

# "SUGAR AND GOLD"

A True Crime Drama

Screenplay and Original Music  
by  
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AUGUST, 1927, N.W. BRITISH COLUMBIA

*Theme music: "Crossing Over" begins over credits.*

*EXTERIOR- DAWN. Wooden fishing launch chugs slowly up river. Mist-shrouded mountains rise steeply on both sides. Five figures, painting easels packed on deck. Edison recorder plays ragtime song: "Bluebonnet Breeze"*

*EXTERIOR - DAWN. Boat passes small village with white wooden church. Distant sound of brass band playing: "Onward Christian Soldiers".*

*EXTERIOR - DAWN. Brass band by small cemetery with white wooden crosses, overlooking river. The fishing boat is passing. The musicians are all Native men. A white missionary conducts.*

*EXTERIOR - DAWN. Out of the mist appears a virtually abandoned Indian village, dominated by weathered totem poles in front of empty longhouses. A few totem poles stand upright. Most are tilting crazily, or have fallen and are rotting on river bank.*

*EXTERIOR: DAY. (Barbeau paces on beach, waves arms toward totem poles)*

**BARBEAU:** "This is criminal, Jackson! Look at the carving! The colours. They are telling stories in wood!"

*Painters nod, continue painting.*

BARBEAU: “Just like the Egyptians and Greeks did in stone and marble. Paint, Emily - Paint! The world must see these before they vanish!”

EXTERIOR: Same DAY. *A picnic is spread out on the river bank. Four easels face the totem poles, paintings partially done. An Edison wax cylinder machine is playing "Lickety Split Rag" while Barbeau's group dances, laughs, eats lunch.*

INTERIOR - DAY. *Scream of gulls. Relentless roar and concussive stamp of machinery in a filthy, wood-planked salmon cannery. Indian men silently shovel and sluice tons of raw offal into ocean estuary. Indian women, Chinese men gut salmon on long tables. White men operate machines, supervise.*

EXTERIOR - DAY. *White agent on cannery wharf trades tobacco, tea, hard biscuits, cases of canned salmon to Native men who bring fresh hand-speared salmon in sailing skiffs. The agent pays cash to white fishermen in adjacent motor boats with nets.*

NATIVE FISHER FROM SKIFF: “We want 25 cents each fish. Same pay as white man.”

CANNERY AGENT: *(laconic)* “Who told you 25? It’s 12 cents - and only for ones this big.” *(Stretches arms wide)*

“No pink or dog salmon.”

NATIVE FISHER: “Charles Barton says 25 cents. Each sockeye and king.”

CANNERY AGENT: (*nettled*) “With a *licence*.”

OTHER NATIVE FISHER: “Only whites with nets and boats that roar get them.”

FIRST FISHER: “And canneries got laws, so now we can’t catch salmons with fence traps.”

CANNERY AGENT: “So buy nets and ‘boats that roar’.”

FIRST FISHER: “When you pay 25 cents each fish.”

CANNERY AGENT: (*nonplussed, glancing at white fishermen on wharf who are laughing at his expense*)

“No licence, no money. Only tobacco, tea, or hard biscuits on trade. Or five pounds of *this (holds up can of salmon)* for three of those.” (*Nods to skiff loaded with 20 lb. salmon*)

*Silence.*

CANNERY AGENT: (*louder*) “No money. You’d just drink it.” (*Mimics gulping from whiskey bottle, drunken stagger, gives confederate grin to white fishers unloading*)

*salmon from their boats).*

“Whiskey money? No.”

“Tea?” (*mimics effete sipping of tea*) “Yes. ”

*Whites guffaw. Native fishers stay silent.*

CANNERY AGENT: “Get Charles Barton to get you licences from King George the Fifth. *He* drinks tea.” (*Agent winks to whites*) “I hear Barton sailed all the way to London - and came back with nothing. Now he’s shovelin’ fish guts up there (*nods to cannery*) for two dollars a week.”

“I hear he also swallowed fire in a travelling circus. Some chief of Chinooks.”

*With exaggerated slowness, he takes tobacco from metal can, stuffs his pipe, lights it.*

“Sun's going to spoil those salmon right quick. You want tobacco and tea or not?”

INTERIOR - DAY. BEYNON AND BARTON *speaks to circle of native cannery workers in Tsimshian:*

SUBTITLES:

BEYNON: “On Sunday, Barbeau the good museum man

will make echoes of our songs and stories. With his talking box. ”

NATIVE WORKER: “Why?”

CHARLES BARTON: “So your children’s children can hear your grandfather’s songs. Even after your bones rest under your crest.”

*Natives exchange surprised looks, but nod assent.*

EXTERIOR - DAY. *Beynon and Barton at salmon spearing station. Above roar of boiling rapids, they urge others to come to record songs and stories.*

#### SUBTITLES:

BARTON: *(To Indians spearing salmon)* “Come on the day the cannery is silent. When the brass band plays.”

BARTON: *(To Indian women drying fish)* “Sunday. Across from the church. We will all sing songs and tell our stories.”

EXTERIOR - Same DAY. BEYNON AND BARTON *move to high bank, look down on salmon first trapped in underwater pens made of saplings, or basket nets. The salmon are loaded into skiffs, or gutted, split, dried and smoked on sapling racks by Native women on the bank.*

EXTERIOR - Same DAY.

BEYNON: (*munching fresh berries, pointing up river*)

“My mother was from this river, where the oolichan oil trail goes to the Skeena. The Eagle House. She went with her father and chief Mountain to Victoria. To stop the first survey for a reserve. My father was captain of the ship that brought them back.”

*Barton nods.*

BEYNON: “I’m half White, half Tsimshian.” (*Pause*)  
“You trust me?”

BARTON: (*examines him carefully*) “Not if you are shamed your heart beats the blood of your mother.”

BEYNON: “I am proud of it.”

BARTON *nods silent assent. Long pause.*

BEYNON: “You know many White Men. You trust Barbeau?”

*Long pause.*

BARTON: “Yes. He has also felt the sting of the English. And he has the Edison. Someday that wax will speak our history. And help win our land back.”

EXTERIOR - DAY. *SOUND of BARTON proudly singing, playing hand drum on high bank in clearing with vista over river to opposite church. His granddaughter dances, giggles.*

*BEYNON and BARBEAU of National Museum of Canada wind up Edison wax cylinder recording machine, transcribe songs, lyrics, stories of Barton. Wide grins all around.*

BARBEAU: *(amazed)* “My God, listen to that! He’s singing in one rhythm but playing his drum with another! The girl’s clapping yet another! Yet they fit together. It’s unheard of.”

*Two painter friends of Barbeau operate a hand-cranked silent film camera on a tripod. Barton hams it up. Old Tsimshian men and women congregate to sing songs. Kids dancing, laughing.*

BARBEAU: *(excitedly marking outlines on map, whispers as Beynon inserts new wax cylinder)*

“This is very important, Bill. Their songs tell lineages. Where every clan lives, fishes, hunts and collects berries. Right down to a gravel bar across a creek. Or the shadow of a mountain - !”

*Beynon grabs Barbeau’s wrist. He stops in mid-sentence.*



*Distant sound of brass band playing across river playing "Onward Christian Soldiers"*

*Frail SUNBEAMS (age 70) appears, leaning on a cane. She wears a white weasel (ermine) hat. Total silence from others. She nods to Barton. With somber, regal poise she speaks into the recording horn in halting English.*

SUNBEAMS: "The gold and singing wires on wood crosses brought the first *Ramskeewah*. When I was a girl. One mission man (*she sweeps arm toward church across river*) brought brass horns. And a magic lantern show. We all came. Saw the three chiefs in dresses, on big sand mules, followed the star to the halo baby."

*She halts. The wax cylinder keeps turning.*

"We all took home the smallpox. My sisters got killed. My grandparents. My cousins. Every House on every river lost many."

*She halts again.*

"It came a second time, when I was a woman. From Nitsu at the potlatch. It killed my sons, my husband ..."

BEYNON: (*apologetic, signaling her to stop*) "Sunbeams - we must change wax cylinders now. You can start again - ...."

SUNBEAMS *nods to other old Indian women, who come forward and lay a badly frayed shirt, with dried blood stains, on the recording table. It has two ragged holes in the back, each the size of a bullet. All stare at it, while SUNBEAMS vanishes.*

BARTON: *(To Barbeau)* “Her sons were Hannamuk and Kumas. Her husband was Kitwancool Jim. He was of the Bear House. To be a chief of all chiefs.”

*Nods to knot of older Indians.*

“Many Nisga’a, Gitksan, Tsimshian knew him. Many whites too. They will tell you the story.”

*Indians begin filing up to the Edison recorder. Barbeau gets a new notebook. Beynon unpacks wax cylinders from wooden crate.*

INTERIOR - DAY. AUGUST, 1927. HUDSON BAY POST, HAZLETON.

*White pioneer MRS. HANKIN, age 70, begins telling her version to Barbeau and Beynon.*

MRS. HANKIN: *(taciturn, speaking into Edison horn).*

“I was interpreter for the Hazleton police patrol. I saw it myself. It was Christmas, 1887. They died by the dozens. Mostly babies and old Indians. When the rashes came, they

ran out and rolled in the snow. That only sent the measles in deeper. It drove them mad. Screaming and wailing.”

*She pauses, shakes head in disbelief.*

“I saw them put fish hooks down throats, and pull out a foot of lung. They drowned in their own blood. Nobody could help them. It was nobody’s fault. But that’s what started the killing. And the manhunt.”

DECEMBER, 1887

INTERIOR - DAY. SAME HUDSON BAY POST

*The store is stocked with dry goods, tools, guns, otter traps. Fur pelts hang, are stacked in huge piles. There is a Christmas tree with minimal decorations, piles of paper-wrapped packages. Three men are congregated at a long counter, passing a whiskey bottle.*

BEACH: “They were both Kispiox. Brothers, even. Dead drunk. They stabbed each other over a missing canoe.”

WASHBURN: *(snickers)* “Did you know there’s one exception to the rule that the only good Indian’s a dead Indian?”

BEACH: “What’s that?”

WASHBURN: *(lewdly)* “A pretty little squaw girl who

does you right at night. Mine is --”

*The bottle vanishes and talk ends abruptly as TOMLINSON enters, kicks snow off boots.*

VOWELL: “Afternoon, reverend.”

TOMLINSON: (*nods to men*). “Commissioner Vowell. Beach. Washburn. Clifford’s not about?”

VOWELL: “He’s off to Victoria. The yearly report of Hudson Bay agents. Beach agreed to stand in for him.”

TOMLINSON: (*nods*).

(*To Beach*): “I’ve come for my mail. There should be several packages from England. Some medical supplies, a box of new Bibles. In the back room.” (*Beach disappears*)

VOWELL: “How goes the business of the Lord, reverend?”

TOMLINSON: “It’s a trial, Mr. Vowell. A trial. I’ve made some headway with some villages, and some chiefs. There’s now a church, a small infirmary, and a brass band. In November, I persuaded some Gitksan to cut down their totems for firewood - ”

WASHBURN: (*grinning*) “ - Then for once they’ll be warm this Christmas. Most of those poles are starting to

fall over or rotting in the -- ”

TOMLINSON: (*pointedly ignoring Washburn*) “But it’s their damnable potlatches that stand in the way. The old chiefs won’t give them up. Every winter it’s the same: four months of debauched feasting and fornication. What ground I win in summer, I lose when the snow comes.”

VOWELL: (*nodding assent*) “There’s no doubt of it, reverend. You are beset by the last stronghold of Indian vice and obdurance. Yet your several letters to the authorities have not fallen on deaf ears.”

TOMLINSON: “No?”

VOWELL: (*Confiding tone*) “I have it on reliable information that Victoria has earmarked a “C” Battery gunboat to strictly enforce Ottawa’s new law against all potlatches. It’s to carry some two dozen men.”

TOMLINSON: (*as Beach returns with boxes*) “That is splendid news, Mr. Vowell. Yet could we expect them to come this far north?”

VOWELL: (*nods*) “I’ve recommended next summer. And enlisted Beach here to conscript special constables. We’ve our eye on some former Irish Guards. There’ll be no more Indians pulling up our survey stakes and throwing them - ”

WASHBURN: “My squaw says Chief Mountain ordered- ”

VOWELL: (*brusquely*) “ - in the river. They were undoubtedly incited by that meddling Methodist, Alfred Green. He’d have had Mountain and his whole red-skinned rabble inside the Premier’s office, arguing the Indian land question, if we hadn’t spoken to his superiors.”

*Vowell takes cigar from vest pocket, bites end, slathers it in his mouth. Checks pockets for matches. Gives Tomlinson a confederate smile.*

“Next, the Methodists will be claiming the savages should *vote!* Since they still make up better than half the provincial population, I think not!”

TOMLINSON: (*nettled*) “I suppose you can thank smallpox for that, Mr. Vowell. Thirty years ago, there were 63,000 Indians, and 400 Whites. As a medical man, I deplore making light of such a pestilence. I saw many perish my first years here. Christian and heathen alike.”

*Awkward silence. Vowell pretends he can’t find his matches, goes to woodstove, opens door, lights a stick, then his cigar.*

WASHBURN: (*with relish*) “Irish Guards, eh? They’ll clean things up! The sooner those potlatches are gone, the sooner we free traders can conduct our rightful business.”

TOMLINSON: (*acidly*) “I daresay, Washburn, that your

‘rightful business’ in illegal Alaska rum, among other evils, has made them even more savage. And am I correct in that you have taken an Indian girl of 15?”

*Another long, stiff silence. Washburn spits tobacco derisively. Vowell returns to counter.*

VOWELL: (*clears throat*) “Victoria has also approved surveying a reserve, reverend. To further orderly development of gold deposits, and the new salmon canneries.”

TOMLINSON: “A reserve? That is likely to incite the heathens again, Mr. Vowell. And make it even harder to make Christians of them. How big would it be?”

VOWELL: “On the order of ten acres per Indian. White settlers shall be given 360 acres each, and more if circumstances warrant.”

*He pauses, gives hidden wink to Beach. Then to Tomlinson:*

“I should think new settlers and cannery workers will make fine Anglicans, reverend.”

TOMLINSON: (*grudging nod*) “Yes. Well. One can’t question progress.”

*All nod, murmur:* “Agreed.”

TOMLINSON: (*taking packages*) “Beach - please make a note of my charges.”

BEACH: “To be sure, reverend. Can I send you off with some extra sugar for the missus and her Christmas baking?”

TOMLINSON: “I shall have to decline, with thanks. Sugar’s quite dear, and my superiors in England are not in the habit of approving extravagances.”

BEACH: “That’s just the thing, reverend. By mistake, Victoria sent Clifford extra barrels of sugar. Double what he ordered. He never sells it to Indians, since they never have money to pay. So he told me to give 5 pounds each to his best customers. For Christmas.”

TOMLINSON: “In that case, very well. Thank you, Beach. Mrs. Tomlinson will be quite delighted. I shall bring Clifford some baked goods when I settle accounts.”

BEACH: “Very good, sir. And, in keeping with the season, I think it wouldn’t be amiss to send you off with another 5 pounds for your patients, as well. ”

*Beach gets two 5-lb.sugar cans from under counter.*

TOMLINSON: “Why thank you, Mr. Beach. You are most generous. Merry Christmas to you. And to you, Mr. Vowell.”



VOWELL: “Merry Christmas, reverend. Let me carry the Bibles and sugar to your horse and cutter. Beach - we will attend to the conscription matter when next we meet in Victoria.”

BEACH: “Yes, sir. Merry Christmas to you and Reverend Tomlinson.”

*Tomlinson and Vowell leave with packages, sugar cans. Whiskey bottle appears instantly.*

BEACH: “Not so much as a ‘Merry Christmas’ for you, Washburn. Must be your Gitksan wench offends the righteous reverend.”

WASHBURN: *(taking long slug)* “Here’s to Ireland, and to hell with Tomlinson and his English Anglican arsehole. He’s bad for business, too. I trade what I want, when I want.”

BEACH: “I doubt he'll be converting many heathens. Guess what Tomlinson did on his first week of missionary work up on the Nass?”

*Washburn shrugs, takes big gulps of whiskey.*

BEACH: “Made a campfire - and burnt a chief’s longhouse, totem pole and garden right to the ground! When he came back, there was nought but *charcoal!*”

*Washburn chokes on whiskey, bends over laughing. Hoots and does brief Irish jig. Beach grabs bottle and takes long, swaggering swig.*

BEACH: “Then his first two Indian patients died during surgery! What did they expect? He never finished medical school!”

*Both gasp for air, laugh, rub tears from eyes. Washburn’s hand lands on the sugar barrel. He lifts the barrel cap, licks his finger, puts it inside, then sucks the sugar off it.*

WASHBURN: “Say, Beach: How much extra sugar did Victoria ship Clifford?”

BEACH: “Two barrels’ worth. One hundred pounds each. Vowell took one barrel for his gold survey crews.”

WASHBURN: “That leaves one hundred. At what price?”

BEACH: “Half what settlers pay: Ten dollars.”

*NITSU enters. Beach and Washburn make no attempt to hide bottle, or acknowledge him. Nitsu slowly inspects all goods on every store shelf.*

WASHBURN: (*half whispers to Beach*). “That’s old Nitsu. A Gitksan. Claims he’s a medicine man. My squaw is one of his nieces. He’s having a big potlatch next week. His

brother died.”

BEACH: “What’s he doing here? Looks like he’s got no furs to trade.”

WASHBURN: “Looking for gifts to give relatives and rival clans, I’d bet. He wants to be chief. That gets him votes.”

BEACH: “What about money?”

WASHBURN: “He gets paid lots in candle-fish oil for his shaman’s tricks. Through his niece I trade his oil to settlers and miners, since they can’t get butter or lamp oil. They pay cash, and I take half for my troubles. That still leaves Nitsu plenty.”

BEACH: “Does he speak English?”

WASHBURN: “No. But I speak some Chinook.”

*Washburn nods to Nitsu, offers bottle to him. Nitsu shakes head, Washburn takes slug, passes bottle to Beach.*

WASHBURN: “I’ll buy that whole barrel of sugar.”

BEACH: (*chokes on whiskey*) “What?”

WASHBURN: “Right now. I’ll buy it all. Half price.”

BEACH: “Are you mad? That’s ten dollars!”

WASHBURN: “Fine.”

BEACH: “Sold, then.”

WASHBURN: “Sold.”

*They shake hands, slug back whiskey, Washburn takes out ten dollar piece and slaps it on the table.*

BEACH: “Who will you sell it to?”

WASHBURN: (*with triumphant grin, nods to Nitsu*). “That old Indian. ”

BEACH: “You’re drunk.”

WASHBURN: “No, but I will be tonight! Indians will die to get sugar. Next week at the potlatch, they’ll have more than they ever dreamed of.”

*(Pats sugar barrel, leans over and whispers)* “This will buy Nitsu the chief’s seat. And make me his partner.”

*Winking slyly, he pushes the gold piece toward Beach.*

“And you, Beach, can let Clifford think this sugar went to his best customers as Christmas presents. You’ll be ten dollars richer - and he none the wiser.”

*Beach grins, pockets gold coin.*

SUBTITLE: *(In Tsimshian)* “Ho! Nitsu! Here’s a whole barrel of sugar! For your potlatch. Same price white man pays. Only twenty dollars.”

INTERIOR: NIGHT. *Washburn and Beach, now very drunk. They are both chewing tobacco, spitting juice, swigging whiskey while dumping sugar into old shipping sacks, burlap bags, lard tins, dirty jars.*

EXTERIOR: DAWN. *Washburn finishes packing Hudson Bay supplies, sugar, otter traps onto mule. Nitsu leads mule by rope, has more gifts in bag on his back.*

*Washburn slaps mule’s ass: “Git, Queen Vic! Git!!”*

SUBTITLE: *(yelling to Nitsu in Tsimshian)* “You bring my mule back!” *(In English:)* “Or I’ll ride your niece from now on – day and night!”

*Nitsu and mule leave outpost of Hazelton as snow falls. Washburn inspects two \$10 gold coins in his sugar covered hand.*

INTERIOR: NIGHT. *Native longhouse lit by large fire in centre. Hannamuk (age 11) sleeps soundly. Kumas (age 7) sleeps nearby. Kitwancool Jim and Sunbeams are making love under Chilkat blankets.*

JIM: (*affectionately*) “This is my favourite woman flesh - right down here.”

SUNBEAMS: (*pleased, teasing*) “It was a different place last night.”

JIM: “No it wasn’t!”

SUNBEAMS: “Yes, it was!”

JIM: (*grabs her wrists, presses her arms back in mock anger*)

“You are lying. Confess.”

SUNBEAMS: (*grins and fights back*) “No, you have forgotten. I would remember such a thing!”

JIM: (*grins*) “Well, then - I changed my mind. I’m a chief. What I say goes. I like this spot the best. It’s soft and smooth as - a peeled poplar tree.”

SUNBEAMS: (*shrieks, with mock outrage, pounds his chest*)

“A peeled poplar! You mean *Ramskeewah*? The skin of a White Man?”

*They grapple, laughing, and make love fiercely.*

INTERIOR: DAWN. *The longhouse. Hannamuk murmurs in sleep. Sunbeams throws oolichan oil on fire, the brief roar stirs Jim. She climbs back under covers.*

SUNBEAMS: (*kissing his chest*) “So, if you’re a chief, it’s time to be one.”

JIM: (*Sleepily*) “What are you talking about?”

SUNBEAMS: “My father’s funeral is coming. At the big potlatch, a new chief will be chosen. Nitsu wants the chief of chief’s chair.”

JIM: “Your uncle’s an old man. He will die soon. Then I will replace him.”

SUNBEAMS: (*flash of anger*) “No! He will use his medicines to trick and scare others. Then make *his* son the chief of chiefs. That’s why he is holding this potlatch. Some say Nitsu has many riches. To buy the favour of other House chiefs.”

JIM: “I am chief of the Bear House. I’m not worried.”

SUNBEAMS: (*suddenly furious*) “You should be called ‘Chief Never Makes Up His Mind’, or ‘Chief Wait Until Next Year.’

JIM: (*grins, trying to make her smile*) “And you should be called ‘Princess Poplar Legs’ instead of ‘Sunbeams’.”

*He nuzzles her.*

SUNBEAMS: (*softer, but still angry*) “Our sons should be chiefs. Not Nitsu’s.”

JIM: “So let’s make another little chief. Then they can rule forever.”

*They make love again.*

INTERIOR: DAY. *Same longhouse. Sunbeams inspects Hannamuk in oversized ceremonial costume, takes white weasel (ermine) hat from painted wooden trunk. Something drops from it, she picks it up, inspects it. Jim is heard singing outside. She quickly puts object inside her deerskin dress, puts weasel hat on Hannamuk’s head. Kumas watches, intrigued.*

*Jim enters, drops dead game birds to floor in surprise.*

JIM: “What is Hannamuk doing in your father’s robes?”

SUNBEAMS: “He is going to be declared chief-in-waiting at the potlatch.”

JIM: “Sunbeams! He is only eleven!”

SUNBEAMS: “I don’t care. The old ways say my son is to be a chief of chiefs. Not Nitsu and his sons.”



JIM: “The old ways say wait until he can kill his own grouse before he stands as chief-to-be - ”

SUNBEAMS: (*turns on him, furious*) “Wait, wait, wait! That’s all you ever say. *Nitsu* does not wait. He has sent runners to all the Houses on every river, saying come to his potlatch. He has been to Hazleton. To buy secret *Ramskeewah* gifts.”

JIM: “The other chiefs will be angry. They will say Hannamuk seeks to be chief too soon. It will bring shame to us.”

SUNBEAMS: (*highly agitated*) “If you won’t stop *Nitsu*, I will! There is no time to lose. The *Ramskeewah* is coming.”

JIM: “What does that have to do with it?”

SUNBEAMS: “Everything! Their smallpox already killed my sisters. Your *mother*. *Gitksans*. *Nisga’as*. *Tsimshians*, too. They are marking lines across our lands. Putting up poles and singing wires. Digging up gold. Putting all our salmon in cans to sell to other *Ramskeewahs*.”

JIM: “You can’t stop that, Sunbeams. There’s too many. They have big boats with thunder guns. Blue Jacket soldiers. Money...”

SUNBEAMS: (*takes a gold piece from her dress, throws it at his feet*)

“Yes! Like *this* I found hidden in the box with my dead father’s robes! Where did you get it?”

JIM: (*lamely*) “I guided Mr. Beach into Stikine country. He knows many white chiefs. He said gold would buy our sons good things.”

SUNBEAMS: “Good. I will use it to fight Nitsu.”

JIM: “How?”

SUNBEAMS: “I will pay Gaxa to make a potlatch song that mocks Nitsu. While everyone laughs at him, Hannamuk will claim my father’s chair.”

INTERIOR: NIGHT. *Huge longhouse, filled with Indians in Gitksan ceremonial dress. Laughter, food, singing, dancing. Oolichan oil is thrown on fire, flames roar. Others toast huge sheets of split salmon, boil vats of black tea.*

*Sacks, burlap bags, lard tins and jars holding Nitsu’s sugar are distributed to covetous families by Nitsu’s three sons. Kids fingers, spoons, cups and hollow mountain goat horns are dipped into the sugar incessantly. Some men are obviously trading for it. Some women hide portions. A delighted buzz.*

*Nitsu beams from his chair. As the sugar is passed out, his oldest son sings this song:*

Sugar, sugar, sugar  
So sweet to old and young  
A gift to you from Nitsu  
To savour on your tongue

*Applause. Sunbeams enters. She searches for her sons, then races to them when she sees they are sucking their sugary fingers in a knot of other kids.*

**SUNBEAMS:** *(hisses, as she hauls them past Nitsu, then outside) “No! Not Nitsu’s sugar!! Taking his gift means he will be chief!”*

*Nitsu smiles triumphantly.*

**INTERIOR - NIGHT.** *Hours later. The potlatch continues. General uproar. Sunbeams stands beside Jim in his chiefs chair, with Hannamuk in his ceremonial robes and Kumas at her side. Jim’s father stands behind Jim.*

*An empty chief’s chair, opposite the longhouse entrance, is draped by a giant grizzly bear skin The head rests on a floor of white gravel.*

*Nitsu, dressed in shaman robes, is about to enter the longhouse with his entourage. He stops dead when Gaxa*

*begins singing in a clear, penetrating voice. Dancers pantomime his words.*

GAXA: *(deadpan serious face)*

“Nitsu, ancient Nitsu  
His bones are growing old  
But *one* no longer stiffens  
Although it is so cold.”

*(Great laughter. Sunbeams surveys crowd; a pleased smile creases her lips)*

“He gets paid in oolichan  
To cast his magic spell  
But why grow poor for medicines  
That never work so well?”

*(Laughter rises to crescendo, clapping, hooting.)*

EXTERIOR - NIGHT. *Nitsu’s painted shaman’s face is a mask of rage.*

INTERIOR - NIGHT. *Seconds later.*

GAXA: *(louder)*

“If they did heal, we all know  
What Nitsu would fix first...”

*(Brief dramatic pause, room drops to suspenseful silence)*

“The soft and sagging warrior that  
His wife has learned to curse!”

*(Roar of laughter. Nitsu storms in with his sons, makes for the central chief’s chair. Sunbeams sees his target, and while the crowd surges around Nitsu, laughing and hooting, she sweeps Hannamuk into the central chief’s chair.*

*Nitsu see this, cries out “Aiy-eee!!” All eyes swing to Hannamuk and Sunbeams. She stares down Nitsu as he approaches through parting crowd.*

NITSU: *(imperious)* “Child - leave that chair! The honour falls to me!”

SUNBEAMS: “He is not moving. The honour falls to the House of the Bear. My father wore the weasel hat. Now my son does.”

NITSU: *(turns to Jim)* “Hannamuk is not of age. You defy the old ways.”

*Jim stays mute, draws a withering gaze from Sunbeams.*

NITSU: *(turns to crowd, other chiefs)* “I gave the sugar. She gave nothing. Tell her I am chief of - ”

GAXA: (*loud, mocking singsong*) “The soft and sagging warrior...”

*Crowd roars with laughter. Humiliated, Nitsu turns to Hannamuk.*

NITSU: (*to Hannamuk*) “I aim this *Siksho* - my shaman’s curse - at you: Not many days will you disgrace the chief of chief’s chair!”

*Crowd gasps, goes silent.*

NITSU: (*to Sunbeams, with chilling vengeance*) “Traitor! Pale ghosts will soon paddle up the Skeena, whispering ‘*snanameehaw, snanameehaw*’. The rest of your life will be nightmares.”

*Nitsu wheels to leave, but other chiefs and their relatives, including Jim’s father, block his way trying to placate, cajole him with dozens of gifts, flattery, salmon slathered in oolichan oil. When downy white eagle feathers are placed on Nitsu’s head, his scowl becomes a wan smile.*

*His sons survey pile of gifts, smile approval. Nitsu leaves with prized copper bracelets, a gleaming Winchester rifle, and a vividly painted oolichan oil box. Jim and Sunbeams see none of this.*

EXTERIOR - DAWN. *Bright, crisp sunshine. Nitsu leading Washburn’s mule down trail in snow, carrying the*

*new oolichan oil box and Winchester rifle. Music:  
"Snowflake Serenade"*

*EXTERIOR - NIGHT. Nitsu and mule sleeping in snow bank, under a huge bear skin.*

*EXTERIOR - DAY. Nitsu and mule trudging trail in snow.*

*EXTERIOR - TWILIGHT. Washburn's mule munches straw at the Hudson Bay store in Hazleton.*

*INTERIOR - NIGHT. Inside store. Beach plays "Skeena Waltz" on banjo in back room, whiskey bottle on floor.*

*Washburn silently puts two \$10 gold pieces on the counter. Nitsu puts his Winchester rifle on the counter. Washburn nods. Nitsu nods, takes coins. Loads his prized, heavy oil box onto counter, then onto his back, braced with hand-made tump line. Nitsu leaves store.*

*Washburn whistles appreciatively, sights down rifle, takes 'aim' at door Nitsu has just left by. Beach enters.*

*BEACH: "You make a trade with the medicine man?"*

*WASHBURN: (nods) "A spittin' new Winchester worth sixty dollars - for ten worth of sugar." (Grins, spits tobacco juice into can) "Christmas came early."*

*EXTERIOR - DAWN. Nitsu trudging trail, weighted down*

*with oil box, covered in bear cape. No mule. Banjo plays:  
“Off the Beaten Track”*

*EXTERIOR - Same DAWN. Gitksan village. Confused, panic-stricken Indian parents bring children outside, vomiting, crying, covered in red rashes. Elderly Indians crawl into snow, panting.*

*INTERIOR. DAWN. Hannamuk and Kumas in fevered sleep. Distraught Sunbeams listens as Jim instructs Indian runner.*

*“Go to the house of Nitsu. Tell him to come here. Both my sons are very sick. They need his medicine. Now!”*

*EXTERIOR - TWILIGHT. Nitsu’s longhouse. Exhausted runner meets Nitsu’s sons (Naxu is oldest) at doorway.*

*NAXU: “Nitsu went to get more oolichan oil. He is gone five days. You come in. Eat. Sleep. We will send a fresh runner back.”*

*EXTERIOR - Same NIGHT. Nitsu sleeps in snowbank, covered in bear skin. Hail pellets rain down on him.*

*INTERIOR: NIGHT. Hail pellets rattle longhouse roof. Jim and Sunbeams asleep in bed, Hannamuk whimpering, Kumas tossing fitfully. Sunbeams sits bolt upright, bathed in sweat.*



SUNBEAMS: (*screams*) “Go away! Go away!”

JIM: “Sunbeams! What is it?”

SUNBEAMS: “The ghost raiders. They’re coming! They have already paddled past Antkees.”

JIM: “Shh-hh. No. You’re here in the longhouse. You’re having a bad...”

SUNBEAMS: (*shivering*) “I can see through them. They are whispering: ‘*snanameehaw, snanameehaw*’, and paddling through the night ...”

INTERIOR: DAWN. *Jim’s longhouse. Second runner arrives. Gives unintentionally misleading message.*

SECOND RUNNER: (*panting*) “Nitsu won’t come for five days. No medicine.”

*Jim and Sunbeams exchange stricken, guilty stares.*

EXTERIOR: Same DAY. *Dead Indian bodies in snow, mostly babies and elderly. Men, including Jim, carry bodies to blazing funeral pyre. Mothers wail. One man puts a fishing hook down his son’s throat, pulling out a lung. The boy chokes to death on his own blood. A family fleeing the village capsizes their canoe in the swift, icy river.*

INTERIOR: NIGHT. *Longhouse, lit by blazing fire.*

JIM: *(suddenly awakes from nightmare)* “My son!”

*Sunbeams throws off blankets, both race, naked, over to Hannamuk. He is dead. Sunbeam screams, takes limp body in her arms. Jim checks Kumas, who is covered in red rash, soaked in sweat. Jim races outside with basket, brings back snow to bathe him in.*

INTERIOR - NIGHT. *Sunbeams frantically paces longhouse. Jim watches Kumas in fevered sleep.*

INTERIOR - DAY. *Dishevelled Sunbeams paces longhouse, obsessively sharpens two long knives against each other.*

JIM: “Sunbeams. Put those knives away. Try to get some -

SUNBEAMS: *(snarls)* “Sleep? How could I sleep? Hannamuk is asleep forever! Nitsu killed him with his *Siksho* curse!”

*Jim checks Kumas, stays silent.*

SUNBEAMS: “Kumas never crossed his path. *(She sharpens knife blades fiercely)* If Nitsu does not come or lift his curse, you must kill him. If you don’t, I will.”

INTERIOR: NIGHT. *Jim watches over Kumas. Sunbeams appears in longhouse doorway, covered in snow.*

SUNBEAMS: (*deranged with grief*) “I just saw Nitsu. When I told him one son is dead and the other is dying, he laughed. Then he sang his sugar song.”

*Jim says nothing.*

SUNBEAMS: (*screams*) “His *sugar* song!”

*Jim stays silent, checks Kumas.*

SUNBEAMS: (*tearing at her hair and clothes*) “Aiy-eee! What kind of chief are you? You say nothing! You *do* nothing! Kill Nitsu before his curse kills Kumas, too!”

EXTERIOR - DAY. *Longhouse doorway. Jim in winter clothes, with a coffin-sled made from a hollow cedar log. Sunbeams stands in doorway, disheveled, slashing knives against each other.*

JIM: (*hollowly*) “I will make a cairn for Hannamuk at the gravesite on the ridge. In the spring, I will make a box for his bones and set it on our totem. Watch over Kumas.”

SUNBEAMS: (*raging*) “Don’t come back until you track Nitsu down and kill him like a grouse!”

JIM: (*sweeping his hand towards other longhouses*) “There are too many dead already.”

*Sunbeams disappears. Returns to doorway, throws musket and bag of musket balls and powder at him.*

SUNBEAMS: (*screams*) “Our ancient blood law says: Nitsu killed, so Nitsu must be killed! Do it!”

*Jim picks up musket, powder bag, begins trudging away.*

SUNBEAMS: (*yells at his back*) “I hope Kumas dies too if you prove his father is a coward!”

EXTERIOR - DAY. *Jim silently drags another sled with heated rocks from his father’s longhouse. The sled tows Hannamuk’s coffin behind it on the snow.*

EXTERIOR - Same DAY. *Jim's arms embrace the cairn. Steam rises from warm rocks. He puts his head down on them, sobbing.*

EXTERIOR - TWILIGHT. *Jim stirs from sleep and shakes his head as he hears distant, happy singing. He can see no one. He may be dreaming, or delirious. The song echoes, with no apparent source.*

NITSU: (*half chanting, half singing, climbing opposite ridge towards Jim*)

Sugar, sugar, sugar  
So sweet to old and young  
A gift to you from Nitsu

To savour on your tongue

*Louder, with steady rhythm.*

Sugar, sugar, sugar  
So sweet to old and young  
A gift to you from Nitsu  
To savour on your tongue

*Nitsu comes near crest of hill, panting heavily, with tump line and heavy oolichan oil box on his back. In the deep twilight, he looks phantasmagoric. He begins singing again:*

Sugar, sugar, sugar  
So sweet to old and young  
A gift to -

MUSKET SHOTS.

*Nitsu cries out, crumples. Jim drops musket, edges toward him in deep snow. Nitsu is covered in blood. Two holes gape from his lungs and stomach. The musket balls have pierced him. Oolichan oil is mixing with the blood on the snow.*

*Jim reaches Nitsu. Nitsu looks up, amazed. Recognizes Jim.*

NITSU: “How could you shoot me? Who have I harmed that you would kill me?”

JIM: “My son is dead. The other dying. Many Gitksan, too. You refused to bring medicine.”

NITSU:(*spitting up blood*) “I know nothing of this. I have been five days away in Hazleton. Getting oolichan oil.”

*Jim sees the full oolichan box leaking oil. Stricken, he looks down the trail leading to Hazleton.*

JIM: (*crying out, grasping head in hands*) “What have I done, Nitsu?”

*Nitsu has passed out. Jim drags him to a hollowed out tree, props Nitsu in a sheltered notch, puts his own coat over him, then the bear skin. Darkness falls fast.*

INTERIOR: NIGHT. *Longhouse of Jim’s father. Jim appears at doorway without winter coat, disoriented, delerius.*

JIM: “I killed Nitsu. He was innocent. Tell his sons he is on the oolichan trail. At the ridge near the gravesite.”

INTERIOR: DAWN. *Longhouse of Jim and Sunbeams. Jim checks Kumas, goes to doorway dressed in heavy winter clothes, with pack. Picks up modern rifle, then drops it as if stung.*

SUNBEAMS: (*hisses from darkness inside*) “Coward!”

JIM: “Nitsu is dead. Take Kumas to my father, before you both are killed by Nitsu’s sons.”

*Jim leaves without rifle.*

INTERIOR: DAWN. *Same day. Nitsu’s sons at entrance to longhouse of Jim’s father.*

JIM’S FATHER: “Nitsu is on the oolichan trail, near the gravesite. My son says he shot him. By mistake.”

NITSU’S SON NAXU: “Is he alive?”

JIM’S FATHER: “No one knows.”

NAXU: “Where is Jim?”

JIM’S FATHER: “Gone.”

*The three sons whisper to each other.*

NAXU: “First, we will find our father. Then we will track Jim down, or the *Ramskeewah* will. We will avenge our father. They will hang him like a dog.”

INTERIOR: Same DAY. *Nitsu’s longhouse. A dozen armed relatives have convened.*

NAXU: “Six will go to find our father. Six will go to the

longhouse of Jim. If he runs like a rabbit, shoot him. If Sunbeams protects him, shoot her too.”

EXTERIOR: DAY. *Jim is inside his father’s longhouse. His father keeps watch at the door.*

JIM: “Get Kumas, and bring him here. Sunbeams is sick beyond help. Nitsu’s sons will kill her if they cannot find me.”

JIM’S FATHER: “Where will you go?”

JIM: “To the headwaters. Your hunting lands. No one will find me.”

JIM’S FATHER: “Maybe not Nitsu’s sons. But you cannot hide from the *Ramskeewah*. They can even shoot eagles out of the sky.”

EXTERIOR: DAY. *Nitsu’s oldest son Naxu and relatives find him propped up in the hollow tree notch. He is barely alive.*

NITSU: “Jim shot me. By mistake. Do not kill again to avenge me.”

NAXU: “But he has run away like a rabbit! Our House has been shamed...”

NITSU: “No! He’s a good Gitksan.”



*Others have searched the area. They find Jim's musket and sack of shot and powder. They bring it to Nitsu's son.*

NAXU: "This is Jim's old musket. I will shoot him with it the way he shot you. Blood for blood."

NITSU: (*last struggle*) "No! I forbid it. Sunbeams drove him to it, because the red sickness killed her son. Vengeance boiled in her."

*Silence.*

NITSU: (*weakening voice*) "Give me Jim's musket. Load it first."

*The musket is loaded, and put in Nitsu's arms. He reaches into his wound, drips blood down barrel. He aims rifle towards the sky. Pulls trigger. Shot echoes.*

NITSU: "Now I have shot the evil spirit that shot me. I am avenged enough."

*Nitsu dies.*

EXTERIOR: Same DAY. *Nitsu's other sons and relatives approach Jim's longhouse across river by canoe. Sunbeams sees them, loads rifle. Fires shots over their heads from her doorway. Re-loads rifle.*

INTERIOR - Same DAY. *Longhouse across river from Jim's. Old Indian man TOBAS hears shots. Delusional, covered in measles, he takes a pistol from under a blanket.*

EXTERIOR: Same DAY. *TOBAS runs down to the river bank. Fires at Nitsu's sons in returning canoes. Kills one of Nitsu's relatives as they try to land canoe. Tobas reloads pistol.*

*Village chief HAGASU runs down to bank with rifle.*

NITSU RELATIVE: *(yelling from canoe)* "Hagasu!! He's a madman! He's shot one of us for no reason!"

HAGASU: *(to Tobas)* "Tobas, put down your pistol!"

*Tobas swings gun, aims at chief. Chief shoots him dead.*

INTERIOR - NIGHT. *Longhouse of Nitsu. His sons and relatives confer with Jim's father and relatives.*

NAXU: "Nitsu was killed by Jim. Not with an evil heart. Yet settlement must be made."

JIM'S FATHER: *(nods)* "It is the *kiskisux* law."

*Nitsu's relatives are divided. His oldest son surveys them. Many scowl, some look skeptical, some relieved. All remain silent.*

EXTERIOR: DAY. *Nitsu's sons and relatives at door to Jim's father's longhouse. Jim appears, cloaked in a full bear skin with a copper amulet in his mouth. He goes to them on his hands and knees, swaying like a bear. Drops amulet at their feet. Then he sings a song of remorse. His father and relatives offer dozens of copper bracelets, blankets, oolichan boxes, otter traps.*

NAXU: "We accept these presents of peace. It is Nitsu's wish that he not be avenged. The Bear House has made amends. Let Indians killing Indians stop."

INTERIOR - NIGHT. *Nitsu's longhouse. Washburn and his teen-age Gitksan bride, GILGUL, survey the peace gifts Nitsu's sons proudly display.*

WASHBURN: *(to Nitsu's sons)*

"You were cheated. The copper, the blankets, the boxes - all are worthless. I know Kitwancool Jim has gold. Much gold. Beach gave it to him. Take all this back. Demand his gold. I can trade you greater gifts for it."

EXTERIOR - DAWN. *Nitsu's sons at doorway of Jim's father's longhouse. They have put the peace gifts in a pile.*

NAXU: *(to Jim's father)* "We have brought these back. They are not enough. We want Jim's gold. The *Ramskeewah* Washburn told us of it."

JIM'S FATHER: (*sternly*) "Jim has gone to get Kumas. We gave you all our copper, blankets and best oil boxes, to make amends. We have little left. Look inside my longhouse if you think there is gold."

*Embarrassed, Nitsu's relatives pick up the gifts and leave.*

INTERIOR - Same NIGHT. *Nitsu's longhouse. It is empty except for Washburn and Gilgul. Nitsu is laid out for a funeral, in his shaman robes. Washburn searches him, then a nearby pile of Nitsu's clothes, personal effects. Gilgul watches, trembling.*

WASHBURN: (*furious*) "The goddam twenty dollars I paid for his rifle is not here!"

*He grabs her arms, shakes her violently.*

WASHBURN: "Who took my two gold pieces from Nitsu?"

*She stares blankly. He curses, slaps her. Sees Jim's musket. Seizes it. Stops, thinks. Tears into Nitsu's robes, digs hand into Nitsu's flesh and retrieves two bloody musket balls.*

WASHBURN: (*showing her his bloody fist and musket balls*)

"These will get me gold instead!"

*Her eyes dart to Nitsu's oolichan box. Washburn detects her glance. He strides to oil box, plunges his bloody hand in, clutches two \$10 gold pieces.*

WASHBURN: *(with evil leer)* "You sly little slut. You're as crafty as that old sorcerer Nitsu was - hiding his gold where even his sons didn't find it."

*(Makes slashing motion across his throat)*

"You tell anyone about this, and I will slit your lovely red throat!"

INTERIOR - NIGHT. *Nitsu's longhouse. Nitsu's relatives have returned with the gifts.*

WASHBURN: *(scornfully, to Nitsu's oldest son)* "You have been cheated twice! Jim has hidden from you the gold coins Beach gave him. He also stole two ten dollar pieces I gave Nitsu five days ago in Hazleton. For *this!*"

*Washburn holds up Winchester, which the sons saw Nitsu receive at the end of the potlatch. He hands it to the oldest son.*

WASHBURN: "I give you this, to honour Nitsu. On one condition."

*Naxu accepts the rifle, but is obviously confused.*

WASHBURN: *(now in a commanding tone, pointing to peace gifts)*

“Take these trinkets back! Get me the gold. And Jim. He’s a murderer. And a thief who stole from me, and your dying father. He has broken your Indian law, and the white man’s.”

*Nitsu’s sons nod.*

“If you don’t find him, the white man will hunt him down, hang him from a tree, and keep all the gold! Go! Now! He will be hiding at his longhouse!”

INTERIOR: DAY. *Nitsu’s sons enter Jim’s deserted longhouse. There is no fire. They search the longhouse, find nothing, search outside. They find a rock cairn, gingerly pull away the top rocks. The child Kumas’ frozen face appears, pocked with red measles. The white weasel hat is on his head.*

*Nitsu’s sons flee to their canoes.*

INTERIOR - TWILIGHT. *Nitsu’s longhouse.*

NAXU: *(To Washburn)* “Jim is gone. No Sunbeam. No gold. Both sons buried. Too much dead. We keep gifts.”

WASHBURN: *(seizing Nitsu’s rifle)* “Then I keep *this!*”

Next time you savages see me, there'll be a bounty on Jim's head. And I'll have a bloody brigade behind me!"

EXTERIOR - Same TWILIGHT. *Bitter cold. Behind the longhouse, Sunbeams brushes the snow from the frozen face of Kumas, tenderly takes off his white weasel hat. By surprise, she finds gold coins inside. Puts both inside her coat, then silently replaces the cairn stones.*

INTERIOR - NIGHT. *Hudson Bay store. Washburn, Vowell, Beach pour whiskey into glasses, drink. Washburn lays out Nitsu's bloody clothes on counter, then Jim's musket and two musket balls.*

WASHBURN: "Here's proof enough. *There's two musket holes in that dead shaman's shirt. Here's two musket balls. Here's Kitwancool Jim's musket - "*

VOWELL: "How do we know it's his?"

WASHBURN: "He had it with Beach and me when he guided us into Stikine country. Clifford saw it with him when he came to trade. Tomlinson, too - when he took Gitksans to his mission for doctorin'."

VOWELL: "Good. Good. How do we know Nitsu's dead?"

WASHBURN: "I saw him with my own eyes. Stiff and cold as an old floor board. That's how I got the - "

BEACH: (*grinning*) “ - Musket balls. (*To Vowell*)  
“Washburn just stuck his hand into his guts, cool as you please, and ripped these right out of old Nitsu’s lungs and belly. Make a good policeman, don’t you think? He’s got a *feel* for it!”

*They all chortle, swig whiskey.*

VOWELL: (*nodding to counter*) “This is strong evidence, men. But in Victoria it’d be just another case of Indians killing Indians. Now if this Kitwancool Jim *planned* it... - then it’s murder. A hanging offense. That would get the gunboat up here.”

*Beach nods. They all ruminates, swig whiskey in silence.*

WASHBURN: “He did it for money.”

VOWELL: “I don’t follow, Washburn.”

WASHBURN: “Right here at this counter, I paid Nitsu two ten dollar pieces for a rifle on trade. On his way back, Kitwancool Jim shot him, twice, then stole that gold. Nitsu’s sons never found it when they found Nitsu dead on the trail.”

VOWELL: “Can you swear to these facts, man?”

WASHBURN: “Yes, sir. On any Bible.”



VOWELL: “Excellent! I think we have a case. Washburn, you’d best come to Victoria with me and personally swear out a murder warrant. Beach, we can conscript constables - and arrange the “C” Battery gunboat - on the same trip.”

*Vowell takes belt of whiskey.*

“These Indians are lawless. They must be taught a good, sharp lesson: to give up their blood code and accept our Queen’s gracious rule. By consent - or force.”

*(Sly wink)* By perfect happenstance, I expect you two might soon start earning some extra wages settling that very score.”

BEACH: *(raising glass)* “To our gracious Queen!”

VOWELL and WASHBURN: *(raising glass)* “To Queen Victoria!”

INTERIOR: DAWN. *Hudson’s Bay store. Distant, reverberant sound, like wolves, but actually human voices. High, keening cries. Wailing. Drum beats. Howling in unison.*

*Vowell, Beach and Washburn are at the woodstove, drinking coffee, smoking cigars, pipes, spitting tobacco into can. A whiskey bottle on counter. Air of suppressed alarm. Knock startles them. Beach rubs frost off pane, looks outside, unbolts door, opens it.*

*Mrs. Hankin enters. Beach bolts door.*

VOWELL: (*surprised*) “Mrs. Hankin. The hour’s early for  
- ”

MRS. HANKIN: (*brusquely, coming to stove*) “It’s only  
early for laggards, Mr. Vowell. I’ve been up the night,  
listening to them wail like wolves. Give me some of that  
coffee.” (*She sees whiskey bottle, shivers, nods to it*)  
“Mercury reads minus 36. Make it stiff, with a good dose  
of Clifford’s Christmas sugar.”

*Beach pours coffee from pot on stove, adds whiskey. Sugar  
barrel is gone. Hands her cup.*

BEACH: “Sorry, ma’am. Sugar’s gone till he gets back.  
Should be New Year’s D - ”

*Haunting human wails cut him off.*

VOWELL: (*indicating howling sounds*) “What do you  
make of it, Mrs. Hankin? “Is it some savage ritual?”

MRS. HANKIN: (*shakes head*) “My kin pioneered here.  
I’ve been deep into Tsimshian country on police and trail  
judge business. We’ve never heard *that*.” (*nods outside*)

BEACH: “Should we be alarmed?”

MRS. HANKIN: “We should be smart. And stay inside until we find out what’s got into - ”

*Furious pounding on door. Beach goes to door, rubs frost off pane, looks, opens it. Tomlinson bursts in.*

TOMLINSON: “They’ve dragged a dozen dead bodies to my mission house! (*gasps for air*) It’s another epidemic! There’s likely hundreds more!”

*Beach slams door shut, bolts it. Tomlinson strides to whiskey bottle on counter, takes quick, stiff belt.*

INTERIOR: NIGHT. *Hudson’s Bay store. Indian wails and howling unabated. Vowell, Beach, Washburn, Tomlinson, his wife, Mrs. Hankin, other white adults and several children crowd around woodstove. They all silently eat soup from bowls, listening. Blankets and rough pallets on floor.*

*Telegraph on table behind counter starts clattering, shattering silence. Beach strides to it, puts fingers on transmitter. Writes out incoming message on paper. Taps out short answer.*

VOWELL: (*tense*) “What’s Victoria say?”

BEACH: (*stiffens slightly, crumples paper in his hand*)  
“The gunboat *Caroline* leaves in six hours. A police patrol and Blue Jackets will be on it. We’re to barricade the post

and let no Indians in. Not one.”

*EXTERIOR: DAWN. Bitter cold. Beach and Washburn on porch, pounding wood planks with iron nails and axe heads over Hudson Bay post windows. Large oat bags are piled as barricades/rifle pits in front of closed door.*

*They stop and listen. Indians still wailing from hills.*

SUBTITLE: “Kill the white dogs! Kill them all!”

BEACH: *(curses under his breath)* “I could have you hung, Washburn. Or better yet, torn apart by those wolves.” *(nods towards hills)*

WASHBURN: *(jolted)* “What?”

BEACH: “It was your sugar.”

WASHBURN: “That’s madness, Beach. Those savages have got you pissing your trousers - ”

BEACH: “Tomlinson says the measles had to come from a common source. No white man has been up in Gitksan country since before Christmas. No Gitksan has been here, except Nitsu. And not a single settler here has got measles. It was the sugar you sold him.”

*Washburn swings axe out into snow in fury, barely missing his mule tied to porch post. He takes a menacing step*

*towards Beach.*

WASHBURN: “Don’t cross me, Beach.

BEACH: (*not backing up*) “Your greed might yet get this whole outpost burned to the ground, Washburn. It hasn’t escaped me that you didn’t stop at dirty sugar. Somehow, you ended up with Nitsu’s Winchester. Plus the gold he paid you for it.”

WASHBURN: (*sneering*) “Plus his little red niece, for as long as I please. But that’s my business. Make it yours, Beach, and there’ll be the devil to pay.”

BEACH: “Don’t threaten me, Washburn. When I inform Victoria about - ”

WASHBURN: (*putting his face an inch from Beach’s*)

“Victoria won’t hear a word about it. Or Vowell, or Clifford, or anyone else.”

BEACH: (*laughs*) “You’ll be lucky if you’re not hung. Get your filthy face - ”

WASHBURN: “If I am, you’ll hang beside me. Clifford put you in charge of sugar sales, Beach. There’s a hundred missing pounds of it. And a ten dollar piece in your pocket.”

*Beach's face blanches. He stays mute.*

WASHBURN: (*malevolent grin*) "So, as we agreed, all the nice white sugar went to settlers for Christmas. It's Kitwancool Jim that's the criminal. There's his bounty to split. All the rest is just Indians killing Indians."

INTERIOR: DAY. *Victoria court room. Empty except for Vowell, Beach and judge. Washburn with hand on Bible.*

WASHBURN: "In the matter of Queen Victoria versus Kitwancool Jim, Indian, Hazleton District, I solemnly swear the aforementioned facts are true, as God is my witness."

EXTERIOR: DAY. *Jim in wilderness, hunting in deep snow.*

INTERIOR: NIGHT. *Victoria saloon. Roar of men drinking, swearing, playing cards. "Nowlan's Reel" being played on violin, to stamping feet. Vowell, Beach, Washburn at table in adjoining room with papers, constable's badges, beer mugs.*

VOWELL: (*reading list*) "We're well in shape, men. We've James Peters, in command of "C" Battery. Not Irish, but he's proven out. Helped hunt down that traitor Riel and his red rebels in '85."

*Beach, Washburn nod.*

VOWELL: “John Flewin as company commander. Our best man on Indian cases. Caught the ‘Seabird schooner’ culprits. Had their red necks hung.”

WASHBURN: (*raises mug in salute*) “And he’s Irish to the bone.”

VOWELL: “As is Fitzstubbs, former Irish Guard. He will captain our twelve constables, and act as magistrate if need be. Roycroft will be sergeant. Dick Loring will be second sergeant until his appointment as Indian Agent commences. I will supervise, and report to Victoria.”

WASHBURN: “And us, sir?”

VOWELL: “Beach and you will command the field in actual Indian country. Our instructions are to bring him to trial without harm, if possible. Thirty Blue Jackets on the gunboat *Caroline* should prove adequate to that purpose.”

*Vowell drops voice to confidential tone.*

“But if not, I expect a quick, sharp blow. This action has been challenged as an extravagant expense by Ottawa, and in some quarters here in Victoria.”

*Beach nods.*

VOWELL: “The more quickly this action is concluded, the

more likely you two will secure the bounty discussed. Hunting one damned Indian will soon be costing Her Majesty upwards of \$100 per day!”

WASHBURN: “Understood, sir.”

VOWELL: “You’ve a last conscript to recommend?”

WASHBURN: “Yes, sir. If there’s trouble, he’ll soon end it.”

VOWELL: “Very well, bring him in.”

*Washburn leaves.*

VOWELL: “Do I detect some misgivings about you sharing field command with Washburn, Beach?”

BEACH: “Sir, I’m not sure he’s trained for it.”

VOWELL: “Agreed. But he speaks Chinook, he knows the country, and he’s got that Gitksan girl. She might lead us to - ”

*Washburn returns with GREEN, a hulking figure with a beer mug in his huge fist. Vowell and Beach stare at his menacing size.*

WASHBURN: “Presenting Billy Green, sir. Former Irish Guard.” (*grins*) “He’s been celebrating Orange Day with



the rest of our Irish lads out there.”

VOWELL: “You’re big enough, Green. Can you carry a 50 pound pack, and shoot straight, for three dollars per day?”

GREEN: “Yes, sir! For a chance at some Indian action, I’ll carry 100 pounds and do it for one!”

*Vowell nods, takes constable badge from table, motions to Green. Sound dies to a whisper as tavern waitress sings "Mountains of Mourne."*

EXTERIOR: DAY. *Summer. Gunboat HMS Caroline loaded with soldiers, police, chugging through ocean coast islands. Sound of brass band playing "Skeena March".*

EXTERIOR - DAY. *Summer. Jim in wilderness, hunting grouse with pistol.*

EXTERIOR: DAY. *Vowell, Beach, Washburn, Green, Fitzstubbs, Roycroft, Loring and police patrol on deck of anchored HMS Caroline.*

CAPTAIN: “The *Caroline* will stay here, at the mouth of the Skeena. The police patrol will take the river to Hazleton, then divide from there. Vowell will command, and relay events by telegraph. If need be, “C” battery will attend in force. Good hunting, and God save the Queen!”

INTERIOR: NIGHT. *Summer. Hudson’s Bay store. Beach*

*behind counter, Vowell, Washburn, police patrol passing whiskey bottle. It's empty when Green gets it.*

GREEN: (*sourly*) "There's nought but a drop left!"

*Roar of laughter. Green instantly lands haymaker punch on nearest man, who crumples. Green begins kicking him viciously. It takes five men to pull Green away. His face is contorted with rage.*

ROYCROFT: (*barks*) "Order, men! Order! Green - stand to!"

*Green heaves and pants, wavers on feet, with malevolent stare. Men hold him back.*

ROYCROFT: "Steady up, man! We're all a bit beaten. Thirteen days in canoes on the Skeena is no parade ground march. But get ahold of yourself. Or you'll be cooling off in the cellar with mice and spiders for - '

WASHBURN: (*blurts out*) "Some stockade that'd be! There's four barrels of rum and two of whiskey down there!"

*Roycroft looks to Beach, who nods.*

ROYCROFT: (*grins*) "Then I order them seized in the name of Her Majesty's constables! Go to 'er, boys!"

*Whoops and laughter as they stampede into cellar. Green grins dumbly, rubs bleeding knuckles with pleasure.*

INTERIOR: Same NIGHT. *Drinking police patrol laughing, stomping, dancing Irish jig to "Miss Moriah's Jig" played on banjo (Beach) fiddle, accordion (other constables).*

EXTERIOR: DAWN. *Jim outside a small trapper's cabin on a densely wooded creek, silently cleaning his pistol.*

EXTERIOR - DAWN. *Hudson's Bay post porch. Entire police patrol, ready to leave.*

VOWELL: "Orders are to capture him alive. The Indians have quieted down much since Christmas. Victoria wants to keep it that way."

*Vowell taps leg irons, manacles hanging on Washburn's mule.*

"I want to see him in *these* inside ten days. Guns are to be fired only as an extreme measure. And then only with an order from Beach or Washburn. Understood?"

*All shout: "Yes, sir!!"*

EXTERIOR: DAY. *Beach, Roycroft and police patrol of six come to clearing in woods, he motions them to stop. Sunbeams is picking berries, alone. Senses something, she*

*whirls around. See's Beach. Disappears into woods.*

EXTERIOR - DAY. *Washburn, Green, and patrol of six trudging up river bank, mule in tow.*

EXTERIOR - NIGHT. *Beach's patrol around campfire. Beach plays "Skeena Waltz" on banjo, another soldier plays melody on harmonica.*

EXTERIOR - NIGHT. *Washburn's patrol around different campfire at river edge. Wolf howls. Mule bellows.*

EXTERIOR: DAWN. *Beach waits in centre of Sunbeam's berry clearing, his patrol lays down packs, rifles at edge. Sunbeams appears at berry bushes. Sees Beach, moves to flee, then hesitates. Beach holds both hands up to show no weapons, motions for her to come join him. She stays silent, still.*

*Beach takes silver coins from pocket, flashes them in sun. Sunbeams does not move. Beach sits down cross legged, slowly plays "Sunbeams' Song" on his banjo. Sunbeams is entranced by sound and sight of sunlight sparkling on the silver frame. He plays again. She gradually comes to within ten feet.*

BEACH: "I am Beach. Jim guided me into Stikine country."

SUNBEAMS: (*glances at coins*) "For gold."

BEACH: (*surprised, pleased*) “Yes.”

*Sunbeams sweeps wary eyes towards woods, catches sight of his patrol. She tenses, ready to flee. Beach plays a few more bars. Sunbeams smiles.*

BEACH: “They won’t harm you. Or Jim. You have my word.”

*Silence.*

BEACH: “Can you read?”

*She gives puzzled look. Beach slowly takes paper from pocket, unfolds it, holds it up to her. She shakes her head. Beach puts paper down on ground, silver coins on top of it.*

BEACH: “Jim is a good Gitksan.”

*She nods.*

BEACH: “Good chief.”

*She nods.*

BEACH: “Good husband. Good father.”

*Her eyes flash. Silence.*

BEACH: “I know where he is hiding. Our Great Queen sees all, and tells me.”

*He gives Sunbeams wide smile.*

BEACH: “Even your thoughts.” (*Pause*) “All of them.”

*Sunbeams almost faints. She is terrified, but transfixed by the combination of Beach’s welcome smile and penetrating gaze.*

BEACH: (*softly*) “Your heart hurts that Jim is gone.”

*Quick indrawn breath, nod.*

BEACH: “And the Great Queen told me Jim is at the end of the river. At Hilleen creek.”

SUNBEAMS: (*instantly corrects him*) “No - at Hiyeen creek. At the cabin on his father’s hunting ground.”

*Beach smiles with satisfaction. His trap has worked. He leans forward to collect the paper and coins. She flinches. He pauses. Plays a few more bars on the banjo.*

BEACH: “He killed Nitsu.”

*She nods.*

BEACH: “For gold”.

SUNBEAMS: (*firmly*) “No. Nitsu killed our sons.”

BEACH: (*startled, stops playing*) “Your sons? Why?”

SUNBEAMS: “Nitsu wanted the chief of chiefs chair. My son took it first. Nitsu said his *Siksho* curse. Then the red sickness came, two days after the sugar potlatch. Nitsu refused us medicines. He never came. For revenge.”

BEACH: (*in sickened tone*) “So Jim killed Nitsu because his sugar brought the red sickness?”

SUNBEAMS: (*puzzled anguish*) “No. Nitsu’s *curse* killed Hanamuk and Kumas. Then I taunted, many times. Threw musket at Jim. Called him coward. Then he shot Nitsu. To avenge my sons.”

*Beach’s face goes ashen. He now knows Jim killed Nitsu by tragic mistake, and the depth of Washburn’s lies. He glances back at patrol, takes a \$10 gold piece from pocket, then pushes paper and coins back to Sunbeams.*

BEACH: “Take this, Sunbeams. Quick. Give Jim this paper, this money. Tell him I know now what happened. He must come to Hazleton, for a white man’s trial. But I promise he won’t be hanged.”

*Sunbeams takes letter, coins, as Roycroft strides up quickly. He detects coins in her hand, note.*

ROYCROFT: (*imperious*) “Did she say where he’s hiding?”

BEACH: “No.”

ROYCROFT: “Then why the devil are you giving this filthy squaw money?”

BEACH: “So she takes that letter to Kitwancool Jim, her husband. It says to turn himself in. He trusts me.”

ROYCROFT: (*strides to Sunbeams, wrenches her arm so that coins and note drops to ground. He picks them up. Gets ready to strike her.*)

“You don’t pay savages for telling you nothing. Or delivering the mail. You just knock them about until - ”

BEACH: (*pulls out pistol, aims it at Roycrofts’ crotch.*)  
“Touch her again and it will cost your manhood, Roycroft.”

*Roycroft freezes, but won’t release Sunbeams. Beach cocks the trigger. Roycroft drops coins and paper to cover his crotch. Gives furious glance back to patrol, who are all sleeping in the sun.*

BEACH: “Think, Roycroft. We haven’t found him in a fortnight. Better he turns himself in then we get caught in



the mountains when the snow comes.”

*Roycroft glares at him. Beach keeps pistol aimed at him, nods to money and note. Sunbeams picks it up quickly, disappears into woods. Roycroft watches in dismay, slowly takes hands away from crotch.*

ROYCROFT: “You have just drawn a weapon on a Queen’s constable, Beach. You’ll be put in gaol for this.”

BEACH: “No I won’t, Roycroft. One word and I’ll say I drew my gun when you tried to rape her. Now get out of my sight. You have the same stink as Washburn.”

EXTERIOR: DAWN. *Tomlinson’s remote mission house, which serves as a church, school, infirmary. A small graveyard adjoins, with a dozen new white crosses over fresh earth. Lelt, a teenage Indian boy (about 17) in western clothes, plays melody of "Penelope's Waltz" on a violin. Tomlinson accompanies on harmonium.*

TOMLINSON: "Much better. This is called a 'waltz'. Count in beats of three."

*He counts in, they play first verse and chorus.*

EXTERIOR: Same DAY. *Tomlinson driving horse and buggy down trail. Lelt plays "Siobahn's Song" on violin.*

EXTERIOR: Same DAY. *Manacles, leg irons hang from*

*mule tied to Tomlinson's mission cemetery fence.  
Washburn, Green, Flewin and three other constables form  
circle around Lelt.*

WASHBURN: (*fingering crucifix on Lelt's neck chain*) "A  
Christian, eh?"

*Nod.*

WASHBURN: "Got a name, boy?"

LELT: "Two. My Gitksan name is Lelt. My Christian name  
is Solomon Harris."

WASHBURN: (*grins to patrol*) "Solomon, eh? After the  
wise man from the Bible?"

*Nod.*

WASHBURN: "Well, well, well. Then tell me, wise one:  
do you know who Kitwancool Jim is?"

*Nod.*

WASHBURN: (*excited*) "Yes?"

*Nod.*

WASHBURN: "Where he went?"

*Nod.*

WASHBURN: (*slaps Lelt on back, delighted. Gives triumphant look to patrol*) “Well, well, well. From out of the mouth of babes!”

*To Lelt:* “Where?”

LELT: “You must canoe far up this river, past the salmon canyons. Then along the trail to Hiyeen creek, then the trail through the mountains on the way to *Medzee-aden.*”

GREEN: “Christ! We’d never track him up there!”

*Glum silence.*

WASHBURN: (*To men*) “You’re right, Green. But pack up, boys! This little Solomon is going to lead us to him.”

*Washburn grabs Lelt’s arm, who resists.*

LELT: “I cannot. Father Tomlinson is coming back to give me lessons -- ”

WASHBURN: “Damn school, and damn Tomlinson! I’ve got a murderer to catch!”

*(He takes two \$10 gold pieces from pocket, presses them into Lelt’s hands)*

WASHBURN: “Where’s your parents, boy? When they see this money, they’ll take me to his hide-out themselves!”

*Lelt points to graveyard, new crosses.*

LELT: “There. The red sickness took my father, mother, and two sisters.”

*Long silence. Police stare at their boots.*

WASHBURN: “Well, that’s a real shame, boy.” (*Points to his crucifix*) “But you know the Great Father took them to heaven.”

*Lelt nods.*

WASHBURN: “And the Great Father will smile on you, if you help us.”

*Lelt looks puzzled. Washburn takes more gold coins from pocket, offers them to Lelt.*

WASHBURN: “You take us to Kitwancool Jim, and you can keep all this money. Or you can use it for school in Hazleton. Or give it to reverend Tomlinson - for his church.”

*Lelt nods.*

WASHBURN: (*smiles with relief*) “Then you’ll take us to

Jim?”

LELT: “The Bible says not to kill. Or we go to Hell.”

WASHBURN: (*angry*) “But Jim killed Nitsu.” (*Looks at graveyard*) “And brought the red sickness. He killed many.”

LELT: “Father Tomlinson says '*measles*' came at the sugar potla - ”

WASHBURN: “Christ, boy! You’re talking damn nonsense. Nobody is going to kill Jim. Look, here’s my orders. Can you read?”

*Lelt nods, reads paper.*

WASHBURN: “See? We just take Jim to a white man’s trial. If the great, wise Queen says he did no wrong, he goes free.”

*Lelt nods.*

WASHBURN: (*grins with relief, turns to Green*) “Get the manacles off the mule. Let’s show Solomon here how it’s done.”

*Green gets manacles and leg irons off mule, drags them to circle of men. Flewin motions a constable to put out his arms and legs to be manacled. Green grins, locks*

*manacles, leg irons. Constable tries to walk, falls down to laughter. Gets up, falls again. More laughter.*

*Lelt watches in horror, throws coins in dirt, flees through graveyard into woods.*

INTERIOR: DAY. *Hudson's Bay store. Vowell, Roycroft, Loring, Tomlinson, Mrs. Hankin at counter.*

TOMLINSON: "Beach is gone?"

VOWELL: (*Nods curtly*) "Gave up the hunt and \$3 a day wages. Barely a word about why. Roycroft - what went on out there?"

ROYCROFT: (*mutters*) "Lost his nerve, I expect. Or has gone Indian. Or both. He gave a small fortune to that filthy squaw Sunbeams. Even played her his banjo."

VOWELL: (*nods*) "Twenty dollars, as planned. She's his wife. The hope was she'd persuade the Indian to turn himself in. Or she'd lead us to him."

ROYCROFT: "Twenty dollars? Beach gave her better than twice that. Gave us orders *not* to follow her. Said: "Follow Washburn's sugar trail instead'."

*Flash of surprise crosses Vowell's face. Tomlinson's is stricken. Mrs. Hankin catches his eye, nods. An unspoken secret hangs in the room.*

ROYCROFT: “It’s now up to Washburn’s patrol, sir. Should Loring and I join them?”

VOWELL: “Yes! A damned fortune’s been spent already. We’ve barely two weeks until winter.”

INTERIOR - DAWN. *Jim staring at ceiling, lying on pallet in father’s cabin. Hears blue jay squawk. Grabs pistol from under blanket, listens intently.*

EXTERIOR - Same DAWN. *Sunbeams in woods near cabin. She forms cup with her hands, imitates blue jay squawk. Repeats. Jim opens cabin door, comes out with pistol. Sees Sunbeams. She motions she is alone. He puts pistol down. She walks slowly toward him. He stays silent, motionless. She lays Beach’s paper and money on the ground 20 feet from him. Jim does not move. She bows her head, sinks to her knees, cries softly.*

*Long silence.*

JIM: “There is nothing to say, Sunbeams. You should go.”

*He goes inside, closes cabin door.*

EXTERIOR: TWILIGHT. *Sunbeams, hidden in woods, watches lightless cabin. Jim comes out, collects paper and coins. Goes back inside. Closes door.*

EXTERIOR - DAWN. *Sunbeams wanders alone on river bank, whispering 'snanameehaw, snanameehaw' incessantly. She's a disheveled wraith, with charcoal and fire ashes on her hair and face. Tear tracks leave ashen streaks down her cheeks.*

EXTERIOR: DAWN. *Tomlinson's mission. The police patrol waits outside.*

INTERIOR: DAWN. *Tomlinson's mission. Tomlinson in white linen jacket and trousers, of the kind worn in India during the 1800's.*

WASHBURN: (*Sneering*) "You don't give me orders, Tomlinson. Your Bible and saint-white getup might scare *savages* into your church, but to me you're just an English Anglican arsehole."

TOMLINSON: "Washburn, you are the devil's own handyman. Bribing Solomon to betray one of his own - "

WASHBURN: " - Heathen brothers? Wasn't it just Christmas when you were happy to see them herded to a reserve so the Methodists wouldn't convert them first?"

*Tomlinson is speechless.*

WASHBURN: "I aim to get Kitwancool Jim. Dead or alive. Beach and I will get the bounty either way. There'll be enough money to - "



TOMLINSON: “Beach has already quit the country.”

WASHBURN: “What?”

TOMLINSON: “He left three days ago. But not before revealing your sugar spread the measles epidemic.”

WASHBURN: “You’ll never prove it.”

TOMLINSON: “I intend to try. I have traced it to the shaman Nitsu, and the potlatch he held Christmas last. You supplied the dirty sugar. It killed hundreds. I hope you hang for it.”

WASHBURN: (*chilling laugh*) “If I do, my last words will tell a Bible story of my own: about a newly-minted missionary and hundreds of Tsimshians who died from smallpox two decades ago. Just after they saw his lantern shows about the little baby Jesus.”

*Tomlinson gasps, reels on his feet. Clutches at his heart.*

WASHBURN: “So not one word about sugar, preacher. Or someday soon you might swing from the same rope I do.”

EXTERIOR - DAY. *Jim reading, re-reading Beach’s letter at the cabin, staring at coins.*

EXTERIOR - DAWN. *Washburn and Gilgu at abandoned*

*longhouse of Jim and Sunbeams.*

WASHBURN: “I got your message. What is it, wench?”

GILGU: “I know where he hides. I take you there.”

WASHBURN: (*suspicious*) “Why?”

GILGU: “For Nitsu’s gold. And his rifle.”

*Washburn gives her sharp look. Then grins, runs hand across her behind. She flinches.*

GILGU: “Gold and rifle. Trade for Jim?”

WASHBURN: (*leers*) “Sure, wife. But no reward before I get Jim - and what a husband is due.”

*She nods submissively.*

EXTERIOR - DAWN. *Jim reads Beach letter, then puts it and money in coat, picks up pistol, heads into woods.*

EXTERIOR - DAWN. *Washburn and police patrol in front of Jim and Sunbeam’s longhouse, which they have been using as a camp. Washburn leads Green down to canoe at river. Gilgul waits in it.*

WASHBURN: “Billy - we’ve got to get him before the snow comes. (*Looks up at sky*) “There’s maybe a week left.

No Jim, no more wages.”

*Green nods.*

WASHBURN: “I’ve watched you. You’re a good man. Tough. Smart.”

*Green laps up flattery.*

WASHBURN: “Thing is, we still don’t know where Jim is. That little squaw’s related to him. She says she can take me to his hide-out. Others say he’s on his way here, to give himself in to Beach. But Beach gave up, and went back to Victoria.”

*Green nods, but looks confused.*

WASHBURN: (*impatient*) “I can’t be in both places at once.”

*Green nods.*

WASHBURN: “So I want you to stay here. While I go with her. If Jim comes here, try to surround him and put him in manacles. But if he fires first, you shoot him. Or if he’s about to escape. You understand?”

*Green nods. Gilgu covertly listens.*

WASHBURN: (*confidential tone*) “There’s half the bounty

in it for you, Green. Whether he's dead or alive. Plus he'll likely have stolen gold in his pockets. You keep that."

*Green grins, his eyes widen.*

WASHBURN: "So we split the bounty if *you* get him. If *I* get him, same thing. But not a word to anyone. Deal?"

GREEN: "Deal!"

*Washburn grabs his hand, squeezes it so that even the hulking Green winces.*

WASHBURN: "Don't cross me, Green. Your life wouldn't be worth hers (*nods to Gilgu in canoe*) if you did."

GREEN: "Never, sir."

WASHBURN: "Good. Now I have a longhouse to burn."

EXTERIOR: DAWN. *Jim at Hanumak's cairn, near trail where Nitsu was killed.*

EXTERIOR: DAY. *Gilgu leads Washburn up heavily wooded creek. She carries heavy pack. He carries rifle, whistles.*

EXTERIOR: TWILIGHT. *Jim at cairn of Kumas. His longhouse has been burned to the ground.*

EXTERIOR - DAWN. *Longhouse of Jim's father. Two constables race from behind, fire THREE SHOTS over head of fleeing figure.*

EXTERIOR: DAWN. *Billy Green at canoe by river, hears THREE SHOTS in distance. Loads bullets in rifle, runs to corner of another longhouse. Sees Jim turn and walk backwards towards him, panting, looking back to see pursuers. Jim does not have his pistol out. Green aims rifle, fires two shots into Jim's back. Jim crumples.*

GREEN: *(in triumph) "I got him! I got him!"*

*Green lumbers up to Jim, who is laying on his back, gasping. He rips the pistol from inside Jim's coat. Still no sign of others. Green rolls Jim over, sees bullet holes in coat, stains, pool of blood on dirt.*

*Green rummages in Jim's pockets, gets Beach's gold, the letter, and a pistol bullet. Puts bullet in pistol, fires into sky, puts pistol in Jim's hand.*

*Looks around. Sees Indians in longhouse doorways, watching him. He sweeps rifle toward them. They disappear inside.*

EXTERIOR - DAWN. *Washburn follows Gilgu walking up smaller creek, bordered by dense woods. Steady roar of water over rocks. She is fifty yards ahead of him, carrying heavy pack*

WASHBURN: (*yells*) “How far now?”

GILGU: (*faintly*) “One hour more.”

*Panting, Washburn stops to pull pouch from coat, put wad of tobacco in his mouth. He looks up. Gilgu has disappeared. He calls her several times harshly, then sweetly.*

*Suddenly his face flashes rage.*

WASHBURN: (*roars*) “Goddam to Christ you little red Jezebel!”

*He kicks at creek water, roars, spits out wad of tobacco. Then freezes.*

WASHBURN: (*now with panic*) “The food! She’s got all the food!”

*He shakes his head like a stunned animal. Groans. Grabs his head in hands. Then freezes again.*

WASHBURN: (*screams*) “And the box of bullets!”

*He cracks open the breech on his rifle. The chamber is filled with sugar.*

EXTERIOR -MORNING. *Jim lies on back in dirt, spitting*

*blood. Green circles warily, pointing his rifle at Jim, prods him with his boot. Flewin, other constables rush up.*

FLEWIN: (*out of breath*) “What happened, Green?”

GREEN: “It was self defense! He shot at me, but missed. Then I took him down before he could shoot again. Watch out! He’s still kicking!”

FLEWIN: (*dubious, to Green*) “Give your gun to Holman, Green. Holman, check the chambers.”

GREEN: (*refusing to give up gun*) “There’s his pistol! Check it. He fired it. First.”

FLEWIN: (*snaps*) “I heard two rifle retorts first. Then a pistol shot. And if he shot first, why are your bullet holes in his *back*?”

*Long pause. All stare at Jim, who raises himself onto his elbow, coughing blood.*

JIM: “He shot me in the back. My pistol was in my coat. He found it. Put a bullet in. Then fired.... at the sky.”

*Flewin snatches rifle from Green, hands it to Holman.*

JIM: “There is proof. He took my ten dollar piece. It’s in his pocket.”

GREEN: (*exploding*) “That’s a dirty (*kicks Jim*) Indian (*kicks again*) lie!”

*Green takes out knife, goes berserk. He grabs Jim’s arm and drags him through the dirt, swinging him in wide circles. The other constables, horrified, cannot get near him. Green laughs maniacally. They won’t shoot.*

GREEN: “Now I’m going to cut off this Indian’s scalp, and take it back to Victor -- ”

FLEWIN: (*barks out*) “GREEN!”

*Green looks up. Indians are coming from longhouses in every direction, with guns, knives, axes. Roars, screeches, wails, drum beats.*

FLEWIN: “Re- TREAT!”

*Green drops Jim, scrambles to rejoin patrol. They back out of village, guns drawn, and disappear into woods.*

EXTERIOR - Same DAY. Roycroft, Loring, other patrol arrive at village by canoe. Indians with axes, knives, guns will not let them land. Loring holds up his rifle, empties bullets into hands, dumps them in the river. Holds up flat palms.

*They are allowed to land. They put all their weapons on the gravel beach, and leave two guards. Chiefs lead them to*



*Jim, inside his father's longhouse.*

LORING: *(bending to check pulse)* “God in Heaven, look at him!”

*Loring carefully turns Jim over, sees bullet holes in back. Motions for chiefs to help him take coat off. Then shirt. All gasp. One bullet has come through his lung. The point is showing through the mouth of a huge, tattooed grizzly bear on Jim's chest.*

LORING: *(solemnly, to Roycroft)* “This means he was chosen to be a Gitksan chief of chiefs.”

ROYCROFT: “And?”

LORING: “And if we don't do our best to save him, there may be war with every Indian tribe in the north-west.”

*Jim comes to, recognizes Loring.*

JIM: “Big white man shot me. In the back. Took ten dollar piece.”

LORING: “Jim. I want to put you in our canoe. Get you downriver to Tomlinson. He has medicine.”

JIM: *(nods)* “Yes. *(In Tsimshian, to chiefs)* “I take canoe. Medicine at mission.”

*The chiefs nod. Crowd parts as the policemen gingerly put Jim on a pallet, cover him in a bolt of white cloth provided by chiefs, carry him to canoe.*

LORING: *(to chiefs)* “I will be back to collect evidence, and take witness statements. If Jim dies, the white man Green will stand trial for murder.”

EXTERIOR - *Canoe flotilla with Jim, Loring, Roycroft pulls up to river bank at Tomlinson mission. Tomlinson is there to meet it. Jim is carried to the bank, Tomlinson examines him. Recoils at the bear tattoo, takes out visible bullet with scalpel, puts in metal coffee cup.*

TOMLINSON: *(gently, to Jim)* “I did what I could. But it looks very bad. You’ve lost a lung. Much blood. The other bullet is buried.”

*Jim nods.*

TOMLINSON: *(hesitant)* “If you wish, I could give you the last rights as a Christian. You could save your - ”

JIM: “No. Let me die a Gitksan. Bury me with my boys.”

*Jim coughs blood, dies. Loring bows his head, motions for police to do same. Tomlinson recites prayer as Jim is wrapped in white cloth, carried to canoe. Loring seizes the bullet, and puts it inside his coat.*

INTERIOR: DAY. *Hudson's Bay store, October, 1888.*  
*Mrs. Hankin takes notes at counter.*

VOWELL: (*reading telegraph note*) "Victoria says have done with it here. Fitzstubbs, Mrs. Hankin will swear you in as magistrate. Green's charge: attempted murder of Kitwancool Jim."

FITZSTUBBS: "Very good, sir."

VOWELL: "Victoria expects proceedings that are efficient, but fair."

FITZSTUBBS: "By all means."

VOWELL: (*faint smile*) "The test firing of *HMS Caroline's* 'thunder guns' seem to have persuaded most Indians to take to the mountains. So Mr. Tomlinson will swear in twelve of our constables as jury."

*Both nod.*

VOWELL: "Beach will not be a witness. Mr. Roycroft will present the case. No facts will be heard regarding the circumstances prior to Kitwancool Jim's death. As a matter of law, they are irrelevant - particularly since Washburn has disappeared without a trace."

*Muffled shouts, pounding from cellar.*

FITZSTUBBS: (*nods, motions to cellar*) “Will manacles and leg irons be required for Green, sir?”

VOWELL: “Yes. Let’s show the Indians that Queen Victoria’s laws apply equally to all.”

EXTERIOR: DAY. *Fitzstubbs in judges chair. Mrs. Hankin takes notes. Twelve constables from police patrol as jurors. Tomlinson, Vowell, Flewin, Loring, Roycroft sit in adjacent chairs, waiting for verdict. A few Indian men stand behind them. One is Lelt (Soloman Harris).*

*Green stands in manacles, leg irons, shifting from foot to foot.*

FITZSTUBBS: “The court has heard the available evidence, and a jury of twelve honest men have reached a verdict.”

*All eyes turn to Green. He whimpers, hangs head, as huge wet stain appears at his crotch.*

FITZSTUBBS: “Special constable Billy Green, this court finds you: - Not guilty.”

*Silence. Eyes shift to Indians at back. Lelt whispers to other Indians. One spits in dirt in disgust.*

VOWELL: (*facing front, nods towards Green and whispers to Roycroft*)

“That sorry sod is stupid as a stone. Good thing he was an Irish Guard with Fitzstubbs: the murder charge only cost him a one-hour trial and a pair of soiled drawers.”

FADE OUT.

SOUND: "BRASS BAND PLAYS "SKEENA MARCH"

SCREEN TEXT -

The commanders of the police patrol  
were hailed as heroes in Victoria for putting down the  
‘Skeena River Rebellion’ of 1888.

Soon after, A.W. Vowell was appointed  
provincial Superintendent of Indian Affairs.  
Roycroft was made provincial chief of police.  
Loring became Indian Agent for the Skeena/Nass region.  
Flewin became gold commissioner.

TEN YEARS LATER

INTERIOR. DAY. *House of the Bear longhouse in  
Kitwancool village. The four massive wood cornerposts are  
carved into fierce bear figures, paws outstretched, teeth  
bared. Opposite the entrance, empty chairs with grizzly  
bear skins draped over them. Their heads glare from a  
floor of white gravel. Animal heads adorn walls. Among  
the decorations are a Union Jack, and a Hudson’s Bay*

*company flag. The longhouse is packed. An excited hum drops to silence as Vowell and his entourage enter. It includes Roycroft, Loring, Flewin, Fitzstubbs, Mrs. Hankin, men carrying survey equipment.*

*A chief points Vowell to the central guests' chair. Vowell frowns at the grizzly bear cape, sweeps it aside. A procession of chiefs enters in full ceremonial dress. They file to the sides, take their own seats.*

VOWELL: *(to all)* “Victoria has approved a reserve. We intend to complete the survey forthwith. Does anyone have anything to say first?”

MRS. HANKIN: *(to all in Tsimshian)* “He is the Government. He’s here to corral you into a little reserve. That is all he has to say.”

*One young chief stands up. It is Lelt. He reads a scrap of paper:*

LELT: “Ten years ago, your Great Queen promised \$100 for the tombstone of Kitwancool Jim, and \$100 to atone with his House of the Bear. *This* was signed by Mr. Loring. It was not done.”

*Loring bows head. Others cough, shuffle feet.*

VOWELL: “I’ll look into it.”

LELT: “No. He was a chief-to-be. Our prince. Make amends. Until then, stay off our land.”

VOWELL: (*jumps to feet, roars*) “I’ll not be dictated to by any Indian.”

*Lelt nods. Gaxa unties rope from post, and begins lowering a huge wooden figure suspended from a pulley from the longhouse ridge pole. All eyes swing upward. Vowell puts hand on pistol, looks up.*

*It is a full-body replica of Kitwancool Jim, carved from cedar. It descends right beside Vowell, so that its’ eyes stare directly at him. The cheeks have four crosses in vermilion red. It is dressed in the shirt Jim was shot in, bullet holes in the back. In an outstretched palm is the bullet Green shot him with. Pinned to the bloodied shirt is Beach’s note.*

VOWELL: (*to all*) “What’s the meaning of this horror?”

*His question is met by total silence. Vowell snatches the note, reads it, crumples it and throws it on the ground.*

VOWELL: (*signaling to entourage*) “We are finished here!”

*Vowell stamps from longhouse.*

FADE OUT

AUGUST, 1927

Distant SOUND of violin and duet of “Too Soon Taken”

EXTERIOR - DAY. *Barbeau, Beynon, Charles Barton with Edison recorder, church across river. Old Indian women come to collect Jim’s bloodied shirt. One nods to Charles Barton, places Sunbeams’ white weasel hat on table. It has gold coins on it, and Beach’s letter.*

INTERIOR - DAY. *Hazleton schoolhouse. Five Indian chiefs lined up before judge. Lelt stands with them. Mrs. Hankin (age 70) acts as court reporter.*

JUDGE: “The charge is willfully obstructing the lawful survey of lands by agents acting on behalf of His Majesty King George the Fifth, in the year of our Lord 1927.”

*Lelt steps forward.*

LELT: “I represent these chiefs. I have secured funds so they may be released on bail.”

*Lelt holds out palm, which has Sunbeams’ gold coins.*

FADE OUT

SCREEN TITLE:



CANADIAN MUSEUM OF CIVILIZATION, 1990,  
OTTAWA, CANADA

INTERIOR: DAY. *Young native woman working quietly alone in 'Salon du Marius Barbeau' archive section of the Canadian Museum of Civilization. There are Barbeau notebooks, maps, photos spread out on table.*

NATIVE WOMAN: *(pointing to 1927 photo of Frank Bolton, young girl grinning, to archivist) "That's my grandmother. They were singing their history."*

*Archivist nods, opens huge metal cabinet marked "Barbeau Recordings". Hundreds of old wax cylinders are lined up, all marked "Tsimshian".*

ARCHIVIST: "They still are."

FADE OUT TO SCREEN TEXT:

*In 1999, one hundred years after A.W. Vowell's last attempt to impose reserves for the native Indians of the Nass and Skeena, the descendants of Charles Barton won legal title to much of their ancestral lands in British Columbia's Nass River valley. Their neighbours, the Gitksan and Tsimshian, still have outstanding land claims.*

THE END