular floor of the chamber. The ROAR is louder.

WIDEN TO REVEAL

a curtain of falling water. They're behind the cataract, probably a third of the way down its height. Light through the water strikes them with a silver luminescence. They're exhausted. The others join them. They almost have to shout to be heard.

CHINGACHGOOK

followed by Uncas, takes stock of their supplies. They check their powder. They have almost none. Uncas shares his with Hawkeye. The Redcoat's cartridge case is soaked, the paper cartridges a soggy mess. Heyward has none. The Ranger has two left. In Mohican, Chingachgook decides some things. Hawkeye and Uncas nod. Heyward approaches Hawkeye.

HEYWARD

Any powder?

HAWKEYE

(crossing to Cora)
Only one or two loads.

CORA

is soaked to the bones. Hawkeye strips off his buckskin hunting shirt and wrings it out.

Cora turns her back, strips off her white blouse and puts on the faster-drying chamois.

CORA
Are we safe?

HAWKEYE
Maybe ...

CORA
Our father? Did you see my father?

EXTREME CLOSE UP: HAWKEYE

The look on his face tells it all

CORA
Tell me!

TWO SHOT

Hawkeye takes Cora away from the group and turns her by her shoulders and whispers to her. We don't hear what he says. Cora drops to her knees and places her hands over her eyes and face like a little girl trying to make something bad go away.

HAWKEYE

Leads her to a depression, his arm around her shoulders, her face covered and she cries softly into his shoulder.

EXTREME CLOSE UP: CORA

says into Hawkeye's ear, after she looks O.S. ...

CORA
Say nothing to Alice ...!

Hawkeye nods.

ALICE

stands in the chamber not far from the wall of water, fascinated with its shimmer. She's oblivious to all the events and everything going on around her ...

HEYWARD

sees Cora & Hawkeye together and turns away.

GROUP

Uncas watches Alice. The wounded Ranger has fallen asleep. The Redcoat is exhausted. Hawkeye & Cora against the wall.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR RIVER BANK - RIVER FALLS ARE IN MIST & RED SKY - TWILIGHT

A landscape with mist rearlit by the red light of the sun that's already behind the mountains. The blues are turning purple and the greens are turning black and the white highlights of the foaming water are going rose. Reflecting the darkening sky, where the surface isn't broken, the water is fast-moving metal ... SUDDENLY: a shaved head and muscled back stands into the foreground. It moves down the shore away from camera.

He's followed by other Huron warriors. They're two hundred yards away from Glen Falls island.

HURON

looks at the island of rock & trees and tilts his head curiously ...

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR FOREST ABOVE CANYON & FALLS - GREY WOLF - TWILIGHT

watches the Hurons below make their way towards the edge of the falls.

OVER HIS SHOULDER: THREE MORE WOLVES

join him, moving frenetically, uneasily ... The leader of the pack looks up & howls as his eyes go white reflecting the new moon.

INTERIOR GLEN FALLS CAVE - HAWKEYE -NIGHT

hears the distant howl. He's now lit silver blue by the moonlight through the falling water. Hawkeye knows it means Hurons are out there. He exchanges worried glances with Uncas & Chingachgook.

UNCAS

immediately starts up the right acclivity to one fissure, and Chingachgook moves carefully to the first fissure. Hawkeye follows.

HAWKEYE

His countenance gives way momentarily. All his experience seems of no avail. He touches the side of Cora's face. Grabs Killdeer and follows Chingachgook.

ALICE

sensing new danger, slips away on her own.

CORA

crosses to the Ranger who's semi-conscious, feverish and getting delirious. She can't do a thing except hold his hand and think of her father.

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR SOUTH FISSURE - HAWKEYE & CHINGACHGOOK

below the edge, listen & wait, testing the environment with all their senses ...

NORTH FISSURE - UNCAS

against one wall, has his ear cocked, monitoring, facing away from the sky ...

ALICE

looks at the sky through the fissure. She sees the starfields and feels silver moonlight pull her forward. She starts out onto the island, oblivious, unaware she'll expose them.

Suddenly ...

UNCAS

yanks her down next to him. He pulls her head into his chest, looking out over the edge, his tomahawk in front of him, his musket near his right hand. There is no sign she was seen.

UNCAS & ALICE

He relaxes, looks at her and puts his finger to his lips telling her to be silent.

Languorously, she lies back, closes her eyes and lays a hand on his shoulder, palm up, as if he were a prince in a romantic fantasy. Uncas tries to restrain her.

ALICE'S

eyes slowly open. Oblivion disappears. It's replaced with escalating fear. She holds onto Uncas with desperation. Her fingers claw his shoulders. She buries her face in his chest.

ALICE

Uncas ...

Her body shudders. Her terror's total. He tries to restrain and calm her. She won't let him. Then her mouth seeks his and in the passion of despair and fear and wanting life, she holds him between her thighs. And Uncas is confused, but

Alice whispers his name and he responds. He loves her in the half-light.

UNCAS

his hand buried in her hair irradiated by the moon, then she seems to reach some emotional climax and begins to cry softly, and Uncas stops making love to her and holds her. Then she's flooded with shame. He reaches for her. She jerks away. He reaches for her again and clutches her to him. And she breaks down. Then he turns her face to him, but her expression has completely flattened.

WIDER ANGLE

She's not a lover to Uncas now. She's pitiful & stricken and he comforts her.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR RIVER - MAGUA - NIGHT

beaches a canoe on the bank. He and eight braves ease out. His war paint is fresh: green handprints on his chest and black and green on his face. Black plumes are affixed to his scalp-lock and his shawl is over his left shoulder. The right arm carrying his musket is exposed. Many scalps are tied to his tomahawk. He walks towards us approaching the island, two hundred yards away ...

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR SOUTH FISSURE - HAWKEYE - NIGHT

checks his powder horn. Nearly empty. He looks at Chingachgook.

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR GLEN FALLS ISLAND, CAVE - CORA - NIGHT

with the Ranger, looks up. Hawkeye enters. The look on his face. Then hers. They've been discovered. Now they're backed into a hole in the ground with no powder and no way out.

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR GLEN FALLS, CAVE - HAWKEYE & CHINGACHGOOK - NIGHT

Chingachgook talks to him in Mohican. Momentarily the anger and frustration is seen on Hawkeye's face. All his experience & craft has been to no avail. He looks at Cora.

Back to Chingachgook. Chingachgook states something terse in Mohican. Hawkeye agrees. Heyward's confused.

He doesn't know what they're talking about. Cora has understood Chingachgook's intent perfectly.

CORA
Yes. Go ahead.

HEYWARD
(explodes)
What the bloody hell plan is this?

HAWKEYE
(to Cora)
In this there is a chance. If I live, I can try to free you. If we don't go, there is no powder, there's too many of them. Though my heart would keep me here, in that there is no chance. None. I can do nothing. Do you understand?

CORA
Yes. I want you to go.

HEYWARD
Coward! Coward back at the fort.
Coward here.

Hawkeye uses discipline not to kill the man.

CORA
You try. With all you have. To save yourself. If the worst happens, and only one of us survives, something of the other does, too ...

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR NORTH FISSURE - UNCAS - NIGHT

Listens. Hears. Then he inches above cover to see ...

UNCAS' POV: THE RIVER & SIX WAR CANOES

of Hurons approach to assault the island carrying torches.

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR GLEN FALLS CAVE - CORA & HAWKEYE - NIGHT

She's holding him. In the rigid language of her body is the struggle to contain her fear.

HAWKEYE

(very close)

If they don't kill you, they may take you north up into Canada. A warrior may take you for a wife.

CORA

turns aside. Hawkeye insists.

HAWKEYE

(continues)

Listen. Submit. You hear me? You're strong. You stay alive. I will find you ... no matter how far, how long it takes ...

CORA

(nods, low)

... never doubt what you are doing.

RANGER

conscious now, arranges his crushed body to face the direction from which will come the attack as ...

HEYWARD

puts Alice, who's entered, behind him as ... Uncas hits the floor of the cave. Now the first glow from Huron torches starts to light the walls. They're coming ...

CHINGACHGOOK

has their weapons slung over his back. He says something in Mohican. Uncas spins looks at Alice: her expression's vacant.

HAWKEYE'S KNIFE

cuts a lock of Cora's hair. He folds it into his shirt. The orange light from Huron torches, now closer, plays on the wall behind her. We hear many Huron approach.

CHINGACHGOOK & UNCAS

now run out of the cave and throw themselves into the curtain of water. This is their exit.

HAWKEYE

engraves her image in his memory one last time and then sprints across the floor towards the water ...

WHAT HAWKEYE SEES: JAMMING AT THE WATERFALL

and then through it into ...

SUBJECTIVE CAMERA: UP

An awful crushing roar. We explode out the front of a white cataract a third of the way from the top and we fall down away from the world.

EXTERIOR GLEN FALLS - HAWKEYE - NIGHT

tumbles down the falls; rolling, tumbling through the white water; then through air; then back into cascading white water again, disappearing ...

THE RIVER BELOW - UNCAS & CHINGACHGOOK'S

bodies hit, disappear and don't surface. It looks unsurviveable.

HAWKEYE'S POV: FALLING

Sheets of water fall with us. The bottom races towards us at a hundred miles an hour ...

Just before we hit ...

CUT TO ...

INTERIOR GLEN FALLS, CAVE - FLAMING TORCH - NIGHT

WIDEN. The cave is filled with Hurons. The Redcoat is dead in the corner. A group of braves moves away from the body of the Ranger.

HEYWARD'S

surrounded. The women are behind him. He slashes at one Huron with his sword and is clubbed down by a giant.

MAGUA

enters. His blanket, like a shawl, over his left shoulder, black plumes in his hair. He's imperturbable.

MAGUA'S HAND

reaches out and touches Cora's hair. Cora is frozen to the spot. His hand drops away from the hated Munros and as Magua turns to go, he says something low in Huron and the two women are jerked towards the fissures. Heyward is dragged by the arms.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR RIVER - WHITE WATER - NIGHT

miles from the falls. We see a figure. It's Chingachgook, nearly spent, rolling and tumbling through the fast-moving white water. He submerges, then surfaces again. He appears exhausted by the fall and ride.

CHINGACHGOOK'S POV: WATER

rocketing at us, battering and drowning us. We glimpse something downstream ...

CHINGACHGOOK

tries to focus, slammed against rocks, he's striking out towards the right, swimming against the current. He's grabbing for something.

KILLDEER'S MUZZLE

and leather shoulder-strap. Chingachgook's hand grabs it. The current rushing past tries to steal him from Uncas and Hawkeye, who're also beaten, bloodied, exhausted. They pull the older, larger man from the water and ...

ON THE ROCK

all three lie there, almost devoid of energy. Then Hawkeye rises, looks at the others.

Chingachgook nods. He's up. Then Uncas, and they're moving off into the calm eddy between the rock they landed on and the shoreline.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR FOREST - HURONS - DAY

move along animal paths.

CORA & ALICE

struggle through the branches of trees. No one helps them. When they fall behind, they are pushed forward.

HEYWARD

badly beaten, bound, staggers ahead to get behind Magua. Then:

HEYWARD

If Magua give women to Yengeese
soldiers ... will receive many gifts.

MAGUA
 (as if considering)
 Gifts?

HEYWARD
 Three, four oxen ... much wampum.

MAGUA
 Wampum?

HEYWARD
 Yes.

MAGUA
 Does Yengeese Major have property
 across salt sea?

HEYWARD
 Yes.

MAGUA
 Yengeese Major give all property to
 Magua.

Magua give Yengeese Major much wampum, many gifts, maybe
 three, four oxen.

Magua looks at Heyward derisively. Does this white man think
 he's an idiot?

HEYWARD
 Gold could be arranged.

MAGUA
 For Munro children?

HEYWARD
 Yes.

MAGUA
 How much gold has the master of the
 Yengeese?

HEYWARD
 The King? The King has mountains of
 gold!

Long pause as if Magua and King George II were seriously
 considering this transaction.

MAGUA
 Not enough.

Heyward is first realizing with whom he's playing.

HEYWARD

What is enough?

MAGUA

Heart. Give Magua new heart.

Magua totally disdains the Englishman and walks away from him, starting up a steeper forested hill.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR FOREST - HAWKEYE, UNCAS & CHINGACHGOOK - TWILIGHT

running cross-country after the Huron column. They leap over fallen logs and keep going.

FRONTAL: HAWKEYE

breathing hard, his lips are drawn back, sweat stains his buckskins.

PROFILE: UNCAS

runs. Then sees something.

BENT BRANCH

where Cora & Alice were struggling up the animal path.

REAR SHOT

as they race across a stream away from us after the war party and into the night ...

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR FOREST - CORA - NIGHT

supporting Alice, is dragged forward by a Huron warrior by a woven rawhide thong tied to her neck.

MAGUA

is imperturbable.

HURONS

move quickly down into a ravine.

HEYWARD

is shoved forward.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR FOREST - RUNNING FEET - DAY

Long, loping strides.

HAWKEYE & UNCAS

cover ground like long-distance runners. No noise except their hard, even breathing.

They're moving down a clear trail.

CHINGACHGOOK

out on the flank. Running hard.

CLOSER: HAWKEYE

lips are drawn back, determined, flashing through the hard verticals of the forest, now leaps down an embankment into the soft loam and keeps going.

CUT TO ...

EXT. HURON VILLAGE - ORNATE CHAIR - DAY

on a rude platform. The entire village is crowded in a large circle. They all wait for someone. They've been waiting a long time. In the perimeter warriors keep Huron at bay for some reason. We see Magua. He stands apart. They wait. Then...

ANCIENT SACHEM

is led to the dais by three women down the main street between the neat rows of birch bark lodges. Many scalps and trophies from the massacre are in evidence. He sits on the raised platform. He looks to be in his nineties. His dark wrinkled face is contrasted by his long white hair. His robe is painted in hieroglyphical representation of combat. He wears numerous silver & gold medals, gifts of French, English and Dutch governors.

Most startling is his face. His dark & lined skin is enhanced by delicate lines of tattooing. He looks up to Magua.

SACHEM

(in Huron; subtitled)

The tomahawks of your young men have been very red.

MAGUA

(in Huron; subtitled)

Many of the Yengeese are dead, great Sachem.

MAGUA
 (sound dissolve to
 English)

I have brought three of my prisoners,
 to honor you. Two are the children
 of Munro. Whose scalp hangs on my
 lodge pole. And whose heart I cut
 from his chest.

Now we see Cora on the ground. Defeat & fear are held in
 place by her determination.

Alice looks around, in another place. Heyward's hands are
 bound between his back with a piece of wood wedged through
 his elbows.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR DIFFERENT FOREST - WIDE FRONTAL: UNCAS, HAWKEYE &
 CHINGACHGOOK - DAY

running. Then Uncas drops and the other two follow.

WIDE OVER THEIR SHOULDERS: THE HURON "CASTLE"

seen in the distance through the sparse trees. They have
 dropped at the very periphery of the forest where the woods
 end. (The lay of the land is important for action that
 follows: the village is built in a meadow. To the left is a
 cliff face that rises to a rocky promontory. On the right is
 a path that winds up to the promontory and beyond, across
 the mountains.)

Hawkeye sees ...

HAWKEYE'S POV: THE VILLAGE, CAPTIVES & HURON CROWD

in the center, outside the largest lodge.

HAWKEYE

slams the earth with his fists. They didn't intercept them
 in time. Difficult odds just became impossible.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR HURON VILLAGE - MAGUA - DAY

MAGUA
 ... the earth was pale. Our tomahawks
 were bright. Now they are dull from
 war.
 And the Huron rich with the trophies
 of honor ... Magua will sell the

MAGUA

English officer to Les Francais and the reward is my gift to you, wise one ... The women - children of the white war chief - will burn in our fires so all can share in this.

The sachem considers this. Then he looks up and sees something beyond Magua.

MAGUA

senses the sachem's eye line ...

HAWKEYE

unarmed, walking through the Hurons. A young boy rushes at him. Hawkeye, at the last possible second, dodges. Others catch and restrain the boy. The Hurons are astounded a European would simply walk into their camp.

CORA

sees him enter, doesn't believe he's there.

CORA

Nathaniel!

Hawkeye glances at her, doesn't respond. The situation is a stick of dynamite ready to go off.

HAWKEYE

(to Heyward; low)

Translate for me, Major. Into French. Every word ... as I say it.

Magua starts towards Hawkeye, his tomahawk slipping into his hand.

HAWKEYE

(to Sachem)

I come to you unarmed and in peace to unstop your ears, wise one. Because the Hurons are misled by the words of the wolf who's never spoken the truth.

Sachem gestures with his hand to Magua. Magua reluctantly stops advancing on Hawkeye. Heyward's French translation has faded to a murmur. We hear Hawkeye's English.

HAWKEYE

Let the children of the dead Colonel Munro go free and take the fire out

HAWKEYE

of the English anger over the murder
of their helpless ones.

MAGUA

(to Sachem)

Our father, Montcalm, is greater
than the Yengeese in the arts of
war. The Huron do not fear English
anger.

HAWKEYE

(to Sachem)

Wise one, the French fathers made
peace and swore to their honor not
to break the friendship. Magua broke
it. It is false that the French would
not be friends, still, to the Huron.

Sachem reacts.

MAGUA

(laughs)

It made our French father happy to
never have to fight the same Yengeese
again. He told me this without
telling me this.

Hawkeye realizes this is true.

HAWKEYE

So the Huron are the servants of the
French? To do what the French are
shamed to do?

MAGUA

No.

(to Sachem)

Huron serve no one. The French father
believes he fooled Magua because he
is so proud of his cleverness, he is
blind. But it is the Huron path that
Magua walks down, not the French one
... Now, Les Francais, also, fear
Huron. That is good. When the Huron
is strong from their fear, we will
make the terms of trade with Les
Francais. And we will trade as the
white man trades. Take land from the
Abnakes; fur from the Osage, Sauk &
Fox. And make the Huron great. Over
other tribes. No less than the whites,
as strong as the whites.

Hawkeye appears to be losing his debate with Magua.

HAWKEYE

(to Sachem)

Magua would use the ways of Les
Francais and the Yengeese ...

MAGUA

(to Sachem)

The red man put down the bow, picked
up the fire stick and became the
best warrior in the forest. Yes. It
is the only way.

HAWKEYE

Would the Huron make his Algonquin
brothers foolish with brandy and
steal his lands to sell them for
gold to the white man? Would the
Huron have greed for more land than
a man can use? Like Francais Black
Robes do? Would Huron kill tribes
with disease? Would the Huron fool
Seneca into taking all the animals
in the forest for beads & brandy?
But sell the fur to the white man
for gold? ...

(to Sachem)

Those are the ways of Yengeese and
Les Francais masters. Are they the
ways of Huron men who hunt & work
the land? Or of dogs? ... Magua's
heart is twisted. He would make
himself into what twisted him. A
Dog, become Master of Dogs. But are
Hurons dogs? ... Magua's way is
false. It is like the white sickness.
Magua's way will bring only sadness
and shame. Is there another way? I
don't know.

(pauses)

I am Nathaniel of the Yengeese;
Hawkeye, adopted son of Chingachgook,
of the Mohican people ... Let the
children of the dead Munro go free
... I speak the truth.

Magua starts to rebut. Sachem holds up his hand and stops
him. Nobody talks. Sachem whispers to the older men on either
side of him.

MAGUA

waits for the decision.

CORA

looks to Alice, then to Hawkeye.

HAWKEYE

exchanges a desperate look with Cora and then senses the Sachem is staring at him from the perspective of nearly a century of laws & judgments. Then ... to every word.

SACHEM

The white man comes like a day that
has passed. And night enters our
future with him ...

(pause)

Our council talks since I was a boy:
What is the Huron to do?

(pause)

But Magua would lead Huron down paths
that make us not Hurons.

(the judgment)

Dark girl burn in fire to heal the
twisted heart of Magua.

Cora, hearing the sentence ... Hawkeye's losing her.

SACHEM

(continuing)

Munro daughter with moon in her hair
must be Magua's wife so Munro's seed
doesn't die.

Alice is gone, living in some dark recess of her mind.

SACHEM

(continuing; dissolves
back to French)

... and Yengeese officer not go to
Les Francais, but back to Yengeese
so their hatred burns less bright.
La Longue Carabine, go in peace.

People move, start to implement the sentence. Hawkeye's panicked. Cora is jerked upright. She looks at Hawkeye in terror: Sachem is starting to depart.

HAWKEYE

No! listen.

(to Heyward)

Tell him I'll trade him! Me for her!
Tell him!!

Heyward translates into rapid-fire French.

HAWKEYE

(shouts)

I am La Longue Carabine! My death is
a great honor to the Huron. Take me!

Cora is jerked forward by three Hurons. Magua grabs Alice.
Cora strikes at Magua. He knocks her aside. Chaos & confusion.
Meanwhile:

MAGUA

(French; subtitled)

This is not the voice of wisdom. I
go to the Hurons of the Lakes! You
are women. Send your arrows and
guns to the Seneca, beg from them
venison to eat, corn to grind.
Slaves, dogs, rabbits, thieves ... I
spit on you!

Those Hurons who hear, do so in deadly, boding silence. Magua
and his fourteen hard core braves start out as ...

SACHEM

heard Heyward's translation. He looks at Heyward, then looks
at Hawkeye and he nods his head.

HAWKEYE

sees this. His eyes go to Cora. They've stopped dragging her
towards the fire pit.

Hawkeye steps forward to surrender. Cora is thrown at him.
Cora looks around wildly.

Instead of taking Hawkeye, two warriors grab Heyward.

HEYWARD

is immediately hamstrung and his legs collapse. He gasps.
He's caught under the arms and dragged forward.

HAWKEYE

I said to trade me!

Hawkeye's holding Cora. Heyward struggles to be seen.

HEYWARD

... compliments, Mr. Poe.
(pause)
Take her and get out.

CORA

(standing)
What are they doing to Duncan?

CORA

Duncan!

He's gone. They start to ease away from the mass of Hurons.

HAWKEYE

(low to himself)

And my compliments to you ...

CORA

Alice?

Hawkeye's concentration is on backing out of the Huron mob. Will the Sachem's judgment be honored? Will some warriors hack down Hawkeye & Cora? As they go ...

CORA

moves towards her sister. But Hawkeye holds her tightly as they retreat.

CORA'S POV: ALICE

with Magua's group crosses the path. He drags Alice behind him like baggage. She regains her feet. Magua is oblivious to her. He's heading towards the plateau.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR FOREST, TREE LINE - CHINGACHGOOK & UNCAS - DAY

Uncas sees Magua's direction. Uncas touches his father, grabs his musket and races off.

Chingachgook reaches to stop him, but he's too late. Chingachgook's hand in the air ...

TWO-SHOT: HAWKEYE & CORA

near the tree line. Hawkeye has eyes only for ...

HAWKEYE'S POV: HURONS

moving towards fire pit. One turns to watch Hawkeye & Cora depart. Will he arouse others to attack? Behind him, others are doing something to Heyward and flames leap up.

CORA'S EYES

are on Alice, off to the right in the meadow.

HAWKEYE

tense. They're almost there.

CHINGACHGOOK

holding Killdeer.

CHINGACHGOOK'S POV: MASSED HURON

Sky & flames. Suddenly, Heyward's stood upright into the fire, bound to a bracket by his arms. As the flames start devouring him ...

HAWKEYE & CORA

close to Chingachgook and the tree line ...

CHINGACHGOOK

tosses Hawkeye Killdeer. As fast as he jams it into his shoulder he FIRES.

HEYWARD

among the hollering Hurons, is shot dead. It goes unnoticed.

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR PROMONTORY - UNCAS - DAY

half-way up the rock face. He's approaching an overhang. He climbs with a reckless desperation ...

EXTERIOR STREAM - HAWKEYE & CHINGACHGOOK

pound across the (sic) to the meadow towards Magua's path...

CORA

trying to stay with them, scrambles up ...

EXTERIOR PROMONTORY - UNCAS

reaches the overhang. It juts away from the face six feet.

THE CEILING OF THE OVERHANG

Uncas' hand jams into a crack in the granite, forms a fist and twists, making a wedge.

He swings out, dangling in space by the hand wedged into the rock. His right hand reaches out and up, searching the vertical face for ...

UNCAS' HAND

... a rock flake. An indentation. Anything ... His fingers find a diagonal crevice and ...

UNCAS

swings out, now hanging by the vertical face above the overhang. His features are distorted with determination. Nothing will stop him. His right hand grabs another rock.

His arms snap him up. Then push. He's on the ledge. Moving fast ...

CUT TO ...

EXTERIOR PROMONTORY - HURONS - DAY

on point are approaching the path above the promontory. Five warriors are ahead of Magua. One behind him drags Alice.

FIRST

Huron starts up the narrow path. Suddenly ...

UNCAS

slams him off the rock with the butt of his musket.

WIDE ANGLE

Two's musket coming up. Uncas swings. FIRES. Before he's fallen, Uncas bayonets Three.

FOURTH

FIRES, misses, swings. Uncas slips the swung musket, but it catches his elbow. Uncas' musket falls. Before it hits the ground his tomahawk is out and hacks Four over the edge ...

MAGUA

running forward past Five, confronts Uncas head on. It's incredibly fast.

UNCAS'

three tomahawk swings are dodged by Magua whose own knife streaks like silver flashes. Uncas, gashed on arms and chest, feints right and slams Magua with an open hand, closes and the men are intertwined steel and muscle ... and Magua throws Uncas.

Going with him and rolling off Uncas, Magua's knife flashes into his armpit. Uncas' right arm is useless. He scrambles up. Next to the expertise of a mature warrior like Magua, Uncas' raw, young determination may not be enough.

EXTERIOR - MEADOW - CHINGACHGOOK

freezes.

EXTERIOR PROMONTORY - UNCAS

closing, swings. Magua moves inside, stabs Uncas twice, turns him to face the edge, ripping his head left to expose the right underside of his throat.

CLOSE: MAGUA'S

knife arm punches forward.

WIDE: PROMONTORY

Uncas falls down the face onto to the rocks.

CHINGACHGOOK

seeing his boy killed, CRIES out and is charging up the path, Hawkeye following.

EXTERIOR PROMONTORY - ALICE

backs to the edge.

MAGUA

moves on Alice. His knife is low, about to strike. She stares at him. Her eyes are like pools of deep water, calm, open, almost beatific. It stops Magua ...

MAGUA

inexplicably, drops his knife hand. He's riveted by her. About him, there's a glimmer of something else. He wears a human face for this one moment. He reaches out with his other hand to offer her safety. To bring her back from the edge...

ALICE

looks down at Uncas, her lover, dead on the rocks below. She turns to Magua with enigmatic calm. Her eyes seem to see into him. She steps off the edge. She falls to her death next to Uncas ...

EXTERIOR MEADOW - CORA

collapses to her knees on the ground and her face falls forward into her hands ...

HURON WARRIORS

are running down the path to intercept Chingachgook, charging uphill, fueled by a father's rage, and Hawkeye. One Huron aims at the center of Chingachgook's chest ...

HAWKEYE

FIRES past his father's side. The Huron's blown off the path. Hawkeye races to reload on the run ...

EXTERIOR PROMONTORY - MAGUA

sees the approach of Chingachgook.

TO CHINGACHGOOK

Huron warriors are an irrelevance. He slams one aside with his musket.

HAWKEYE FIRES.

HURON

with tomahawk, about to blindside Chingachgook, is SHOT DOWN.

MAGUA

charging Chingachgook.

VERY WIDE

Two men, like dots, race to collide at the center of the promontory. Now the others fall back... It's one-on-one. Hawkeye slows ...

COMBATANTS

Magua - confident, pumped up - feints with his left, his tomahawk appearing in his right, sweeping backhand, while his left, magically holding his blade, is jamming up to gut Chingachgook. Chingachgook's dead. Except ...

CHINGACHGOOK

isn't there. He rolled and, on one knee with his back to Magua, his arm slams rearward.

The massive war club crashes into Magua's back.

MAGUA

stunned, turns to hatchet Chingachgook ...

CHINGACHGOOK

now up and towering - slams his club right into Magua's assault ... destroying it, breaking Magua's right arm. And...

CHINGACHGOOK

... with his momentum, spins like a shot-putter and the next blow cripples Magua's left side and crushes part of his chest.

ANOTHER BLOW

destroys Magua's collar and shoulder.

MAGUA

amazed. His body is broken and crippled, but he still stands. He looks into the eyes of the last warrior of the Mohicans.

CHINGACHGOOK

UNCAS!!!

And he spins and swings. The blade side of the war club punches into Magua's chest, caving him in two.

WIDE

Magua dies in the dust.

HAWKEYE

watching Chingachgook's heaving back. It's over.

CORA

alone, kneeling in the meadow. Her eyes downcast ...

FADE OUT ...

FADE IN

EXTERIOR - MOUNTAIN TOP - WIDE REAR SHOT - NEXT DAY

Chingachgook's at the edge, facing the endless rolling forests to the west. A haze of sunlight illuminates silver and lead clouds. Hawkeye is a little apart, watching his father.

HAWKEYE'S POV: CHINGACHGOOK

speaks to the sky.

CHINGACHGOOK

(Mohican)

Great Spirit and the Maker of all
Life ...

ON HAWKEYE & CHINGACHGOOK

We HEAR Hawkeye's English translation in VOICE OVER:

CHINGACHGOOK/HAWKEYE (V.O.)

(in English)

... a warrior goes to you swift and straight as an arrow shot into the sun. Welcome him and let him take his place at the council fire of my people.

(pause)

He is Uncas, my son.

(pause)

Bid them patience and ask death for speed; for they are all there but one - I, Chingachgook - Last of the Mohicans.

*

Chingachgook's hands drop to his sides. He lets out his breath with a weariness. His eyes seek Hawkeye's. They hold ...

CORA

is standing, her back to us, in front of a rock-covered grave with a wooden cross. Next to it is Uncas' burial platform. Cora [says a] silent prayer. Then she pauses, crosses herself. Her emotions are spent. She moves next to Hawkeye. He takes her hand.

HAWKEYE & CORA

HAWKEYE

Will you go back to England?

CORA

I have nothing to go back for.

Long pause.

HAWKEYE

Then will you stay in America?

She turns to face him.

HAWKEYE

And will you be my wife?

Pause.

CORA

Yes.

They hold each other's eyes. She searches his face.

CORA
Where will we go?

HAWKEYE
Winter with the Delaware, my father's
cousins. And in the spring, cross
the Ohio and look for land to settle
with my father in a new place called
Can-tuck-ee.

They move next to Chingachgook. He senses they're beside
him. Hawkeye's arm is around her shoulders.

CHINGACHGOOK
The frontier moves with the sun and
pushes the red man of the wilderness
forests in front of it. Until one
day there will be nowhere left.
Then our race will be no more, or be
not us... The frontier place is for
people like my white son and his
woman and their children.

HAWKEYE
That's my father's sadness talking.

Hawkeye puts a hand on his shoulder.

CHINGACHGOOK
No. It is true... One day... there
will be no more frontier. Then men
like you will go, too.
Like the Mohicans.
(pause)
And new people will come. Work.
Struggle to make their light... One
mystery remains.

HAWKEYE
What is that?

Cora, listening to Chingachgook, takes Hawkeye's hand.

CHINGACHGOOK
Will there be anything left to show
the world that we ever did exist?

REAR SHOT

Cora stands next to her man. Hawkeye puts his arm around his
father. They stare out over the wilderness.

THE END