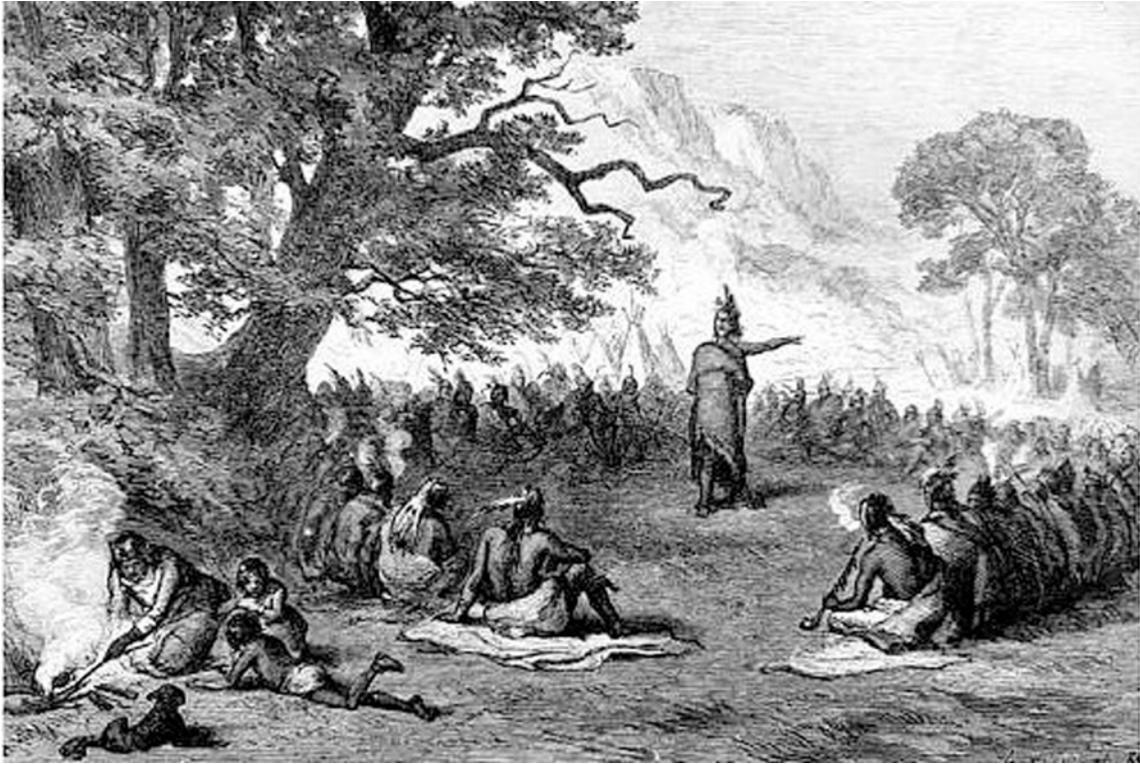


The Pontiac Case



Scenes from the days of the great Indian war,
after Francis Parkman's documentaries,
by Christian Lanciai.

The characters :

Major Robert Rogers
Major Gladwyn
Captain Dalzell

Indian chiefs:

Pontiac
Wapocomoguth
Black Eagle
Strenuous Beaver
Swift Deer
Tough Bear
Minavavana

Commander Sir Jeffrey Amherst
Colonel Henry Bouquet
Captain Norris
a quaker
Saint-Vincent, a French drummer
Pierre Laclede, French merchant, founder of St. Louis
Saint-Ange de Bellerive, the last French governor of Illinois
Sir William Johnson, governor of New England
trappers
soldiers
guards
lieutenants
corporals
French Canadians
Captain Horst (sea captain)
Sailors
Seamen
a master-at-arms
a mate
a wounded sergeant
Paxton men (professional lynchers)
Lancaster mob
a bartender of St. Louis
an adjutant
Indians, warlike and peaceful
Black Cat
an officer, his wife and his daughter

The action takes place in the states of New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois and in Pensacola (Bouquet's death) during the 1760s.

Dedicated to *Hubert Evert*, who treasured this as his favourite story.

Notice. The death of Pontiac in Cahokia outside St. Louis in April 1769 was instigated by a certain Williamson, who hired an unknown Indian for the assassination. The "Black Cat" remained unknown, but his tribe, the Illinois Indians, was almost completely extirpated by the other Indian tribes. Pontiac was buried by the governor Saint-Ange. In the drama the events of the fifth act have been rearranged chronologically in consideration of the dramatic form. Colonel Bouquet, the subjugator of the Indians, actually died before Pontiac. *Editor's note.*

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The Pontiac Case

Act I scene 1. Fort Niagara, 1760.

Major Robert Rogers Men, have you ever seen a more astonishingly promising perspective? Beyond these falls of Niagara there is a vast wilderness spreading out which is totally virgin. All this unknown part of the world belongs to us Englishmen. We have fought a successful war against the French with honour and achieved the most total victory ever experienced by the British. Could anyone of you doubt, when you behold these magnificent falls of Niagara, that the land we have won must be the richest and greatest in the world?

A trapper You are forgetting one thing, Sir.

Rogers What?

Trapper The Indians.

Rogers We have not forgotten them. We are very well aware of their existence. But since when does civilisation bother about half naked savages?

A soldier With respect, Sir, the French always had problems with the Indians. They almost abandoned the country to us with some joy of relief.

Rogers They succeeded in extirpating the Iroquois, though.

Soldier But it almost took them a hundred years.

Rogers Well, my friends, in a hundred years we will probably have managed to extirpate all other Indians as well who are stupid enough to make trouble.

trapper The fact remains, that they know the country better than we and are born and brought up in it which we are not.

Rogers But our children will be. With our culture they will probably better understand to govern the country than half naked savages that wallow in cruelties.

A guard (entering) Major Rogers, some Indians wish to speak with you.

Rogers That's wise of them. How many are they?

guard A few chiefs with some warriors. They are not more than a handful and appear to be peaceful.

Rogers Bring them here at once.

guard Yes, Sir. *(out)*

(Three magnificent Red Indian chiefs enter escorted by some half dozen warriors.)

Chief Wapocomoguth Greetings, Englishman.

Rogers Greetings yourself.

Wapocomoguth What are you doing in our country?

Rogers The French have left it. So we take over all their forts.

Wapocomoguth Our chief Pontiac wishes to speak with you.

Rogers Let him speak.

Chief Pontiac All guests are welcome to our country, but we would prefer them to first announce their arrival and not just break in.

Rogers This is our country since the French have left it.

Pontiac Wrong. It took the French a hundred years to learn that it was our country.

Rogers It cost the lives of many brave men to teach them that, and yet they never learned it.

Pontiac Wrong. They left the country out of respect for us.

Rogers Wrong. They left the country because we forced them out.

Pontiac They learned to cooperate with us. That's how they could build Canada. The English have never cooperated with others.

Rogers We wish to cooperate with you.

Pontiac Major, in that case you are a wise man. I invite you to live in peace and cooperate with us, but then you must respect us, like the French finally respected us.

Rogers (to his nearest soldier) What does he take us for? Imbecile idiots?

(to Pontiac) There is nothing we want more than to live in peace with all Indian tribes.

Pontiac Let us then confirm your good will and our peace by smoking the peace pipe together.

Rogers (compliant) We will be delighted. *(to the soldiers)* Make some space in the fort. We have to humour them so far that we take their ceremonies seriously. Never insult an Indian, but kill him if he makes trouble.

soldier Yes, Sir. *(leaves with some men)*

Rogers We shall smoke the peace pipe together. May I ask your name, chief?

Pontiac Pontiac.

Rogers A handsome name that suits a handsome and impressive chief.

Pontiac What is your own name, Englishman?

Rogers Major Robert Rogers.

Pontiac A difficult name worthy a chief of a difficult people.

Rogers I am no chief. I am only a major.

Pontiac Humility befits the white man better than hardness and irreconcilability.

Rogers Perhaps. Please enter the fort now, my friend. *(takes Pontiac kindly round the shoulder. All the Indians follow them into the fort.)*

Scene 2. Fort Detroit, spring 1761.

lieutenant Attention! *(The soldiers straighten up.)* You have done well, gentlemen. The major is proud of you, whatever he says. Here he is now.

Rogers (enters) At ease! *(the soldiers relax.)* My service here is at an end. We have done a magnificent job. The greatest free realm of the earth enjoys unparalleled peace and order. We have won the world's greatest wilderness for civilisation! And it's as much to your credit as to the command. *(The men murmur in appreciation.)*

By this I wanted to bid you farewell. Behave yourselves in my absence, treat the French like the English, don't make trouble with the Indians, and try to be fair. That's

the best advice I can give you. Justice is the foundation of all peaceful existence. That's all, gentlemen. Any questions?

Lieutenant Allow me one question, Sir.

Rogers Well, what is it?

Lieutenant Is five hundred soldiers really a sufficient force to maintain order in this all too vast and unsurveyable land?

Rogers My boy, in a land of peace, five hundred soldiers are really five hundred soldiers too much.

Lieutenant But if anything should happen?

Rogers What for example could happen?

Lieutenant Imagine for example that the Indians would get the idea of trying to get rid of the white man?

Rogers The lieutenant is apparently afraid of the Indians. Allow me to smile. Haven't we respected them? Haven't we left them in peace? Have they ever quarrelled with us? The French were always at war with the Indians. We have learned from them to leave the Indians in peace.

A corporal The Indians are not happy with the settlers, Sir.

Rogers The settlers are breaking new lands at their own risk. It is naturally our duty to protect them. But have they been attacked even once since we took over after the French? *(silence)* There.

A soldier (after a moment's silence) We don't trust the chief Pontiac, Sir.

Rogers Do you think Pontiac trusts any white man? Mistrust is mutual and natural but harmless as long as you respect each other. Anything else? *(silence)* Well then. Farewell, gentlemen. *(departs)*

lieutenant Attention! *(the soldiers straighten themselves up)* Ready! *(the soldiers raise their weapons.)* Fire! *(Salute is fired in the air.)*

Rogers Good luck, gentlemen!

Soldiers Good luck, major Rogers!

Lieutenant Aim! *(the soldiers aim.)* Fire!

(the salute is fired. The major disappears.)

Scene 3. An Indian community two years later.

Black Eagle The white man barges forth like a forest fire in our mohawk ruining everything in his way.

Strenuous Beaver The French gave us generous gifts for maintaining the peace, but the English only destroy, take everything away from us and curse us.

Swift Deer The fire water of the English affects our brothers like a plague. Every tribe that drinks of that English fire water is corrupted and lost.

Tough Bear The Englishman has demonstrated that he brings no good and holds no good in his mind. He only thinks of himself and his own people. He

doesn't care about us and ignores our right of existence. He has come to our country only to take it away from us.

Black Eagle He burns our forests, guns down all our game, extirpates all furred animals and chase us and our brothers out of our own lands.

Tough Bear All they want is to grab and take, share nothing and give nothing in return. They will ruin the entire country if they are allowed to continue.

Pontiac My brothers from Canada and from the lands south of the great lakes, our forefathers tried to extirpate the French. They failed and were extirpated themselves. Now the French are gone, but instead we have the English, who are worse, harder and more difficult. If we try to extirpate them, which we have to do unless we wish to be extirpated ourselves or see our entire country being destroyed, then we must not fail. We have to be consistent and succeed. Every Englishman has to be extirpated.

Black Eagle (after a pause) We are listening, great chief.

Pontiac We can only succeed in one way. We have to attack all the forts and settlements of the English on one and the same day. We have to act promptly and strike hard. If they survive or manage to escape they have time on their side and will only be back in even greater numbers. They must not manage to escape, and they must not survive.

Black Eagle That should mean that we may not spare anyone, no white woman, no child, no aged people and not let any house remain?

Pontiac Exactly, Black Eagle. That is our only chance.

Strenuous Beaver Chief Pontiac proclaims total war. Is there any alternative?

Pontiac Strenuous Beaver, our alternatives are as follows. We could go on living in peace with the English. Then we will have to accept seeing our land and the lands of our fathers being continuously destroyed, burnt down, cleansed of all wildlife and made impossible for us to live on. We will then have to accept being obliged to constantly move further off with our tribes to areas where life will be even more difficult just to survive, and there we will then get into conflicts with our own brothers. We have to choose between war with the white man or war with our brothers. We can only win a war with the white man if we extirpate him forever and completely liberate our country from his presence.

Strenuous Beaver So we have no choice?

Pontiac No.

Black Eagle Chief Pontiac is right. We have to make a total war, and we have to win it. And we will be able to win it if our chief Pontiac may lead it.

Tough Bear Lead us in the war, Pontiac.

Pontiac It is my duty to lead you and all our brothers in a successful war against the white man, so that he never more may act in violation of nature. If he wants to live in our country he must learn to respect our country and ourselves as guardians of the country and as human beings. He has neither respected the country nor us. We must therefore teach him a lesson that he will never forget. Our goal is to extirpate all Englishmen from our country. We will never be entirely successful, since their forts

by the sea are too strong. But we could succeed enough to have our free hunting grounds restored to us, that our big game may continue thriving, that our furred animals be not extirpated by reckless poaching and that our children may keep the land of their fathers.

The Indians (expressing consent and appreciation)

Pontiac We could succeed enough to have the English defeated, making them accept their defeat and become more humble towards us and nature.

Tough Bear (after a pause) Chief Pontiac has spoken wisely. I and my tribes will follow him.

Black Eagle I submit to chief Pontiac's wise counsel of war with all my tribes.

Strenuous Beaver I will participate in the war with my entire tribe.

Swift Deer I will spread the message of the great war to all tribes in the south.

Pontiac Then we are all agreed. The English are no more than a thousand across the country. We cannot fail. Those who do not wish to die have to escape or surrender. Let us smoke the peace pipe together for the unification and alliance of all our brothers against the English.

(They light the peace pipe.)

Scene 4. Fort Detroit, May 1763.

Major Gladwyn How many are they?

a soldier (by the palisade) Impossible to say, Sir, but they are increasing all the time. They must have doubled since yesterday.

Gladwyn They will never reach us inside the fort, but what about the settlers out there?

Soldier There is not one of them left, Sir. They have burnt down every house.

Gladwyn (sighs) Yes, we saw them like torches yesterday and heard the screams of women and children who were scalped. Hardly a fraction got away.

Soldier Sir, a trapper is on his way here. He probably brings some message from Pontiac.

Gladwyn Is he alone?

soldier Yes.

Gladwyn Let him in.

(The gate is opened to the trapper, who enters.)

Are you coming from Pontiac?

Trapper Yes.

Gladwyn Well, what's his excuse for tonight's bloody massacre on innocent women and children?

Trapper He demands your surrender. He will allow you to leave the fort unharmed if you leave your weapons and belongings.

Gladwyn Apparently he is serious.

Trapper Yes.

Gladwyn He will learn that he with a handful of savages are fighting the British Empire. Tell him that we will never surrender.

Trapper I must warn you. There is a great Indian war developing with the one intention to chase English supremacy out of the country.

Gladwyn (laughs) A great Indian war! Bless my soul! His great Indian war would in Europe be like a village uprising. Tell him that we consider his ambitions ridiculous.

(The trapper leaves. The gate is opened to him, and he disappears.)

Soldier Was that wise, Sir? We have hardly provisions for three weeks.

Gladwyn Do you think he will be able to keep up fighting for three weeks? He will tire after a few days. I know those bloodthirsty savages.

A corporal Sir, there are at least six hundred of them out there, and they are fully armed with guns. Their burning arrows will easily put our straw roofs and frail wooden buildings on fire.

Gladwyn I know, but we are expecting reinforcements. Several boats with provisions and ammunition are on their way here, and I will make sure they send an extra convoy.

Corporal Through the land of the Indians?

Gladwyn Englishmen know how to defend themselves. We must rely on that they will make it. Or else...

Soldier Or else what, Sir?

Gladwyn Or else we'll see if we are still alive in three weeks.

Scene 5. An Indian village.

Pontiac (in full war paint, half naked with battle axe and his long black hair let loose)

Yes, we have started the extermination war against the white man, and we challenge all our brothers of whatever tribes to follow us! Now is the right moment! The English have grown strong enough to take possession of all lands that belonged to our French brothers. The French were always friendly towards us during their long war against the English overwhelming us with gifts for evidence that they were anxious about peace and cooperation with us. After the English bereft the French of their rights, the English have ignored us and only demonstrated their wish to get rid of us and take all lands away from us like they did to the French! If we don't extirpate the English, the English will extirpate us!

an old chief Give us a sign, great war chief!

Pontiac We are at present laying siege to the strongest fort of the English, which they call Detroit. Our French brothers built that fort. A hundred and twenty Englishmen are defending the fort against six hundred of our warriors. It must eventually fall, like all the other English forts are falling, one after the other.

Chief A victory over small forts and peaceful white settlers is no sign. I asked for a sign. You know what I mean.

Pontiac (presenting a war belt, a Wampum) Here is the sign of the holy war! Here are the holy signs written that tell of the Delaware prophet's revelation! He had a calling from the Great Spirit and searched for him for forty days in the wilderness without company and without sustenance. Finally the Great Spirit revealed himself. He spoke to our brother from Delaware and said:

"My son, how long will you still stand the white intruder's reckless greed and devastation of your free and sacred land? I have had enough of the destructive lust of these ruthless men of violence and their lack of sense and piety. They ruin my free nature and consume it leaving only a black smoking desert behind. He extirpates my animals and burns down my forests. He introduced fire weapons and fire water in this free holy land. With his fire weapons he started extirpating the free sons of my country, and with his fire water he destroyed their souls. Therefore I command you: he must be extirpated! And this message I ask you to bring all your brothers no matter of what tribes they are. They must all join to march against the white man, for the white man is so evil, that if he is not extirpated, he will extirpate you."

Thus spoke the Great Spirit to our brother from Delaware. And here is the belt with the holy signs that eternalise the Great Spirit's message. This holy Wampum has wandered among all the Indian tribes between the great lakes and Mississippi and Ohio, and all tribes will take part in the holy war. Now it's your turn to also stand up.

Chief (rising) The great war chief has spoken. You have seen and heard the sign. We all know that only signs from the Great Spirit in nature are reliable. Your victories, Pontiac, are nothing to this sign. Now I believe we could succeed in defeating the white man, and we will all support each other in defeating him. But we must leave our French brothers in peace.

Pontiac All our brothers of all tribes realize the importance of leaving our French brothers in peace. Only Englishmen may be killed, but all Englishmen must be killed!

Chief The great Pontiac has spoken. His word is now our law as long as our holy war in the name of the Great Spirit goes on.

Act II scene 1. Fort Detroit after three weeks' siege (May 30th, 1763).

Lieutenant The situation is desperate, Sir.

Gladwyn I know, but we have to hold out.

Corporal The Indians are still increasing every day. They are now at least eight hundred.

Lieutenant The men are tired of having to sleep sitting up and dressed up with weapons in their hands. They get lice, illnesses and starve.

Corporal The Indians attack us day and night. We never get a rest.

Gladwyn But we must also never give up. I know that a convoy with supplies is on its way here.

Lieutenant Why then does it never arrive?

Corporal Sir, every night one or several get delirious of exhaustion or mad of terror. (*Gladwyn looks at him.*)

A soldier (brightens up) Colonel! Look! (*shows at the river. Everyone runs to the closest aperture to watch.*)

Corporal The convoy!

Gladwyn At last!

Lieutenant Eighteen boats with supplies! They are actually here!

Gladwyn Somewhat late but the more welcome. Well, my men, do you still want to surrender and decamp?

Corporal The boats still have to reach here, and their men and supplies have to safely get into the fort.

Gladwyn We can thank them. The worst is over.

Soldier(terrified) Colonel! Look!

Gladwyn What do you see that I don't see?

Soldier Look at the men in the aft!

(*All look and pale with fear.*)

Lieutenant Indians!

Corporal They have taken the convoy, and the men have to row for them!

Lieutenant All the supplies and weapons will end up in the Indian camp.

Gladwyn This is too much!

Soldier Sir! Look! In the first boat!

Gladwyn Yes, I see. It's a desperate act. It's the man's only chance, and it's a brave venture.

corporal They succeeded in throwing one Indian in the water, but the other one is struggling. He drags one of the officers with him over board. He pulls a knife...

lieutenant Both are gone.

Gladwyn But the other four can now manage, and they row for their lives towards us. We have to help them! We must cover them! Dispatch a patrol! Not one of these four brave men must die!

Lieutenant Yes, Sir! (*hurries out, meets a trapper in the door*)

Gladwyn (to the trapper) You look solemn, my friend. Do you bring bad news?

Trapper I am sad to have to announce, Sir, that the forts St. Joseph, Michilimackinac, Ouatanon, Miami, Le Boeuf, Venango, Presqu'Isle and Sandusky have fallen to the Indians.

Gladwyn All eight of them?

Trapper Yes, Sir.

Gladwyn And the ninth?

Trapper Fort Pitt is still holding out, but together with yours it's the only one remaining west of the Alleghany mountains. The entire country between Lake Erie, Ohio and Mississippi is now completely in the hands of the Indians.

Gladwyn What more do you know? Any survivors?

Trapper Just a few exceptions. One from St. Joseph, two from Michilimackinac, no one from Sandusky and Ouatanon; most, and that's more than ninety percent,

have ruthlessly been massacred, including the civilian population with women and children, with one exception.

Gladwyn It surprises me that there are exceptions. Well?

Trapper Every Frenchman in the vast area have been spared. The Indians are making war only against England and Englishmen. The French Canadians seem to have joined the Indians out of revenge. It might have been they who persuaded the Indians to start the war.

Gladwyn What more do you know?

Trapper The Indians seem to imagine that the French king has not abandoned them. Pontiac has asked for French reinforcements from Illinois, that don't exist.

Gladwyn Then at last we have found a weak spot with the Indians. They are counting on French support, which never will arrive. When they realize it, they will fall out of breath. Pontiac isn't more stupid than that he must realize that a few thousand Indians never will be able to throw the British Empire out of America alone. Well, my men, what about that? At last some light ahead!

Soldier Here are the four who managed to escape with their boat.

(These come bursting in, some badly wounded, all completely exhausted, supported by the lieutenant and others.)

Gladwyn Well, my brave friends, I suppose you have a shocking story to tell.

The least wounded We were taken by surprise by the Indians two days ago. They were simply too many. We had no chance. Only two boats managed to slip away. The rest of us were forced to go on here with the arms of the Indians aimed at our hearts. I guess the four of us are the only lucky ones. All the other sixty will probably be massacred. This is a bloody war.

Gladwyn And it's only getting more bloody. The Indians have never before been so well organised and cruel. They have massacred all English settlers between Lake Erie, Ohio and Mississippi. We are the only ones left in the country.

Trapper Sir, we don't know what the Indians do with their prisoners. It's possible that they let some live.

Gladwyn Do you think so? Are you so naïve? No, my friend, if they murder so many they will murder all. *(to the rescued)* The four of you are probably the only ones in the entire convoy who got away alive.

The first saved Do you really mean that, Sir?

Another (of the four) What about all the forts? Didn't we have a chain of forts here in the wilderness?

Gladwyn Ours is the only one remaining.

The first saved (the other three also expressing great amazement) Do you really mean that, Sir?

Gladwyn Yes, my friend. The Indians have embarked on a total extermination war against all whites speaking English. It's the revenge of the French for having lost their war. That's how bad losers the French are.

The first saved (exchanging glances with the others) Can you hold out, Sir?

Gladwyn (thoughtfully) That's the question.

Scene 2. The Indians.

Pontiac Our French brothers, are they here?

A chief They are waiting for meeting their brother Pontiac.

Pontiac And I am longing to meet them. May they appear to meet my face.

(The chief leaves to usher in a group of French Canadians.)

My friends, I am anxious to learn what's in your hearts.

Canadian Great chief, we are not happy about your war. You say that you only wage war against the English, but still it happens ever more often, the longer the siege of Detroit goes on, that your Indians appear threatening to us Frenchmen, intrude in our houses with tomahawks lifted to plunder us of all we have of victuals. Is that your way of defending us French against the English?

Pontiac My brothers, we never wished you any harm, and we never allowed any transgressions against you. Those who made themselves guilty of that have done it completely on their own against our advice and command. It's not just to avenge our own wrongs that we war against the English. It's also to avenge your wrongs. They have trampled you down like they have tread us down. That is why we wish to destroy all Englishmen and not leave a single living one left. I regret to say that I have heard that there also are some of you who have joined the English against us. We know exactly who they are, and when our French father your king will come here to help us, we will point them out to him to have them punished.

I further regret all the troubles caused by the war from our constantly having to pass through your settlements. I ask you to remember, though, the war seventeen years ago, which the Ojibwa and the Michilimackinac tribes together with the Sax and Fox Indians fought against you to have you all extirpated. Who defended you against these wild tribes then? I did at the head of my Ottawa Indians and the Wyandots, the Pottawattami and the Shawanoo Indians. The chief Michinac swore solemnly that he would carry your colonel's head to his camp and eat his heart and drink his blood. Who told him, that he, if he wanted to extirpate all Frenchmen, then first had to kill me and all my warriors? As I defended you then I defend you today. I am a Frenchman and wish to die like a Frenchman. We are of the same blood, you and I. Therefore don't make impediments to my war. I ask no help of you, for you no longer have any power against the English. All I ask for is food and supplies to what extent you are able to provide. Of course, you are welcome to fight by our side to what extent you wish, since it's naturally to the interest of us all to get rid of all English as soon as possible. And then when we have prevailed it's our intention to let each one go home to his own village in peace to await there the arrival of our French father your king to our country. Live in peace, French brothers, and I will make sure no evil will happen to you.

(The Canadians look at each other.)

Canadian We are happy with your answer, great chief, and we trust you. And as well as we can we will help you by all means in the war against the English.

Pontiac Good, my French brother. *(offers him the peace pipe. They smoke.)*

Scene 3. On board a ship.

(Is is dark . You see the side of the ship with the lake in the background.)

Master-at-arms We are passing through enemy territory, Sir

Captain I know. Double the watch. Nothing is more treacherous than silence.

Mate What do you mean, Sir?

Captain I mean, that the damned redskins are most dangerous, when you don't know where you have them.

A sailor Captain! I see small objects approaching on the water. They must be canoes.

Captain (sharpens his eyes) You are right. No one says a word. – All hands on deck, but without a sound. We will give those bloody savages a warm reception. This cargo must reach Detroit! Or else we English will have no more business in America!

(The men steal quietly around, arming themselves and taking positions along the rails.)

Captain Not a sound! Not until I give the signal! Not one red devil must get away alive! Every shot must hit the heart of a red murderer! We must not miss! Keep still and quiet! Let them come out into the moonlight! Let them be clearly seen! Take careful aim in peace and quiet. Is everyone ready? Quiet now. Ready.

(shouts) Fire!

(All shoot at the same time. You hear wild dying Indian screams at some distance.)

There they got it to make them yelling! Set the cannon on fire! Aim in the middle of the canoes! Fire!

(The cannon is fired while the others go on shooting.)

Master-at-arms They are escaping, Sir.

Captain How many got hit?

Sailor I got one.

Mate And I had two.

Master-at-arms Maybe sixteen in all, Sir.

Captain It's not enough. Every damned Indian must be exterminated from all this country! Or else we will never be able to civilise it properly!

Sailor Sir, another danger.

Captain They don't give up, those devil dogs. What are they up to now?

Sailor Windward, Sir. *(You see a red light out to the left.)*

Captain I see. The damned bastards are sending a flaming raft against us. It's burning bright and well, but we are sailing past it. It will drift behind us. Sorry, redskins, water is an element that the British Empire masters better than you. You will never get at us out here. We will reach Detroit safely, and Detroit will never give in.

Mate How happy they will be in the fort when they hear about the signing of the peace in Paris!

Captain Yes, and what long faces all French Canadians will pull! Those idiots believed in their French king.

Mate They say the French have started supporting the Indians.

Captain They will have themselves to blame. In that case they will die with the Indians when we exterminate them. And those who survive will have to speak English, if they want to survive.

Mate It could be a long war, Sir.

Captain All wars are long. That's why we always win them. We are tougher and wiser than all the rest. The world will just have to accept it.

Sailor The flaming raft is passing us by, Sir.

Captain And will go out with the last hope of the cruel redskins to be able to practice their atrocities in peace. We English are here to teach them to stop scalping people.

Sailor They were here in the country, though, long before us. The country is originally theirs.

Captain You are right so far, my friend, but no further. Their right they have ruined themselves by their bloody and extreme cruelty. The war could last for long, but the longer it lasts, the more certainly and the more they will lose. The difference between us whites and them is, that they have nothing to win but everything to lose, while we have nothing to lose but everything to win. For we are hopelessly superior from the start, no matter what temporary victories they gain.

(The light from the burning raft glides out to the right and goes out.)

Sailor There the last flame of the raft went out.

Captain And the future of the Indians of America. Now we shall reach Detroit safely. The Indians are already beaten.

Sailor By nature or by their own inferiority, Sir?

captain No, by their own destiny.

Scene 4. In a French Canadian cottage.

Canadian 1 It's a disaster for us.

2 I never thought it could be possible.

1 It's a betrayal, a gigantic, nasty betrayal!

2 But what shall we say to the Indians?

1 The Indians are making war on the English. There's our only chance. We have to do everything to support their war.

2 Yes, we must never accept that France has betrayed us.

1 But it will only work if the Indians never learn about it.

2 Yes, let's keep them in the belief that France is backing them up.

1 Let Pontiac enter.

2 (moves to the door, lets in Pontiac and his chiefs)

Welcome, great chief.

Pontiac We are worried about you, my French brothers.

1 All we have is yours. All French are at your disposal. What is your concern?

Pontiac There is a rumour that French and English have made peace with each other and that all French in Canada from now on will serve the English. I must warn you, Frenchmen, and I ask you to let all Frenchmen know, that those Frenchmen who collaborate with the English will be treated by us like the English. They will be as little spared as any Englishman.

1 All Frenchmen know this, great Pontiac. No Frenchmen will ever collaborate with any Englishman.

Pontiac What are Frenchmen then doing in the fort? And why do the French ask for protection against us by the English? Verily I say unto you, that you have to make up your minds whether you will be French or English. We will spare all Frenchmen, but we kill all Englishmen, even if they speak French.

1 I promise all of you, great Pontiac and all chiefs of Wyandot, Shawanoo, Ojibwa, Delaware, Miami, Kickapoo and Pottawattami, that you don't need to worry. A great French army is on its way up the St. Lawrence river under the command of our king, our great French father, to drive out all the English and return the country to you and us. All will be well.

Pontiac (rising) Good French brother, your speech is agreeable. Something like that was exactly what we wished to hear. Now we know we will prevail. We will fight for France until there is no one left in this country who still dares to speak English. Friends, let's leave. *(The Indians break it up.)*

2 *(when they are gone)* That was a dangerous lie.

1 But necessary. Now their fighting spirit might perhaps endure so that they really could teach the English a lesson.

2 Do you think they could win?

1 No, but they could at least kill as many Englishmen as possible. The thing is to keep them going. Their cruelty is on our side.

2 You make them sacrifice themselves for us.

1 They will be sacrificed anyway by the English.

Scene 5. Fort Detroit.

(Around the officers guards, soldiers and other people move about.)

Gladwyn You are most heartily welcome, captain Dalzell. If you hadn't come, the saga of this fort might have been finished.

Dalzell I realized as much when we came up the river and were met by fire of the Indians from both shores. Didn't you achieve a peace treaty with the Ojibwa and the Pottawattami Indians?

Gladwyn You know how the Indians are: capricious, treacherous and as reliable as water. They gladly betray each other. Give them whiskey, and they will scalp each other and forget the war.

Dalzell Perhaps we should export more whiskey to them?

Gladwyn In the long run that would be their certain destruction. But so far they keep laying siege to us and to harass us on a daily basis. Pontiac is not a man who gives up.

Dalzell At least we got all our twenty-two boats unharmed up to the fort with the loss of only fifteen men.

Gladwyn Now the fort will survive.

Dalzell But why did you never make any offensive attack on the Indians?

Gladwyn They are too invidious. They have their eyes everywhere and move invisibly anywhere in nature without a sound. Pontiac knows everything and as an expert on attacking from behind.

Dalzell But now with all your renewed supplies of food, ammunition and weapons and 260 extra men perhaps we could dare venture on a greater raid. Their camp is after all not far from here. We burned several of their camps along the shores of Lake Erie.

Gladwyn I would not recommend an attack.

Dalzell How else could we break the siege?

Gladwyn I imagine that the Indians will get tired of it all. I am hoping for their own division and dissolution.

Dalzell In that case you might have to wait forever. Their war is well organised, and Pontiac keeps them united. You have to strike against Pontiac's own heart, against his own village! A bold attack is maybe all we need to crush their fighting spirit.

Gladwyn I will not follow. You will have to do it on your own in that case.

Dalzell I am willing to wage all my two hundred and fifty men. If we strike now I think we could vanquish him. He is getting reinforcements all the time. If we wait any longer it might then already be too late. We still have him within reach now, and he hasn't grown too strong!

Gladwyn Do as you wish. I will not interfere. *(They depart.)*

A French Canadian (who unnoticed has heard the conversation) Those fools are going to attack Pontiac's camp! We must let Pontiac know that at once!

Act III scene 1.

The English attack in darkness.

Dalzell Dark is the night. But in this night the future of England in America will be decided by a bold push, a definite settlement, a courageous and determined initiative straight out into the darkness. My men, we shall take the savages by surprise so that they never will dare to show themselves in the country again! We shall cleanse them out of the forests by blasting their very heart by burning down the very camp of the great Pontiac! Forward, my men! Let's storm the darkness!

(They advance. Suddenly there are wild war cries in the air from Indians, and you hear gunfire and see flashes of rifles. Men go down everywhere and fall over each other.)

What is this? We haven't even reached the camp yet! How then can they be all around us?

major Rogers Captain, they are too many, and they seem to be all around us.

Dalzell Halt! We have to rearrange and retire a few steps!

(They pull back to the initial position.)

a soldier They were waiting for us by the brook.

Another Yes, they knew we were coming.

(The gunfire stops.)

Dalzell Forward now, but carefully! Make a formation! We must not expose ourselves openly to the coward savages!

(The men dare advance again but with scared looks around.)

Dalzell (cries suddenly) All attack at once! Now!

(They make a strong push efficiently firing their arms. Nothing happens.)

Rogers Where are they?

a soldier Have they run home?

Another Have they gone into hiding?

(The men carefully tread their way, completely dumbfounded by the fact that the Indians suddenly are like gone to earth.)

(Suddenly the Indian storm breaks loose again with wild war cries and gunfire but from a totally different direction. The men get confused, try to run away, run into each other, are gunned down, etc.)

Dalzell Keep in order! Don't give up so easily!

Rogers Captain, we must retire. These savages see like cats though the night. We stand no chance against them We have to wait for the daylight.

Dalzell Yes, but don't dissolve the order! We can't run like rabbits in a panic! Then we are really lost!

A soldier Captain, the Indians are in thousands all around us

Dalzell Don't you think I know, you dumbskull! Fight like men! Don't strand there jumping! Shoot for hell's sake! Defend yourselves! *(draws his sword, hitting the fleeing ones with the broadside, quarrels and tries to force his men to fight.)*

A soldier (to Rogers) We have no chance. We have to run for our lives.

Dalzell (screams) Don't disrupt the order! Don't fall out of line! Fight bravely like men for England and the British Empire and our civilisation! They are just savages!

Rogers Sir, we have to retreat.

Dalzell Yes, but everything in good order! Men! Make a formation and let's all retire in good order under cover of the fire of the major's men!

(A few Indians are seen stealing forth taking scalps of some already fallen.)

A wounded sergeant (sees them) Help!

Dalzell (sees the sergeant) I must help him. Or else they will scalp him alive.

(tries alone to go to help the sergeant, gets shot, Indians come forth scalping him quickly, quietly and efficiently.)

Rogers We can't help him nor any other fallen man any more. Turn back!

(The English manage to protect themselves enough to be able to retreat. When they are gone, the scene is filled with exulting Indians taking scalps. The yelling and the gunfire continues. Finally blackout and absolute silence.)

Scene 2. Fort Detroit.

Gladwyn (facing a sad bunch of badly wounded, who managed to come back alive)

How many dead and wounded?

Rogers Fifty-nine, Sir.

Gladwyn I warned captain Dalzell. And how many Indians did you manage to kill?

Rogers Twenty at most.

Gladwyn A downright massacre on civilised people by wild barbarians!

Rogers Sir, they were perhaps eight hundred.

Gladwyn And you walked straight into their trap with drums and trumpets! *(tired)* Well, you didn't know better. Just hear now what our scouts have to report as direct consequences of the Indian victory. Tell these brave survivors what you heard, MacGregor!

MacGregor (a trapper) Pontiac is more powerful than ever. All Indians who earlier waited to see are now joining up with him. The war against the English-speaking America has become a national concern for all Indians.

Gladwyn Do you understand what you have done? They are a force of several thousand murderous savages out there with their scalpels now! Several of you might still be eternalised by a scalp dangling from the belt of a screaming cannibal! We are to expect a storm attack at any moment. They have us all caught in their hands! They just need to squeeze their grip. But we will never give in. And if we are massacred to the last man, there will be others coming after us to take over.

Rogers What shall we do, Sir?

Gladwyn I don't know. These Indians are like a force of nature. You never know where you have them or what they will find out to do next in their inconceivable capriciousness. They fight with nature for their means and weapons against us civilised educated human beings, who only learned to fight nature with all means. The struggle seems to be one between man and nature. And if nature really mobilizes all forces against man, what are then the chances of man?

Rogers Sir, we are waiting for orders. Our captain is fallen, and we are now expecting orders from you.

Gladwyn We have nothing else to do but to wait. It's better to do nothing than to do something stupid. Go home to bed and lick your wounds. Eat and sleep until something happens, for then you will perhaps never be able to sleep or eat any more. Instead you might be eaten, like captain Campbell. Those are the only prospects for the future I can offer you now in this damned country.

Rogers (to the invalids) At ease! *(They march out.)*

Gladwyn (thoughtfully) The devil knows if we shouldn't have left the country in the first place. It belonged after all to the Indians from the beginning.

Scene 3. On board the ship.
Darkness and fog.

sailor 1 You can't see your hand in front of you.

2 I feel the stench of treason a long way off.

3 Was it so wise to let those six iroquois go ashore?

captain Horst They were our friends. They just wished to visit their families. If we hadn't given them leave they would have jumped over board anyway.

sailor 4 We should have kept them by force and put them in irons!

captain Why?

sailor 4 For their treacherous intentions!

captain And if they had been innocent?

sailor 4 Every Englishman knows, that every Indian is a traitor.

captain It may be true, that the only good Indian is a dead Indian, but still you can't just kill them off without reason. You have to provoke them first into doing something stupid.

sailor 1 Captain, I suspect some mischief out on the water.

captain Double the watch!

sailor 2 It doesn't help. You can't see anything anyway.

sailor 3 First head wind all day, and then this impenetrable fog. We'll never reach Detroit.

sailor 4 (suddenly crying) Indians! They are here! Lots of them!

captain Shoot, for hell's sake! Fire the gun!

(All start shooting wildly about. The cannon is fired. Indians come climbing on board with knives between their teeth.)

sailor 1 Too late. *(dies)*

(The fight gets fierce and bloody. Both whites and Indians are falling, but the Indians are constantly increasing in number.)

Sailor 2 Captain, they are at least three hundred.

captain And we are only twelve! We have no chance! But we must not give them the ship! Blow it up!

an Indian They are going to blow up the ship.

Indian 2 In that case, just let them. *(The Indians leave the ship and jump over board again, all of them.)*

sailor 3 That was almost too narrow an escape. How many of us are dead?

sailor 2 Two and four wounded. But we killed seven and wounded at least twenty.

sailor 3 But they were ten times as many. How is the captain?

Sailor 2 (turns the captain) Dead.

sailor 3 Pity. But we saved the ship.
Sailor 2 At least something.

Scene 4. The chief of the Ojibwa Indians speaking to some trappers.

Minavavana Englishmen, I am surprised at you. You say you bring peace, and that you wish to live in peace with us. Do you consider us so stupid that we could be fooled that easily? You speak with a cloven tongue, like the rattle snake, and then accuse us of being unreliable. We are reliability itself. For many years now we have helped our French brothers in their war against you, and the French king is our father. We will not fail him. It's you yourselves, Englishmen, who wanted this war against the French and who started it, and you know very well that we are the French king's children. How dare you then enter our country and take for granted that we will live in peace with you, when all you want is to take our country away from us?

We have learned that our father the king of France is old and weak. The war against you has tired him out so that he has gone to sleep. While he slept you stole his country Canada away from him. But we are not sleeping, and we know that he will awake. And how do you then think you will be able to keep what you have stolen? Surely our father will come up the river to us and justly punish you to resume his country and give it back to us.

Englishmen, you will know, that we can never be your slaves. If you can defeat the French it doesn't mean that you can defeat us. For we are one with nature. We are this wilderness, these grand free lakes, these limitless mountains and forests, and who are you then that you could make all nature your slave? You are stupid, Englishmen, if you could imagine such a thing.

I must warn you. The French king always showed us respect and gave us presents to prove his good will towards us. The English king never did that. You English have always treated us with contempt, spat at us, swore at us and avoided us, except now when you have come forth to kill us. No Indian therefore has any reason to believe any good of any Englishman. That's why we are at total unending war against all English. However, you have come into our country without weapons with peaceful intentions and only wish to hunt and live. Therefore nothing evil will happen to you. You have articles that we gladly would obtain, and therefore we will gladly trade with you. We are especially interested in that like copper golden water, what is it you call it?

trapper Whisky.

Minavavana Yes, exactly, whisky. But I warn you. When it comes to fighting we stand on the side of all Frenchmen against all Englishmen, I have spoken. Now we can smoke the peace pipe.

(sits down. They smoke.)

Scene 5. Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Commander Sir Jeffrey Amherst and colonel Henry Bouquet.

Amherst Colonel Bouquet, this will not do any longer.

Bouquet What more can we do than succour Fort Pitt and Fort Detroit?

Amherst We can do so much more. The forts will hold. They can manage on what they have. What we can do is to fight! Have you heard what they did to Sir Robert Davies and lieutenant Robertson?

Bouquet I gather they are dead, Sir?

Amherst Yes, they are fallen, but not in battle. They were taken prisoners and tortured to death, colonel Bouquet. They were roasted to death over a small fire, colonel. They were roasted limb by limb, a little at a time, until they languished to death by the pain after five days! Then their hearts were eaten up, and their scalps were hanged as trophies around the belts of the savages! What do you say to that, colonel?

Bouquet That's what the Indians do also to their own enemies. They make no difference between Indians and whites in that matter.

Amherst But we do, colonel Bouquet! We are civilised people! We don't tolerate barbarity! The Indians have burnt and destroyed every fort between us and the lakes except Detroit and Fort Pitt. It will be your mission to succour Fort Pitt. At the same time we will boost the war to greater efficiency.

Bouquet How, Sir?

Amherst By any means. From now on there will be a bounty for every Indian. They seem to prefer fighting in the forests, where they are superior and at home, since they know their wilderness. What do you think about chasing Indians in the forests with dogs on leash?

Bouquet Why not, Sir? No Englishman dares to go alone in a forest where there are warlike Indians, and the dog is man's best friend.

Amherst Exactly. The more dogs, the better. You can keep them on a leash in order to increase their appetite without the soldiers falling behind. One by one the red devils could be tracked down by bloodhounds and eliminated. But we have even better plans.

Bouquet Sir?

Amherst They like buying warm blankets from the white man. We infect the blankets with small pox, and then we export these blankets for charitably low prices to the enthusiastic Indians, as a proof of good will and friendliness. Then they may warm up and enjoy their blessed blankets as long as they live.

Bouquet An infernal stratagem, Sir.

Amherst It's hard but fair! They are roasting our officers over slow fire!

Bouquet Small pox does not primarily affect their warriors but their children, aged people and women.

Amherst So we impede the progeny! Thus at least we'll get rid of them in the long run!

Bouquet Sir, they are more vulnerable to small pox than we are.

Amherst That's just the reason why! So much the better! How many families have they turned homeless and without means in the settlements by burning their houses, murdering their fathers, scalping their mothers, kidnapping their children and flaying their old folks? At least a thousand families! And you dare have scruples?

Bouquet It's not scruples, Sir. It's the method.

Amherst And what's wrong with the method except its possible efficiency?

Bouquet It is foul, Sir. It is hitting below the belt.

Amherst Hitting below the belt! You complain of a hit below the belt when they flay our children, scalp our mothers, devour our wives and torture our officers to death as slowly and painfully as possible!

Bouquet Sir, it's a sport of theirs to expose men to extreme tests of manhood. The more pain a man can endure, the more admirable he is in their eyes. To be exposed to torture is, according to their way of thinking, an honour.

Amherst Not one word more, Bouquet! It will not do to defend bloodthirsty enemies! You will march tomorrow! And let the whole frontier know, that all England is marching on its way against the red barbarians with dogs and small pox.

Bouquet Yes, Sir. One more thing, Sir.

Amherst Well?

Bouquet Two friends are applying for protection.

Amherst Against the Indians?

Bouquet Against the war.

Amherst Well?

Bouquet The soldiers desire to kill them.

Amherst Why?

Bouquet (*opens the door and lets them in. They are two Indians.*)

Amherst But they are Indians!

Bouquet Yes, Sir, but a Mohegan and a Cayuga. The Mohegans and Cayuga Indians have always been friendly with all whites. These two have applied to us for protection with their families, but our countrymen wish to kill them.

Amherst What are they asking for? Bodyguards?

Bouquet No, just protection, Sir.

Amherst (*looks down*) Very well. They shall have bodyguards. I will speak with the others about it. Go now.

Bouquet Yes, Sir. (*to the Indians*) You will have all the protection you need. No one will be able to do you any harm. (*leaves with the Indians.*)

Amherst (*alone, thrusts the table with his fist*) Scruples! You cannot have scruples in war! And especially not in a war with Indians!

Act IV scene 1. Bushy Run. Indian cries and gunsmoke in the forest.

Bouquet Get back! Get back! They are too many! For God's sake, don't attack! They outnumber us three times! We can't afford any more massacres! Disaster! Disaster!

A corporal Sir, we have taken a prisoner.

Bouquet One prisoner?

corporal Yes, Sir, one prisoner.

Bouquet And what the heck are we to do with one single prisoner when we have a hundred thousand murderers around us in the bush?

corporal That's just the problem, Sir, but the fact is that we have succeeded in taking one prisoner.

Bouquet We neither have time nor room for any prisoners! We have to defend our lives against the predominance! What the hell are we to do with prisoners?

corporal That's just the problem, Sir.

Bouquet Well, bring on the poor prisoner.

(The prisoner is brought in, an ordinary Indian. Some twenty English soldiers bring him in.)

A lieutenant Here is the prisoner, Sir.

Bouquet But it's just an ordinary Indian!

corporal Yes, Sir. What did you expect? An Eskimo?

Bouquet Don't try to be funny, corporal. Well, you poor redskin, don't you think we have enough of all your brothers out in the bush? What the hell are we to do with one more here in the middle of us? As if we didn't have enough problems!

Lieutenant Sir, what are we to do with the prisoner?

Bouquet Do what you bloody well please! I am damned tired of all this most irregular war! *(leaves the stage)*

Lieutenant That's what I call clear instructions.

corporal What are we to do with him, lieutenant?

Lieutenant Yes, there is one thing clear. We can't keep him, since we have to fight for our lives!

a soldier Kill him!

Another Yes, let him pay for all our hundred dead companions!

A third It's not more than fair!

A fourth (to the Indian) You bloodthirsty murderer, you and your savages are slaughtering the whole peaceful population of America!

A fifth You are on your way of exterminating us although we never did anything against you!

A sixth All we wanted was to live in peace with you!

(The soldiers appear constantly more threatening against the Indian, who is increasingly more terrified, fending himself with his hands.)

The first Kill him!

The second Let's get it over with!

corporal What do you say, lieutenant?

Lieutenant Well, I guess we have no choice. We can't keep him anyway.

Third soldier Get him, boys! Butcher him!

The fourth We know what the redskins do with their white prisoners!

(The soldiers attack the Indian with rifle butts and bayonets without waiting for further orders. The Indian disappears in their midst.)

Lieutenant Stop! Wait!

Corporal Too late.

Lieutenant What the hell are you doing, you ruffians? *(interferes and tries to separate the soldiers. These retire aside. The Indian is left alone in a twisted position entirely massacred.)*

corporal (examining him) He is dead.

lieutenant (angry, to the soldiers) You are British soldiers, not bloody murderers!

(looks furiously around them) You are here to make war on Pontiac's armies, not to cowardly massacre a lone unarmed Indian!

(Non one dares to speak.) Get back to the war! *(The soldiers scatter. The lieutenant is left alone with the corporal.)* I wish this had never happened.

corporal Pontiac has a strange capacity for succeeding in turning the white man's weapons against himself.

Lieutenant He will not succeed with that in the long run! Let's get back to the war, corporal!

corporal Yes, Sir. *(gets lost)*

lieutenant Damn it! *(leaves the stage. The dead indian is left alone in the middle of it.)*

Scen 2. Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The market with the state prison in the background.
Some Paxton men appear as gang leaders.

1 It's the fault of the damned quakers. Without them we would never have got this damned Indian war on all fronts.

2 But it's still the Indians who make war and not the quakers.

3 But the quakers are protecting them!

4 It's not fair! We have to have free hands against the Indians!

1 There is only one thing to do: exterminate all the Indians!

3 Yes, exterminate all Indians!

1 And let's begin then with those who are here in town.

3 Yes, put an end to them!

2 But they have done no harm. They are Christians, and they have sought our protection just to get away from the war of their racial friends.

1 But they are Indians!

3 Are we then to maintain them and feed them and spoil them just to then let them take the scalps of our wives when there is spring again? Are we to allow cannibals to live at the cost of our Christian society?

1 That's what the quakers want!

3 To hell with the quakers!

1 Come on! Let's cut the process short! Let's exume the vermin at once! To the prison!

many To the prison!

(They start on their way to the prison with torches and guns, a dangerous infuriated mob of mostly rowdy ruffians. A quaker stops them.)

quaker Stop, my brothers! What do you intend to do with these weapons and angry countenances? Your looks bode no good.

1 Get out of the way, sanctimonious cannibal protector!

Quaker I hope you will not do the Indians any harm?

1 *(to his followers)* We don't wish any harm to the Indians, do we? Ha-ha-ha!

(All rudely laugh him to scorn.)

Quaker My brothers, you don't know what you are doing! Don't forget that the Indians here are our guests!

(to his followers) The cannibals are the guests of the quakers! *(more scornful laughter)*

(to the quaker) Listen, you imbecile society saboteur without any sense in your skull, you quakers are supporting the Indians in destroying all New England! From your comfortable settlements in the east, where all Indians long ago were extirpated, you preach that no evil should be done to any Indian, while the Indians all along the frontier in the west are murdering and burning our societies, men, women, children and old people! The only ones they spare are madmen like you, but you are out of their reach, for you live in safety far away from the front! So just shut your mouth and let those who are of any good manage the war!

Quaker I forbid you, brothers! These Indians in the prison are from the Christian colony in Moravia, they are Christians like us and like yourselves, they suffered hardship and are mostly women and children, they were caught up by the war, they have sought protection here just to save their lives, they were placed in prison just because it was the safest place for them, and now you wish to harass them!

1 Out of the way, jerk! *(strikes him down)* Come on!

(The mob carries on. The quaker is trampled down and is left behind them completely mangled.)

Quaker (as they pass) Lord, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing!

1 *(by the prison)* Now we'll let those devil have it! *(shoots up the lock and breaks into the prison)*

Come on out, you devils! *(No reaction. He fires a few shots at random. Screams and cries of anguish and despair are heard from the inside.)*

Throw in a torch to wake them up! *(One of the men throws in a torch.)*

There! Now we have some light inside! *(fires again. More horrible screams, more heart-rending than at first.)*

Indian 1 (comes out with his hands up) Don't shoot! We are your brothers! We are Christians!

1 *(shoots him down in cold blood)* Listen to him!

3 Forward, boys! Finish them off! Let no one get away!

(The mob attacks and the massacre begins. You see Indian women and children come tottering out, wounded and dying, while the slaughter goes on. Finally they are all dead, and everything is quiet.)

1 There! That was all! Let's now go on to the next town!

(The mob cheers and follow him with exulting enthusiasm. They vanish from the scene.)

Quaker *(alone left in the square)* What villainy! What an outrageous villainy! And they were just peaceful Indians who wanted to become English like us! O God, can you allow such things to happen and allow the white man's society to go on?

(cries and complains and beats the ground with his fists.)

Scene 3. Fort Detroit, October 1763.

Lieutenant An Indian mission is here, Sir.

Gladwyn What do they want?

Lieutenant Peace, Sir.

Gladwyn Is it Pontiac himself?

Lieutenant No, it's another of the lesser chiefs. He doesn't represent the Ottawa Indians but only the Ojibwas and the Pottawattamies.

Gladwyn Let's hear then what he has to say.

Lieutenant *(opens the door)* Please come in, Wapocomoguth.

(Wapocomoguth, chief of the Mississippi Indians, enters with some Indian followers.)

Gladwyn I have heard that you desire peace, Wapocomoguth.

Wapocomoguth The Mississauga Indians have always lived in peace with the English.

Gladwyn Still you mean that you also express the wish of the Ojibwa and the Pottawattami Indians.

Wapocomoguth I have been chosen by them to negotiate peace.

Gladwyn Have you then tired of making war against the white man?

Wapocomoguth It is autumn, and winter is approaching day by day. We Indians live according to nature, and we have to adapt to her order. That is why it is our wish to depart from here to our winter quarters. But before we depart we want to have accomplished a peace treaty with you.

Gladwyn So you want peace because of the winter. And what happens when spring comes? Will you then attack us again?

Wapocomoguth I answer here for the Ojibwa and the Pottawattami Indians. The great war chief Pontiac will have to answer for himself and his Ottawa tribes. We depart probably never to return.

Gladwyn You probably have the best intentions in the world, Wapocomoguth, but I don't trust Pontiac and the other chiefs. I will gladly make a peace treaty with you, but tell Pontiac and the others, that we will never give up, that we will always bring new supplies and weapons here, that we constantly have new reinforcements, and that we intend to crush Pontiac and the Ottawa tribe if anyone dares to attack us again in spring.

Wapocomoguth That is good. Let us smoke the peace pipe to seal the lasting peace between Englishmen and the Ojibwa and Pottawattami tribes. (*The peace pipe is lit.*)

Gladwyn May I only ask: why do you suddenly give up so easily?

Wapocomoguth The great Pontiac has become uncertain. He has heard that the French have let him down.

Gladwyn So he believed in the support of the French all the way until now?

Wapocomoguth Yes.

Gladwyn Poor Pontiac.

(*They smoke.*)

Scene 4. Pontiac's camp by the Maumee river.

Morris arrives at the camp. Pontiac receives him standing with his arms crossed surrounded by his warriors. Morris offers his hand, Pontiac refuses it. A Frenchman in French officer's uniform, Saint-Vincent, supporting himself on his rifle with the butt to the ground, is also at Pontiac's side.

Saint-Vincent Pontiac does not accept any white man's offered hand, since he knows that the other hand conceals a dagger behind the white man's back.

Morris I come alone and unarmed as an ambassador of peace.

Saint-Vincent You speak for yourself, but those you represent have worse intentions than you.

Pontiac Englishman, you come here in vain, for it is Pontiac's experience that all Englishmen are base liars.

Morris I am not lying when I tell you that peace has been made with the Ojibwa and Pottawattami tribes.

Pontiac But you are lying when you say that you bring peace. Englishmen want to buy lands from us to then drive us off the lands and constantly force us to move further away. They take for granted that free men of the wild will die out. They take no responsibility themselves for their share in our expulsion. They give us whiskey and rum in unlimited supplies and spread their spotty sore disease among us so that we die, and then they say we die out from natural reasons.

Morris Great Pontiac, all Englishmen are not like that.

Pontiac No, but most of them are. And they are all liars or deceived naïve victims of the lies of their chiefs. You say that the French have left America and made peace with you. Here is a letter from New Orleans that speaks the opposite! (*shows a letter which he hands over to Morris*)

Morris (reads) "Your French father is neither dead nor fallen asleep. He is already on his way with sixty big ships across the sea to revenge himself on the English and eradicate them from America."

Great Pontiac, this if anything is unfortunately a lie.

Pontiac What dare you say so openly, you mean liar?

Morris It is a lie invented by embittered French Canadians to fool you into perdition in a fatal and devastating war against us. The French hate us so intensively that they don't hesitate to send innocent Indians in meaningless suicidal attacks against us.

Pontiac Would the French be as great liars as the English?

Morris I am afraid so.

Pontiac But who is then to be trusted?

Morris All you can trust is peace.

Pontiac The peace of the Englishmen, who bring liquor and small pox to exterminate us more efficiently than by an honest regular war?

Morris (looks down and is ashamed)

Saint-Vincent He is ashamed of his white people, great Pontiac.

Pontiac If he hasn't anything better to say, I can't protect his life against my warriors.

Morris I will tell you whom you can trust, great Pontiac.

Pontiac Well?

Morris You can't trust a single white man in all America. The white man has only come here to take your land away from you, and when he has succeeded in exterminating you he will start a civil war against himself. The white man has only come to America to destroy America. Therefore, never trust any white man.

Pontiac (amazed) At last you speak a language that I understand. *(gives a warrior a sign. He comes forth, and Pontiac receives a worn and torn book from him. Pontiac gives it to Morris.)* Here is a gift for you from us.

Morris (examines the book with wonder) Where did you find it?

Pontiac With a dead English officer. Explain what it is.

Morris It is the collected works of Shakespeare.

Pontiac (not understanding) Shakespeare?

Morris Our wisest man in England. Here are all his thoughts.

Pontiac Are there Englishmen who think?

Morris At least there have been.

Pontiac Go home in peace, Englishman. No harm will come to you. And tell your people that they would do best in going home to England and start thinking, like that wise man.

Morris They will laugh at me and at you, like they first laughed at Shakespeare.

Pontiac Only fools laugh, but sooner or later their laughter sticks in their throats. We despise laughing fools, and we kill them as easily and without distinction as vermin, but we revere thinkers and divine madness, which harms no man. But you Englishmen harm everyone by your greed. All the world will hate you one day and war against you until your power has been smashed. We Indians only want freedom, but you English only want power. Power is the enemy of freedom. You will never be free yourselves until you lose all power.

Morris I will tell that to my brothers.

Pontiac Do so. Go.

(*Morris leaves.*)

Saint-Vincent Well, Pontiac, will you carry on your war?

Pontiac Do we have any choice? Also that Englishman was just an Englishman, and even if he understood his thinker's book, he was rather alone. Also you, Frenchman, are alone. The majority of the whites will still remain equally destructive to us, our country and our future.

Saint-Vincent You are right, great Pontiac.

Scene 5. Illinois, Fort Chartres.

Pierre Laclède The Indian is here now.

Sainte-Ange Do I have to meet him?

Laclède We might as well get it over with.

Sainte-Ange Why is he coming? Doesn't he know that we have made peace with the English? We don't want any more trouble now. Tell him to go to hell with his war madness.

Laclède Pontiac is far too wise a man to engage in war madness.

Sainte-Ange So what did he engage in so far? Children's care? The care of old people?

Laclède He is still at the head of eighteen Indian tribes, and all Indians look up to him.

Sainte-Ange His case is lost. He and his men have murdered two thousand whites and turned double as many homeless. In the future English-speaking America he can never be regarded as anything else than an outlawed murderer.

Laclède Tell it to him, so that he might understand it.

Sainte-Ange I don't wish to provoke him.

Laclède He is not the one to be provoked.

Sainte-Ange Well, I might as well see him then. But nothing good will come of our meeting. It will only be the worse for himself.

Laclède I think he is aware of it. I think all he wants is clear information. Surely he is entitled to it.

Sainte-Ange Show him in. (*Laclède leaves.*)

This will be the most painful moment of my life. France has sacrificed America and the Indians to the British for a sultry peace, and I am the one who will have to explain the French treason of America to the noblest chief of the Indians, while the English have free hands to exterminate the Indians with rum, whiskey and small pox. Why am I a Frenchman! (*Pontiac enters.*)

Welcome, great chief.

Pontiac I greet you, the friend of the Indians of France.

Sainte-Ange What do you want?

Pontiac I see that the French flag is still waving over Illinois.

Sainte-Ange It's only until the English will arrive.

Pontiac Will they arrive?

Saint-Ange Colonel Bouquet has subjected all Ohio and pacified Delaware, Shawanoo and the Miami tribes. Sooner or later they will come here, and then we must go.

Pontiac Is France giving up that easily?

Saint-Ange My friend, most Frenchmen are innocent. It's those who have the power who have given up so easily.

Pontiac So they sacrifice all the Indians of America and all the Frenchmen of Canada just for their convenience?

Saint-Ange They have no other choice. It costs too much to keep America French.

Pontiac So the French have sold America for money?

Saint-Ange I guess you could say that.

Pontiac (gives up) When the English said they had defeated you we could not believe them. We thought they were lying as they always do. We never thought that you Frenchmen, whom we served so faithfully and fought for during so many years, would turn over our land to the English. We never thought you could obey the English, when they forbade you to send traders to our villages to offer us what we needed. You French have proved yourselves like women, and you abandoned us without a word and let our women and children freeze and starve to death while we continued sacrificing our lives for you without knowing that you already had failed us. We always managed better without you, but we supported you because we thought you were on our side. Instead you sold our country to the English for money, a country you never owned yourselves and which you never had the right to sell or give away. You have given the English power to exterminate us by their laws, the free red people of America, as they please. They are now bribing all my remaining warriors with floods of rum, and my warriors drink it without suspecting it will be their death, and that's why they give them their rum for nothing. Frenchmen, I deplore you, for you are worse than Englishmen. *(leaves)*

Saint-Ange (alone, after a moment's consideration) The worst thing about it is that he is right.

Act V scene 1. St. Louis. An alehouse.

All are drinking. The customers are exclusively declining individuals,
English and French as well as Indians.

Two trappers sit by a table opposite each other drinking.

Trapper 1 (Jack) Have you made any good deals lately?

Trapper 2 (Tom) Most Indians are still easy to cheat. Few of them have understood how balance and scales really work. In ordinary villages no one can understand how the white man weighs out three pounds of furs to make it weigh only one pound.

Jack And those damned devils are so thirsty that they will give anything for any drop of rum. The bar keepers make splendid business on diluting some rum for

the Indians with twice as much water. They only drink the more and pay the full price anyway.

Tom Yes, when those bastards are extinct it will be difficult for all the con men of America to support themselves.

Jack But so far it works, if you are just somewhat methodic. It's still good business to shoot Indians. In some places you still get 134 dollars for every Indian scalp of men over ten years and 50 dollars for every Indian woman scalp of over ten years.

Tom How is it possible?

Jack The peace is generally known only in the most peaceful regions in the east, where there are no longer any Indians. But you can't just shoot any Indians for nothing. You can only shoot fully fledged paleface haters with a good conscience, and only the aged ones, who no longer work or make war, are worth taking the scalps of, for they cannot be cheated either.

Tom But no one has succeeded in killing Pontiac.

Jack No, he is still alive, and as long as he lives no white man will be safe in America.

Tom I have a hot tip. (*lowers his voice*) He has managed this long only because he kept away in the wilderness. But now he is on his way here.

Jack Why?

Tom To meet the governor. They will seal the peace treaty together.

Jack Do you believe it? Do you think Pontiac could ever make peace with any white man?

Tom He could appear to do it, but he could never mean it.

Jack Exactly what I think.

Tom So he will remain a mortal danger as long as he lives.

Jack And will you allow this opportunity to pass by?

Tom Never. The thing is that no white man can kill Pontiac. That would only mean a total Indian war again.

Jack How could you then kill him?

Tom There is only one possible method. I have thought it over for a long time. (*puts his hand over a bottle, lowers his voice even more*) There are some thirsty Indians who can't afford to pay for their liquor. They would do anything just to be able to drink themselves to death for as long as possible.

Jack You think it's possible to persuade an Indian to murder Pontiac?

Tom It's the only way. All whites would welcome and bless the deed, and only Indians would get the blame.

Jack It's ingenious.

Tom At least it's worth a try. (*catches sight of an Indian by the bar.*) Check that one.

indian (to the bartender) I tell you I need liquor!

bartender No money, no credit, no liquor.

indian But I got to have liquor!

bartender Pay first what you owe. Or else you will be thrown out.
indian But I got to have liquor! Now!
Tom (to Jack) There is our man. (*approaches the bar*) Black Cat, do you want liquor?
indian (turns around) Yes.
Tom You will get as much as you want. I will pay. But in return you have to do something for us.
indian Is it difficult?
Tom No, it's very easy for an old experienced warrior like you. It's just a moment's job.
indian And then I will have as much liquor as I want?
Tom Yes, for the rest of your life.
Jack (to himself) It will not be long.
indian Tell me what I am supposed to do.
Tom Come along here. (*brings the Indian with him to the table. The three men lower their voices so that no one can hear what they say.*)

Scene 2. At the governor's.

governor So then at least the peace is confirmed by oath. I thank you, great Pontiac, for wanting to accept our agreement on behalf of all your Indian tribes.
Pontiac I had no other choice.
governor I hope though that you are serious and sincere and don't carry any anger still in your heart or any second intentions.
Pontiac I only wish to ask a few questions on behalf of my people.
governor Please go ahead.
Pontiac You English devote yourselves to systematical extirpation of my people. (*The governor wants to protest.*) Listen first to what I have to say. My people had the choice between being absorbed by your way of living or to move west to there find themselves in conflict with the Dakota. They wished for neither. Therefore they decided to make war. Unfortunately I could not keep the eighteen tribes together for more than fifteen months, for they allowed themselves to be bribed by the fire water of the English, and at home their wives and children died of the small pox of the English. Against such an enemy not even my bravest warriors could fight. You have won by your liquor and your small pox. What I want to ask is this: How do you think, white man, with all your splendid civilisation, that you could build a lasting and happy society on the grave of a free and natural people who you eliminated by such means?
governor Is that your question?
Pontiac Yes.
Governor (after a pause) My friend, I can only tell you as it is. Only the future can answer it. I can myself no more than apologise for my people's behaviour, well aware of how insufficient such an apology is. One man cannot apologise for a people

of several millions, and most of my people would never even think of trying to make any apology themselves. But here at least is one lonely white man who begs you, Pontiac, to accept his apology. Will you accept it? (*offers his hand*)

Pontiac (accepts it) White father, why are you wise and good palefaces so few? Among thousands I have only met two or three. Why do you tolerate all the others, the rabble and the majority of rotten eggs?

governor That question also can only be answered by the future.

Pontiac (lets go of his hand) I walk from here without hatred and curses in my heart. But I wish to give the white man one word for a farewell. The red man has never cursed or ruined his country. All hatred and curses have come from the white man.

governor Thank you, Pontiac. (*Pontiac leaves.*)

He knows very well that his people now must perish, and still he is not the least bitter or revengeful. The like of patience and stoicism I have never seen. An extraordinary man.

(*sits and returns to his desk work.*)

Scene 3. A dark forest.

You hear Pontiac singing medicinal songs.

Pontiac The Great Spirit rules over all spirits, all humans and animals. His whims are like the wind but far more potent than the hurricane, everything is swept along by the power of his will; but with the same unpredictability as his will causes impossible revolutions on our earth, he could the next day blow from a totally different direction to everything he started. Our Delaware prophet proclaimed the Great Spirit's will when he revealed to us the necessity of our war, and the same Delaware prophet proclaimed with the same conviction that the war should be interrupted and concluded. What the Great Spirit really means by his unfathomable capriciousness no one will ever understand. You can just follow along, like a leaf in the will of an omnipotent thunderstorm. It's still only the Great Spirit himself who wins and who implements his own will, which no one ever will be able to grasp or understand.

indian Are you singing your death song, powerless chief?

Pontiac Who are you?

indian They call me the Black Cat.

Pontiac You talk with the tongue of a white man. You are drunk.

indian I know.

Pontiac Are you hired to murder me?

indianen Yes. The white man dares not take the risk of letting you live on.

Pontiac So the white man murders me after I made eternal peace with him.

indianen That's the white man's law.

Pontiac The white man defends his crimes by laws that absolve him from having to think by himself.

indianen It's the white man's law.

Pontiac The white man's law is his established folly. It will be his own destruction. But by hurting others he will only harm himself. A French priest taught me early, that he will suffer more and longer who causes harm than his victims. It hurts more at length to do harm than to suffer harm.

indian Now you are speaking with the white man's tongue.

Pontiac I am just a man. Even among the whites there were a few wise religious exceptions.

indian I am not one of them.

Pontiac No, you are like most whites under the influence of the fire water.

indian That's the white man's power which no Indian can resist.

Pontiac The dependence on means of intoxication is the white man's curse, misfortune and his own destruction. Unfortunately he has managed to drag our people with him into his own death trap.

indian But his destruction is enjoyable.

Pontiac Is it then enjoyable to be a fool? Where do you find this joy?

indian In the forgetfulness of yourself and all sorrows, in the insensibility and freedom from responsibility.

Pontiac In other words: in suicide. Then I must prefer life with all its pains, its wholesomeness, clarity of mind and freedom in the home of eternal nature, where you find the spirit. But death is only the contrary to the spirit, and you advocate death, the white man's adoration of and inclination to suicide. For me that is a disease and no sacred mental madness. Such a mental illness is not even worth any respect.

indian You can't talk me away, Pontiac, or the white man and his history. He is here to stay, and we must tolerate him and obey him unto death, for we have no choice.

Pontiac Yes, we have a choice. It's easy to say no. But like the French you have allowed yourself to be bought and not by money but by destructive intoxication means. That is even lower than the filth of a dirty animal.

indian It's our only chance of survival, for we can't survive any longer as Indians.

Pontiac Can you then survive as slaves and beasts in the humiliation of the white man's service? Is it not just a long interminable horrible death, to get stuck in a swamp and drown in unendurable slowness? Is there any worse destiny than to relinquish your freedom for dishonour unto death?

indian We can't get away from it anyway. Then it's just to forget all about life. You could not become one of us, Pontiac, you couldn't even follow us into the hell of compromising with the white man's law with fire water as your only comfort. You are lost, for the white man has so decided. He can't tolerate exceptions from the life service to liquor and capitalism.

Pontiac I am free although I die. But you are dead although you live.

indian Prove it! (*raises suddenly his tomahawk and strikes it home in Pontiac's head.*)

So die then, Pontiac, in freedom, if you can. But you can never convince me with the same power as the liquor, which at least is real and has some effect!

(Pontiac falls. The Indian strikes again several times to make sure. When Pontiac is dead he sneaks away from the place.)

(The audience has at most been able to see vague silhouettes.)

Scene 4. Bouquet severely ill in fever somewhere in the south.
He is lying in his camp bed in only his shirt, sweating badly.)

Bouquet (lamenting) I only asked for permission to get away from the vicious Indian war, not to be transferred to the murderous swamps of the south! *(enter an adjutant.)*

You look upset. What news?

adjutant Colonel, New England is revolting against London! It was because of that tax on tea in Boston.

Bouquet Tell me!

adjutant One night a band of Indians stole out to the ships and boarded them. They threw all the tea over board.

Bouquet Was it real Indians?

adjutant No, they were American rebels. They had dressed up as Indians.

Bouquet (to himself) Now it begins. – You may leave. *(the adjutant leaves.)*

Now it begins. Now the wild Americans start throwing out all faithful Englishmen from America. They want to relieve England of a heavy responsibility and take it over themselves without realizing what it means. We succeeded in overcoming and pacifying the Indians only to then be forced to leave their land over to the plunderers and murderers of the Indians. You brave new people, what reward will I now get for succeeding in subjecting the Indians to your future, I who didn't even receive any other reward by the English but for this miserable sentry-duty in the feverish south? I will probably die here, forgotten by all America as the Swiss outsider I am. Well, at least the British crown will now be free from all further involvement in the destiny of the Indians. May the American republicans assume that responsibility themselves as long as they can bear with it. I have reasons to be content, for I have got my final reward: American death fever in the south for undesirable heroes who didn't like their work as heroes. *(writhing and sweating in his fever.)*

Scene 5. An Indian camp

Soldier Here it is, Sir.

officer How could you find them?

Soldier It took years, Sir.

officer It doesn't matter now that we have found them. The point is that they live and are well.

Soldier I must warn you, Sir.

officer Against what?

Soldier Your wife and daughter are no longer quite the same.

officer I can well believe that after so many years in Indian captivity.

Soldier Sir, I have warned you. (*leaves*)

officer Why did he walk away? Well, it doesn't matter. I am expected and have nothing to fear. These Indians are peaceful. It's just for me to enter the camp and collect them. (*enters the camp.*)

an Indian White man, you have come to collect your wife and daughter. You are welcome.

officer Thank you. Where are they?

Indian Here in the tent. (*opens the tent. A white lady and girl come out. They are dressed as Indians.*)

officer Mary! (*hurries forth, embracing his wife.*) After so many years! (*cries in her bosom.*) Mary! Don't you recognize me?

Wife Yes. You were my husband.

officer And that I am still! I am alive and you are alive, and our daughter is alive! This is the miracle! After so many years' divorce and after such a long imprisonment on your part! How terrible your lives must have been!

Wife The Indians have always treated us well with respect.

officer So much the better! (*turns to his daughter*) Susannah! Don't you recognize your own daddy? (*embraces her.*)

wife She doesn't speak English.

officer Haven't you taught her English?

Wife She didn't want to speak it. She only speaks the language of the Indians.

officer Wife, what do you mean? She is our own daughter!

Wife John, why have you come here?

officer To get you back, of course! You must be longing to get home after three years of captivity among wild Indians?

Wife John, our home is here among the Indians.

officer Mary, what are you saying?

Wife Our daughter knows no people but the Indians. She knows no other life than the Indian life. Look yourself how cold and uncertain she is in facing you.

officer Have you then been so barbarized that you no longer are civilized?

Wife John, it would have been better if you never had found us.

officer What is it you are saying?

Wife The truth. We don't know you any more, and our daughter does not want to have anything to do with the white man's world. She wants to be free, and I understand her.

officer Free? Among these savages?

Wife They are our brothers and sisters. We have no other family. Like them we live only for our freedom with nature, with the wind, with the free wilderness and the free spirit.

officer Mary, I don't recognize you.

Wife John, you have to make a choice. We will never return with you to the white man's world. Either you stay with us and become one of us, or you walk back alone and leave us alone.

officer (stiffly rising, completely paralysed, understands nothing and finds no words. After a while:) Is there no hope?

Wife We have made up our minds.

officer I will come back. When I come back you must have changed your minds.

Wife When you come back our camp has moved to a different location out of reach of the white man.

officer Nothing is out of reach for the white man and his civilisation.

Wife Yes, John. You will never get back your wife and daughter.

officer But why?

Wife Ask Pontiac. Ask the Indian who killed him for rum and who was instantly executed. Ask all those Indians who died in the Indian civil war after his death. Ask the tribe that was eradicated for the sake of Pontiac's murderer, because the white man told the Indians who had done it. Take the bearings of the white man's evil if you can, John. No white man can do that. In the same way you will never again be able to find your wife and daughter.

(leaves him with her daughter.)

officer (remaining standing alone with his head bent)

Indian Is the white man satisfied?

officer (looking stupidly at him) What do you mean?

Indian Has he found his wife and daughter?

officer (absent) No, my friend. Not yet. I was wrong. Some other time.

(walks away dejected. The Indian looks after him and then disappears back into the camp.)

The End.

(1992, translated into English in June 2021)