

NO SUCH CLAIM

A FEATURE SCREENPLAY BY SCOTT FLACK · ADAPTED FROM THE BOOK *THE RIVER MADE NO SUCH CLAIM*

Between 1790 and 1813 on one American river, two armies are destroyed, a confederacy is bought with a pen, and one man reads the arithmetic that is pricing his country away an acre at a time — and spends his life trying to overturn the sum. *Told by the river, which is not on anyone's side.*

THE DEVICE

One gate, nineteen years apart. 1794: beaten warriors run to their British allies' fort and pound on the oak. The gates stay shut. On the wall, regulars stand at parade rest, faces empty, and do not move. The camera is **outside**, with the men at the door.

1813: six hundred American prisoners are driven toward the same fort. They see the same flag and believe it means protection. The gates **open** — onto a gauntlet. Same wall, same regulars, same parade rest. The camera is **inside** now, looking out at the hopeful faces coming on.

The villain of this film is never a man. It is the arithmetic: shutting the gate cost the King nothing, and opening it cost him nothing either.

THREE IMAGES THE FILM IS BUILT ON

- **The coat.** A Shawnee war-leader wears the King's scarlet into council, certain it means the King stands behind him. Nineteen years later, on the morning of his last battle, Tecumseh takes that same coat off, lets it fall, and puts on his own deerskin.
- **The strop.** After the Thames, a nineteen-year-old Kentucky volunteer pockets something small and says one word about it. A year on, a farmer again, he strops his razor on it every morning without looking. The camera never goes closer. It does not have to.
- **The ten seconds.** The battle is Tecumseh's voice — while it carries over the guns, the line holds. It stops. And so does every sound in the film. Ten full seconds of nothing.

FORM

An essayistic tone poem, not a plot engine — Malick's *The New World* is the comp. The river narrates five times and no more, from outside of time, and never intervenes. Played cold: the evenness of the land is not the comfort at the end of this film, it is the last thing in it that cannot be appealed to. There is deliberately no likeness of Tecumseh, on the page or the screen — none from life survives, and the film keeps faith with that absence.

THE DRAFT

~52 pages · action-weighted, plays ~75–90 min

Three acts · Whirlwind / Common Ground / Open Gate

Status: complete draft, in revision

THE FOUNDATION

292 sources · 544 sourced facts

Every disputed fact flagged, never resolved silently

Dramatization, not invention — the speeches are the record's own