

THE GUNS OF NOVEMBER

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Historical Action/Adventure/Drama
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FADE IN:

EXT. WINDMILL POINT - CANADA 1837 - DAY

On a bluff on the north side of the Saint Lawrence river, a British flag stands atop a five story windmill.

Across the river, a large American flag with twenty-six stars billows in the wind.

EXT. RIVER - AMERICAN SIDE - NIGHT

SUPERIMPOSE: St. Lawrence River. December 29, 1837

The U.S. passenger steamboat *Caroline* moored to a dock one mile above Niagara Falls.

An American WATCHMAN walks the deck. All is quiet except for the roar of the falls in the distance.

RIVER SHORE - BRITISH SIDE

A BRITISH CAPTAIN in a long grey coat, leads a raiding party with five oared boats - nine British soldiers in each.

BRITISH CAPTAIN

Our orders are such. American passenger steamboats are used to smuggle supplies and guns to raid our land. We are going to put an end to these traitorous acts once and for all.

The men in the boat murmur an agreement.

BRITISH CAPTAIN

Head-out.

EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

The rowers struggle against the current as they cross.

ROWER

We are going astern, sir; we shall be over the Falls.

BRITISH CAPTAIN

Put her head around. Give way, lads! Give way. Pull for your lives.

The raiding party enters calmer waters. They drift down quietly towards the American steamboat.

WATCHMEN (O.C.)

Boat ahoy. Who comes there?

BRITISH CAPTAIN

A friend. I'll give the counter-sign when I board.

STEAMBOAT DECK

The Captain boards, pulls back his coat, removes his sword and points it at the watchmen.

BRITISH CAPTAIN

Now I want this vessel, and you better go ashore at once.

An American crewman fires a weapon towards the Captain. He misses. The Captain slices the crewman to the ground.

The watchmen holds a pistol to the Captain's head and pulls the trigger -- flint only flashes in the pan.

The Captain gives him a slash cut on the inside of his right arm rendering it useless.

British soldiers storm aboard to attack crewmen with muskets, swords, and cutlasses; then burst through doors and force men, women and children ashore.

RAIDING PARTY

God damn them.
Give no quarters
FIRE! FIRE!

A black American crewman lies dead. Wounded Americans are pushed from the boat.

BRITISH CAPTAIN

(to wounded loyalist)
See that everyone is off.
Then burn it.

The soldiers set the ship on fire, cut her loose, and release her to drift.

EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

Engulfed in flames the steamboat plummets over Niagara Falls.

EXT. USA TOWN STREET - MORNING

1838 New York newspaper headline.

War Eminent Against Great Britain. Passenger steamboat Caroline attacked. Twenty-two Americans killed. President Van Buren protests strongly to London, but ignored.

NARRATOR

In the years that followed the War of 1812, the United States and British controlled Canada fear the outbreak of another war as Americans increasingly sympathize with Canadians who had openly rebelled against British rule.

EXT. ARMORY - BACK GATE - MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE: Ogdensburg New York Armory.

In the cover of morning fog, AMOS THORN (26), tall and rugged, helps two anxious men load the last of ten US military crates onto his horse-drawn wagon.

Amos pays the men. Drives off.

U.S. army soldiers holding rifles run towards them. The two men scatter.

EXT. UPSTATE NEW YORK - TOWN LODGE - MORNING

Amos drives his loaded wagon up to the side door.

NILS VON SCHOULTZ (31) in a bright white, blue-tasseled uniform, greets Amos with a nod.

Men in civilian clothes unload Amos' wagon.

Amos turns his attention to the field.

EXT. FIELD - CONTINUOUS

SAMUEL COLT (23) demonstrates his invention, the repeater rifle, to a group of men.

Colt packs the last chamber of a rifle with powder and ball. He proudly hands it off to an US ARMY SOLDIER.

COLT
 (to crowd)
 With my Colt repeater rifle you can
 defeat an army ten times your size.

The Army Soldier takes aim and hits six of the ten targets lined up at the fence.

COLT
 That is IF you can hit the target.

Colt takes his revolver and shoots the remaining targets. The crowd, impressed, moves to get a closer look.

The Army Soldier blows on his lightly burned hand.

COLT
 You jus fired ten rounds my friend.
 It gets hot. Who's next.

INT. TOWN LODGE - MAIN HALL - CONTINUOUS

Amos weaves through the farmers, tradesmen and laborers that fill the smoky room. Older men calmly wait; restless young ones move about the room.

Three Kentucky frontiersmen - in their twenties - long rifles in hand, stand in front of a line at one of the six recruiting tables.

A scrawny CLERK sits behind the table. He looks up from a ledger.

CLERK
 Where from?

OLDEST KENTUCKIAN
 Me and my kin come up from Kentuck'
 some time back.

The clerk notes the entry. The Kentuckians sign the ledger and collect a few coins.

OLDEST KENTUCKIAN
 Is that it?

CLERK
 You'll get that plus fifty when you
 cross the river. Now move on.

Amos intervenes. He takes the pen, scribbles a few initials.

AMOS
(to clerk)
Let's make him a Quartermaster.

The clerk reluctantly agrees. He hands Amos thirty dollars.

Amos pays the oldest Kentuckian the extra monies. The Kentuckians smile, shake Amos' hand.

INT. TOWN LODGE - INITIATION ROOM

Recruits kneel on the floor. A cloth covers their eyes. Nils points his sword at a recruit's chest.

The MASTER OF CEREMONY recites from a paper.

MASTER OF CEREMONY
I solemnly swear in the presence of
almighty God and this lodge of
Hunters that I will not give the
secrets of this decree to any
person to whom they do not justly
and legally belong.

The blindfolds are pulled away.

NILS
As you see the light, so you also
see death. You are all now Patriot
Hunters.

INT. TOWN LODGE - MAIN HALL

Nils and the new recruits exit the initiation room.

Amos takes position in front of the Patriot Hunter flag pinned to the back wall; the banner reads: "Liberty or Death".

Excitement erupts when one of the crates are opened.

Amos steps onto a raised platform. He assesses the crowd, pleased with the turnout.

AMOS
Quiet please. Quiet. Welcome to the
Jefferson County Hunter's meeting.

The crowd settles.

AMOS

It is my honor to introduce the men
who will lead us to victory--

CROWD VOICE (O.C.)

Amos, we gunna shoot the British?

AMOS

Our aim is not to shoot or kill
anyone, We go to support the
Canadians, our brothers across the
river for their freedom.

Colt stands against the wall, arms crossed. Impressed with
Amos' convictions.

CROWD VOICE

What's the plans, for when we
cross?

AMOS

For that, I give you General John
Birge.

JOHN BIRGE (38) self-appointed General in a homemade gold-
braided uniform steps onto the platform. Amos steps down.

GENERAL BIRGE

Patriot Hunters, you have taken the
oath to attack and destroy all
things of royal origin and never
rest till all the tyrants of
Britain cease to have any dominion
in North America.

Birge holds up a new rifle. Colt smiles.

Nils leads the applause.

GENERAL BIRGE

With our superior fire power, we
support the thousands of Canadians
who are ready to rise up and drive
the British from Canada.

Cheers erupt in agreement. Amos sees two older men hurry out.

GENERAL BIRGE

We are in fortune to have Colonel
Nils Von Schoultz.

Nils gives a modest wave to the crowd.

GENERAL BIRGE

A freedom fighter who led the
offensive in Poland against the
Russians.

NILS

Liberate Canada!

CROWD

Liberate Canada! Liberate Canada!

EXT. TOWN LODGE - DAY

The noise from inside spills out as the two older men quickly
exit. They bump into JOSEPH THORN [52] in a well-cut suit.

A GUARD blocks his entrance.

GUARD

Can I help you, sir?

JOSEPH

I am here for my son. Amos.

GUARD

This is a private meetin'. Do you
know the sign.

Joseph pushes his way in.

INT. TOWN LODGE - MAIN HALL - DAY

Joseph scans the crowded room.

CROWD VOICE

Those are fancy words, Mr. Birge,
but tell us the strategy? The plan--

Caught off guard. Birge looks to Nils

GENERAL BIRGE

Colonel Von Shoultz has already
assured our victory, with hundreds
of his Polish followers--

NILS

The plan, my fellow Patriots
ensures freedom. A political belief
of equal rights--

The Guard at the doorway signals General Birge as Joseph
makes his way through the crowd.

NILS
 ...having ever regarded enemy as
 their deadliest bane--

General Birge acknowledges the guard.

GENERAL BIRGE
 (to crowd)
 At this time, we are to discuss
 holiday decorations. Unless there
 is any other call to matter?

Joseph continues towards the platform.

The crowd chuckles.

JOSEPH
 (to Birge)
 Look, I am not interested in your
 Hunter's secret meeting. Or your
 asinine plans to liberate Canada.

Joseph looks to the room. He nears the platform.

JOSEPH
 The U.S. Government and President
 Van Buren does not and will not
 support your actions -- that could
 lead to war.

GENERAL BIRGE
 Why if it isn't the noted attorney--
 Joseph Thorn, Esquire.

Joseph makes eye contact with Amos. Colt walks over to Amos.

COLT
 (to Amos)
 Your father?

Amos nods.

Men in the room look to Birge: should they stop Joseph.

Birge shakes his head.

GENERAL BIRGE
 (indignant to Joseph)
 You are such a prominent protector
 of people's rights you would think
 you would support liberty--

JOSEPH

You pompous ass, the British army and navy will not sit back and let you invade their land.

COLT

(to Amos)

He doesn't mince words does he?

GENERAL BIRGE

Their land! I have over ten thousand American and Canadian people who will to give their lives for what they believe.

Birge turns to the audience.

GENERAL BIRGE

God's people are entitled to God given rights. People's rights. Freedom for Canada.

CROWD

People's rights! Freedom for Canada. People's rights! Freedom for all

Amos leaves through a side door. Joseph follows.

EXT. TOWN LODGE - DAY

Meeting continues inside. Joseph confronts Amos.

JOSEPH

What in blazes are you doing?

AMOS

Things that they are saying make sense.

JOSEPH

More like nonsense. I'm training you to uphold the law. Not break it. You are too much the idealist.

Amos shrugs, looks back towards the hall.

JOSEPH

I don't argue that the system in Canada needs change, but through legislation, not force. This goes against everything I have worked for.

AMOS

Force is the only language the
British understand, or have you
forgotten how these United States
were created.

That hits home with Joseph. Amos turns away to go inside.

JOSEPH

Amos do not pursue this. If you
take up arms against the British,
God help you, cause I won't.

EXT. SACKETS HARBOR, NEW YORK - DOCK - DAY

SUPER: Sackets Harbor, New York. November 11, 1838

On a large map board posted at the dock, a fourteen year old
boy's hand traces the US passenger steamship's route down the
Saint Lawrence river.

A dark red line delineates the mid-river border with Canada.

The ship's bell rings.

Mixed in with other passengers, a group of MEN, ages 18 to
57, with rifles and bags board the American steamship.

The STEWARD takes count as they enter.

STEWARD

(calling out)

Last call for Vincent, Morristown,
final arrival in Ogdensburg.

JEM CLARK (14) in US military style jacket and pants, runs
down the dock. He trips and drops his bag. Long johns,
apples, and potatoes fall out.

JEM

Private Clark reporting.

STEWARD

Huh?

Jem scrambles to pick up his things.

JEM

Clark, Jem.

The steward picks up a potato and returns it.

STEWARD

All right boy, now get onboard.

Jem scrambles to join the other male passengers.

EXT. CANADA - PRESCOTT - DAY

SUPER: Prescott, Upper Canada.

Amos drives an empty wagon up from the Ogdensburg-Prescott ferry. Behind him, British soldiers aggressively search the loaded wagons.

EXT. PRESCOTT - MULLOY TAVERN - DAY

Amos pulls behind another wagon. He steps down and adjusts its tarp to better conceal "Patrick Landis Supplies" written on the side.

ISAAC MULLOY (15), sidesteps customers as he sweeps the front steps. He uses a broom to push the tavern dog away.

INT. MULLOY TAVERN - DAY

Barmaid DORA MULLOY (24) attractive, entertains the customers with an Irish ballad while a man plays an out-of-tune piano.

Amos finds an empty spot at the bar.

The song ends. PATRONS cheer.

PATRON

Dora, one more.

With a practiced smile Dora gracefully evades groping customers to return to the bar.

PATRICK LANDIS (25) a scruffy shyster with a practiced boyish smile, leans against the far side of the bar.

He artfully cons a young man and woman.

PATRICK

They say it can't exist, and yet it does. I have it right here in me pocket. Something that God never made and man has never seen.

Patrick places his hand in his front pocket.

The young man looks down.

PATRICK

For the price of a pint, I betcha
ya can't guess what it is?

Dora notices two rough-looking men nod at Amos on their way
to the back storage room.

She goes over to Amos at the bar.

DORA

What brings ya across the river?

AMOS

Some deliveries.

DORA

Amos Thorn, jus' once I was hopin'
it was to see me.

Amos smiles and takes her hand.

Dora pulls back then smiles. She gestures to Amos to please
take Patrick away.

PATRICK

(to young couple)

Nah, It ain't my watch. Many a man
has seen my watch. Another guess.

Amos walks up, puts his arm around Patrick.

AMOS

Patrick, come on.

Amos pulls him away towards the back of the tavern.

PATRICK

Amos, you jus' cost me a drink.

Dora watches with suspicion as the men enter the back room.

INT. BACKROOM - DAY

LEMONT (46) a French-Canadian and four rough-looking men stop
their heated discussion.

Amos enters. Patrick closes the door and sits below the alley
window.

AMOS

(to group)

Fortune is with us.

(MORE)

AMOS (CONT'D)

The British troops that were to be transported here to Fort Wellington have been delayed.

Amos points to a map of the area pinned to the wall that shows Fort Wellington less than a mile from Prescott.

AMOS

Crucial to the mission are the supplies and guns that Patrick and I will deliverer to Lemont--

Dora opens the door. The men avoid eye contact as she enters.

DORA

Can I get you boys something?

The uncertain men look to Amos.

PATRICK

If Amos is payin'?

The men loudly agree. Dora crosses over to Amos.

DORA

What are you doing here?

AMOS

Nothing you need to be concerned about. You going home after work?

DORA

Where else would I go?

A dog barks outside. Dora glances out the window. She counts the men and leaves. Lemont pulls down the map.

LEMONT

(to Amos)

We must be careful. Vigilant.

The barking gets louder. Patrick looks out the window.

PATRICK

Soldiers!

British soldier kick open the alley door.

Amos pushes the alley door closed. Lemont hands the map to Patrick. He then helps Amos barricade the alley door.

Patrick stuffs the map down his pants. He opens the door to the tavern. The men run through with Lemont and Amos right behind.

Soldiers break through the barricade and give chase.

Patrick politely nods to each soldier as they pass.

INT. MULLOY TAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Amos and Lemont blend in at a table with sympathetic patrons.

The British soldiers struggle to chase the four rough-looking men through the now agitated crowd.

Amidst the chaos, Patrick strolls over to the bar.

PATRICK

Dora, always a pleasure.

Dora cringes with each sound of broken plates and chairs.

The four rough looking men make it out the front door.

Soldiers turn their attention to Patrick.

PATRICK

Now, wait boys.

Patrick slides along the bar towards the front door. He grabs Isaac's broom to defend himself.

Soldiers close in.

Patrick throws the broom at the soldiers as he sidesteps out the front door. He turns--

British Lieutenant JAMES R. BULLOCK (36) strikes him down with the butt of a rifle.

Amos rises from his chair. Lemont pulls him down.

Bullock returns the rifle to a young CORPORAL.

EXT. MULLOY TAVERN - CONTINUOUS

The four rough-looking men run down the street.

BULLOCK

Prepare to fire.

The soldiers take aim at the four men. The tavern dog chases after them.

Bullock looks into the tavern to see if any patrons react.

BULLOCK

Fire!

Bullock's soldiers fire. The four men fall.

INT. MULLOY TAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Bullock puts his boot into Patrick as he steps over him.

Amos' anger grows.

Bullock scans the room towards Amos. Dora pushes a glass to the floor. CRASH.

Bullock turns to the bar. Dora shrugs. He tips his hat to her.

She gives him a weak smile. Soldiers pick up Patrick.

BULLOCK

(to soldiers)

Strip him down. Search him.

Bullock and his men leave.

Isaac carries his broom to Dora. Together, they clean up the broken glass.

Isaac's attentions are on Amos.

AMOS

(to Lemont)

Who was that?

LEMONT

That is Lieutenant James Bullock -
a real bastard. In charge of the
Militia around here.

Amos stares at Dora with suspicion. She confronts him with a defiant look.

Dora taps Isaac with the broom. Isaac turns to Dora with a apologetic smile.

Lemont grabs Amos' arm to get his attention.

LEMONT

That British pig arrested dozens of
my friends. Burned their homes.
Best to stay away from him.

Amos stands. His interest are on Dora.

AMOS
I got bigger problems.

Amos looks back at Lemont.

AMOS
I gotta find another driver

EXT. MULLOY TAVERN - DAY

Amos exits. The tavern dog returns to the porch.

AMOS
(to dog)
Turncoat.

Amos climbs onto his wagon. He looks at Patrick's wagon.

Isaac stands in the doorway, broom in hand.

AMOS
Isaac, ya think you can handle a
wagon by yourself?

ISAAC
You know I can. But, I'm expected
to finish chores. Cousin Dora--

AMOS
You wanna sweep or come with me?

Isaac hesitates, then climbs up on Patrick's wagon.

ISAAC
Where we going?

AMOS
To Hollow Cove to meet Captain
Johnston.

ISAAC
The Pirate?

Dora, resentful, watches them drive off.

EXT. ST. LAWRENCE RIVER - HOLLOW COVE - DAY

A boat with a British flag lies tied to an isolated dock.

Frightened passengers stand lined up onshore clutching a few possessions.

The infamous pirate CAPTAIN WILLIAM JOHNSTON (56), struts to the shoreline with the aid of his silver knobbed walking stick.

The captains' first mate, MR. FLOOD (48) pushes a FEMALE PASSENGER into the line.

FEMALE PASSENGER
You mur-mur-derering thieves.

KATE JOHNSTON (19) the Captain's beautiful daughter and his armed pirates chuckle at the insult.

Amos and Isaac arrive on their wagons and stop.

Captain Johnston takes notice of Amos. He lifts an eyebrow when he sees Isaac on Patrick's wagon.

CAPTAIN JOHNSTON
(to passengers)
If you want to sail again, best be grateful you are still alive.

Captain Johnson lifts the frightened female passenger's head gently up with his cane.

CAPTAIN JOHNSTON
Mr. Flood? What day is it?

FLOOD
Why, Captain, I do believe that it is Sunday, Novemb' 11th.

CAPTAIN JOHNSTON
Since it is Sunday. I will start over here.

Captain Johnston walks down the line of passengers. He stops in front of the last one: CALE (40) who spits on the ground.

CALE
Marshal Dee will def--definite hear abou' this. Pirate B'B' Bill!

Amos lightly chuckles. Isaac, turns to him, concerned. Amos turns serious.

CAPTAIN JOHNSTON
Hard to do if you are dead.

Kate fires her pistol. Cale dramatically falls to the ground.

Isaac and the passengers in line gasp.

Amos chuckles. He jumps off his wagon.

AMOS

Aye Kate. You're prettier than ever
with a smokin' pistol in your hand.

Captain Johnston's men loudly agree. Kate smiles.

CAPTAIN JOHNSTON

Aye lads. Get to work.

Captain Johnston's crew load the U.S. Military crates onto
Amos' and Isaac's wagon.

Amos strides onto the dock. He and Captain Johnston hug and
slap each other's back.

AMOS

Up to your old tricks I see. Clever
to use a British boat to transport
the guns across the river.

Isaac admires Kate as she puts away her pistol. She pretends
not to notice.

CAPTAIN JOHNSTON

Who's the boy eyeing my daughter?

AMOS

My stepbrother. Isaac Mulloy.

CAPTAIN JOHNSTON

Mulloy you say. Can he be trusted?

AMOS

He has no loyalty to the British.

CAPTAIN JOHNSTON

Kinda young ain't he?

AMOS

He knows these Canadian roads. Far
better than I do.

Amos signals for Isaac to join them. Isaac stumbles and falls
from the wagon.

Captain Johnston's men laugh.

Kate gives Isaac a reassuring smile as he gets up.

AMOS

Isaac, this is Captain William
Johnston.

Isaac extends his muddy hand.

ISAAC

Sir.

CAPTAIN JOHNSTON

Maybe next time, son.

Flood pushes past Isaac.

FLOOD

Captain, this is the last of the cargo. Time to head back to American waters.

CAPTAIN JOHNSTON

Very good Mr. Flood. Get our crew on board and make ready.

FLOOD

What of the passengers?

CAPTAIN JOHNSTON

They can walk to town. They've got far less to carry.

Isaac gives the last passengers a sympathetic shrug as they walk by.

Amos walks over to Isaac. He ties down the wagon with a tarp.

ISAAC

That's Captain Johnston? How does he get away with it?

AMOS

Look back.

Isaac turns back. Cale returns to the ship unharmed.

AMOS

Fear is a powerful weapon.

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