

CROW ' S BLOOD

Historic Drama

Pilot: BIRTH OF THE CROW

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CROW'S BLOOD

Pilot Episode

"BIRTH OF THE CROW"

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. MARIPOSA, CALIFORNIA - WOODLANDS -- DAY

The year 1851. The U.S. Occupation of California, aka California Genocide.

CLOSE UP: KANGEE, a Native American 7 year-old filled with wonder and innocence, clings to his mother while looking at the many exhausted faces of tribal members all around.

As Kangee walks a gloved hand comes into frame -- patting his head. Kangee looks up, wearing an infectious smile.

ANGLE ON:

A soldier smiling back genuinely, from high on his horse.

CALVARY SOLDIER #1

Now there's a handsome one, if I
ever saw. A little chief, maybe?

REVEAL: A horse trail in the woods. -- Kangee, his mother and nearly 300 more wary people of the Chowchilla tribe, majority women, children and elders, are being escorted by a Calvary of the U.S. Army.

GREATER REVEAL: Aerial view -- the tribe and Calvary exiting the woods, out into a clearing where armed civilian Settlers on horseback wearing self-made military accessories over tethered clothes wait patiently with Sheriff JAMES BURNEY.

The Calvary's Commander speaks as his soldiers herd the tribe inside of a circle formed by 100s of sacks of travel supplies, each with a blanket folded on top.

CALVARY COMMANDER

By order of President Willard Fillmore
and Peter Hardeman Burnett, the
elected governor of this U.S. State
of California, Chowchilla tribal
members shall no longer occupy this
land. As a show of good faith, new
land has been provided for you to
harvest and live out the rest of
your days with dignity as a free

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALVARY COMMANDER (CONT'D)
people of its own nation. That land
is a twelve day's journey...

Meanwhile, few tribe members understand English or even look his way. Instead they rummage through the sacks -- gulping down water from canteens -- wrapping in blankets -- smiling -- some even dancing, seeing the sack's contents as gifts.

CLOSE UP of Sheriff Burney, looking upon them with disgust, muttering to himself...

SHERIFF BURNEY
Indians.

WALTER
(overheard - to Luis)
Indians? What's that mean?

LUIS
Means savages.

Kangee stands out while gazing at the many faces: the Calvary -- then Sheriff Burney and his unpolished militia, Walter -- Luis -- BRADSHAW -- DAVID -- RAMON -- ANTONIO -- JUAN -- MIGUEL -- FRANCISCO -- HENRY -- and ALBERT.

KANGEE
Nookas, we're safe now, right?

His mother kneels, holding and kissing his face...

KANGEE'S MOTHER
Yes my little Cheveyo. The White man has made a good promise.

Back to the Calvary Commander -- ongoing...

CALVARY COMMANDER
...The government of the state of California has gifted you those essential supplies to ensure that you survive the journey. This lawman, Sheriff James Burney, and his militia of the people, have been entrusted to escort you ...to protect you ...and to ensure that you all comply. God speed to you all.

The Commander looks over, gesturing for Sheriff Burney to take control. The sheriff hides his look of disgust and does nothing, only gazing back for a beat -- until...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHERIFF BURNEY

You can go now, Commander. We've got it from here. Go on.

The Commander, clearly uneasy about things, leads his Calvary back into the woods.

FRANCISCO

Sheriff?

SHERIFF BURNEY

You just hold tight, Francisco.

Sheriff Burney's eyes never look away from the tribe as he listens to the Calvary's horses gallop further and further away. And then...

SHERIFF BURNEY (CONT'D)

Fire.

The militia opens fire on the unsuspecting tribe. It's brutal! Carnage! Bullets tearing through body parts and skulls -- brain matter SPLATTERING! -- Terror! Agony! Screams! The faces of women ripped open from gunfire -- bloody mayhem, all happening from Kangee's POV, as his mother frantically tries to shield him.

In the trees. The Calvary returns, watching from afar, angered but unwilling to interfere.

Close Up: Kangee looks over at the Calvary -- then at Sheriff Burney firing his weapon -- then at Francisco, whose bullet goes through his mother's head. His mother collapses, with him beneath her pooling body. Little Kangee is terrified.

The massacre is ongoing until the Calvary has been long gone. The shooting then slows to a halt, revealing a sea of carnage beneath a cloud of smoke. Slit throats, exploded heads, severed parts and open guts lay waste in the circle of sacks. The militia gets down from their horses and begin casual conversations while some execute survivors, and others scalp the dead.

Kangee watches them all from beneath bodies -- notices Luis coming his way while hacking and collecting scalps.

LUIS

These are every bit as good as the gold rush. I estimate 350 of them.

The body pinning Kangee down begins to continuously move back and forth. Luis's boot lands inches from his face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALTER (O.S.)
(heavy breathing/
panting)
We'll get a good penny for those.

REVEAL: Walter raping Kangee's dead mother. Kangee can see everything.

Meanwhile, Luis's hatchet suddenly strikes down -- its blade wedged into Kangee's mother's skull. He struggles, PULLING and TEARING to get the scalp.

LUIS
A very good penny.

Blood and brain matter SPLATTERS Kangee's face as Luis musters the strength to rip the skull free.

SHERIFF BURNEY (O.S.)
Get back to work, Walter!

ANGLE ON: Walter climaxing inside of Kangee's dead mother...

WALTER
Yesss ...sir! Yep.
(fixing his pants)
Right away, Sheriff.

SHERIFF BURNEY
You too, Henry.

We see Henry in the distance, also raping a dead body.

CLOSE UP: Kangee. Still laying there. Open eyed, appearing dead. His severe state of shock saved his life. A tear rolls down lifeless face.

FADE TO BLACK:

TITLE AND INTRO CREDITS HERE

FADE IN:

EXT. MARIPOSA, CALIFORNIA - THE MASSACRE -- DAY

Hours later.

The aftermath. Only the butchered bodies remain.

A small band of Seminole warriors approaches from the woods. They are lead by NEEEWA, the only woman. She's as fierce as the men. She looks upon the sea of bodies with empathy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NEEWA

We will bury the dead and pray for them all.

WARRIOR#1

There are far too many.

NEEWA

Do as I say.

WARRIOR#2

These are not our people. Our journey ahead is a very long one. Our strength needs to be reserved.

NEEWA

Do as I say or die.

WOLF, one of the more skilled warriors, goes to her.

WOLF

Neewa, our hearts are as broken as yours ...but it's just not possible.

NEEWA

Then we will bury the children.

They agree. Neewa, pulls Kangee's mother's body, finding him beneath -- his eyes still open and lifeless. She grabs him -- finding no wounds -- realizes he's alive, in some sort of catatonic state.

NEEWA (CONT'D)

(to the others)

Come!

CUT TO:

EXT. WHITE HOUSE -- DAY

A gathering of the elite. Well dressed members of America's elite sipping wine and brown-nosing. JOSEPH, a handsome soldier whose rough exterior doesn't quite blend with his impressive outfit, makes his acquaintance with a woman. PHILIP, an arrogant aristocrat, notices and interrupts.

PHILLIP

Brigadier General Joseph Briggs. Fancy seeing you here. I've always known you to be one most comfortable in the company of the common folk. An atmosphere of wealth such as this doesn't suit you.

(to the woman)

Don't you agree?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Joseph sees President WILLARD FILLMORE across the room, but before leaving he responds --

JOSEPH

When one has the fortitude to frolic in the mud he expects to encounter a worm or two, yet, here I am astonished to be graced with your presence, Philip. Excuse me.

(goes to the President)

Mr. President.

WILLARD FILLMORE

General Briggs, what a pleasant surprise.

JOSEPH

I'm not quite sure how that can be, considering my relentless, unanswered requests to meet with you. It was either I continue the pointless letters coming or I attend this impressive gala where I could potentially corner you.

WILLARD FILLMORE

Well said. The former president has left quite a mess for me to clean up, which is causing neglect to current affairs, such as yours. It was a struggle to admire Taylor prior to his untimely death. One can only imagine how I feel about him today. But, be that as it may, I do apologize, Joseph. What is this pressing matter of yours?

JOSEPH

It's about the Militia. I think including them in our efforts to relocate the people of the land poses more harm than good.

WILLARD FILLMORE

You mean savages. They are savages. You're referring to the Florida State Militia, or course?

JOSEPH

I'm referring to the militia in every state. I have reports of a California Militia massacring over 300 natives two months ago.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLARD FILLMORE

The U.S. States Army has killed thousands more.

JOSEPH

It wasn't in battle, Mr. President. They were unarmed women, children and elders who had agreed to our terms. The men of the militia aren't disciplined soldiers with proper training. They are settlers with agendas.

WILLARD FILLMORE

Are you conflicted with compassion for the savages, General?

JOSEPH

No, Mr. President. What I have is concern for the future of our country. I have on good authority that the Seminole tribes are attempting alliances with other tribes in New Mexico, Texas, Louisiana and even California. I believe dealings with the Militia will only help accomplish those efforts.

WILLARD FILLMORE

Worried about Chief Billy Bowlegs?

JOSEPH

It's Bolek, and I think he should be taken very seriously.

WILLARD FILLMORE

You believe ...another Seminole war? Nonsense. Too many language barriers. Too many cultural differences. The savages are too divided. There won't be any alliances. Billy Bowlegs is no Chief Oseola. General, we remain steadfast with our strategy. We keep hammering away with killing their food supplies and writing into law new ways to raid their camps. I promise you ...it's just a matter of time. We will remove them all and expand this new world enough to reach its greatest economic potential.

(laughing -- crossing
to the First Lady)

You give the savages too much credit. Come. Say hello to my lovely wife.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLARD FILLMORE (CONT'D)

It's time she gets to meet the
legendary General Joseph Briggs.

CUT TO:

EXT. FLORIDA WOODS -- DAY

Neewa and her warriors are at the end of a long journey home. Kangee rides with Wolf, appearing healthier but emotionally damaged.

WOLF

I've learned your many faces, little warrior. You say nothing but I know when you want more food. It won't be long.

NEEWA

Not long at all.

They ride off at greater speed through an opening in the trees -- entering the Seminole village.

CUT TO:

EXT. FLORIDA EVERGLADES - SEMINOLE VILLAGE -- CONTINUOUS

Neewa and her warriors ride in -- as an establishing shot shows a tribe accepting of various races of people who have assimilated into Seminole culture. While the vast majority are Native Americans from other tribes, few are runaway slaves and fewer are Whites.

Joyful children run to Wolf. They are in awe of Kangee, who is non-responsive, cold and extremely reluctant as Wolf takes him down from the horse.

A curious WHITE TRIBAL MEMBER observes from afar as the children surround Kangee -- Kangee looks to Neewa, as if wanting to be rescued. Neewa extends her hand...

NEEWA

Come.

Kangee doesn't come. She leaves him, followed by Wolf and the other warriors -- all heading toward a group of higher ranking tribal men coming her way. Just as they meet, Chief BILLY BOLEK emerges from the rear to greet them.

WOLF

Billy.

BILLY

Success?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

In the far background: we see Kangee follow the children into a chickpee hut. The curious White tribe member isn't far behind.

NEEWA

Many aren't willing. They are wary of war and say too many families are without fathers because of the battles they endured on their own land. They see the battles we fight here as separate and apart from those they fight over there.

BILLY

Naive and unfortunate. And those who are willing?

NEEWA

The chiefs of the Konkow Maidu people, the Pomo people, the Ahwahnechees, the Wintus, the Modocs, Tolowa, and the Yana people all agree to an alliance. But you must return with me to --

Suddenly, the screams of scattering children -- coming from the chickpee hut. Neewa and others all run over and inside...

CUT TO:

INT. CHICKPEE HUT -- CONTINUOUS

They find Kangee in a fit of rage, SNARLING and GROWLING like an animal while repeatedly STABBING the White tribal member with sharp edged wood. Meanwhile, the man is bleeding out from a slit throat -- losing conscious.

Wolf rushes -- GRABBING Kangee -- taking him away as other tribe members attempt to save the man.

CUT TO:

EXT. CREEK -- CONTINUOUS

Wolf, RUNNING with Kangee in his arms -- stopping at the river's edge where he begins DUNKING the boy into the icy waters, SUBMERGING his head to stop his rage -- continuing repeatedly with no success, as Neewa and Billy watch from behind.

Neewa is conflicted, feeling for Kangee while fearing the disappointment she may have caused Billy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NEEWA

This is my fault. I brought the boy here. He's of the Chowchilla people. They're all dead. I found him buried beneath the body of a woman. Most likely his mother.

Billy's face is like stone -- watching. He appears angry.

A tribesman comes over from the chickpee hut.

TRIBESMAN

Chief. We couldn't save him.

Billy gives a cold nod, not looking away from Kangee.

NEEWA

I know this will be a discussion for the Council. I understand. A life for a life.

BILLY

The boy has seen more than he can endure. His heart is bleeding and his little mind is broken. But his heart can be healed, and the pain that destroyed his mind can be shaped... used... to become a disciplined and exceptional warrior.

(a beat)

There will be no discussion with the Council. The boy will stay with us. I will care for him myself. I'll fix his mind ...and his heart.

CLOSE UP: Kangee face as Wolf lifts him from the water. Gasping. Finally the rage is gone, and a glimmer of the innocence he once had can be seen in his tearing eyes.

CUT TO: