



## *UnDamming History* Final Script for Online

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** Historical dialogue depicted in this play is either direct quotes or slightly edited quotes from actual correspondences, government reports and newspaper articles. A couple composite characters are used for the sake of brevity.

**LIGHTING** – Illuminated most of the stage, emphasize on downstage right and center and all of the center stage.

*Stage directions: Light shines at the left front of the stage to reveal Harmon Good who is talking with a reporter for the Shasta Courier. They are seated downstage center/right.*

**Reporter:** Harmon 'Hi' Good, renowned Indian killer in the flesh. Many of our readers at the Shasta Courier are awed by your diligence, protecting the citizens against the depredations of the red devils. They say your cry is as familiar to the Indians as their own war whoop.[1]

But during his recent visit to our country, the scientist William Brewer reported he witnessed you and the volunteers quote "indiscriminately killing all the wild Indians, they could find, male or female." [2]

**Harmon Good:** Whoa . . .I'm just a God-fearing man, from Ohio originally. I want to tend my ranch in peace, but the Diggers frequently steal my corn and raid other law-abiding citizens. I can't stand idle . . . I've come to learn the only good digger is one that's dangling at the end of a rope or has an ounce of lead in him.[3]

**Reporter:** Many *do* say that annihilation is the unfortunate fate of the redskins. Does this notion seem true? What tales can you report from the front of the Indian Wars?[4]

*LIGHTING directions: Light shines on the rest of the stage illuminating an Ajumawi village where 8-10 villagers are sleeping soundly.*

**Harmon Good:** Our last battle was back in November of this good year of 1862.[5] We were campaigning in the region of the Pit River where the Indians are an especially pugnacious group of savages. We tried to burn their wigwams and stores for the winter to drive them out of the country for good.[6] Yet they're strikingly stubborn in their desire to remain in these lands.

*Stage directions: The vigilantes appear from downstage right and downstage left. They creep slowly to the village with their rifles ready to fire.*

**Harmon Good:** When we came to the village, we laid in wait till dawn, when the diggers are most vulnerable.[7]

**Reporter:** That Yale professor says you and other militia men are driving the Indians away from their hunting grounds to make way for ranches. Then when the Indians dare steal cattle to fend off starvation, you respond with a hailstorm of bloodshed. I saw today eight scalps dangling from your horse's saddle. And there are rumors of more than 40 red scalps festooned from a poplar outside your home.[8]

**Harmon Good:** Whenever my men have captured squaws and their children, we made sure they found good and proper Saxon homes. The treacherous savages have brought death and brutality to many of our good citizens. When history is written, I will be remembered for protecting the innocent against these depredations.[9]

*Stage directions: The vigilantes creep slightly closer to the village.*

**Harmon Good:** And as our first Governor Burnett said: "'A war of extermination will continue to be waged . . . until the Indian race becomes extinct.'" [10]

*Stage directions: The vigilantes fire. The Ajumawi women scream.*

*MULTIMEDIA DIRECTIONS: The sounds of gunfire ring out.*

*The stage goes dark.*

*Vigilantes exit stage left.*

## 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Scene 1

*LIGHTING: Downstage left is illuminated. The rest of the stage should be darkened as much as possible.*

*Stage directions: Ms. Rodriguez, Billie, Maddie, 4<sup>th</sup> grade extra and Awi enter from stage left and sit in their desks.*

*Awi is sitting at her desk staring at a construction paper headdress in her hands. The other students are either wearing paper pilgrim hats or a construction paper headdresses. In the background, we can hear stereotypical Indian drum beats.*

*The non-Native students, Billy and Maddie, are dancing around a tipi doing a fake Indian dance and mimicking a Hollywood war whoop, patting their hands to their mouths.*

**Ms. Rodriguez:** Good job, you guys, good job! Why don't you little Indians and Pilgrims have a seat? *(looks at Awi)* Ooow-ee, why aren't you joining in our re-enactment of the Thanksgiving feast? All the students usually love this time of year.

**Awi:** *(confused)* It's Awi. . . this isn't how we dance. I don't know what this is.

**Ms. Rodriguez:** Well, not all Native Americans dance the same. Don't take this so seriously. This is supposed to be a fun activity to honor the friendship between the Pilgrims and the Indians.

**Awi:** *(holds up the cardboard headdresses)* Our dancers have flicker feather bands, and our headdresses are made of woodpecker and eagle feathers. These are ugly . . . *(tosses it to the floor).*

**Ms. Rodriguez:** Listen, Ooow-ee, how are you going to get by in this world if you get so easily offended all the time?

The pilgrims had to escape religious persecution in England, and they sailed for 65 days across the ocean before landing on Plymouth Rock. With a little help from the Indians they learned to hunt and grow corn, and . . . .

**Awi:** The Wampanoag. The Wampanoag was the tribe that helped them.

**Ms. Rodriguez:** Right. The Pilgrims were totally ignorant about America, but with hard work they created a prosperous colony with religious freedom. They helped bring civilization to the . . . the Wampanoags in the New World.

**Awi:** But it wasn't *new*. Natives were already here in . . . Peleen Bos. . . that's 'our place' in Wintu. I learned that at camp.

**Ms. Rodriguez (exasperated):** You know the Wampanoags walked over two days to feast with the Pilgrims, and even helped them build shelters.

Come on, Ooow-ee. Don't you want to follow the spirit of the Wampanoags and be cooperative and thankful?

*Stage directions: Awi looks at the other kids, and then at her teacher. After a few awkward moments, the stage goes dark.*

*Billie, Maddie, Ms. Rodriguez, and 4<sup>th</sup> grade extra exit stage left. Awi crosses the stage to her "home".*

## HOME SCENE 1

*Aunt Louise and Grandpa Jack enter from stage right. A few moments later, the other side of the stage is illuminated revealing that Awi is now at home with her grandfather Jack and Aunt Louise. Aunt Louise is mending Awi's sash for her graduation.*

**LIGHTING:** Downstage right and center should be illuminated. Rest of the stage is as dark as possible.

**Awi:** Grandpa, it was so bad. I hate school, and I'm never going back.

**Jack:** Oh, let me guess. Did another classmate who knows you're Native tell you her grandma was a Cherokee princess?[11]

**Awi:** (laughing) You're crazy, grandpa. Hey, what are you doing Aunt Louise?

**Louise:** Well, my perfect little brilliant niece. I'm mending this sash that your great grandmother made. It has some of our Iss-Awi baskets designs. So many of our people drop out of high school. We want everyone to know how proud we are of you when you walk across the stage.

**Awi:** Ohh Sak Sak suwi. Thank you, Auntie. . . anyway, the teacher turned the class into a hipster fest with all these fake headdresses. They did a hecka stupid Thanksgiving dance, and Ms. Rodriguez said my name wrong again.

**Jack** (mimicking the teacher): Oooowww-eee! I've got an ooowww-eee!

**Awi:** She said I should be thankful, but the whole thing was annoying.

**Louise:** You have a lot to be thankful for. You're learning your language. You go to ceremony and learn our songs. For a long time, our people could have been punished for those things.

**Jack:** But you shouldn't have to participate in that nonsense. The fact the schools still do these Thanksgiving feasts just shows how little they know about Natives.

**Awi:** Billy asked if I lived in a teepee and if I was related to Pocahontas. Colors of the wind, I'd like to show 'em the colors of my fist!

**Louise:** Oh, Pocahontas . . . she was kidnapped from her tribe and forced to marry John Rolfe. But Disney turned her story into a romance! It's sick! [12]

**Jack:** A lot of the stories you'll hear in school about Natives aren't true. Like the books that call us primitive 'hunter-gatherers' or describe us in past tense like we don't exist any more. Remember when you hear people talking about things like sustainability and restorative justice they're talking about how Indian people think. Our ways are ancient, but they're a big part of the future.[13]

**Awi:** Ms. Rodriguez tried to tell me the pilgrims brought us civilization.

**Louise:** The truth is . . . we've had civilization all along.

*Stage directions: The stage goes dark.*

*Louise and Jack exit stage right. Awi exits stage left.*

## Pre-Contact Scene

*LIGHTING: Whole stage is generally lit. Emphasis should be on center stage and downstage center.*

*Multimedia: Play pre-recorded video of elders reading the text and sounds of animals, rushing rivers, etc.*

*Stage directions: The Villagers are re-enacting pre-contact life activities: grinding acorns, working on regalia, etc; fishermen are also spearing salmon. There are also animals on sticks that are held up from below the stage to portray the different animal relatives.*

*Audio directions: There are sound effects of rushing rivers, howling wolves, salmon jumping, wolf howls, deer and elk hooves scampering.*

### **Pre-contact narration read by elders:**

**Jessica:** In the beginning, our relatives – deer, eagle, salmon, wolf, coyote, grizzly bear, even the little flyers – were here before us. We were the last to be created.

We have maintained our responsibilities to the lands, to the waters and each other. We did not seek to destroy our relatives, but looked to them for teachings and blessings. The wolves instructed us about family ties, loyalty and love. The beavers taught us about building homes and making people welcome.

The rivers ran cold and free and ran black with salmon when they returned to spawn.[14] As the salmon nourished us, the forests and the waters, we danced and sang for them.

The forest fires were tamed.[15] We allowed the trees to grow old and used prescribed burns to create grazing grounds for the deer and elk.[16] The burns drove down pests and helped create bounties of acorns,[17] which we made into soup.

**James:** We were the first scientists, using the knowledge of our land and ecosystems, that had been passed down from generation to generation, to keep our world in balance.

More than 100 indigenous languages were spoken in California before contact[18], and our languages are interwoven with our philosophies and beliefs that English neglects.[19]

Before colonization, we had nine bands of Wintu, the Yana people as well as nine bands of Achumawi and two Atsugwei bands.

We would defend our territories, but we were peaceful people. When the first white people arrived some thought they were the Yapaitu, ancient people who lived in our world before us[20]. Many of us welcomed them and tried to help at first. . .[21]

**Caleen:** We lived in houses made of cedar bark, and every village had a headman and council of elders. Prior to colonization, women and men had different and important roles, but they weren't rigid. Women's power to create life is known as a vital force in our societies.[22]

Our lands, rivers and sacred places still lift us in times of need . . . but deforestation, the dams[23], the mining[24] and the ranching destroyed places where we trained our healers and where people went for blessings in times of despair.

Our histories, like our rivers, have been choked by dams. Behind the dams, our rivers grow hot. Mercury[25][26] and toxins roil and poison algae blooms. Just like our waters, our history is sick. The dams on our history bring the poisons of ignorance and stereotypes; they hold back the currents of truth and justice that will heal us all.

Today, we continue the journey to know our true selves, where we have been and how we will move forward, unified and in peace. Today, the history of Shasta County shall be undammed!

*Stage directions:* **Lights go dark.**

## Fourth Grade Scene 2

**LIGHTING:** *Downstage left and center is illuminated. Rest of the stage is darkened.*

*Stage directions:* Ms. Rodriguez, Awi, Billy, Maddie, and Jesse enter from stage left. The lights illuminate the classroom side of the stage. The teacher is holding a Mission model. Awi is sitting next to her cousin Jesse.

**Ms. Rodriguez:** This project is vital to understanding how Father Serra started the mission system that stretched from San Diego to Sonoma. He and the padres navigated rugged terrain

with limited supplies. Many of the men grew tired and sick, but they called on their faith to keep them going.

The padres converted many hostile Indians into faithful Christian neophytes, and they taught them how to mend clothes, how to read and write, how to farm. The padres built all of this from wilderness.

**Jesse (snarky):** My dad says the missions were horrible and I should be allowed to set my mission on fire. If they had built missions in Wintu land, we would have burned them down!

**Billy:** Man, don't you people have bigger problems to worry about? Like all the drugging and drinking you guys do.

**Jesse (looking at Billy):** Whoever thought of this project must have been on drugs!

**Maddie:** That's rude Billy! The news said Native Americans are mad they made Father Serra a saint. I want to learn about that.

**Ms. Rodriguez:** Settle down everyone! Now Jesse, you and Awi will have to do the Mission assignment just like everyone else. There's no special treatment in this class.

Billy, by the same token, I'm pretty sure drinking and drug problems aren't relegated to any one group here in Shasta County, unfortunately.

**Awi (Flipping through textbook):** They don't even say anything about Natives in this book. Just that some of them died from disease. There are barely any pictures of the Natives unless they're wearing Mission clothes.

**Jesse:** This writer thinks the Natives liked being slaves.

**Ms. Rodriguez: (exasperated)** You guys, our schedule won't allow for these disruptions. Especially with these new common core standards. Jesse, one more interruption, and I'm sending you to the principal's office.

Maybe they made some mistakes, but what if the padres had never come to California? Ooweee, don't you think the Native Americans would have had a harder time adjusting to the modern world?

**Awi (confused):** Well, yeah I guess. I dunno.

**Billy:** You're so modern, Ooow-ee!! Especially when you're doing Indian witchcraft in the woods!

**Jesse:** Shut up, noob!

**Maddie:** Don't be a jerk, Billy. I've seen pictures of some of the ceremonies in the paper. I wish I could go to one.

**Ms. Rodriguez:** Quiet down. Now Awi, if you don't have any complaints, we can start our research. Jesse, I want you go to the principal's office. Now! Billy, you have detention after school.

**Jesse:** (gets up from desk) Aww, man! This is just like bad Indians getting whipped at the Missions![27]

**Ms. Rodriguez:** Jesse!

*Stage directions: The stage goes black. Jesse, Maddie, Billy and Ms. Rodriguez exit stage left. Awi moves across the stage to her home.*

**Stage management directions: Move the table into the center of the stage for the treaty signing.**

## Home Scene 2

*Stage directions: After a few moments, the left side of the stage, Awi's home is illuminated. She is upset, but her Auntie Caleen is comforting her. Aunt Jessica is also there.*

**LIGHTING: Downstage right and center is illuminated. Rest of the stage is darkened.**

**Awi:** Ugh. You won't believe what happened in school today. Billy called me a witch, and Ms. Rodriguez said we wouldn't be able to read without the Missions.

**Caleen:** (Hugging her and laughing) So just another day at school for a Native. A lot of the teachers don't know much about the local tribes. When we were trying to get the California Indian curriculum passed, the teachers voted it down because they said it would scar the other kids.[28] Like what they're teaching doesn't traumatize us.

**Awi:** Everyone stares at me and Jesse. They're waiting to see what we're going to say. But even though I know the Mission project is dumb, I can't explain it.

**Jessica:** The Missions didn't make it up here this far. The missions should be portrayed like slave plantations. They made the Indians work long and hard, and they tortured the Natives for breaking tiny rules. The death rates were horrendous. More than 80 percent.[29]

**Caleen:** What's disturbing though is the Indians still had more rights under Spanish law than when California became a state.

**Awi:** Things got worse when California joined the United States?

**Caleen:** We couldn't own property or vote. We couldn't even move around without a "pass" that proved we worked for a white man.[30]

**LIGHTING:** Downstage left is also illuminated. If possible, darken downstage right.

*Stage directions: The constitutional convention delegates enter from stage left. The lights darken. The middle front of the stage is illuminated to reveal the scene of the constitutional convention, featuring three representatives. They are sitting and arguing.*

**Narrator(off-stage):** California Constitutional Convention. Sept. 1, 1849. Colton Hall. Monterey, Calif.

**Charles T. Bott:** It's vital we articulate our stance on suffrage of our new state. The Treaty of Hidalgo stipulates that all Mexican citizens in California are eligible to be U.S. citizens. But representing the Monterey district, I am perfectly willing to exclude the African and Indian races.

**Lanford Hastings:** To enfranchise savages who are not enmeshed in our economy is a disconcerting prospect. There are gentlemen who are popular among the ignorant Indians, who could march thousands of barbarous bucks to the polls.[31] Barring Indians is the only way to maintain a proper democracy.

**Louis Dent:** But other states like Wisconsin have enfranchised Indians. The California Indians were the original proprietors of the soil from which we derived many blessings. Haven't the Indians already been deprived enough of their original independence?[32]

**Hastings (angry):** There is not a rancho where you could not find 100 bucks the owner could run to the polls and carry any measure he might desire.[33]

**Dent:** You're speaking in hysterics.

**Hastings:** Do any of us really want to place himself on the same level as the Digger or the Negro?

**LIGHTING:** Lights go dark on downstage left. Lights brighten on downstage right and center.

*Stage directions: Dent, Hastings and Bott exit stage left. The lights go black on the convention in the center of the stage. The lights illuminate the left side of the stage, where Aunt Caleen and Jessica Jim are talking to Awi.*

**Jessica:** They decided against giving Indians the right to vote and citizenship by a single vote. [34]We wouldn't become citizens until 1924.

**Awi:** Really? Wow.

**Caleen:** At first they said we Winnemems and other Wintus were too Indian to be U.S. citizens. Now they're saying we're not Indian enough to be federally recognized as Indians. . . Maybe it's not legal any more to kill Indians, but the laws still don't do much to prevent the destruction of our ways of life.

That's why it's so hard for us to protect our ceremonies that could be destroyed by raising Shasta Dam. And that's why the Pit River tribe has had to fight for twenty years to stop [the fracking at Medicine Lake](#). [35]

**Jessica:** When the museums and schools act like we're all gone it makes people think they don't have to worry how we're going to keep our cultures going.

**Awi:** I never understood why the Pit River tribe is recognized and the Wintu aren't.

**Jessica:** It really began with the unratified treaties. In 1851 the Yana and Wintu leaders signed the Cottonwood Treaty, and it would have provided a 35-square-mile reservation, including the east side of Redding. [36]

**Awi (looking to Caleen):** So Waterworks park could have been part of your rez?!

**Caleen (laughs):** Well, I don't know about that, but federal recognition is mostly based on what tribes had land and reservations. When they took all the Wintus off the list in the mid-80s, it was easier because we had no land. [37]

**Jessica:** But those treaties were still a bad deal for tribes [38]. We had to move and give up a lot of land and resources for pennies on the dollar. But having the reservation might have prevented some of the horrors that followed.

**Awi:** How come the treaty wasn't passed?

**LIGHTING:** Downstage left, center and left center are also illuminated. If possible, darken downstage right.

*Stage directions: The lights go dark at Awi's home on the left of the stage, and they illuminate the center of the stage, which is now Pierson Reading's ranch. Present are Reading, a Shasta Courier reporter, Dr. Oliver Wozencraft, and three Wintu and Yana leaders who enter from stage left.*

**Narrator:** "August 16, 1851. Pierson Reading's Ranch near modern day Cottonwood."

**Wozencraft:** Major Reading it is very kind of you to have offered your estate for this treaty signing. How did you come to own a parcel of such lovely country?

**Reading:** It's my pleasure Dr. Wozencraft. I arrived here seven years ago, after much toil and travel, and losing many horses to the Pit River Indians. I became a Mexican citizen and accepted a Mexican land grant of 26,000 acres.[39]

*(Looks over at the Wintu and Yana, who are talking amongst themselves, then leans in closer to Wozencraft.)*

I noticed the Indians here are quite different from the prairies, being mild and inoffensive in manner. I was confident when I settled here I could make them useful subjects[40] and they may soon work as industriously for me as the negroes in the South do for the cotton growers.[41]

**Wozencraft:** Strange you say that. I'm a physician from the East and new to these Indian affairs. But I have found the Diggers especially troublesome.

I once traveled up the McCloud Fork of the Pitt River and was fortunate to capture a few. But I was very disappointed they escaped before an interpreter could be obtained. I only continued these efforts because these Indians cannot be subdued by warfare; the rugged terrain forbids it.[42]

**Shasta Courier reporter:** Our readers, who live in the vicinity of all these Indian troubles, are skeptical. To place upon our most fertile soil the most degraded race of aboriginals of Northern America is planting the seeds of disaster. . . it would be far safer for the Saxons if all wild Indians were removed beyond the limits of the state. [43]

**Wozencraft:** Troublesome though they may be, the Indians I have spoken to say if a cattle is stolen they face violence as if they had murdered 20 men. They will consent to the reservation, but only because they seek protection from the whites.

**Reading:** (nodding) I employ a great many friendly Indians here. This season, we are harvesting an unusually large crop of watermelon, and I am happy to offer a grand feast of my melons to the local Diggers to establish harmony among the races.[44]

**LIGHTING:** Lights brighten on downstage right and center also.

*Stage directions: The Indian Leaders are discussing things fervently with strong gesticulations and hand movements.*

**Caleen:** Our people were starting to be killed, our women and children were being taken as slaves [45]. . . They probably barely understood how the U.S. government worked, but thought the treaty would help protect them.

**Jessica:** Wozencraft and the other Indian agents would only negotiate with other Indian men because that was their way. Who knows what Wozencraft's interpreters told them what it actually said. They had to sign with an X because they didn't know English.[46]

*Stage directions: Reading beckons the Indian leaders to the table and instructs them where to sign the treaty. The Indian leaders slowly and with trepidation mark the treaty with their X's. Wozencraft shakes their hands, and the Indian leaders inspect him with trepidation. The Shasta Courier report takes notes from a few feet away, shaking his head.*

*Reading clasps each Indian leader on the back and hands them a slice of watermelon. The Indian leaders walk somberly to the front of the stage and stare out into the distance towards the audience. Behind them, we see Reading, Wozencraft shaking hands effusively and talking quite excitedly.*

**Caleen:** The California leaders didn't want to give up the land or the free Indian labor. When the settlers came, they wanted to clear all the forests and blast away all the mountains looking for gold.

So the U.S. senators unanimously rejected all of the treaties and locked them away for 53 years.

**Jessica:** Leaders from Pitt River country never signed the treaties. We didn't have any settlement until the 1950s when the Indian Claims Commission recognized our rights to 100-miles-square of ancestral homelands. But the BIA sold us out and got away with paying us 47 cents per acre instead of giving us that land. Now we only have about 200 acres in federal trust in Shasta County.[47]

**Caleen:** After the treaties were unratified, they also said we weren't worthy of government protection. That was when the mass murder of your family or your village could happen as easily as the next breath.[48]

It was such an awful time. When you're older, you'll be ready to learn just how bloody and horrible it was.

*Stage directions: The lights go dark.*

*Caleen, Awi and Jessica exit stage right. Wozencraft and Reading and the treaty signers exit stage left.*

**Stage management directions: Remove the chairs from the front center of the stage.**

## HIGH SCHOOL SCENE 1

**LIGHTING:** Lights illuminate downstage left and downstage center.

*Stage directions: Ms. Crook Johnson, Billy, Maddie, Awi and Jesse enter from the stage left. The right side of the stage is illuminated for another classroom scene. Ms. Crook- Johnson is doing a lesson about the gold rush with the high school students.*

**Ms. Crook-Johnson:** So now open your AP US history books to Chapter 14: The Territorial Expansion of the United States. As we talked about, our expansion West was driven by the belief in Manifest Destiny, that it was God's will that we spread Democracy and American values across the land.[49]

**Jesse:** Expansion? More like invasion of our homes!

**Ms. Crook-Johnson** (voice slightly raised): Jesse! In 1848, a carpenter named James Marshall discovered gold in the riverbeds of the Sacramento Valley. Gold fever quickly spread, and our state's population would boom in the next few years. People used their new riches to start businesses and build cities. And in their quest for gold, the prospectors clashed with American Indians and set the stage for long-lasting tensions.

So your assignment, and this is always popular, is a creative writing one. Instead of a regular essay, you'll have to write your own choose-your-own adventure story that is historically accurate, but using fictional characters you create.

**Jesse:** Is there a choose-your-own adventure where you get to be an Indian who kicks the invaders out of his land?

**Ms. Crook-Johnson:** Jesse, didn't we just chat with your parents about disrupting our lesson plans? I think you'll see there were atrocities on both sides. But what's fun about this assignment is you can choose any historical character you like. You're welcome to imagine what it was like to be a Native American during this time.

**Awi:** So you're saying it was like a war? The stories I've heard from elders don't really describe it that way.

**Ms. Crook-Johnson:** Yes, Awi. There were Indian wars here in Shasta County because the Native Americans and settlers couldn't forge a peace. There were attacks on villages that some people call massacres, but it was usually because the Native Americans would steal from the settlers and sometimes they'd kill white women or children for revenge.

I'm actually the great great great great granddaughter of Lt. Crook, who was one of the military heroes of the Indian wars here in Pit River country.

**Awi:** Hmm. . . I have heard a few stories how Natives might have attacked settlers to try to get their kids or women back. I also heard stories of settlers targeting our women's ceremonies.[50]

**Jesse:** Oh great, we get to be taught by the relative of the guy who murdered our people. I read that Indians couldn't testify at court back then[51]. So settlers would frame Indians for murders of white people.

**Ms. Crook-Johnson:** Jesse, don't you think it's time we let the past be the past? I don't hold any grudges. Lt. Crook was very brave, and he was just fighting to protect his countrymen. He actually spoke very highly of the courage of the Native American warriors he fought. But they *all* were men of their times, and the times were very violent.

And if you speak out of turn one more time, I'm sending you to the principal's office. Aren't you one citation away from a suspension?[52]

**Jesse:** Yeah, cause Principal Knouse wouldn't give me excused absences for ceremony.[53] But Billy got credit for writing a report about his family's dumb trip to Disneyland.

**Billy:** Walt Disney created a billion-dollar business and actually contributed something to society. What's the point of ceremony? The long hair and feather skirts make you look like a bunch of girls!

**Jesse** (leaps at the other boy and grabs him): Shut up, you racist noob!

**Awi:** (leaps into the middle of the fracas and tries to pull them apart) Stop it Jesse!

**Ms. Crook-Johnson** (breaks up the fight): Jesse and Awi to the principal's office . . . RIGHT NOW! Billy, you're staying here for detention!

*Stage directions:* **Lights go dark.**

**Stage management directions:** *Remove classroom desks from stage.*

*Stage directions:* Ms. Crook Johnson, Jesse, Billy and Maddie exit stage left. Awi crosses the stage to her home. Kenwa enters stage right. A few moments pass and the lights on the left side of the stage illuminate to reveal Awi's home.

**LIGHTING:** Lights illuminate on downstage right and center.

**Kenwani:** What's up niece? It's not like you to get into fights. I thought I'd told you not to act like I did when I was in school.

**Awi:** Oh geez, I was trying to break it up, and as usual, the Native kids get in trouble for something they didn't even start. Jesse was telling the teacher how our Gold Rush book is inaccurate[54] and then one of the boys called him gay. And you know how Jesse is . . .

**Kenwani:** My teachers growing up would always tell the Native boys to cut their hair. They didn't know the history of the boarding schools. At those schools, they'd cut the hair of our

children and that really violated their spirits. They separated children from their families, and beat us for speaking our language or practicing our culture. The idea was to “kill the Indian, save the man.”[55]

**Awi:** I can't imagine growing up without my family or so far from our homelands. That would hurt my soul so bad. I've heard that phrase “kill the Indian, save the man,” but what does it actually mean?

**Kenwani:** Government officials decided it would be cheaper to educate and assimilate the Natives instead of trying to kill us off.[56]

That was after the extermination campaign in California that was paid by state and federal funds. In old Shasta City, the vigilantes would get \$5 a head and \$1.25 for our scalps. They say there were 300,000 Indians in California before the Gold Rush and only 30,000 by 1860.[57]

**Awi:** Oh, so that's what Aunt Caleen means when she says Indian killing used to be a good way to make a living.

**Kenwani:** Yeah, one of the worst massacres I learned about was the one at Kaibai Creek in 1854.

Kaibai was a big hunting village on the McCloud River where the Winnemem Wintu hold the Balas Chonas today for young women. At the time, many of the men and boys had gone on a hunting expedition.

**LIGHTING:** Lights also illuminated right center, center and left center stage.

*Stage directions: The light illuminates the center of the stage revealing the bark house and traditional village scene. There are women and children sleeping on the ground around the house. The militia members are stalking towards them in the dark.*

**Kenwani:** Apparently, the militias claimed some Chinese railroad workers had been killed on the Sacramento River. And the white militants were seeking revenge. They just went up the McCloud River even though the Winnemem had nothing to do with it. It didn't matter whose head they had; they would get paid.

*Stage directions: The villagers are rustled awake as the militia vigilantes attack.*

**Multimedia directions:** gunfire shots

*Stage directions: One of the vigilantes captures a teenage woman and takes her prisoner. Others shoot their rifles, and some of the villagers fall. One young one runs off and escapes. One vigilante goes to the one fallen villager male, and cuts off his scalp with a knife.*

**Kenwani:** They hunted them all day long. My friend's great great great aunt who survived by hiding in the river said 200 Wintus were killed.[58]

There was a also state law called the Act for the Government and Protection of Indians[59] . . . this allowed the settlers to sell Indian orphans and adults to the highest bidder.

*Stage directions: The center of the stage darkens, and the right front of the stage is illuminated to reveal Wozencraft who meets with the vigilante who has the young woman.*

**Kenwani:** If they didn't kill the women in the massacres, the militia men sold the women and young girls into slavery or made them concubines. The 49ers assumed we were promiscuous because of our traditional dress.[60] That objectification still goes on with all the sexy squaw outfits you see during Halloween.

*Stage directions: Wozencraft displays a fistful of money to the soldier, who inspects it. He hands over the young woman to Wozencraft, and greedily counts the money.[61]*

**Kenwani:** Despite the massacres, despite the slavery, despite the dams and the boarding schools, we survived and our long hair is a sacred way to honor our ancestors' strength.

*Stage directions: **The lights go dark.***

**Stage management directions: Put classroom desks back on the stage.**

## HIGH SCHOOL REPORT SCENE

**LIGHTING: Lights brighten on downstage left and downstage center.**

*Stage directions: The high school classroom with two non-native students and Awi. Jesse is gone. The teacher is at the front. The right side of the stage with the school scene is illuminated and the rest of the stage is darkened.*

**Ms. Crook-Johnson:** I thought y'all did an outstanding job with the Choose-Your-Own adventure assignments, but these Living History reports have been even better. This is our last day of presentations about California historical events that still affect us today. First up is Awi.

*Stage directions: Awi walks to the front of the class and clears her throat. Ms. Crook-Johnson takes a seat among the students.*

**Awi:** Lt. George Crook was described by William Tecumseh Sherman as the greatest Indian fighter since Andrew Jackson. He actually thought more highly of Indians than other soldiers, and he said Natives "fought . . . in order to stem American aggression, lust, or greed." [62]

But he followed orders. Because settlers complained we were fighting back, he led a campaign of extermination in Pit River territory during the winter of 1856 and 1857. Usually attacking at

dawn, he laid waste to village after village.[63] Even though we often received payments in beef, if he found cattle in our villages, he'd assume we were thieves and kill us.

During the summer, Crook and his men were stalking a village of Pit River Indians. Looking for information, he captured an Ajumawi woman and her infant at gunpoint. That night, Crook and his men were preparing a surprise attack on the village, but the Natives had moved their settlement on the opposite side of the river. When the men were distracted looking for a place to cross, the woman set down her infant. Without a word, she slipped under the water and out of sight. A few moments later, the fires at the village went dark. The villagers fled. The Pit River woman had sacrificed her child in order to save her people.[64]

I will never know the Pit River woman's name, nor her child's. But she haunts my thoughts and my dreams. Did one of my great-great grandparents live in that village? Would I exist without her sacrifice? How can we have museums, mountains, towns and national parks named after murderers, and I can't know her name? This unfairness crushes me. It makes me feel invisible.

Next year, I'm going to major in history at Haskell Indian Nations University because I want her story and others like hers to be told. Our history shouldn't idolize mass murderers and. . .

**Ms.Crook-Johnson:** That's enough, Awi. I think you've made your point

*Stage directions: Ms. Crook-Johnson slowly moves toward the teacher's desk.*

**Awi:** But I didn't finish. . .

**Billy:** Geez, I didn't know it went down like that.

**Ms. Crook-Johnson:** You did some excellent primary source research, but why are you trying to make us all feel guilty for atrocities that happened such a long time ago?

**Awi:** I didn't write this to make anyone feel guilty. I wrote this for me.

*Stage directions: Awi moves past Ms. Crook-Johnson and heads toward her seat meeting her gaze as she passes. Ms. Crook-Johnson reclaims her place at the front of the class.*

**Billy:** I'd like to hear the rest of it.

**Awi:** Also, there were white people who tried to help.[65] It wasn't just the times . . .

**Ms. Crook-Johnson:** Please, sit at your desk and be quiet. Your paper feels like a personal attack. . . on me and my family.

**Awi: (waves a book in her hand)** But it's here in Crook's own reports. It's what he wrote himself.

**Ms. Crook-Johnson:** Awi! Please, just give me those. We've heard enough about how horrible the Indian Wars were.

*Stage directions: Ms. Crook Johnson takes Awi's paper and books. Awi sits down. Then looks around.*

**Awi:** Hey, Ms. Crook-Johnson, where's Jesse?

**Ms. Crook-Johnson:** (Pauses. Looks at Awi for a moment) You hadn't heard. I was told he had withdrawn from school. He turned 18 last week.

**Awi:** He dropped out?!

**Billy:** I saw him before school. He said he was going to the river trail.

**Awi** (To herself): Jesse.

*Stage directions: Awi jumps out of her seat and runs off stage. The stage goes dark. Billy, Ms. Crook Johnson and the high school extra exit stage left.*

## VII. Jesse scene

**LIGHTING:** Downstage center, center, right center and left center are illuminated.

*Stage directions: Jesse enters from stage left. A single light illuminates Jesse who is sitting on the center of the stage floor all by himself. He has a beer can in one hand and a bottle of pills in the other. He looks blank, lifeless. He alternates between pondering the bottle in his hand and taking swigs of beer.*

**Multimedia:** Images of stereotypical Native American mascots flash across the screen in Montage – videos and images of Native American mascots at college and high school sports, Redskins fans in Red face, Coachella and Oregon Country Fair, clips from old Hollywood movies, clips from rodeo roundups, images of Mission art, artwork of Manifest destiny, art of the subservient Indian, etc

**Awi (pre-recorded voiceover):** Creator, I'm worried about my cousin Jesse. He takes in the pain of his ancestors and can't let go. I pray you ward off all evil from him. Let him hear and see the good things. Let him remember the good people in his life. Before the bad things he's taken inside grow too big and too painful. Help him see the light our people have always found even in the darkest times. Ohhh.

*Stage directions: After Awi finishes her prayer, three ancestors in traditional dress come out one by one with a burning root. They enter from stage left. They circle Jesse and move the root around his head, over his body and in front of his face.*

*Jesse can't see them. But there is a change in him. Slowly he stands up, leaving the beer can and the bottle on the ground. He smooths out his loose and gnarly hair, and puts it in a pony tail.*

*Then one of the ancestors puts an abalone heart plate around Jesse's neck.*

*At that moment, Awi comes running from off stage. The ancestors back away. She runs to him and they embrace firmly. The dancers and the traditional leaders slowly retreat off stage right as their embrace continues for a few moments.*

**Awi:** Oh, Jesse. . .

**Jesse:** It hurts, cousin.[66] Thank you for finding me.

**Awi:** cé tuc-ó títaspí-mí. Never give up. (looks back at the ancestors). We can get through this together.

*Stage directions: **Stage goes dark.** Awi and Jesse exit stage right.*

**Stage management directions: Remove classroom desks.**

## Graduation Scene

**LIGHTING:** As much of the stage is illuminated as possible, especially though downstage right, downstage center and downstage left.

*Stage directions: Awi, Jack and Louise enter stage right. Billy, Maddie, Principal Knouse and Ms. Crook Johnson enter stage left. On the left side of the stage we see Awi receiving the Native sash and eagle feather from Jack and Louise. On the right side of the stage, the desks are gone, and now it's a graduation scene. Principal Knouse is standing ready to give diplomas out, and Billy and Maddie are waiting in line.*

**Jack:** We're so proud of you, Awi! You've made it to graduation. There's nothing more dangerous than an educated Native!

**Louise:** This is for you, my brilliant niece.

*A nervous looking Ms. Crook-Johnson gingerly approaches Awi before she can join the graduation line. They meet at center stage. Awi looks at Ms. Crook Johnson confidently but keeps a little distance.*

**Ms. Crook-Johnson:** (tearful as she speaks) Awi, I read the journals. They're horrifying. It's disorienting, like the ground beneath me has turned to quicksand. What you wrote was so heartfelt, and I was so crude. I don't know what to say. I'm sorry.

**Awi:** (looks at Ms. Crook-Johnson warmly, but still keeps her distance) I appreciate that. But all I want is for people to share the truth. . . and see my ancestors as humans.

*Awi nods at Ms. Crook-Johnson and then walks across to the right side of the stage and gets in line behind Billy and Maddie. Ms. Crook-Johnson walks behind her and stations herself next to Principal Knouse. She gives each student a hug after they get their diploma.*

**Principal Knouse:** Billie Weil. . . congratulations!

**Principal Knouse:** Maddie West. . . congratulations!

**Principal Knouse:** Awi Wolfin . . .

*Stage directions: When Awi gets to the front of the line, the principal puts his hand up.*

**Principal:** You'll have to take those off Awi. No special adornments are allowed in our graduation code. Many students don't have the time and resources to make such accessories, lovely though they are. *(she reaches out to touch Awi's sash and Awi flinches)* If we let you walk, what will happen next year? Someone wearing a Taylor Swift t-shirt over their gown? It's just unfair to give you special privileges.[67]

*Stage directions: Awi slowly steps back until she's in the middle of the stage. The slow beat of a drum (or clapstick) is heard. A faint healing song is sung off stage as the pre-recorded voice over is played.*

**(Multimedia: Play montage of Native people)**

**Awi: (Pre-recorded):** When I tell people about the history of the genocide our people survived, some people say they feel guilty or it's too horrible to face. And I think of the Ajumawi woman who sacrificed her child to save her village. There are so many heroes like her who have been hidden in the footnotes of history, whose deeds and names need to be discovered.

**Multimedia directions:** *A collage of video and photo images of heroes past and present appears on the screen.*

**Awi (pre-recorded):** Every Native who kept a song or language alive, every Native who kept ceremonies going underground . . . they are heroes. Every settler who provided a safe haven from massacres, every Native who survived a boarding school, every linguist who helped record our languages, every Native who kept our medicines alive, they are heroes.

*Stage directions: The traditional dancers come on stage and start dancing around Awi. Offstage, the sound of the clapping sticks and the singers singing a healing song grow louder. Awi moves forward closer and closer to the principal. Billy and Maddie move away from the principal and stand behind Awi, backing her up.*

**Awi (pre-recorded):** Every Native who learns their language, every Native who dances and sings at ceremony, every Native who still dreams, every native who builds a canoe, every Native who stands up for a sacred site, they are all heroes.

Like raging waters of an undammed river, our people's stories flood us with resilience and courage. Our history reminds us that the forces of fear, shame and greed can be survived and eventually overcome. Together.

**Ms. Crook-Johnson:** Yes . . . together.

*Stage directions: Ms. Crook-Johnson steps forward and grabs the diploma from the principal and hands it to Awi. Awi looks at the diploma in her hands, and embraces Ms. Crook-Johnson. The dancers circle them, and then the villagers and Native leaders from the treaty signing also come on stage and sing.*

**Ms. Crook-Johnson:** Congratulations Awi!

*For several moments, they embrace, and then **the stage goes black.***

**THE END**

## General Sources

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(Key research on unratified treaties, documented massacres, disenfranchisement of Native peoples, slavery and sex trafficking and why the California Indian extermination fits the U.N. definition of genocide)

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[\*The Adventures of Captain Hi Good.\*](#) Delaney, Dan. June 7, 1887.  
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[41] pg. 38 Madley.

[42] [Wozencraft’s newspaper report on the Treaty signing process](#).

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[55] pg. 19 *Education for Extinction*, Wallace Adams.

[56] pg. 20 Wallace Adams.

[57] pg. 268 Madley (*author's note – early ethnographers' estimates of pre-genocide are probably not reliable as they likely assumed Native people did little to manage their lands and food supplies, which would lead to lower estimates. It's the opinion of this author that the original numbers of California Indians is probably much higher than 100,000*).

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