

THIS ISN'T LITTLE HOUSE  
ON THE PRAIRIE

BASED ON A TRUE STORY

A TOBY THOMAS & SUZANNE DELAURENTIIS PRODUCTION

# WILDERNESS ROAD

WRITTEN BY  
MARK BACCI & TRICIA AURAND

DIRECTED BY  
ROEL REINE

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER  
TOBY THOMAS

PRODUCED BY  
SUZANNE DELAURENTIIS

COMING SOON



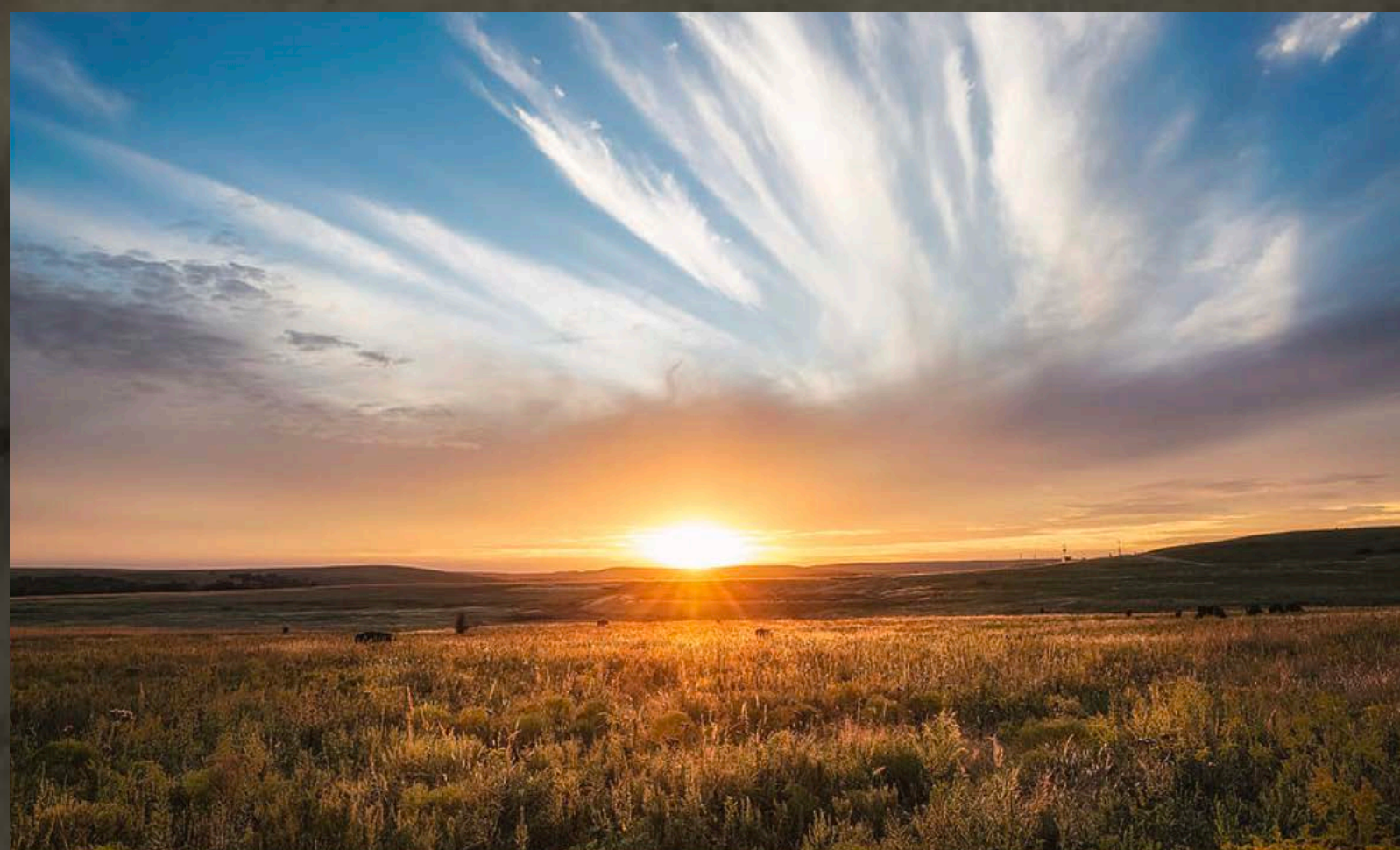
# WILDERNESS ROAD

SCRIPTED SIX EPISODE MINI-SERIES

STATUS: PILOT IN DEVELOPMENT







*WILDERNESS ROAD* is the story of

## **THREE GENERATIONS OF AMERICAN PIONEERS:**

Their hardships, victories, passions, and tragedies.

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## **THE SERIES FOLLOWS THE INTERWOVEN LIVES OF TWO FAMILIES:**

The Grays, a Cherokee family, and the Beans, a Scottish immigrant family, who settle in the Tennessee Valley in the bloody banner year of 1776, against the backdrop of the American struggle for independence.

W I L D E R N E S S   R O A D



# WILDERNESS ROAD

## THE WORLD AND THEMES

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There are really two worlds of this story, separated by 50 years – the lush forests and rivers of the Tennessee Valley, the cradle of both families, sharply contrasted with the barren plains and empty horizons of Oklahoma, where both end up. The richness of the world during the Revolutionary War arc highlights the families' hopes and the sense of possibility as a new country is born; the mud and toil of the Oklahoma world underscores their frustrations as the boundless greed of that country forces their displacement and lays waste to their dreams.





# WILDERNESS ROAD

## REVOLUTIONARY WAR ARC

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### THE COLONISTS





## **WILLIAM BEAN (50s):**

A stubborn Christian patriarch, explorer, and gunsmith who believes the land of Bean's Station has been given to him by God, and he's willing to enact violence or kill if he believes he's in the right. Gregarious and friendly, but ultimately, judgmental and cold. A natural leader that men respect because he doesn't tolerate fear or weakness. The kind of man who sees himself as an instrument of God's justice, even when he's motivated by pure revenge. His sons are terrified of him, and at least one of them hates him and wishes he were dead.

## **LYDIA BEAN (50s):**

Inventive and book-smart, a former teacher with a creative streak and an ear for music. She's warm and blessed with the infinite patience of a teacher, but she's also savvy and doesn't tolerate nonsense from her kids - not a pushover. However, she firmly believes in the traditional roles, that everyone has a place, and especially that women have a place in the home. She sees William as the head of the house and refuses to question his methods, for which her children resent her - up until his judgement leads to the death of one of their sons. She's hugely influenced in this by Nancy Ward, who insists that women should have a say in their own futures.

## **JOHN BEAN (40s):**

William's brother, an alcoholic ne'er-do-well that's a hell of a lot more fun than William, the cool uncle who's popular with the ladies. Also works in the blacksmith's shop, but less interested in guns - secretly kind of an artist.

## **JESSE BEAN (18):**

Passionate, impulsive, idealistic, creative. Jesse is driven by a spirit of adventure and exploration. While he does admire his father and wants to be like him, he has doubts; he's not sure that his father's way of life - all legalism, rules, and coldness - is for him, and he deeply fears disappointing his father. Jesse's not violent by nature, but he lacks discipline and self control; whatever he does, he does with his whole heart. Constantly on the move, a moment's away from speaking his mind or getting himself in over his head.

## **JANE BEAN (16):**

A fiery rebel who's a lot more like Jesse than any other member of her family; they're close friends, the closest of all the siblings. Jane probably wishes she'd been born a boy so she could go and fight. She's not actually in love with Joseph Gray, but flirts with him just to enrage her parents. Eventually, she's killed by a raiding party led by Dragging Canoe.

## **RUSSELL BEAN (11):**

Ends up becoming a preacher and a pacifist. Works in the blacksmiths' shop, beating swords into ploughshares.

## **SARAH BEAN (8):**

Marries Samuel Moore. More in the Oklahoma storyline.

## **SAMUEL MOORE (13):**

Russell's peer and a pigheaded bully. Gets kidnapped along with Lydia and Russell. Russell is released and Samuel is transformed by the experience.



# WILDERNESS ROAD

## REVOLUTIONARY WAR ARC

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### THE CHEROKEE





### LUTHER GRAY (50s):

A James Vann type. A savvy businessman who eschews violence, who wants to settle everything in a gentlemanly way and who strives to be seen as civilized by European standards. Makes his money in the riverboat business and the slave trade in Georgia, much to the disapproval of Nancy Ward and other tribal leaders.

### JOSEPH GRAY (20s):

Destined to inherit the wealth and business sense of his father. Kind of an Ivy-league Cherokee. Sees potentially marrying Jane Bean as a good business proposition.

### NANCY WARD (40s):

Beloved Woman of the Cherokee, a prophetess, a woman with political ambitions and an early feminist in a patriarchal society. Nancy desperately wants peace between the colonists and the Cherokees, and for the cultures to learn from each other. However, she sees trouble on the horizon and doesn't want Cherokee and whites intermarrying (she was left by Betsy's father for a white woman, his first wife). She knows that the colonists will eventually turn on the Cherokee yet again, and that their souls are sick to the core with greed.

### BETSY WARD (18):

The center of a love triangle between Jesse Bean and Joseph Gray. Betsy is strongly attracted to Jesse but her mother disapproves. She and Joseph have been friends since they were young – and her mother doesn't approve of that either because of Luther's family's participation in the slave trade.

### DRAGGING CANOE (40s):

Nancy's cousin and leader of the Cherokee warriors. Dragging Canoe doesn't trust the British or the colonists but sees that the British interests are aligned with the Cherokees' for the time being. War-like, determined to make the white man bleed.

### YOUNG TASSEL/JOHN WATTS (20s):

A young warrior, half-white, but raised by the Cherokee.

### FIVEKILLER (25):

A Cherokee warrior, Nancy Ward's son from her previous, Cherokee, marriage. Betsy's half-brother who lives in a different village.



# WILDERNESS ROAD

## REVOLUTIONARY WAR ARC

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### THE MILITARY





**MAJOR PATRICK FERGUSON (30s):**

Scottish officer in the British army and gunsmith. Designed the Ferguson rifle, which was used extensively against the colonists during the Revolution. Commander of the loyalist forces at the Battle of Kings Mountain.

**JOHN MACDONALD:**

Scottish settler, British loyalist, supplies the Cherokee with guns.

**COLONEL EVAN SHELBY:**

American officer that led the Overmountain men and Colonial forces in the Battle of Kings Mountain.

**JOHN SEVIER:**

Overmountain Man, soldier, diplomat, the first governor of Tennessee.



# WILDERNESS ROAD

## OKLAHOMA ARC

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### CHARACTERS





## **JESSE BEAN (80):**

Still passionate and impulsive but his fiery temper has been mellowed by time. His optimism for the country and its prospects have turned to cynicism; he firmly believes the Colonists, like his father, did serious harm to the land and the Native people. But he also believes the power of the white European settlers and the American government are too strong to resist. He's not an idealist anymore, he just wants to work his land, keep his head down, and die in peace.

## **EDMUND BEAN (40s):**

Jesse's youngest son who lives with him on the Bean farm in Oklahoma. Like Jesse, he's a widower, but he still has energy to help his community in any way he can. He's less experienced with military things and isn't violent by nature - he has the steady temperament of a born farmer. He's good, kind, involved father to his two children (a boy, AARON, and a girl, REBECCA).

## **ROSE GRAY (40s):**

The only child of Betsy Ward and Joseph Gray. Both her parents are dead, her mother was killed in the fire that burned down the Gray Plantation (around 1900). Later, her father was murdered by one of his enemies (maybe Dragging Canoe or a descendent of Dragging Canoe?) Rose always had a difficult relationship with her father because he tried to prevent her from practicing her Cherokee traditions. He sent her to an Indian boarding school that attempted to suppress Native culture. Rose felt like she hardly knew him. Her husband (a young Cherokee man she met as a teen at boarding school) died in the internment camps before the forced removal began.

## **RUSSELL BEAN (70s):**

Jesse's brother, a preacher and head of the local church.

## **SAMUEL AND SARAH MOORE (60s):**

Samuel Moore married Jesse and Russell's youngest sister. They (along with their children and grandchildren) live nearby. Sarah helps take care of the Bean grandchildren, especially Edmund's daughter REBECCA.

## **WESLEY GRAY (17):**

Rose's oldest child, raised almost entirely by his Cherokee great grandmother, Nancy Ward and his great uncle Fivekiller.

## **ANNA GRAY (10):**

Rose's young daughter.

## **COLONEL ANDREW CAIN (30):**

Officer in charge of Rose's camp's march to Oklahoma. Cruel, sadistic, thinks the Native people are less than human.

## **GENERAL WINFIELD SCOTT (40):**

Commanding officer in charge of the Trail of Tears. Wise but stern, attempts to be human toward the Cherokee people but, ultimately, fails to enforce decent treatment among his officers.



# WILDERNESS ROAD

As the series continues, the romance between Jesse Bean and Betsy Ward deepens, driving a wedge between Jesse and his family's values and straining his commitment to the ideologies behind the Revolutionary War. Meanwhile, Jesse's rebellious sister, JANE, offers to help Joseph Gray and his secret ally, Dragging Canoe, but after a horrible misunderstanding, Jane is violently murdered by Cherokee warriors. Furious, Jesse attempts to desert his post and seek revenge, but he's caught and sent back to the front - just in time to see action at the BATTLE OF KING'S MOUNTAIN. There, William's dogma and Jesse's irresponsible behavior result in the death of JOHN BEAN.



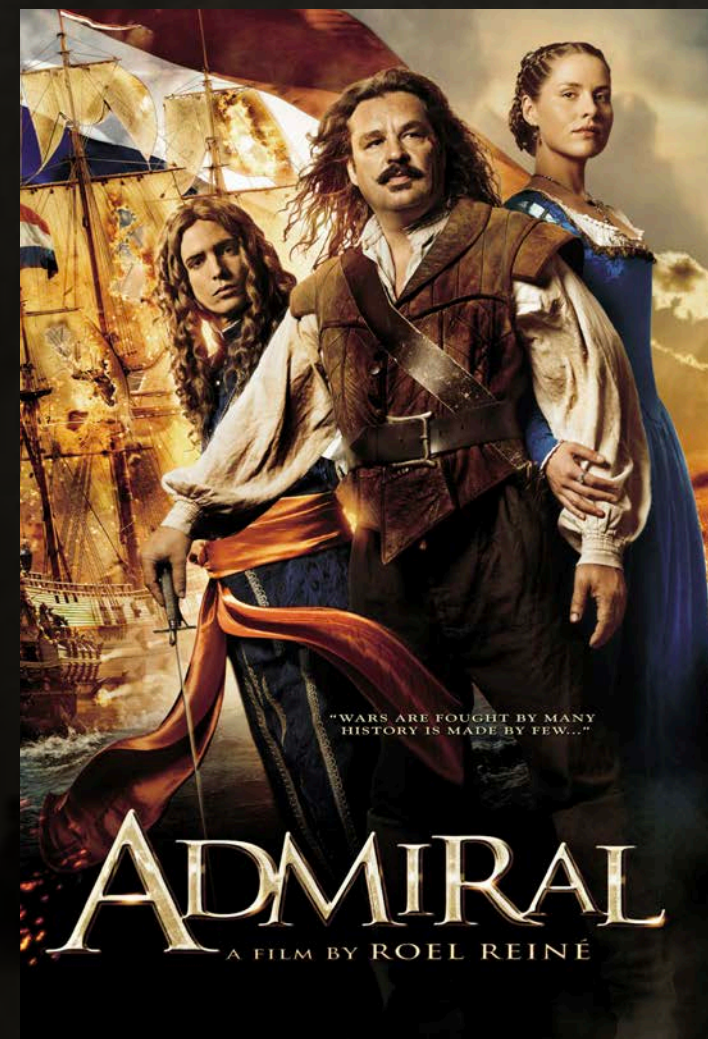
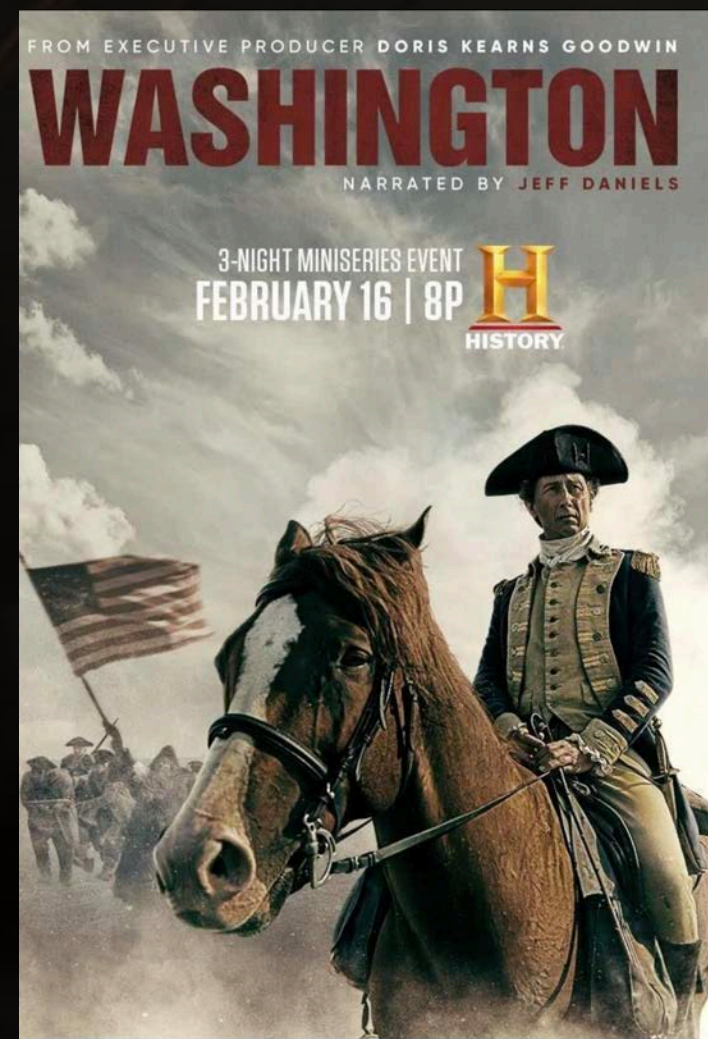


# WILDERNESS ROAD

Meanwhile, the situation in Oklahoma devolves. An older Jesse struggles to free Betsy and her family, torn between the cynicism of his old age and the romanticism of his youth. Jesse recalls that the death of his favorite sister and the costs of the war pushed him and Betsy apart. As the Revolutionary War draws to a close, the conflict between the Colonists and the Cherokees crescendos, finally forcing LUTHER GRAY and his family off their plantation into the TRAIL OF TEARS. Finally, the injustices of the American government's treatment of the Cherokee people collides in the past and present, culminating in Jesse's last desperate attempt to rescue Betsy, her children, and her grandchildren - his final chance to save the woman he loved.







**ROEL REINE**  
DIRECTOR



# CAST SUGGESTIONS

*WILLIAM BEAN*

J.K. SIMMONS



THOMAS JAYNE



BRETT CULLEN



KYLE CHANDLER



MICHAEL BIEGN





# CAST SUGGESTIONS

*LYDIA BEAN*

UMA THURMAN



ASHLEY JUDD

SHANIA TWAIN



MIRA SORVINO

KYRA SEDGWICK





# CAST SUGGESTIONS

*COL. SHELBY*

CLAYNE CRAWFORD



EDWARD BURNS

SCOTT SPEEDMAN



WALTON GOGGINS

TRAVIS FIMMEL





# CAST SUGGESTIONS

## *LUTHAR*

LOU DIAMOND PHILLIPS



ZAHN MCCLARNON





SALES

*CARLOS ALPERIN*

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