

Captain John Brown

By Samuel Theodros

Based on True Events

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"Let America know and ponder on this: there is something more frightening than Cain killing Abel, and that is Washington killing Spartacus." Victor Hugo

EXT. HANGING GROUNDS VIRGINIA - MORNING

In 1859 Charles Town, Virginia, a crowd of white men, women and children gather around a hanging platform. On this cold December morning, a ray of sun beams through the clouds.

The crowd YELLS at a bearded man, THOREAU, 40s, who stands on the platform above them.

THOREAU

I must speak a word about the man who has been so publicly ridiculed. No man in America has ever stood up so persistently and effectively for the dignity of human nature, in that sense he was the most American of us all.

More YELLS from the crowd.

THOREAU

A man such as the sun may not rise upon again in this contemptible land...Sent to be the redeemer of those in captivity; and the only use to which you can put him is to hang him at the end of a rope!

The crowd SCREAMS in protest, tomatoes splatter against Thoreau's clothing.

Thoreau's hands gesture wildly as he delivers this last line. Spit flies from his mouth.

THOREAU

This event advertises me that there is such a fact as death--the possibility of a man's dying. It seems as if no man had ever *died* in America before; for in order to die you must first have *lived*.

After this last remark, the hangmen rush onto the stage and grab Thoreau. He is held by POLICE OFFICERS and escorted off the platform and out of site.

The Hangmen bring CAPTAIN JOHN BROWN, age 59, onto the hangman's platform. Next to him are JASON, and OBERLIN.

They all stand on the platform tied at the wrists standing below the dangling nooses. John Brown stands in the middle of them all.

INT. PRINTING PRESS - DAY

SCREEN TEXT: TEN YEARS EARLIER...

Inside the Alton Observer, an abolitionist printing press, ELIJAH LOVEJOY, late 30s, works on his paper. The printing press strums in the background.

Elijah Lovejoy sits at his mahogany desk writing in his leather bound notebook. A young boy, BRAM, enters the printing press alerting Lovejoy.

BRAM
Mr. Lovejoy?

LOVEJOY
Yes, Bram.

BRAM
I am ready to deliver the paper,
like you wanted.

LOVEJOY
Yes, Bram. I'll be right with you.

Lovejoy turns around from his desk and faces Bram.

He brings a stack of newspapers, with Alton Observer across the top. The stack rests at Lovejoy's feet.

Bram looks quizzically at the newspaper.

BRAM
My Pa, told me to stop delivering
these papers.

LOVEJOY
And yet you are here?

BRAM
The ten cents does me good. My Pa
also thinks that I stopped.

Lovejoy grins.

LOVEJOY

Do you have a problem with my paper?

BRAM

Not really, I just know a lot of people don't like it.

LOVEJOY

Do you know why?

BRAM

Yes, I'm not stupid. You keep saying the niggers are just like us.

LOVEJOY

What do you think?

BRAM

I don't know, they haven't done me harm.

Lovejoy grabs his newspaper stack and puts it on the ground next to Bram. The "Stop Slave Catchers" title visible.

LOVEJOY

Hm. Maybe you will grow up to be a little different than your father.

Bram motions to respond, but Lovejoy turns his back on him and looks out his window. A mob of white men with guns and torches are out front.

LOVEJOY

Bram, go out the back way. Go now.

Bram runs out the back of the printing press, just as the mob enters. The mob is lead by the MOB LEADER: a grotesque looking man with scars on his face.

The Mob Leader grins revealing his yellow teeth. He spits at Lovejoy's feet.

LOVEJOY

I have sent for the sheriff.

The Mob leader LAUGHS and gestures towards the mob outside.

Lovejoy scans the room for anything to defend himself. His eyes betray his fear.

The Mob leader motions to the men behind him and they punch Lovejoy repeatedly. Once he is on the ground, they stomp on him with their boots. He's dragged outside.

The Mob leader searches through the office and finds Lovejoy's printing press and throws it threw the window.

EXT. PRINTING PRESS- DAY

The mob lassos a hangman's noose around the wooden beams that support the outside structure of the building.

Lovejoy is held down by the men around him, but he manages to stand. His face is swollen, his lips are bloodied, but he stares unrelentingly at the mob leader.

LOVEJOY

(stammering, out of breath)

Do what you will.

(a beat)

But I am governed by higher considerations than either the favor or fear of man. I am compelled by a higher power, and I shall never abandon my sentiments.

MOB LEADER

They will abandon you.

Mob LAUGHS.

The Mob leader motions to the men carrying wooden torches. They enter the printing press while Lovejoy is being brought to his feet.

A crowd of people have now gathered around the printing press watching the show. Lovejoy looks around with fear.

Lovejoy is strung up on the beam his legs struggle fiercely. Almost simultaneously, the office behind him turns to flames.

The crowd continues to watch the spectacle like it is a show. The mob laugh and cheer as the office CACKLES.

EXT. NEAR PRINTING PRESS - DAY

John Brown is silhouetted against the flames of the office. He drops the bag of food he is carrying, and dashes towards the inferno.

He pushes through the crowd and sees, Lovejoy, dangling from the beams of the office.

JOHN BROWN

NOOO.

John Brown leaps up to the platform and pushes his way through the mob. He pulls a knife from his pocket and cuts him down.

The flames behind him grow stronger as he pulls Lovejoy away from the press to the ground. Tears stream down his face.

John Brown YELLS in pain. The mob LAUGH.

MOB LEADER

You a nigger love now? This good for the town, you know all that filth he was spitting out.

John Brown STAMMERS while the mob laughs.

MOB LEADER

Get yourself away from those flames. I don't want your wife giving me trouble about doing you harm.

John Brown cradles the lifeless body of his friend. He YELLS once more as he stares towards the sky.

INT. BROWN BEDROOM - DAY

A startled John Brown lifts his head from bed and wakes MARY, 40s, a small, pale faced woman. He is in a sweat. Above his bed is a wooden panel which reads: "Blessed are the meek."

MARY

Were you dreaming of-

JOHN BROWN

No, I planned to wake up and get an early start today.

Mary touches John Brown's face with a small look of concern.

JOHN BROWN

Better get the boys up too.

Mary slaps John Brown's thigh.

MARY
Let them sleep.

JOHN BROWN
You're too soft on them. I think a
bucket of cold water would be a
fine waking.

MARY
Leave my sons alone.

John Brown smiles and gets up from bed.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

John Brown exits his room and goes outside his sons' rooms. He stands beside the door's frame and rubs his fingers against the small indentations.

Next to each mark is an initial: "OLB, OMB, and JAB." They mark each sons' height as a child.

He opens the door slightly and sees two of his sons sleeping. John Brown moves his lips, but does not make a sound.

INT. SALES SHOP - DAY

He enters his make shift wool sales shop that is attached to his household. He begins to take inventory of the various garments. To the right of the sales shop is Brown's farm.

John Brown continues to tidy up his shop when JANE (40s), a light skinned mulatto approaches him.

She smiles at John Brown.

JANE
You were missed at the service.

John Brown attempts to lose her gaze, but her brown eyes remain fixed on his.

JANE
You are not the only one who lost
someone, it helps to-

JOHN BROWN
Is there something you want?

JANE

I am...

(a beat)

We are having a meeting to talk
about how to go about-

Jane makes eye contact with John Brown and he glances away.

JANE

With Elijah

(a beat)

We need to discuss how to fill his-

JOHN BROWN

I am not Elijah.

JANE

I know.

Jane reaches into her bag and retrieves an invitation.

JANE

Please, just come and listen.

Jane smiles softly and leaves. John Brown takes the card
with a shaking hand.

EXT. SALES SHOP - NIGHT

John Brown's hands slightly shake as he closes his shop. The
night is dark and swallows him as he enters it.

EXT. TOWN - CONTINUOUS

John Brown continues to walk in the darkness until he
approaches a large barn. The light radiating from the barn
illuminates his face.

He pauses outside the door and listens to the thunderous
voice of a man.

John Brown stands there unsure of whether to go inside.
Several black and white MEN approach the door and frighten
him. He shakes their hands and gestures for them to enter
ahead of him.

He slowly walks away from the light into the darkness.

INT. SALES SHOP - MORNING

John Brown stares out at his farm and glances at the rising sun.

His sons are now in the large field of the farm. He glances back at a small line of people in front of his sales shop.

A MAN with a black top hat steps toward John Brown and gestures at a piece of wool.

JOHN BROWN

That one is ten cents.

MAN

Yes, I will take it.

John Brown nods and hands the piece of wool to his customer. He sees OLIVER, late teens, who walks towards the shop.

Oliver has a sympathetic face with long hair that attempts to hide his boyish looks.

OLIVER

Pa?

Oliver stands near his father holding his hand. A WOMAN takes a piece of wool from John Brown and exits the sales shop.

JOHN BROWN

What is it?

Oliver shows his father his cut hand.

OLIVER

Let me stay in the shop and die wool.

JOHN BROWN

Bring me your hand.

Oliver walks closer to his father while he takes some cloth from his desk. John Brown takes his son's hand and wraps the wound.

JOHN BROWN

Go back to your brothers.

OLIVER

But...

JOHN BROWN
You're not a child anymore.

OLIVER
Tell that to Owen and Jason.

JOHN BROWN
They just like to tease you. You
have ample time to show them the
man you are.

OLIVER
If it is all the same, I would like
to stay here with you.

John Brown pats his son on the head.

JOHN BROWN
Go on.

INT. SHOP - DAY

After several minutes. A BANKER, wearing spectacles, and
extravagant clothing approaches the barn.

John Brown ignores him tending to his wool.

BANKER
Mr. Brown?

JOHN BROWN
Yes.

BANKER
My name is Mr. Schultz from the
bank on main street.

John Brown scans him.

JOHN BROWN
I do not doubt it.

BANKER
Yes, well. The credit you have
taken out on your farm has grown
far too much. We will have to seize
your farm.

JOHN BROWN
We?

BANKER
Yes, the bank.

JOHN BROWN
And if I refuse?

BANKER
Well...

He motions to Police Officers.

INT. JAIL CELL - MORNING

John Brown sits alone in a small jail cell. His black eye stares at the brick wall.

Mary approaches the jail cell. She looks concerned and throws her hands to the bars.

MARY
John!

JOHN BROWN
I'm fine Mary, when will they release me?

Mary looks around the jail cell.

MARY
A man wants to see you.

JOHN BROWN
Here?

John Brown shakes his head.

JOHN BROWN
Have him meet me at the farm. What is my bond set for?

MARY
He is down here already.

JOHN BROWN
What does he want?

MARY
I do not know.

JOHN BROWN
Do you know his name?

MARY
He told me his name was Simon
Perkins.

Mary pauses and wipes a tear from her eye.

JOHN BROWN
What is it?

MARY
Nothing...

JOHN BROWN
What is wrong?

John Brown gets up from his seat and approaches his wife.

MARY
The farm... they sold it..

JOHN BROWN
(softly)
No...

MARY
They sold it... The boys were told
to leave.

JOHN BROWN
Where are they now?

MARY
At my mother's house.

John Brown lets out a grunt while Mary turns her head to see
SIMON PERKINS, age 45, a ruggedly handsome fellow.

SIMON
Mr. Brown.

Simon extends his hand through the jail bars. John Brown
shakes it.

SIMON
Sorry to meet under these
circumstances. Do not feel too
embarrassed. In my youth, I found
myself lying in that very spot,
after a few difficult nights.

Simon takes an imaginary swig of alcohol.

SIMON
My name is Simon.

JOHN BROWN
Simon, I-

Simon gestures at John Brown to let him finish.

SIMON
I have spoken to several sheep
farmers in town and they all have
spoken highly of you. That you are
an honest and fair man.

(a beat)
My partner and I have recently
split ways and I want you to join
me in-

JOHN BROWN
Leave the state?

SIMON
Yes, I have purchased land in
Massachusetts.

JOHN BROWN
I am humbled by the offer, but I
have business to intend to here.

SIMON
I heard that your farm was taken.

JOHN BROWN
I-

SIMON
I also heard of the death of your
friend.

John Brown looks away.

SIMON
This will be an opportunity for a
new start in a town that will suit
you.

JOHN BROWN
And my family?

SIMON
They will join us in Massachusetts
of course. Your sons, if they
choose, can work the farm.

JOHN BROWN

I-

(a beat)

Thank you for the offer, Mr. Perkins. But I can not-

(a beat)

I will not simply run away when such an injustice is done to me and my family.

Simon shakes his head.

SIMON

I will be in town for the remaining month. Think about it.

Simon walks away from the jail cell.

EXT. SALES SHOP - DAY

John Brown approaches his sales shop with his three sons behind him.

A white MAN (50s) is in the field shearing a sheep while another is in the sales shop taking inventory of the wool.

INT. SALES SHOP - DAY

MAN

We're closed.

JOHN BROWN

We are not customers sir. I hope we can come to an understanding... I do not know what the bank told you but this is our home. I am willing too-

The Man turns his back to John Brown and continues to take inventory.

JASON

Listen here!

The Man turns around and faces the group.

JOHN BROWN

Jason.

John Brown glances at his son with a look of disapproval.

MAN

I do not know what you want from me. I have already purchased this land from the bank.

JOHN BROWN

This land is dear to me. I could arrange a monthly payment of a portion of our earnings.

MAN

You could not even pay the bank, how am I suppose to take you at your word.

JOHN BROWN

Now Sir!

MAN

No.

The Man lifts a piece of paper.

MAN

See here, I own this land.

JOHN BROWN

A piece of paper does not give you the right.

MAN

Ha. It absolutely does.

John Brown's sons circle the farmer but John motions towards them.

Oliver and his older brothers move closer to the man fists clenched.

The man YELLS for help.

John Brown glances into the field and sees the man running off the property.

OWEN BROWN, John Brown's eldest son, raises his fist to strike the man.

JOHN BROWN

Owen, no!

Owen lowers his fist and looks at his father.

John Brown looks around at the farm longingly and motions to his sons to leave.

Before leaving, John Brown walks past the Farmer to his old desk and removes a knife hanging on the wall.

EXT. SALES SHOP - DAY

John Brown's family sit in two separate carriages. A group of friends and family stand by their carriages. Several Black men and women stand in the crowd.

Jane stands in the crowd and stares at John. It is a piercing glare that penetrates him.

John Brown waves at the crowd and WHIPS horses onward.

EXT. ROAD TO MASSACHUSETTS - DAY

The Brown family along with the Perkins' convoy travel the long journey from Ohio to Massachusetts.

They travel through Virginia and witness the the WHIPPING of a black woman in the cotton fields. John Brown glances at his children and towards the children in the fields.

EXT. FARM SPRINGFIELD - DAY

Simon Perkins and John Brown stand overlooking the new property. John Brown and Simon Perkins shake hands amicably while Brown's children survey the land.

SIMON

This calls for a drink.

JOHN BROWN

A bit early huh, Simon?

SIMON

Never too early my friend. How bout it?

John Brown smiles and Simon nudges him.

SIMON

C'mon.

John Brown and Simon leave the land while his sons and children survey the land and investigate their new home.

INT. TAVERN - DAY

John Brown and Simon enter an empty tavern. The Bartender pokes his head up from his brief nap and slaps his mahogany bar.

JOHN BROWN
Seems like it is too early.

SIMON
It is never too early for a drink.

Simon gestures to the bartender for two drinks.

SIMON
Oh, I forgot to mention the Sanford church is across the street there.

JOHN BROWN
The what?

Simon takes a sip of his drink.

SIMON
The Sanford Church, sponsor for
Elijah's newspaper.

Simon downs his drink.

SIMON
Ah. That peach. What's her name?

Simon slaps the bar counter.

SIMON
Jane, that's it. She made sure I
mentioned it to you.

Simon smiles and nudges John Brown, who has turned to look out the windows of the tavern.

INT. TANNERY SHOP - AFTERNOON

John Brown sits and dyes wool while Simon Perkins stands in front of the shop.

John continues to sit and watch as people enter the store and purchase wool. He notices several free black men and women who enter the store and purchase wool. A small smile touches his face.

INT. SANFORD CHURCH, MA - DAY

John Brown sits in the back of an integrated church and glances around. He is hunched over in his seat.

A white man has just finished speaking of the absurdity of the Fugitive slave act.

A black man, FREDERICK DOUGLASS, age 40, stands up and speaks.

DOUGLASS

I was asked to come here and speak, to give the perspective of a *man* who was a victim of slavery, to those who fight against the inhumane institution.

(a beat)

But truthfully, it is a perspective that I cannot give. As a slave, my former master, succeeded in breaking me. I was broken in body and spirit. My natural elasticity was crushed, my intellect languished, the disposition to read departed, the cheerful spark that lingered about my eye died; the dark night of slavery closed in upon me; turning me from a man into a brute.

Douglass looks on, introspectively.

DOUGLASS

I must emphasize to you, that I am no different than any of my brethren who are currently enslaved.

EXT. COTTON PLANTATION - DAY

DOUGLASS

(V.O)

I remember, when just a boy,
I realized the horror of slavery.

A small black boy works in the middle of a large cotton field. He cannot see through the plants. Suddenly, he hears the whip of the overseer and the screams of his victim.

DOUGLASS

(V.O)

I do not remember exactly what I saw but I shall never forget the feeling. It was the beginning of a series of outrages in which I was doomed to be a witness and a participant. I was doomed to be trapped inside a blood stained gate, the entrance to the hell of slavery through which I was suppose to stay.

The small black boy starts to run, but each direction is marked by the blood of the overseer's whip.

DOUGLASS

(V.O)

A system that dehumanizes its victims and brings out the cruelty, greed, maliciousness, and intolerance of its patrons. Thus is slavery the enemy of both the slave and the slaveholder-

The black boy continues to run with the sound of the whip echoing in his ears. The sound of screams growing louder and louder.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

John Brown's eyes strain with the last remark. He sits up in his seat.

INT. TAVERN - DAY

John Brown sits in the tavern alone. He stares out the window of the tavern. Finally, he rises to leave and finishes his drink.

EXT. FARM - AFTERNOON

John Brown arrives at his farm to see his sons in the field. His wife and his daughter are in their home cooking dinner.

A weary, John Brown, walks into the field, and Oliver walks toward him.

OLIVER
You see that? We got the fence put
up.

JOHN BROWN
I see that son, how is the farm
looking?

OLIVER
Fine.

Oliver takes a step closer to his father.

OLIVER
(soft voice)
They're still not including me in-

John Brown smiles and pats his son on the shoulder.

JOHN BROWN
They will in time. You want me to
have a word with them?

Oliver smiles and nods.

JOHN BROWN
Ok, now go inside and help your
mother set up dinner.

OLIVER
Yes, sir.

Oliver walks past his father into the house. John Brown
walks into the lush pastures of the farm to his two other
sons.

OWEN (28 years old) and JASON BROWN (25 years old) are
hammering the last sections of the fence. Owen looks like
his mother while Jason is spitting image of his father.

JOHN BROWN
Owen, Jason! Dinner is ready.

The two brothers stop working and walk towards their father.
Both brothers smile while looking towards their father.

OWEN
Pa, we are going to make a fortune
here. I wish that bastard back home
could see this.

Owen turns to the sheep grazing in the pastures.

JASON

The Bank probably has his land
title already.

Jason looks up to his father for approval.

JOHN BROWN

It's the bank that I blame boys not
the man.

John Brown pats them on the head and ushers them towards the
house.

JOHN BROWN

Dinner is ready, let's see what
your mother and sister have made.

The group walk side by side towards their modestly sized
home.

A short older looking black man, Joseph (60), slowly
approaches the farm.

JOSEPH

Mr. Brown!

John Brown turns around and gestures to his children to
enter the house. He walks towards Joseph.

JOHN BROWN

I'm sorry the shop is closed. We
open early tomorrow morning. I am
sure you will be able to find a
piece of wool to your liking.

JOSEPH

No sir, it's not that. Mr. Perkins
said you might need a hand on the
farm. He said yall have purchased
more sheep and could use some
hands.

John Brown looks over Joseph. The man is short but stout and
physically built. His back hunches over slightly.

JOHN BROWN

Have you skinned sheep before?

JOSEPH

Yes, sir, I worked along side a
tanner for many years.

John Brown smiles shyly.

JOHN BROWN
John, will do. When can you begin?

A wide smile spreads across Joseph's face.

JOSEPH
I can come by tomorrow, su- I mean
John.

JOHN BROWN
I will see you tomorrow then.

John Brown reaches out and shakes Joseph's hand. Joseph smiles and walks away.

INT. JOHN BROWN HOME - NIGHT

The Brown home is neat and tidy with religious artifacts hanging throughout the house. A small fireplace is positioned across from the dining room table in the living room.

Above the fireplace is a family portrait.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

John Brown smiles at his wife upon sitting down. His family sits to wait for him to arrive. He squeezes Mary's hand affectionately. John Brown's daughter, LUCILLE, age 17, sits next to her mother.

OLIVER
Jason wanted to begin eating, but I
insisted we wait for you father.

MARY
Shhh, Oliver!

JOHN BROWN
I doubt that son.

The family laughs and Oliver grins.

MARY
Lucille, would you like to say
grace?

LUCILLE
Yes, Mother. Come, Lord Jesus, be
our Guest, and let thy gifts to us
be blessed. Amen.

FAMILY

Amen.

JOHN BROWN

This a fine meal, Mary.

MARY

Don't just thank me. Lucille had her hand in this as well.

John Brown chuckles while looking at his daughter.

JOHN BROWN

Is that true?

LUCILLE

Yes, Pa.

JOHN BROWN

Your fiance is a lucky man.

John Brown smiles at Mary.

JOHN BROWN

We should have that young man over for dinner, shouldn't we?

Lucille blushes.

MARY

Lucille, why don't you get some drinks for the boys.

Lucille rises and nods. Mary turns to her sons.

MARY

Some hard cider?

OWEN

Yes, for me and Jason, and a tall glass of milk for little Oliver.

Owen nudges Jason and they both laugh. Oliver stares angrily at his brother then glances at his father.

Lucille returns to the table with the two cups of cider and one of milk. She places the cup of milk next to Oliver's plate.

JOHN BROWN

(addressing Lucile)

Can you give me the cup of milk?

LUCILLE

Uh?

John Brown gives her a glare and she lifts the cup of milk and places it by his plate.

Lucille puts down the cups of cider next to Owen and Jason's plate. Oliver glances to his mother and father with a confused look.

John Brown rises as Owen puts the cup to his lips.

JOHN BROWN

Give me your cup.

OWEN

Why?

John Brown takes the cup from his hand and walks over to the other side of the table and gives it to Oliver.

OWEN

What am I-

JOHN BROWN

Enough.

He sits down at his chair and drinks the cup of milk.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MARY

What is it you wanted to tell us
Owen?

Owen ignores his mother. He still upset about his scolding.

MARY

Owen?

OWEN

I have met a woman.

JOHN BROWN

Really?

OWEN

(mean spirited)
Yes, is that so hard to believe?

JOHN BROWN

Now, Owen-

OWEN

Her name is Jessica... I'm thinking of... I have heard that in Kansas they are offering cheap land for settlers, if we-

JOHN BROWN

You will not go to Kansas.

OWEN

Why?

John Brown sends Owen a stern look.

OWEN

Why does it bother-

John Brown visibly upset looks at his son.

JOHN BROWN

A slave state?!

Owen looks down and back at his father.

OWEN

The territory will be decided by popular sovereignty and I have been told that the people in the territory do not want the expansion of slavery.

Owen looks around at his brothers and his mother.

OWEN

I will not go without your approval but I believe the cheap farm land can be a great opportunity for me. An opportunity to start a family on a land of my own.

John Brown looks at his son intently.

EXT. FARM - DAY

John Brown sits on a stool next to a moaning sheep. The sun is just beginning to rise.

Joseph walks up the dirt road and approaches the farm. He smiles warmly to John Brown.

John Brown gestures at him to join him.

JOHN BROWN

As you can see my sons are not as
industrious as we are.

JOSEPH

I reckon it is just being young.
I'm sure they'll be like you soon,
suh.

John Brown shakes his head and starts to skin the sheep.

A group of unshorned sheep graze in the pasture.

John Brown hands him a shearing knife.

Joseph nods gratefully skins his own sheep. John Brown
notices that Joseph is shearing the sheep using a different
technique than him.

Joseph has nearly skinned half of the sheep's wool before
John Brown.

JOHN BROWN

How did you manage that?

Joseph smiles.

JOSEPH

Ahh, I'll show you if you want. It
is technique I thought of. Keeps
you from cutting yourself. Pretty
fast too, huh?

John Brown gestures to his own sheep which is only a third
skinned.

JOHN BROWN

Please, show me.

Joseph walks over to John Brown's sheep and shows him how he
holds the knife. He also shows him a new shearing motion.

John Brown tries shearing the sheep the new way. He
struggles.

JOHN BROWN

Hmm, I don't seem to have grasped
it.

JOSEPH
I'll show you again.

JOHN BROWN
Thank you.

Joseph shows him the motion again. He smoothly skins the sheep. John Brown tries once more. He succeeds and smiles.

EXT. FARM - DAY

The farm is grazed by bare sheep and cows with only a few unshorn sheep remaining.

John Brown and Joseph sit facing one another dyeing the wool.

JOSEPH
I don't know what I would do if I
had a farm, and for it to be
taken...

Joseph shakes his head. John Brown nods.

JOHN BROWN
Owen nearly fought one of the men.

JOSEPH
You stopped him?

John Brown nods.

JOHN BROWN
You would have allowed it? Owen is
too rash, hot tempered.

Joseph grunts and shakes his head.

JOHN BROWN
What is it?

JOSEPH
It's not for me to speak on another
man's affairs.

JOHN BROWN
Ha, you know me better than that.
Speak your mind.

Joseph looks around and stares into John Brown's eyes.

JOSEPH

I don't want to sound too bold,
suh, but to my eyes, if a law is
not just I don't see how we can
follow it.

JOHN BROWN

You're speaking of slavery?

Joseph nods and looks away.

JOHN BROWN

Times will change, you can see that
with your own eyes.

JOSEPH

They-

A young black man, OBERLIN (age 19) approaches the farm.
Joseph turns around and gestures to his son.

OBERLIN

You left without your tools, Ma
told me too bring em.

JOSEPH

I reckon you should have left em at
home, your chores need doing.

Oberlin nods and runs off.

JOHN BROWN

He is your splitting image.

JOSEPH

Thank you...s.. um... John. He acts
more like his mother.

John Brown laughs heartily and pats Joseph on his back.

JOHN BROWN

Why don't you go home with your
son, I'll finish.

JOSEPH

You sure?

John Brown nods.

JOHN BROWN

I will see you at the Church
service.

Joseph shakes his head.

JOSEPH
I won't be going...

JOHN BROWN
Oh?

Joseph gives John Brown an ominous look.

JOSEPH
I... hmm...will see you soon.

Joseph walks away and John Brown continues dying the wool.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

John Brown sits alone in a pew with his gaze fixed on a white male, GARRISON, age 60, who speaks in front of the room. Garrison's long nose and features gave him a look of a timid liberal.

GARRISON
The use of violence will only further entrench the slaveholders in their gross practices and lead to greater violence against black men and women.

Many people in the church murmur amongst themselves. DAVID a free black man (30s) with a fiery demeanor steps to the front of the church.

DAVID
Beloved brethren, with due respect to Garrison, let me tell you, of the suffering of my people. The violence suffered to my people by white hands, not only in America, but in all corners of the world can only be stopped with active force.

INT. FOREST - NIGHT

Joseph runs in the woods followed by runaway slaves. The sound of dogs bark can be heard. Joseph's face is strained as he continues to run side by side with the slaves.

DAVID
(V.O)
If God is the God of justice, that I know him to be, can the men who oppress my brethren escape justice?

DAVID
 Can we call ourselves man if we do
 not act?

Joseph continues to run while the lanterns behind them grow brighter.

DAVID
 (V.O)
 I say to you that the millions of
 lives that are in bondage were not
 created to be tortured and killed.
 I say to you that each one of them
 would rather meet death by glory
 then by a slaved existence.

The dogs have now converged on Joseph and the runaway slaves. His screams ring out in the forest.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

John Brown grimaces as if he is aware of his friend's death.

DAVID
 I call upon us to act, as is our
 duty, with any means that we can
 afford.

David steps off the podium and the church is silent. John Brown face turns glum.

Several men and women continue to speak but John Brown ignores them.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Most people file out of the church but a small circle of white and black men talk quietly, including Frederick Douglass.

John Brown looks at them then turns away towards the door.

STEPHEN JACOBS, a 60 year old man, with a sympathetic, but serious face, looks intently to each man in the group.

STEPHEN
 (whisper)
 I have just learned that Joseph's
 whereabouts are unknown. He has not
 reached the safe house.

John Brown turns around and walks over to the group. Several men give nods of recognition to him.

STEPHEN

In North Carolina, we have a group
of runaway slaves and freeman
hiding in a safe house.

Stephen looks into the eyes of each man in the group.

STEPHEN

We must assume the worst. Joseph...
(a beat)
I would lead them myself but I fear
I am not healthy enough to make
such a trip.

Stephen looks to each member in the group.

STEPHEN

Will no man volunteer?

A silence.

JOHN BROWN

What of Joseph?

STEPHEN

He was leading a group but did not
arrive at the safe house. I am
sorry John.

John Brown looks around at the group. A lump forms in his throat.

JOHN BROWN

I will lead them.

STEPHEN

Are you sure?

JOHN BROWN

Yes... yes, I'll lead them.

Stephen nods. He pulls a map out of his pocket and hands it to John Brown.

STEPHEN

We will give you a carriage and
rifle to lead them to a safe house
here in Springfield.

JOHN BROWN

In town?

Stephen nods.

STEPHEN

Yes.

Stephen points to the basement of the church.

STEPHEN

Once you bring them here, another man will lead them to Canada.

The group of men in the circle shake John Brown's hand. He nods and walks out of the circle and towards the door.

INT. JOHN BROWN HOME - NIGHT

John Brown sits at his dining room table beside a troubled Mary.

MARY

This is not your responsibility. Will you just leave your wife and children to fend for themselves?

JOHN BROWN

I am doing no such thing. The boys are more than capable of taking care of the farm. Simon will be in every other day to check in on you.

MARY

He is not my husband!

John Brown shakes his head.

JOHN BROWN

I know that Mary.

MARY

What you are doing is illegal.

JOHN BROWN

The law is unjust, you know that.

MARY

Yes, I know it, and you have known it for a while now. It is still the law. Why are you threatening our lives?

JOHN BROWN
I... I must do this.

Mary rushes away and John Brown continues to sit at the table. He looks on straight ahead as if he is looking past his walls.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

John Brown sits in a carriage that overlooks miles of road. The wagon passes through large green pastures and cotton fields. He hears the YELLS of overseers in the fields.

He sees the large white houses of the Slave owners overlooking their property.

EXT. ROAD TO N.C - DAY

John Brown travels towards North Carolina. In his carriage are large barrels, some filled with wine, others empty.

He makes his way past plantations to the safe house.

John Brown exits the carriage and knocks on the door.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

The safe house is in Victorian style with white columns along its entrance. The lantern outside the home is still on and movement can be heard inside the house.

John Browns knocks and takes a step back.

VOICE
Who goes there?

JOHN BROWN
I have come to forward some
baggage.

VOICE
And where is the end destination?

JOHN BROWN
Heaven.

The door slowly opens.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

A small white woman, CAROL, age 40, turns off the lantern and leads John Brown to a table inside.

She smiles shyly to him and taps on the floorboard.

CAROL

I would offer you some tea, but it is really better if you left immediately.

JOHN BROWN

Joseph never arrived?

CAROL

Joseph? No.

CAROL

Is this your first time forwarding?

Carol paces back and forth.

CAROL

The cover of darkness is always best. You may be able to exit the town limits by dawn.

(a beat)

My name is Carol Stuart, sorry for being in such a rush. You can only imagine the-

Suddenly, three black men and two females enter the room. Carol smiles warmly at them and ushers them into the room.

INT. SAFE HOUSE- CONTINUOUS

In a frightened silence, NELSON, JEDEDIAH, ELIZABETH, and ROBERT, and ROSIE walk closer to John Brown and Carol.

They are careful to take each step without making a sound on the wooden floor.

Carol smiles sadly at the group then back at John Brown.

CAROL

John, this is Nelson, Jedediah, Elizabeth, Robert, and Rosie.

John Brown extends his hand and the group look at him oddly. Then NELSON, age 30, a short strong man, reaches out his hand and shakes John's weakly. The group follows suit.

Carol walks quickly toward the door and talks quickly.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

CAROL

Now, you must continue down this
main road until dawn then-

John Brown pulls out the map.

JOHN BROWN

Thank you Carol, we will have no
trouble.

The group of former slaves and freeman look at Carol
thankfully. Rosie, age 19, hugs Carol warmly. John Brown
notices the whip marks on her back.

John Brown turns to the group. He gestures to the back of
the wagon while he smiles apologetically.

JOHN BROWN

I know you are scared, but I won't
fail you.

The runaway slaves look at John Brown and nod.

JOHN BROWN

I have in the back several large
barrels used to transport wine.
When the sun rises you must hide
yourselves inside the barrels.

GROUP

Yez sir.

Carol looks into the street then back at John Brown.

CAROL

You must go now.

John Brown helps the group enter the back of the wagon then
enters the front. He pats his lead horse firmly on the
backside.

NELSON

Uh, Masta Brown?

JOHN BROWN

John.

NELSON

Oh, ok sir, I can hear something in
some of these barrels. I don't
understand if you want us to still-

John Brown stops the carriage and turns to the runaway slaves. A wine barrel is pressed close to the front of the carriage and John shakes it to highlight its liquid contents.

JOHN BROWN

It's only for show Nelson.

John Brown reaches for another barrel and shakes it. It reveals no sound.

JOHN BROWN

See? There are empty barrels there
for hiding in and others filled
with wine.

ROSIE

Smart of you sir.

EXT. ROAD TO SPRINGFIELD - MORNING

John Brown glances into the wagon to make sure that the group is hidden inside the barrels.

It is morning and John Brown continues to lead the wagon through the south. He sees plantations on each side of him and the sad faces of black slaves looking towards him.

EXT. ROAD TO SPRINGFIELD - CONTINUOUS

John Brown continues down a dirt road, but sees two men on horseback ahead. The men have a look of slave catchers; they are mean looking with pistols on their hips.

One looks at John Brown's wagon and smiles. He nudges his partner and they ride their horses in front of John Brown's path.

One slave catcher, FRANKLIN, a 40 year old, sickly yellow faced man, with missing teeth rides towards him.

FRANKLIN

How you doing mista?

John Brown extends a nervous smile at Franklin from the wagon.

JOHN BROWN

Fine, just riding through.

Franklin rides along side his wagon.

FRANKLIN

You own a store up north? This here
is a lot of barrels.

Franklin's partner rides alongside the wagon. A heavier
fellow, KARL, age 40, looks annoyingly at Franklin.

JOHN BROWN

My sons and I run a tavern, you
boys are welcome to come through if
you are ever in Maryland.

KARL

Thank you Sir. Why don't you leave
this fella here alone. We got a
long way back home as it is.

Franklin gestures at Karl to stop talking. Franklin rides
along to the front of the wagon.

He stares at John Brown.

FRANKLIN

You see any niggers running through
these roads? Or any of them half
breeds posing as white men?

JOHN BROWN

I can't say that I have.

FRANKLIN

I think we lost em.

Franklin rides along side Karl. Then, Nelson, who was
leaning forward in a barrel flips over. The barrel remains
closed.

FRANKLIN

What was that?

John Brown's eyes look back at the barrels then at Franklin.

JOHN BROWN

Horse kicked, must have made barrel
turn over. Might need some help
with barrel, you fellas think you
could help me turn it back over?

KARL

We've taken too much of your time
already.

FRANKLIN

We gotta get going.

Karl and Franklin nod apologetically and ride off.

John Brown nods and rides past them.

EXT. SPRINGFIELD - AFTERNOON

John Brown continues to drive the wagon through large slave plantations; he continues to witness the horrifying nature of slavery.

He witnesses a black man being whipped unconscious near a large tree. He stars forward fighting back his emotions.

INT. CARRIAGE - NIGHT

Nelson opens his barrel and slightly emerges his head. The other slaves are lying outside of their barrels sleeping.

NELSON

Mista Brown?

JOHN BROWN

Yes.

NELSON

Those men this morning were they
slave catchers?

JOHN BROWN

Yes.

Nelson's hands tremble and his voice quivers.

NELSON

Suh, you think they following us?

JOHN BROWN

No, I don't. I reckon we're fine.
We will be in Springfield soon.

Nelson continues to shake.

NELSON

Sometimes I wonduh, if I'm suppose
to be free.

John Brown stops the wagon and looks back at Nelson.

JOHN BROWN

I don't understand?

NELSON

Sometimes I wonduh if God wants me
to be a slave. If I'm suppose to be
caught sent back to slavery.

JOHN BROWN

I tell you now, God has nothing to
do with this, only man. You will be
free, I swear to it, under God.

Nelson continues to tremble, tears streaming down his face.

NELSON

I have heard stories, Mista Brown.
Horror stories of slaves who were
caught trying to be free.

John Brown pauses collecting his thoughts.

JOHN BROWN

Think of those stories no more. I
promise you on the lives of my
children that I will bring you to
safety.

EXT. SPRINGFIELD'S CHURCH - NIGHT

John Brown and the group arrive in Springfield. He leaves
the carriage and knocks on the Church door.

A light flickers inside the Church and Stephen opens the
door slightly. A wide smile comes to his face as he fully
opens the door.

They embrace and walk quickly to the back of the wagon.

STEPHEN

Did you have trouble?

JOHN BROWN

I managed.

John Brown and Stephen gesture to Nelson and the others to exit the carriage. The group quietly jump down and look around nervously.

A young man approaches the wagon from the street. The darkness masks his appearance.

STEPHEN

Who goes there?

A shaken Oberlin approaches the carriage. Stephen smiles sadly and gestures to the runaway slaves to enter the cellar passage.

Oberlin gazes at John Brown.

OBERLIN

(stammering)

Mr. Brown, my father? Did he...?

John Brown looks at Oberlin sadly and they embrace. Oberlin cries in his arms.

JOHN BROWN

Your father was a brave man,
I...anything you need for...

Oberlin steps away from John Brown slowly and fades into the night.

John Brown turns and sees that the runaways have entered the cellar.

Nelson however stands out the cellar looking back at John Brown.

NELSON

(stammering)

Thank you suh, I don't know what to say.

Nelson pauses and looks down.

NELSON

I guess the Lord does not want me
to always be a slave.

John Brown's knees nearly buckle with those words. He only manages to extend a hand which Nelson shakes more firmly than last.

INT. WAGON - DAY - MONTHS LATER

A noticeably older John Brown is driving a wagon through a slave state. To his left, a mob is in the process of lynching a black man.

A quiet GASP can be heard from the barrels in the wagon. John Brown looks over to his right where a rifle sits. He looks back at the mob.

The mob is filled with white men, women, and children. The laughter of the mob almost drowns out the screams of the black man. Almost.

John Brown touches his rifle as he drives past the lynching mob.

INT. DINING ROOM, BROWN HOME - AFTERNOON

John, Oliver, Jason, and Mary Brown sit around the dining room table.

The fireplace is burning and the light of the fire reflects off the crucifixes hanging on the walls.

Mary looks nervously at her husband.

MARY

We received a letter from Owen yesterday.

John Brown smiles.

JOHN BROWN

Did Jessica have the child yet?

MARY

John, it's not that. Owen has become worried-

JOHN BROWN

About?

MARY

He says Missourians are raiding the territory settlers... They want Kansas to join as a slave state. Owen is scared.

John Brown clenches his fists on the table. He looks at his sons.

INT. SPRINGFIELD CHURCH - DAY

The packed Church is filled with abolitionists and activists, men and women. A quiet MURMUR, an excited WHISPER can be heard.

John Brown enters the church, and a sudden silence sweeps over.

John Brown walks to the front of the church.

JOHN BROWN

I stand before you as a husband, a father, but most importantly as a man, a free man. And it is this freedom that I must discuss with you.

(a beat)

My son has embarked to Kansas to start a family of his own. A God given right that no man can refute. But now my son has sent me a letter telling me of his fear of Missourians.

John Brown's face changes displaying a fierce intensity.

JOHN BROWN

Yes! My son tells me of settlers being attacked by pro-slavery men. He tells me of Missourians raiding settlements with the hope of scaring them to support slavery.

John Brown's hands gesture wildly.

JOHN BROWN

What shall we do? Shall we let this evil institution spread throughout this great country.

A MAN in the crowd attempts to stand and challenge John Brown but he is shot a menacing look.

JOHN BROWN

I ask you what shall we do? You all know me well, but I cannot continue to stand by and not act against this destructive force on all humanity.

John Brown searches through the crowd.

JOHN BROWN

Are your mouths tied? Shall we continue and allow the slave catchers to come into our town and snatch free black men and women back into slavery. Shall we allow slavery to expand through our country without lifting a finger.

John Brown takes a breath.

JOHN BROWN

You know me as a non-violent man, but I now believe that we must act against this great evil. That the freedom of our fellow black men and women and the freedom of those who choose to live amongst them must be protected.

An astonished look is shared amongst most of the attendees. A faint APPLAUSE rings out through the church.

John Brown steps down and walks to the door. Stephen rises and looks over to him.

STEPHEN

What will you do?

JOHN BROWN

What I must.

John Brown walks out of the Church.

EXT. POLLING STATIONS - KANSAS

Owen Brown and his wife Jessica stand in line at a polling station when suddenly a large group of heavily armed pro-slavery Missourians ride into the station.

They begin shooting their guns in the vicinity of the voters leading to panic and confusion. Most of the voters flee the polling station.

The Pro-slavery men enter the station while the Ring leader, who wears a straw hat (40s) stands by the entrance gun in hand.

RING LEADER

How you voting, son?

OWEN
My own way.

The Ring leader spits a yellow substance to the ground.

RING LEADER
I said, how you voting?

OWEN
I'm voting for this land here to be
free.

The Ring leader smirks then pulls out his rifle.

RING LEADER
Burke! We got ourselves a nigger
lover-

Owen grabs the Ring leader's gun and they tussle on the floor. Jessica takes several steps back while she SCREAMS.

BURKE, 65, a grey haired man with beady blue eyes fires a gun in the air. Owen and the Ring Leader separate and stand facing each other.

The Ring leader raises his gun slowly at Owen. Burke puts his hand over the gun.

BURKE
Ha. He got the message. Didn't you
boy?

As Owen nods, a drip of blood, falls from his lips to the ground.

EXT. ABOLITIONIST HOME - NIGHT

John Brown is gathering arms. A MAN (50s) returns to his door with a rifle and shakes Brown's hand.

EXT. STEPHEN'S HOME - NIGHT

Stephen returns to his door with money and a rifle. John Brown and Stephen embrace.

EXT. BROWN HOME - MORNING

John Brown stands outside his home with his sons and wife. Jason Brown is carrying several rifles and can be heard loading them in the wagon.

Mary looks at her son here eyes filled with tears. Her mouth moves to speak but she cannot find the words.

Oliver however looks angry. A mixed feeling of anger and disappointment.

OLIVER

I am not a child anymore, you
taught me how to defend myself.

John Brown looks at his son and smiles. He enters his home and returns with several more rifles and loads them into the wagon.

OLIVER

Answer me. I can help. I just need
to be given a chance.

A tear swells in Oliver's eyes.

JOHN BROWN

And who would look after your
mother and sister when we are gone?

John Brown touches his son's face warmly.

OLIVER

Is that what you think of me as a
housemaid?

John Brown looks fiercely at his son.

JOHN BROWN

I leave you behind because I love
you. And I could not bear knowing
that if violence were to occur I
could lose all my sons.

John Brown pauses, almost crying.

JOHN BROWN

I love your mother as well and
while I have taken Jason from her
now. I could not as well take her
youngest from her.

John Brown embraces his son and then enters the wagon followed by Jason.

EXT. BROWN HOME - CONTINUOUS

John and Jason Brown drive away on the wagon.

EXT. KANSAS - DAY

John Brown and his son ride into the Kansas territory. The town is quiet with few people in the streets.

EXT. OWEN'S FARM - DAY

They pull their wagon into a disheveled looking farm. The roof of the house is collapsing and the fence is torn down.

INT. WAGON - DAY

John Brown and his son exchange looks. They stop the wagon outside the house and dismount.

EXT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY

Owen exits his house and greets his father and his brother with a reserved smile.

His lip is slightly swollen.

JASON

Your lip.

Owen shakes his head clearly embarrassed.

OWEN

It is nothing.

John Brown gestures to Owen's face and roof then looks back at his son.

JOHN BROWN

Let's see my daughter and grandson.

Owen leads the group into the home.

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY

John Brown cradles his newborn grandson while Owen, Jessica, and Jason talk.

EXT. OWEN'S HOME - MORNING

Owen and Jason exit the home while looking around for their father.

OWEN

Pa!

Jason walks into the field.

JASON

Father!

JOHN BROWN

Stop yelling and start working on the fence.

Owen and Jason look up to see their father fixing the roof.

OWEN

I feel you are too old to be up there.

Owen and Jason laugh.

JOHN BROWN

I am still young enough to give you a strong spanking.

John Brown laughs along with his sons.

JOHN BROWN

Tools are in back of the wagon.

The brothers grab the tools and head to the fence. John Brown continues to hammer away.

EXT. OWEN'S HOME- DAY

John Brown and his sons are looking at their work. The roof is fixed and the fence surrounding the house is mended. The grass is no longer a dirty brown but a light green.

John Brown pats his sons' shoulders.

JOHN BROWN

Now, there is proper home to raise my grandson.

INT. OWEN'S HOME- DAY

John Brown sits at the table with Jessica, a pale faced woman, with blue eyes and dirty blond hair.

JOHN BROWN

How has the move west sat with you?

Jessica looks away at her baby sleeping then back at John Brown.

JESSICA

Well, I reckon we have managed. It is much different from home you see. I just did not expect these clashes.

Jessica pauses.

JESSICA

And the incident with Owen at the polling station-

Jessica brings her hand to her mouth.

JESSICA

I... I must support him. He wants to provide for us. We will be safe here.

Jason and Owen enter the house with a look of stress painted on their face. Jason gestures to his father to leave the table. John Brown pats Jessica's hand and leaves.

EXT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY

JOHN BROWN

What is it?

OWEN

There is talk in town of slavery men marching on Lawrenceville.

JOHN BROWN

Do we know if their is any truth to these words?

OWEN

I have only heard whispers from worried folks in town.

JASON

What of this town's mayor, surely
he would have some knowledge.

OWEN

We do not have a mayor; the man in
charge is only the town leader.

JASON

What is the difference?

Owen scratches his head and Jason shoves him lightly.

OWEN

Ja-

JOHN BROWN

Where does he live Owen?

Owen leads his father and brother to Town leader's home.

EXT. TOWN - CONTINUOUS

They walk through the town until reaching the Town leader's
home.

They knock on the door.

JEFFREY, age 60, a tall man, with patches of grey hair,
opens the door for the group.

INT. JEFFREY'S HOME - DAY

OWEN

We have heard rumors that slave men
are moving to attack Lawrenceville,
is this true?

JEFFREY

Well, yes. But they are not coming
here, I have made sure of that.

Jeffrey takes his long pipe from his drawer and puts it to
his mouth. A small puff of smoke filters the air.

JOHN BROWN

Is that your only concern? Do you
not care of the safety of the
people of Lawrenceville?

He removes pipe and smiles at John Brown.

JEFFREY

And what would you have me do?

John Brown looks angrily at Jeffrey.

JOHN BROWN

Gather men to help defend the city!

JEFFREY

Ha. My concern is for the people in this settlement.

Jeffrey gestures at his surroundings.

JEFFREY

Do I appear to have a standing army at my disposal? Ha. We could barely defend this settlement if those men came here.

Jeffrey gets up from his chair.

JEFFREY

And I will tell you one more thing. These clashes do not lead to anything but more violence. Nothing will be solved if you try anything foolish.

John Brown points his finger in Jeffrey's face.

JOHN BROWN

Coward.

They leave Jeffrey's home.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

JOHN BROWN

Owen, go to the homes of any abolitionists you know and tell them we aim to arrive in Lawrenceville by morning.

Tell them if they are willing, I could use their help.

Owen nods and runs off.

JASON

Father, do you mean too-

JOHN BROWN

Yes, I do.

You do not have to travel with me
if you feel-

JASON

You know I am my father's son.

John Brown looks at his son lovingly.

INT. OWEN'S HOME - NIGHT

John Brown sits at a table with his sons and a group of other men. The other men include: JOSHUA (age 40), FRED (age 35), ERIC (age 22), and ABRAM (age 50), a mulatto.

JOSHUA

We have heard they'll be marching
in mostly on foot. They'll be there
at nightfall.

FRED

Bastards are drinking in
neighboring town, hooting and
hollering about sackin
Lawrenceville.

John Brown strokes his beard. He looks at the map that is spread on the table. He touches a stretch on the map.

JOHN BROWN

Here.

Jason looks more intently at the map.

FRED

Now, I ain't one to show any
disrespect, but our defense should
be in city limits. We go where your
pointing they'll cut us down.

John Brown shakes his head.

JOHN BROWN

We're tasked with protecting the
settlers. If we hide in city limits
we'll be exposing them.

John Brown points to the stretch on the map again.

JOHN BROWN

Here. There is a long stretch of woods that will hide us well. The trees will also hide our numbers.

Jason nods in approval. Owen looks worried.

JOSEPH

They outnumber us by at least ten men, if they open fire, we'll be killed.

JOHN BROWN

We will take them by surprise, they will surrender.

Fred LAUGHS.

JOHN BROWN

The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.

The group bow their heads.

GROUP

Amen.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

A gang of twenty-five men walk through a dark wooded path. The men are led by Burke, and the Ringleader, who are on horse back.

The men continue to SING and LAUGH drunkenly. John Brown and his men watch intently from twenty yards away. They are hidden on both sides of the wooded path.

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

The pro-slavery men continue down the path, with each step taking them closer to Brown's men.

BURKE

Now, settle down here. We're getting close to the settlement.

John Brown raises his fist and exits the woods. He cuts off Burke and points the rifle at his chest. Burke's horse rears and he falls to the ground.

Suddenly, Joseph's men come out from the opposite woods rifles pointed.

MALE VOICE
We're surrounded!

Jason fires a shot in the air.

MALE VOICE
They're shooting us.

JOHN BROWN
Tell your men to surrender and
we'll spare your lives.

Burke spits near Brown's feet.

BURKE
Men! Lay down your arms.

Burke stumbles to his feet. He LAUGHS.

BURKE
This doesn't change nothing.

JOHN BROWN
Just as you led these drunken men
here, lead them out.

Burke mounts his horse and turns around. His men follow him guns at their backs.

EXT. LAWRENCEVILLE TOWN - NIGHT

The town is vibrant and full of life with FOLK MUSIC playing in the background.

Joseph and his men dance with various women while John Brown and his sons look on smiling.

The Free state hotel stands glistening in the background.

EXT. FREE STATE HOTEL - MORNING

John Brown stands across from a prominent LEADER in the Lawrenceville settlement. His sons are behind him unloading several rifles from the wagon.

JOHN BROWN
We will leave you our rifles-

LEADER

(hungover)

Too kind of you sir! But do not worry, those cowards will not be back, and if they do, we will be prepared.

The Leader slaps John Brown on the back.

LEADER

Ha. Ha. Bunch a Nancy's if you ask me.

John Brown smiles and shakes his hand.

INT. OWEN'S HOME - DAY

The Brown boys and Jessica sit around the table. Jessica looks worried while she cradles her child.

JESSICA

What is to stop them from wanting revenge?

She looks down at her child.

JESSICA

If they know it was you... they could come here.

Owen walks over to his wife and kisses her gently.

OWEN

Don't worry sweetheart.

The baby CRIES and Owen takes him from his wife. John Brown glances at his grandson then out towards Kansas.

EXT. FOREST PATH-LAWRENCEVILLE - DAY

A group of men from Lawrenceville stand hidden amongst the trees just outside city limits. The MEN talk amongst themselves, rifles on shoulders.

Suddenly, the SOUND of YELLS and horses.

WHITE MALE

It looks like hundreds of them!

The worried looking men aim their rifles at the fast riding men on horseback. None fire.

EXT. LAWRENCEVILLE KANSAS - CONTINUOUS

A group of free state settlers and abolitionists stand in front of the Free State hotel. The crowd is gathered around an ABOLITIONIST, age 50, who is speaking.

ABOLITIONIST

We must not be intimidated by these ruffians- a free state is important for us all, especially you small farmers.

Suddenly, hundreds of Missourians and pro-slavery settlers ride into town. Many carry guns others torches. They are led by Burke and the Ringleader.

BURKE

Ha. Looks like your protectors are gone. And what is this? Ha. Ha. Look what we got here men, a free state rally.

The men laugh.

RING LEADER

I like to call em Nigger rallies.

An even heartier laugh from men.

BURKE

Now, now. I don't see any niggers here. I do see a mighty fine hotel though.

Burke squints his eyes.

BURKE

They call it the Free state?

Burke motions to a MAN who is carrying a torch.

The Free state hotel is now on fire, with men and women running out of it SCREAMING. The pro-slavery supporters move to stores along side of the hotel. They begin to loot and set fire to the other stores..

A family is caught inside the hotel and their SCREAMS are heard by the crowd.

The ABOLITIONIST reaches his arm to his waist, but Burke notices the movement and pulls his pistol.

BURKE

Now, now you wouldn't want to lose
your life here boy.

Burke continues to point his gun at the frightened crowd of people while he mounts his horse. The other men follow his lead and they ride off.

The frightened circle of men, women, and children look on as their town burns.

EXT. TOWN HALL - NIGHT

John Brown and his sons walk towards the town hall building, in the middle of town.

Before they enter the building, they hear the YELLS and MURMURS of the people inside.

They enter.

INT. TOWN HALL - NIGHT

MALE VOICE

I heard they burned Lawrenceville
to the ground!

FEMALE VOICE

And some chillun were killed in the
hotel.

John Brown and his sons sit down while the WHISPERS and MURMURS continue. Jeffrey, a tall white man with a patchy grey beard, gestures at the town folks to settle down.

JEFFREY

We do not know the extent of the
damage to Lawrence. The only
certainty is the burning of
the hotel.

FEMALE VOICE

Liar! The whole town was sacked!

The MURMURS and WHISPERS of the townspeople grow louder. A short MAN, age 35, stands up and points at the Town leader.

MAN

They may come here, do the same to
us. What's to stop them from-

John Brown stands up.

MAN

Sit down! You're the reason, we're
in this trouble. You and your sons!

John Brown gestures at the man to sit down.

JOHN BROWN

Many of you know me and many others
do not. My name is John Brown and I
am the father of Owen Brown, who
has lived among you for months now.

(a beat)

This man speaks with anger of my
actions, but I ask you of its
merits. When has protecting liberty
been frowned upon in this great
nation? When has acting in defense
of the weak been look at with
disdain?

(a beat)

I have heard enough of your fears
of attack, of your cowardice in the
face of the great threats to your
life and liberty.

(a beat)

I must ask what shall come with the
resolution of this meeting? The
surrender of our principles?

(a beat)

Shall we vote for this state to be
slave or shall we finally act to
stop this aggression?

The short MAN stands up once more.

MAN

What shall you do? I have heard
that Senator Sumner was beaten when
he spoke of our plight.

John Brown growls at the Man.

JOHN BROWN

I am no politician, I represent no
party, and I am not bound by their
laws and constraints. Something
must be done to show these
barbarians that, we, too, have
rights.

(a beat)

Any man with principle, who wants
to stand for his rights, and the
rights of his wife and children can
join us.

John Brown pats his sons on the shoulder and they exit the meeting.

INT. OWEN HOME - NIGHT

John Brown and his sons sit around the table with a group of several other men. One of the men, Joseph, a broad shouldered man with rosy cheeks, and a sympathetic face, is the leader of the other men.

JOSHUA

We will be back tomorrow night, you
have our word.

John Brown reaches to shake his hand.

JOHN BROWN

Your word is all I need.

A serious and solemn John Brown shakes the hands of the remaining men. His face looks tired.

EXT. OWEN HOME - NIGHT

Joshua leads a group of men towards the Brown home; they carry broadswords.

John and Jason Brown sit in the front seat of the wagon while Owen waits in the carriage.

Joshua and his group pile into the wagon as it pulls away from the house.

EXT. DARK ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The wagon slowly rides through the free state territory towards the pro-slavery territory.

The dark night is dark with the moon covered by the clouds.

EXT. BURKE AND RINGLEADER'S HOME - NIGHT

In the cover of darkness, John Brown and his sons, armed with broadswords, leave the wagon and slowly head to the Burke home.

EXT. BURKE'S LOG CABIN - NIGHT

Joshua and his group go the Ringleader's neighboring log cabin.

John Brown and his sons' pry open the door and it CREAKS. They make their way to the bedroom of Burke and his sons.

John Brown awakens Burke while his broadsword is pointed at his neck. Burke looks up at Brown frightened.

BURKE
(stammering)
What? What is this?

John Brown leans his face closer to Burke. His eyes glisten against the blade. The Wife YELLS.

JOHN BROWN
(to wife)
Shhh. Stay here.

John Brown nudges Burke with his broadsword.

JOHN BROWN
Get up.

John Brown motions to Burke to leave the room.

EXT. BURKE HOME - NIGHT

Burke and his two sons are brought out of their home with swords to their necks.

Joshua and his men are standing nearby with the Ringleader and his only son also at sword point.

Burke now stands tall and looks over at his sons confidently.

BURKE
Now, what you plan on doing?

John Brown stands unflinching. The broadsword still pointed at Burke's throat.

BURKE
I know you don't plan on killing us, else we'd already be dead.
(a beat)
Ha. I ain't a dummy.

Burke spits to the ground close to John Brown's feet just as the slave catcher did.

John Brown stares past Burke, deep in thought.

EXT. CARRIAGE - DAY

John Brown sees Joseph being chased in the woods by slave catchers. He hears his screams as the dogs catch him.

EXT. CARRIAGE - DAY

John Brown sees the hanging body of the black man surrounded by the mob of white people. He hears the man's SCREAMS.

EXT. PRINTING PRESS - DAY

John Brown sees the hanging body of his friend. He hears his own SCREAMS.

EXT. BURKE HOME - NIGHT

John Brown looks into Burke's contemptible face and lets out a SCREAM.

John Brown brings down his broadsword across Burke's chest slicing him open. Burke SCREAMS in pain.

In his peripherals, John Brown can see Abram killing the Ringleader.

Burke lies on the ground with his eyes focused on his door. He is bleeding profusely and crawls to his door. John Brown stands over him, gun in hand.

BAM.

An expressionless John Brown stands erect looking at his sons while drips of blood fall from his broadsword.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN - DAY

John Brown stops the wagon and lets out Joshua and his men. A nod of recognition is shared between the two men. The men shake Owen's hand before fully exiting the wagon.

John Brown looks at his sons who sit in silence.

JOHN BROWN
What you saw that night-

John Brown pauses and his sons look at him intently, somewhat scared.

JOHN BROWN
It was as if I was watching myself
outside my body.

They sit in silence.

JASON
Did you intend to kill Burke, when
we rode out that night?

John Brown looks at Jason then back at the road.

JOHN BROWN
I cannot-
(a beat)
I hoped to scare him, to keep him
from attacking in the future, but
when I saw him. All the past
memories rushed through me. I
realized that only violence could
stop him.

Jason nods but Owen and Oliver look on.

EXT. TOWN - CONTINUOUS

John Brown continues to lead wagon into town in silence.

Jason looks puzzled noticing the black smoke polluting the air.

As they ride closer to Owen's home, the black smoke gets thicker. A look of fear strikes their faces.

OWEN
Hurry!

The wagon wildly makes its way through town until reaching Owen's home. The flames have overtaken his log cabin and have begun to spread to the field.

A group of people stand in front of the home admiring the fire. Owen flings himself from the wagon and pushes his way through the crowd towards the flames.

OWEN
JESSICA!

Owen is tackled to the ground by Jason. He flings his elbows at his brother hitting Jason in the head. Owen looks up at his burning home, tears in his eyes.

OWEN
NOOOO.

Owen struggles away from his brother and turns to confront his father.

OWEN
(frantic)
My wife, my child...For what? I
would rather have them then...

Owen breaks down into tears. John Brown has tears in his eyes. He glances at his son then at the burning cabin.

He stands alone and stares at the growing flames.

EXT. CHURCH - AFTERNOON

A disheveled John Brown walks into the white doors of the town's Church.

Upon entering, he hears the CRY of a young baby boy. A woman is cradling her baby towards the front of the church.

John Brown walks in a daze towards the woman; his footsteps ECHO through the church.

Jessica turns around and looks sadly at John Brown. He runs to her and they embrace.

JESSICA
He won't stop crying.

JOHN BROWN
(bewildered)
What?

Jessica lifts her child in her arms.

JESSICA
I've tried everything; he won't
stop crying.

JOHN BROWN

I'm sorry...

JESSICA

I told Owen, I told him they would
attack us.

JOHN BROWN

How did you manage-

JESSICA

We were here, I was praying for
your safe return.

Tears are streaming down her face.

JESSICA

I left... We left... to go back
home and a group of men were in the
yard. They were looking for you...
When they couldn't find anyone,
they set the cabin on fire..

John Brown shakes his head in disbelief.

JOHN BROWN

Jessica, Owen thinks that you and
the baby-

John Brown chokes on his words.

JOHN BROWN

He thinks you're dead. I must go
and tell him that you're here...

Jessica looks deeply in her father-in law's eyes.

JESSICA

I can't stay here any longer.

JOHN BROWN

Jessica...

JESSICA

No- I won't. There is nothing for
us here. Please, tell Owen that we
should move back. Please.

Jessica now is cradling her baby in one arm and holding John
Brown's wrist in the other.

JOHN BROWN
 (stammering)
 I cannot begin too... I am sorry.

John Brown takes his grandson from her shaking arms. He rocks him from side to side while looking sadly at Jessica.

EXT. OWEN'S BURNED HOME - MORNING

John Brown sits in the front of a large wagon. He is staring directly at the burned home, with Jason to his right. All of their possessions and belongings are in the back of the wagon.

Owen Brown and Jessica are in a wagon behind them. With one more look back to their destroyed property; they ride off.

EXT. ROAD TO SPRINGFIELD - CONTINUOUS

John Brown and his sons ride through large plantations and see black men and women picking cotton. In passing, they hear the slave songs of men and women picking cotton.

FEMALE VOICE
 Wade in the water.
 Waaade in the water, children.
 Wade in the water.
 God's gonna trouble the water.

SCREEN TEXT: TWO YEARS LATER

INT. BROWN HOME - MORNING

John Brown is sleeping while Mary attempts to wake him. John Brown wakes up startled.

MARY
 John, John.

John's face looks white.

MARY
 Are you alright. It looks as if you
 have seen a ghost.

JOHN BROWN
No, no. I'm fine. Did I talk in my
sleep again?

Mary smiles.

MARY
Not as much as usual.

John Brown rubs his his eyes.

MARY
Hurry, we need to be at the Church
by 11. You know how Oliver gets.

JOHN BROWN
He is a good boy.

MARY
Like his father. Now, hurry, I laid
out your clothing.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

John Brown looks at himself in the mirror. His hair has
greyed considerably and wrinkles have begin to crack around
his eyes and forehead. He is cleanly shaven.

He tightens his bow-tie while walking out of the bathroom.

Mary, wearing a light pink dress, looks at him and smiles.

MARY
How do I look?

JOHN BROWN
Beautiful.

Mary blushes.

MARY
Stop it. I am asking seriously. How
does the dress fit me? Is it too
much?

JOHN BROWN
I think it looks fine.

Mary smiles and they walk out of their home.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

John Brown and Mary walk to the Church.

INT. SPRINGFIELD CHURCH - DAY

John Brown and Mary arrive at the Church and see their sons: Jason and Owen standing next to their wives.

Jason's wife ELIZABETH, age 35, has her arms locked with Jason. She looks at him lovingly.

John Brown embraces his sons and looks for his grandson. PHILLIP, now two years old, hides behind his mother and his father. John Brown pats him on the head lovingly.

Oliver rushes out into the lobby.

OLIVER
(looking at brothers)
What are you guys doing here? You
should be at the altar.

Oliver looks at his father and mother nervously then kisses them.

OLIVER
Sorry for this, I am just-

JASON
Oliver, is it true that Julia is
having second thoughts?

Jason and Owen glance at each other with smiles on their faces.

JOHN BROWN
(looking at Jason and Owen)
Go to the altar.

Jason and Oliver leave the lobby with Oliver quickly following.

John Brown leads his wife and his daughter-in laws inside the church. They make their way to the first pew, in front of his sons.

John Brown looks to his left and sees his friend and business partner, Simon Perkins. He nods and smiles at him.

INT. SPRINGFIELD CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

The Bride walks down the aisle and stands across from her fiancée. The PRIEST looks down on them smiling.

PRIEST

Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of this company, to join together this Man and this Woman in holy Matrimony. Into this holy estate these two persons present come now to be joined until death. If any man can show just cause, why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter for ever hold his peace.

The Priest pauses.

Oliver, wilt thou have this Woman to be thy wedded wife, to live together in the holy estate of Matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honour, and keep her in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto her, so long as you shall live?

OLIVER

I will.

PRIEST

Julia, wilt thou have this Man to be thy wedded husband, to live together in the holy estate of Matrimony? Wilt thou love him, comfort him, honour, and keep him in sickness and in health; and, forsaking all others, keep thee only unto him, so long as he shall live?

JULIA

I will.

PRIEST

By the power vested in me by our Lord, I now pronounce thee husband and wife.

Oliver kisses Julia and the crowd CLAPS and JEERS. They walk down the aisle together while John Brown smiles lovingly at his son.

INT. BROWN HOME - MORNING

John Brown tussles and turns in his sleep. Mary, accustomed to his sleep terrors, is unbothered and is fast asleep.

John Brown lifts his head up quickly. He pants while in a sweat.

John Brown gets up from his bed and goes into his kitchen. He moves quietly to not disturb his wife.

EXT. TOWN - CONTINUOUS

John Brown walks down the street to the newspaper stand. He pays for the large stack of newspapers and walks back to his house.

INT. BROWN HOME - MORNING

John Brown sits at his table and reads The Abolitionist Paper. The title: "Clashes in Kansas Continue" catches his eye.

Mary walks down the stairs.

MARY
You're up early.

John Brown smiles.

JOHN BROWN
I am going to tend to the sheep
early this morning.

Mary smiles.

MARY
Is Simon already in the office?

JOHN BROWN
No, he should not arrive for
several hours.

She sits down next to her husband.

MARY

I know you do not like to discuss
it but you seem bothered-

JOHN BROWN

I'm fine Mary.

MARY

You don't hear yourself at
night...It has gotten worse since
you returned.

John Brown shakes his head.

JOHN BROWN

I do not want to burden you with
this, it is nothing I cannot come
to grips with.

John Brown takes a sip of his tea. Mary looks at him with a
concerned look. He touches her hand gently.

They continue to sit in silence.

EXT. FARM SPRINGFIELD - DAY

John Brown stands amongst the sheep in his farm. The naves
of the sheep ring out. John Brown is examining the remains
of an unshered sheep.

John Brown sits next to a naying sheep and skins it of its
wool. The sun beams down on him and while he gazes around
the farm.

John Brown peers into the field and sees his younger sons
tending the sheep and the other cattle. The past memories of
working with his sons flows through him.

He then gazes into the field and sees the faces of Black
slaves working the fields the WHIP of their masters at their
back.

INT. WOOL SALES SHOP - DAY

John Brown sits alone and dies the skinned wool. He
continues this for several hours until Simon Perkins arrives
in the store.

SIMON

An early start this morning?

JOHN BROWN

Yes, I found myself awake.

Simon nods and smiles. He takes inventory of available wool to sell.

People begin entering the sales shop. A woman gestures at a piece of wool.

WOMAN

I love the color of this one.

The woman reaches to touch the wool.

WOMAN

Soft.

SIMON

That will cost \$1.50 cents Ma'am.

The Woman nods and hands over money.

John Brown looks up at Simon.

JOHN BROWN

We are charging more...

SIMON

Yes, we will have to discuss that.

Several more people enter the store ending the conversation. John Brown continues dying the wool.

INT. WOOL SALES SHOP - NIGHT

Simon Perkins starts to close the shop and a tired John Brown gets up to leave.

SIMON

John.

John Brown turns around from the door.

SIMON

We need to discuss the business.

JOHN BROWN

What is it?

SIMON

Business has slowed... Unless we are able to gain new contracts-

JOHN BROWN
Why didn't you tell me this
earlier?

Simon looks down then back up.

SIMON
Things have been... I didn't want
to trouble you. Anyway, cheer up
lad, we have an offer to buy the
business.

JOHN BROWN
You're are not considering?

SIMON
This is our best option... barring
some miracle.

John Brown shakes his head and exits the store. He walks
next door to his home.

INT. BROWN HOME - NIGHT

John Brown enters his home. The table is set and Mary is
standing over the stove. She smiles back at John Brown.

John Brown quietly sets the table.

MARY
Jason, was by the house for supper.

JOHN BROWN
How is he? We have good boys.

Mary sits down.

MARY
He is fine... I did ask him too
come.

JOHN BROWN
Hm.

MARY
He told me of the... the struggles
in Kansas.

JOHN BROWN
He did?

Mary shakes her sadly.

MARY
 (abruptly)
 You have to leave this... I can't
 take this much longer. What it's
 doing to you... to us...

Mary touches John Brown's arm.

MARY
 (frantic)
 We have four beautiful children,
 two beautiful grandchildren. Leave
 that life behind you... just leave
 it.

JOHN BROWN
 You think I can merely forget the
 things I have seen?

John Brown gets up from the table. He clutches his head.

JOHN BROWN
 They will never leave my head.
 Every day I think about them. They
 itch away at me. Whenever I close
 my eyes... all the things I've
 seen... that I've done.

He pauses.

JOHN BROWN
 My friends lost...

MARY
 John...

JOHN BROWN
 I will never stop thinking of them.

John Brown sits back down and looks at his wife. A sad look
 of understanding is exchanged.

EXT. FARM - AFTERNOON

John Brown finishes shearing the wool from another sheep. He
 brings the group of skinned wool into the sales shop then
 leaves.

EXT. TOWN - CONTINUOUS

John Brown grabs the abolitionist newspaper and looks at the headline. The headline reads: "Abolitionists victorious: Kansas declared free state"

John Brown looks on while the newspaper remains firmly in his hand.

INT. SPRINGFIELD CHURCH - DAY

John Brown sits inside a filled Church. The news of the abolitionist victory has led to great excitement and enthusiasm in Springfield.

The Church gets quiet as Garrison walks to the front of the church.

GARRISON

I hope, by now, all of you have heard of our victory in Kansas.

APPLAUSE.

GARRISON

A thanks should be given to our brother John Brown and his sons.

The group CLAPS loudly. John Brown nods.

GARRISON

Now, to present matters. We must discuss the continued push back of slavery and our plans for its eradication.

APPLAUSE.

GARRISON

With the help of Frederick Douglas we have organized a Constitutional Convention to discuss our tenets as an organization and our plans to organize continued opposition to slavery. The Convention will take place, in our town hall, next week.

APPLAUSE.

John Brown looks at his fellow abolitionists with an excited look. He stands up.

JOHN BROWN

Garrison, if I may, I would like to speak at the convention.

Garrison smiles.

GARRISON

Of course, I was hoping you would.

INT. TOWN HALL - DAY

The Town hall is twice the size of the church and every seat is filled. The hall is filled with an even proportion of blacks and whites. Many fugitive slaves are also in attendance.

In front of the Town hall, two black men and Garrison stand in front of the crowd. John Brown and his sons sit in the first row and wait for the convention to begin.

GARRISON

We have met together for the achievement of an enterprise, a goal that far transcends the law of the land and whose moral truth moves us like a physical force.

Hence we maintain- that in view of the civil and religious privileges of this nation, the guilt of its oppression is unequalled by any other on the face of the earth;-and therefore we maintain that every vestige to slavery must be undone and the oppressed must be set free.

A round of APPLAUSE.

A FREEMAN, age 30, with a scar on his face, steps forward.

FREEMAN

We must further maintain that no man has a right to enslave or imbrute his brother-to hold or acknowledge him, for one moment, as a piece of merchandise- to keep back his hire by fraud-or to brutalize his mind by denying him the means of intellectual, social and moral improvement.

The Freeman pauses and looks towards the crowd. His voice chokes slightly.

FREEMAN

The right to enjoy liberty is inalienable. To invade it, is to usurp the prerogative of Jehovah. Every man has a right to his own body- to the products of his own labor- to the protection of law- and to the common advantages of society.

A round of APPLAUSE.

The Freeman steps backward and another black man, WALKER, age 40, with all white hair, steps forward.

WALKER

We further believe and affirm that all persons of color who possess the qualifications beneficial to society ought to be admitted to forthwith to the enjoyment of the same privileges. Black men and women must be afforded the same paths of preferment, of wealth, as their white counterparts.

Walker nods at Garrison and steps backwards.

GARRISON

We have also come to agreement that while slavery is a crime, we fully recognize the sovereignty of each state, to legislate exclusively on the subject of slavery.

John Brown looks startled and looks at his sons.

Garrison looks unapologetic at the crowd.

GARRISON

We concede that Congress, has no right to interfere with any of the slave states. But we do maintain that Congress has a right, and is solemnly bound to suppress the domestic slave trade between several States, and to abolish slavery in those newly formed territories.

Garrison pauses.

GARRISON

We also maintain that, at the present time, the highest obligations are resting upon the people of the free states to remove slavery by moral and political action, as prescribed by the Constitution of the United States.

Garrison smiles and nods signifying the end of the articles.

The Crowd smiles at one another and stands CLAPPING.

A startled John Brown does not clap; he waits for silence.

INT. TOWN HALL - CONTINUOUS

John Brown remains standing as the CLAPPING stops and the crowd of people sits back down.

John Brown does not stand on the small stage, of the three men, but turns and directs the crowd.

JOHN BROWN

I apologize for my startled demeanor but it is only because I did not expect to hear such weak words spoken by brother Garrison.

A GASP from the crowd.

JOHN BROWN

We gather today, with the knowledge that Kansas has become a free territory, in large part, because of the active resistance on the part of brave abolitionists and other men of courage.

Do we believe that Kansas would have become free if we simply acted "politically" as Garrison has expressed?

John Brown's hands wave as he speaks.

JOHN BROWN

Our brother speaks of the Constitution and acting in ways in accordance to its laws.

John Brown pauses.

JOHN BROWN

But is it not our Constitution that states that: "All men are created equal, that they are endowed with their creator with certain unalienable rights, among these life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"

John Brown looks on at the crowd.

JOHN BROWN

Now who is it that must abide by the Constitution!

A man, we all know, once said "If there is no struggle there is no progress" Nothing is more true-

Frederick Douglass, who is sitting, in the second row rises to object.

DOUGLASS

It is true that I said those words, but I am unclear to what you are suggesting?

John Brown looks to an apprehensive Frederick Douglass.

JOHN BROWN

I will not reveal in full what I have come to realize. But what is self-evident is that slavery will not cease to exist simply by our political opposition.

John Brown takes a deep breath.

JOHN BROWN

What I have seen in my life is that active resistance is only way to end this corroding institution. I hope that all like minded people will join me in acting directly against the institution of slavery.

Jason looks up to his father. The Crowd faintly APPLAUDS. John Brown walks down the aisle and leaves. He is followed by Jason and then by Oliver and Owen.

Frederick Douglass stares down the aisle as they leave.

EXT. BROWN HOME - NIGHT

A group of six men stand huddled around each other. They stand less than five feet from John Brown's home.

Each man is white and roughly the same age. Their heads are tilted down suspiciously.

John Brown exits his home and joins them. EMERSON, age 60 has a long nose bearing spectacles, lifts his head slightly.

EMERSON

What is your plan John?

JOHN BROWN

Is it really best for you to fully know?

Emerson looks to the group. A short bald man, RALPH age 60, shakes his head.

RALPH

You cannot expect us to fund something we are not privy too?

JOHN BROWN

My hesitation to tell you is for your own protection.

The men look around and shake their heads in quasi agreement.

EMERSON

Can you at least tell us your general plan?

John Brown looks around. The town is silent; the light from his home illuminates his face.

JOHN BROWN

Nothing charms the American people as personal bravery. Think of the cases of the Haitian revolution and La Amistad. Blacks fighting to free themselves.

RALPH

Insurrection?

Ralph shakes his head.

RALPH

How do you expect to be successful?

The men in the circle glance at one another.

JOHN BROWN

Their thirst for freedom is strong.
If we can help free some from
bondage it will spread throughout
the south. Slave owners will run
from their plantations in fear.

Emerson smiles and the other men nod in agreement.

EMERSON

How much funds will you need?

JOHN BROWN

A hundred dollars or so...

RALPH

One hundred dollars!

EMERSON

Shhh.

JOHN BROWN

Anything you could spare would
greatly help. I imagine eighty
dollars may be enough.

The group search through their pockets and hand money to Emerson.

EMERSON

This is all we can give you now.
Contact me if it becomes evident
that you need more.

John Brown smiles at the men. They shake hands and walk away.

EXT. JOHN BROWN'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

A man walks toward the Brown home. The dark night hides his face. John Brown turns and sees the man approaching him.

It is Frederick Douglass.

JOHN BROWN

Frederick?

Frederick Douglass walks closer and he becomes fully visible.

JOHN BROWN

The meeting is over, what is it you want?

DOUGLASS

May I come inside?

John Brown nods and Douglass follows him into his home.

INT. JOHN BROWN'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

A candle is lit in the middle of dining room table while the wood burning in the fire place CRACKLES and slowly burns.

John Brown sits down and gestures to Douglass to do the same.

DOUGLASS

I am sorry to come here at such a late hour.

JOHN BROWN

It is no trouble.

DOUGLASS

You used my words at the Convention and I-

JOHN BROWN

Yes, I am sorry. I should not have used you in my argument.

DOUGLASS

That is not what worries me.

Douglass pauses and looks into Brown's eyes.

DOUGLASS

It is your intent on violence that troubles me.

John Brown gaffes.

JOHN BROWN

I intend no such thing.

DOUGLASS

Do you take me as a fool?

John Brown remains silent.

DOUGLASS

Do you see me as a coward for not wanting violence?

Douglass smiles.

DOUGLASS

Do you think that I do not want retribution?

John Brown is silent.

DOUGLASS

When I was a slave in Maryland, my Master Mr. Lloyd had an overseer who ruled over us slaves. His name was Mr. Severe.

Douglass laughs.

DOUGLASS

A fitting name.

Douglass scratches his black and white beard.

DOUGLASS

He was a cruel, cruel man. I once saw him whip a woman, causing her blood to run off her back for nearly an hour. He did this while her children wept at her feet, pleading for her release.

Douglass clenches his teeth.

DOUGLASS

He seemed to take pleasure in manifesting his fiendish barbarity. From the rising till the going down of the sun, he was cursing, raving, cutting, and slashing among the slaves on the field.

John Brown motions to speak but is cut off.

DOUGLASS

Now, do you think I would not do anything to make this man feel the pain that he causes so many of my brethren. Do you not think I have pondered the many ways in which I would hurt him?

JOHN BROWN

Then join me, help me free your
brethren.

DOUGLASS

What you intend will not succeed!
It can only end in the death of
yourself and any man, Black or
White who joins you.

Mary quietly walks down the stairs. She sits on the steps
and listens.

JOHN BROWN

Ha. How can you suggest that
without knowing what I intend to
do?

DOUGLASS

What is your plan?

John Brown hunches over and looks intently into Douglass's
eyes.

JOHN BROWN

In Virginia, there is an arsenal at
Harper's Ferry.

Mary GASPS quietly. John Brown looks towards the stairs but
does not investigate. Frederick Douglass looks startled but
lets Brown proceed.

JOHN BROWN

If we seize the armory we can
distribute the arms to slaves
throughout the south, liberating
plantations by our sheer numbers.

Frederick Douglass stands up abruptly and places his hands
through his hair.

DOUGLASS

This plan would be considered an
attack on the Federal government.
Do you realize this?

JOHN BROWN

Yes.

DOUGLASS

(incredulously)

You'll never get out of there
alive; the whole country will be
against you.

JOHN BROWN
God will be with me.

Douglass shakes his head and turns to leave.

DOUGLASS
I admire you, but they will kill
you if you attempt this. Please...

John Brown shakes his head in disagreement.

JOHN BROWN
Slavery will never end in this
country without force. You know it
to be true.

Douglass shakes his head emphatically.

JOHN BROWN
How do you see slavery ending?

DOUGLASS
I-

JOHN BROWN
Do you believe slave holders, after
being beaten in argument, will
simply release their slaves?

Ha. There is no resolution without
the loss of blood. Black and White.

Douglass looks stark. A sudden realization runs through him.
He nods slightly.

DOUGLASS
You may be right.

Douglass looks at John Brown sadly then leaves his home.

INT. JOHN BROWN'S HOME - MORNING

John Brown wakes up to see Mary nervously pacing in their
bedroom.

JOHN BROWN
What is wrong? Did I startle you in
my sleep?

Mary ignores him. She continues to pace. Then she turns.

MARY
You will not take my sons.

JOHN BROWN
Mary?

MARY
You will not them with you.

John Brown gets up and walks towards her.

JOHN BROWN
Take them where?

MARY
Do not toy with me! I heard you
last night.

John Brown sighs.

JOHN BROWN
They are my sons as much as yours.

John Brown gestures for Mary to hold her response.

JOHN BROWN
I will not ask them to join me.

John Brown walks towards Mary and holds her wrists gently in
her hands.

JOHN BROWN
And what of me? Will you not plead
for me to stay?

Mary looks up sadly at her husband.

MARY
I have cried enough over you... How
could you even think of this?

Mary sobs.

MARY
You know our sons will-

John Brown shakes his head and grabs Mary's hand.

JOHN BROWN
Look at my hands.

Mary notices that they are shaking.

JOHN BROWN

This how they will always stay... I can't sleep. I am... I see Elijah hanging in my sleep... I see the faces of the men and women whipped on the plantation fields.

(A beat.)

Joseph... I think of his son not growing up with his father... I do not know what to do Mary! Shall I live out my life with them buried in my conscious?

Mary stands quietly sobs and John Brown walks out of the room.

JOHN BROWN

The plan.

John Brown looks down then back at Mary.

JOHN BROWN

The plan will succeed and I will see you again my love.

He exits the room.

EXT. BROWN HOME - NIGHT

John Brown walks outside of his home to his carriage. When suddenly his sons appear.

JASON

Father, where are you headed at this late hour?

John Brown smiles at Jason and pats him on the cheek.

JOHN BROWN

Don't you have your own children to look after?

OWEN

God forbid, our children would ever be this foolish.

John Brown looks at each of his sons.

JOHN BROWN

What do you know?

OLIVER
 (soft voice)
 Only what Frederick Douglass, told
 us Pa.

John Brown shakes his head and enters his carriage.

JASON
 Father, I want to help you.

Owen looks at him startled.

JOHN BROWN
 I will hear nothing of it.

OLIVER
 I want to help as well.

JOHN BROWN
 Your mother-

JASON
 This decision does not concern her.
 Only us.

A deep sense of pride wells up in John Brown's chest.

JOHN BROWN
 I will be gone a week gathering
 forces, if you still want to join.
 I will not stop you.

John Brown rides away.

EXT. ROAD TO KANSAS - DAY

John Brown rides to Kansas and the memories of his past voyages to slave territories rush through his head. He passes a large plantation and sees Black faces picking cotton.

He turns and appears to see the face of the same black woman singing the old negro spiritual. Her voice overwhelms him.

FEMALE VOICE
 (V.O)
 Wade in the water.

 Wade in the water, children.

 Wade in the water.

 God's gonna trouble the waaater.

INT. JOSHUA'S HOME - NIGHT

The Room is filled with ten men including John Brown. The men consist mostly of those who helped stop the initial sacking of Lawrenceville.

Joshua lights his pipe and the spark of light illuminates his face and the room. He puffs out the smoke and it filters throughout the room.

JOSHUA

Now, how many weapons you think they got in the armory?

JOHN BROWN

100,000 muskets and rifles.

A GASP from the room. Fred approaches John Brown.

FRED

So we won't have to go far you reckon. In the south I mean.

John Brown nods his head.

JOHN BROWN

We have seen from the Negroes in Haiti, and in isolated parts here, that they have fight. If we arm them they will liberate their brethren.

Joshua lights his pipe again illuminating the room.

ERIC

I don't know this ain't like fighting against Burke and his men. This is serious business. I don't know if I will go down there with you Brown.

JOHN BROWN

I understand but I don't ask you to do this for me. I ask you to act for your brethren toiling in languish.

John Brown gets up and shakes Joshua's hand.

JOHN BROWN

I leave tomorrow morning, I hope I will have your answer then.

EXT. KANSAS HOTEL - MORNING

John Brown exits his hotel and is met by Joshua. Joshua reaches out his hand and John Brown shakes it firmly.

JOSHUA

We will not be the only ones?

JOHN BROWN

No. The abolitionists in Springfield have purchased a farmhouse in Maryland, meet us there on the 15th of October.

Joshua nods while John Brown gets into his wagon and rides back to Springfield.

EXT. SPRINGFIELD - AFTERNOON

John Brown pulls the wagon into his home and lets out a tired grunt. The traveling has begun to take its toll. The bags underneath his eyes are noticeable and his beard is considerably long.

As he exits his wagon, the door to his home opens. His sons exit the house and walk to their father.

JASON

We have decided.

Jason pauses and looks to his brothers.

JOHN BROWN

Does your mother know?

They nod.

OWEN

She blames you.

John Brown sighs.

JASON

We recruited three black-

John Brown cuts off his son and embraces them firmly. It is a sort of fatalistic embrace.

JOHN BROWN

We will discuss strategy later. I need to rest.

They nod and walk away.

INT. JOHN BROWN'S HOME - NIGHT

When John Brown enters his home, Mary starts to weep and runs away. A tired John Brown sits at his table. A blank expression on his face.

John Brown continues to sit in silence. He hears Mary's sobs then suddenly tears begin to flow down his face. He dabs at them while the door opens. His grandson, Phillip, runs into the house and jumps into his grandfather's lap.

Phillip notices his grandfather's sadness and gives him a kiss. Owen knocks and walks into the house.

OWEN

I hope we are not intruding?

JOHN BROWN

No, no. Sit down. I was just-

John Brown dabs at his eyes. Oliver looks concerned.

OWEN

Phillip, why don't you go upstairs and play with your grandmother.

Phillip nods and runs upstairs.

OWEN

You never called on us to discuss strategy yesterday, I wanted to see if you were well.

JOHN BROWN

Yes, I am fine. I have um- I think it would be best if we talked of something else.

Oliver looks into his father's eyes and sees weakness, an uncertainty that he has not seen in years. He sits down and holds his hand.

OWEN

Father, that day we returned to see my home in flames. When I thought Jessica and Phillip were... I was so angry I thought I would hit you-

JOHN BROWN

You would have been within your rights.

Owen gestures at his father to stop talking.

OWEN

Then the several days passed, and I began to think of our lives in Kansas before you arrived.

Owen shakes his head.

OWEN

Our cabin was not fit for a living soul, I was failing as a farmer.

JOHN BROWN

You would have been-

OWEN

No. You came and made a home for my wife and my child. The man that I am now is the result of you.

John Brown smiles at his son.

OWEN

I do not know whether you want to continue with your plan, but I will not be excluded on account of some misplaced guilt. It is a decision I have come to, a decision that may change, but that is firm now.

John Brown looks into his sons' strong eyes.

OWEN

What is your strategy?

A confidence returns to John Brown's face.

SCREEN TEXT: ONE MONTH LATER

EXT. JASON'S HOME - DAY

Jason leaves his small home and his wife Elizabeth trails after him.

ELIZABETH

Must you go?

Jason touches her face gently.

JASON

You know it is something I must do.

Elizabeth rubs her stomach revealing a child in her belly.

JASON

If I stayed and my father and
brothers left. I could never live
with myself.

Elizabeth shakes her head furiously and looks down. Jason
touches her chin and lifts her face.

JASON

How could I raise my child in right
and wrong if I didn't abide by my
own principles?

ELIZABETH

That is not true. You do not have
to do this... this will only lead
to...

Elizabeth starts crying slightly. Jason kisses her while she
resists.

JASON

I love you.

Jason kisses her once more and walks away.

EXT. JOHN BROWN'S HOME - MORNING

John Brown leaves his house with several rifles in his
hands. He puts them into the back of a wagon that already
contains twelve rifles.

Oberlin approaches the wagon. John Brown sees him and shakes
his head.

JOHN BROWN

No, I cannot allow you to come.

OBERLIN

You owe it to-

JOHN BROWN

Joseph would not-

OBERLIN

My father would be happy that I
followed in his footsteps. He would
be happy that I was with you. His
friend.

John Brown smiles sadly and motions to a wagon.

To the left of John Brown is his son Oliver and in the back of the wagon is, DENIS (age 40), a freeman.

EXT. SPRINGFIELD - DAY

They begin to ride to the farmhouse in Maryland.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

They ride over green pastures and bridges. Finally reaching there destination.

EXT. FARMHOUSE MARYLAND - NIGHT

John Brown and his men exit the wagons and unload all the guns and equipment.

The Farmhouse looks abandoned with neighbors roughly fifty yards away on both sides.

John Brown grabs several rifles from the back of the wagon and enters the dark Farmhouse.

EXT. FARMHOUSE MARYLAND - MORNING

Outside of the farmhouse, Jason is showing Oliver how to fire a gun properly. Jason helps Oliver aim down a site.

JASON

Make sure to keep that eye closed.

Oliver looks into the farmhouse where John Brown, Denis, and Oberlin are looking over a map.

OLIVER

You think I'll have to shoot anyone?

JASON

I hope not, with that shot of yours. You have yet to hit anything. I bet you can't even hit the broadside of this barn.

Oliver pushes Jason lovingly. They both smile.

INT. FARMHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

John Brown sits in the middle of a large table. A map of Harper's ferry is sprawled out in front of them.

JOHN BROWN

The telegraph wire must be cut so
no word can escape the town.

OBERLIN

You think the slaves in the town
will help us once we begin taking
hostages?

JOHN BROWN

Yes, they must.

Oberlin smiles and nods.

JASON

(O.S)

Father, Joshua and his men have
come!

JOHN BROWN

Excuse me.

John Brown exits the farmhouse to greet Joshua and his men. To his surprise, only Joshua, Eric, Fred, and Abram have made the journey.

JOHN BROWN

What of your other men? There must
have been a dozen in the room that
night.

Joshua shakes his head.

JOSHUA

When do we leave for Harper's
ferry?

JOHN BROWN

Tomorrow. We'll enter the city with
the cover of nightfall.

EXT. HARPER'S FERRY - NIGHT

On a quiet night in Virginia, two carriages enter the town of Harper's Ferry.

They leave their wagons under large poplar trees while gathering their rifles. Denis and Eric head into the direction of the telegraph wire. Each man carries a rifle in his hand. Some also have pistols at their waist.

JOHN BROWN
We must stay together.

John Brown turns to Joshua.

JOHN BROWN
Any slave owner or towns person
that sees us must be taken as
hostages until we have collected
the weapons.

Joshua shows that he has necessary rope for binding. John Brown nods. They then begin on foot to the armory.

EXT. HARPER'S FERRY - CONTINUOUS

The group come across a WATCHMEN on night duty. He is sleeping inside a small post. John Brown and Joshua enter the post and begin to tie his hands and feet.

He awakens and begins to struggle but John Brown hits him with butt of his rifle.

He is knocked out cold.

They continue towards the Armory which sits in the middle of town when a small Baltimore and Ohio train begins passing through the town. The Train's CONDUCTOR notices the group carrying arms.

They begin firing on the conductor in an attempt to stop the train's passage. They are unsuccessful.

OLIVER
What will we do?

JOHN BROWN
We must move fast to the armory; he
will alert the authorities.

The SHOTS have alerted residents of the town and a SLAVE OWNER, age 50, in a large white house leaves his home to accost them.

SLAVE OWNER
What in God's name are yall doing
at this time-

John Brown rushes him with his rifle pointed. Joshua is quick to follow and binds his hands.

John Brown gestures to the group to follow him.

JOHN BROWN
Oberlin, go to the slaves quarters
and alert them of our presence.

John Brown pauses.

JOHN BROWN
Tell them we mean to help them
achieve their freedom.

Oberlin nods and rushes to the outhouses behind the large white house. John Brown has the Slaveholder at gunpoint and grasps him around the shoulder blade.

John Brown leads the group to the back of the white Victorian house in anticipation of the additional slave forces.

OBERLIN returns with his head down.

JOHN BROWN
Where are they?

OBERLIN
They said they did not want to
help...

JOHN BROWN
What?

OBERLIN
They said, they would surely die if
they helped us. And they would be
whipped to death or worse if they
survived.

The group looks around at one another in sadness and shock. The Slave owner LAUGHS. Oberlin hits him in the gut with the butt of his gun.

SLAVE OWNER
Ahh.

The group undeterred continue at a faster pace towards the armory. They come across a large outpost that is directly in front of the armory. Three YOUNG MEN are on duty. One sits inside post the other two circle the area.

SLAVE OWNER

Help!

The young men outside the outpost turn around and see the group with guns aimed towards them. They drop their weapons while the young man inside attempts to run.

Jason runs past the surrendered man and raises his rifle.

JASON

Stop running or I'll shoot!

The young man stops and turns around.

EXT. HARPER'S FERRY - CONTINUOUS

The WATCHMEN are bound and lead the group to the Armory. One of the Watchmen handover the keys to John Brown and they enter.

INT. ARMORY - EARLY MORNING

The group brings the hostages inside while they take inventory of the armory.

EXT. HARPER'S FERRY - MORNING

A group of soldiers led by ROBERT. E. LEE begin to cross the bridge into Harper's ferry. Many stay back to seal off any route into town.

Robert E. Lee rides further into town, with three soldiers, until he comes across the nearest outpost.

Lee dismounts from his horse and sees the watchmen bound. He quickly approaches the now conscious young man and unties him.

LEE

What happened to you?

WATCHMEN

A bunch a men sir, with rifles came storming into town. I tried to stop them-

LEE

How many of them?

WATCHMEN

Uh- I'd say about fifteen. They have some niggers with them too.

Lee nods.

LEE

Alert the townsfolk of the events while we secure the bridge and surround them.

WATCHMEN

Yessir.

The Watchmen runs off while Lee rides back to the bridge.

INT. ARMORY - EARLY MORNING

The group load their rifles and other weapons into their bags until...

SHOTS fired. They look towards one another and hear the CRACK of glass.

The townspeople are shooting at the group from outside the armory. John Brown, rifle in his hand, runs out of the armory with a bag containing weapons slung over his shoulder.

WHIZZZ. A bullet just misses John Brown's head. Oberlin covers him and shoots the MAN in the chest. Jason rushes out to help his father and another WHIZZ. Jason fires back and shoots a man in the shoulder.

JOHN BROWN

Let's go.

Suddenly, they see Eric and Denis running towards them. The townspeople turn to them and fire upon Eric and Denis. BANG. BANG. Eric and Denis are shot down. John Brown shoots down the townspeople.

BANG. BANG.

JOSHUA

NOOO.

Joshua stares at his bleeding friends. Suddenly, the horses hooves get louder and louder. John Brown looks frantically for a place to defend themselves.

He sees a small brick building across from the armory and motions to the group to run there.

JOHN BROWN

Run and barricade the doors there!
I'll be right behind you.

John Brown provides cover fire while the group runs to the brick building. Owen falls while they are running and is shot. Oliver rushes to his side and helps him.

Owen SCREAMS.

OLIVER

Here brother.

Oliver gives Owen his shoulder to lean on. John Brown follows shooting madly to scare the townspeople.

Several bloodied bodies lay dead on the dirt road.

EXT. BRICK HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The Brick house is now surrounded by Robert E. Lee and his men. The soldiers are on foot, guns by their side. They await the orders to overtake John Brown and his men.

INT. BRICK HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The men pant loudly and look to one in another search for answers.

Abram, a quiet fellow, in Joshua's group paces around the small room. He stands on top of a chair to see that the soldiers have circled the building.

ABRAM

They'll kill us. I tell you they'll
kill us.

Abram pauses.

ABRAM

(looking at John Brown)

We never should have followed you
here.

Owen SCREAMS in pain.

Oliver turns to his brother and puts pressure on his wound. Jason looks at his father searching for answers. None are forthcoming.

Abram grabs the slaveholder.

ABRAM
Bargain. That is it. We must
bargain with them for our lives.

Abram rips off a part of his white cloth and raps it around his gun.

ABRAM
Let me out.

JOHN BROWN
They will kill you on sight.

Abram firmly grabs the slaveholder.

ABRAM
No, no, they won't. I have a valued
citizen here. They will not dare
shoot me.

Abram walks to the barricaded door and opens it slightly. He pushes the slaveholder out first then while he holds the peace symbol exits the building.

BAM.

LEE
(O.S)
All of you surrender now, or we
will storm the building and you
will all end up like this man here.

JOHN BROWN
Storm it then! I prefer to die
here!

JOSHUA
What are you doing?

JOHN BROWN
Giving us a chance to die with
dignity. Do you want to die as
Abram has?

A quiet Oberlin nods his head. He looks at John Brown.

OBERLIN
I don't want to die out there
either. I'd rather die inside here
with...

John Brown nods to Oberlin as Owen SCREAMS in pain.

Oliver tends to his brother.

JOHN BROWN
(to Oliver)
I told you one day you would show
them the man you've become.

OLIVER
Father?

John Brown puts his arm around Oliver. They are all crouched down below the windows of the building. Owen lays sprawled on the ground. He PANTS loudly.

OWEN
Put, Father...please, put me out
of my misery.

Owen SCREAMS in pain.

JOHN BROWN
If we must die, we will die like
men.

Jason remains alert crouched on his knees noticing movement on both doors.

Suddenly the door bursts open and the SOLDIERS burst through shooting.

Jason shoots the first man, who enters from the front, while Joshua kills the man, who enters from the rear.

More shots fired. BAM. BAM.

Joshua SCREAMS.

John Brown turns to see the back entrance overrun by soldiers. He shoots a man with his rifle and the bullet goes through the soldier's abdomen to the man behind him.

The Soldiers SCREAMS while more push through the back entrance.

John Brown stares at his sons.

INT. BROWN OLD FARM - MORNING

A lucid state. A young John Brown cradles Oliver in his arms. Mary beams at her husband while the YELLS of Owen and Jason can be heard in the background.

JOHN BROWN
What shall we name him?

MARY
I like Oliver, it was my
grandfather's name.

John Brown touches the small toes of his son. The young baby boy grasps at his fathers black beard.

JOHN BROWN
(soft voice)
Oliver, my son.

INT. BRICK HOUSE - MORNING

Owen is dead and Oliver is shot.

John Brown glances down tearfully at his son, just as a soldier raises a saber down towards his head. He dodges the sabre, but it still manages to slice him on the neck. Blood gushes from John Brown as he hits the ground.

The soldier raises the sabre to kill him, but John Brown pulls out his pistol and shoots him repeatedly in the chest.

SOLDIER
AHHHH.

John Brown lays on the ground bloodied next to a dead Oliver and Jason, who is also wounded.

EXT. BROWN HOME - SPRINGFIELD- DAY

Frederick Douglass and Garrison walk towards the home of John Brown. They KNOCK on the door.

Mary cracks the door open. Her daughter and daughter-in laws sit around the table. A young Phillip runs through the house.

MARY
What is it?

Douglass looks at Garrison.

DOUGLASS
It's your husband...

Mary shudders.

DOUGLASS
He has been captured.

Mary is frantic.

MARY
My boys! What has happened to them?
Please?!

A silence.

GARRISON
Oliver and Owen are...

The SCREAMS of Mary ring out through the town.

EXT. HANGING GROUNDS- VIRGINIA

The Hangmen adjust the nooses that are dangling from wooden posts. The mob YELLS in excitement.

MOB
Traitor!

One of the hangmen looks at John Brown and gestures at the crowd.

HANGMAN
You got a right to your last words.

John Brown's saggy eyes look out to the hateful crowd. And despite their antagonism; he exhibits no trace of malice. He is calm.

John Brown steps slightly forward.

JOHN BROWN
To all you here, I deny everything
but what I have all along admitted-
the design on my part was to the
free the slaves, as I have done in
the past leading groups from the
south to the north.

He pauses and the Hangmen BARK at him to continue.

JOHN BROWN
That was all I intended. I never
did intend murder, or treason, or
the destruction of property, or to
make insurrection.

MOB

Liar!

JOHN BROWN

It is the truth, and in fact I have an objection: that it is unjust that I should suffer such a penalty. Had I interfered in the behalf of the rich, the powerful, the so-called great- or in behalf of any of their friends, or any of that class- and suffered and sacrificed what I have in this interference, it would have been alright; and every man in this crowd would have deemed it an act worthy of reward rather than punishment.

John Brown's tied hands gesture forcefully towards the crowd.

JOHN BROWN

Most of you that stand in front of me, are God fearing people. People of the book, who believe in the word of God and his wisdom. That book has taught me to do unto others as I would want done to myself. It teaches me, further, to remember those that are in bonds, as though I too was shackled.

FEMALE VOICE

Nigger lover!

JOHN BROWN

I believe that to have interfered as I have done, on behalf of the weak and the powerless, was not *wrong* but *right*. Now, if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactment,- I submit; so let it be done!

With his last word uttered, the Hangman grabs John Brown's shoulder and pushes him under the noose. The other hangmen do the same with Jason and Oberlin.

John Brown looks sadly at his son and at Oberlin. The Hangmen place the noose around their necks.

On the wooden beam above them, a bird lands and perches itself above John Brown. The bird stays stationed above them until the bodies drop towards the ground.

The bird flies away up into the sky while a beam of light casts itself down. A ray of sunshine separates the clouds, and illuminates the hanging bodies of the dead men.

FADE OUT