

WEETAMOO

By James Lee & Robyn Lee Van Vechten

FILM TREATMENT

LOGLINE:

A Privileged, sanctimonious wife of a puritan minister is captured by Native Americans and placed into the custody of a stern, no-nonsense woman who is chief of her tribe.

BACKGROUND:

The film takes place in 1670s New England during King Philip's War, a brutal conflict between Native tribes and English settlers.

The world is one of tension and upheaval, where Puritan colonists push westward, forcibly taking land from the Indigenous peoples. The Native tribes, including the Wampanoag and Pocasset, are fragmented by colonial expansion and betrayal, with alliances strained between survival and resistance.

Historically, this period marked the collapse of Native sovereignty in the region, as European settlements grew.

The story reflects the desperation, loss, and defiance of Indigenous leaders fighting to protect their land and people against overwhelming odds.

OVERVIEW:

WEETAMOO is a dramatic, historical, two hander epic, that tells the true story of two woman. Enemies thrust together during war. One a brave, proud and formidable female leader, Weetamoo, Chief of the Pocasset tribe and the other, Mary Rowlandson, the wife of a Puritan minister and a religious zealot who believes that all Natives are savages. Set during King Philip's War, one of the bloodiest conflicts in American history, the film is a combination of action, politics, and the personal struggles of two woman caught between cultures. Weetamoo, Chief of the Pocasset Wampanoag, fights not only for the survival of her people but also to preserve her identity and heritage amidst increasing pressure from English colonists. She grapples with leadership, love, and loyalty, caught in the crossfire of war and betrayal.

Weetamoo's stern, steadfast character and leadership style acts as an agent of change providing Mary a character arc from a whiny, self important elitist who looks upon the Native people with contempt and transforms her attitude to one of respect. It is a story of resilience, sacrifice, and hardship. It explores how Weetamoo's decisions impact her family, tribe, and the broader Native American resistance. Similar to a modern political thriller, it's layered with tension, diplomacy, and warfare, reflecting the complexity of colonization and Indigenous resistance.

Like a combination of a historical war drama and a tale of loss and identity, Weetamoo should mix genres, embracing war, political intrigue, and a heartfelt personal journey.

The film will immerse the audience in a world that is visceral, dangerous, and emotionally charged, offering glimpses of raw humanity amidst war's chaos, while honoring the legacy of a powerful woman largely erased by history.

CHARACTER SET- UP:

Weetamoo:(38), The fierce Squaw-Sachem of the Pocasset tribe. She is driven by a desire to protect her people from the English colonists. Her journey is one of resilience as she struggles between war and diplomacy. She attempts to find peace while recognizing the inevitability of conflict. With time, she becomes a symbol of leadership and transforms into a somber and reflective figure .

Mary Rowlandson:(30s),A Puritan woman taken captive, who initially views her captors as savages. Her journey is one of transformation, where survival compels her to confront her biases and slowly form a reluctant bond with Weetamoo. With time, she becomes more empathetic, understanding the depth of loss on both sides.

Captain Samuel Mosely:(30s), Former pirate and ruthless leader of the militia. He relishes his task of hunting down and destroying the Native tribes.

Quinnapin:(30s), A Sachem of the Narragansetts who is caught between loyalty to his people and his affection for Weetamoo. He wants to find a way to protect his tribe while navigating the politics of the war. As the narrative progresses, Quinnapin grows from a warrior focused on battle to a more strategic leader.

Metacom (King Philip):(38), The leader of the Wampanoag tribe. He wants to resist the English colonists who are seizing native lands.

Initially, he believes that war is the only solution, but his impulsive decisions often lead to disastrous outcomes. He is a tragic figure, representing resistance against the forces of colonization .

Wootonekanuske:(28), Weetamoo's sister and Metacom's wife. She is quiet a but vital force in the narrative. She is deeply concerned for her family's safety. Her relationship with Weetamoo highlights the emotional toll of the conflict, and her growth lies in her ability to support her sister through grief and hardship .

Benjamin Church:(30s) An English militia officer who is driven by a desire to quell Native resistance but unlike Mosely, he has a sense of honor. He respects Weetamoo and other Native leaders. His arc does not involve personal growth but shows the relentless advance of English colonial power .

James The Printer:(35), A Nipmuck Native raised among the English, working as a printer in Boston. Torn between his heritage and his adopted culture, he seeks survival in a world where he belongs to neither side. His journey is one of inner conflict, as he grapples with his loyalty to his people while trying to fit into English society.

STORY:

In 1676, in Boston, Metacom, also known to the English as King Philip, the chief of the Wampanoag, flees after an English attack. He is accompanied by his wife, Wootonekanuske, their son, Ahanu, and his sister-in-law, Weetamoo, the chief of the Pocasset tribe. Weetamoo decides to part ways, seeking help from the Narragansetts despite Metacom's warning that they are allied with the English. She leads her people south, while Metacom continues north.

In Lancaster, Massachusetts, Mary Rowlandson and her Native servant, Hanina, prepare supper. Afterward, Hanina sneaks food to her son, Machetehew, who is joining a Native rebellion. Meanwhile, Mary dismisses her husband's advice to treat Hanina with kindness and teaches her children about the prophet Jonah, comparing Native Americans to Ninevah's people, needing conversion.

Weetamoo arrives at the Narragansett village but faces hostility. Pumham, the sachem, suggests turning her over to the English, but Weetamoo defends her stance, blaming the English for the conflict. Canonicus, an elder, promises protection, though other counsel members fear retaliation from English. He proposes an alliance through marriage, introducing Weetamoo to Quinnapin.

A montage of brutal frontier battles follows, where Monoco also known as One-Eyed John successfully ambushes English militia, while Captain Samuel Mosely ruthlessly slaughters Native villages.

Mosely's company arrives in Springfield to find the town destroyed, with scalped bodies everywhere. His men bring a Native woman who claims to be Christian, but under pressure, she reveals Monoco's warriors are from Menameset. Mosely orders his second in command Cornelius Anderson to unleash his hungry dogs on the woman.

In Plymouth, Captain Church meets with Governor Winslow, who discusses the war's toll and Weetamoo's dangerous new alliance with the Narragansetts through her marriage to Quinnapin. Winslow sends Church and Mosely to scout the Narragansett stronghold, despite Church's dislike of Mosely.

At the Narragansett fort, Weetamoo hears from Quinnapin that a large English force is gathering. She considers negotiating peace with Church but fears his connection to Mosely.

In Lancaster, Joseph Rowlandson leaves for Boston, despite Mary's fear, to get supplies for the town. She watches him ride off, anxious about a possible attack.

At the Narragansett fort, warriors prepare for battle. Mosely's men approach through the snow, but the fort's defenders open fire, killing many. Mosely retreats, regrouping with Captain Church. Spotting a weak point in the fort's wall, Mosely charges, but the attack is repelled, leaving many dead. Mosely retreats again as Quinnapin taunts him from inside the fort.

Mosely and Church prepare for another charge, with Anderson releasing the dogs. Despite heavy losses, some militia breach the fort, leading to brutal combat.

Inside, Weetamoo and Quinnapin help survivors escape through a secret door. From a nearby hilltop, they watch in horror as the English burn the fort, killing those trying to flee.

In Lancaster, Mary Rowlandson and her sisters discuss the threat of Native attacks, leaving Mary anxious. Hanina offers her cake, but Mary reacts harshly, filled with dread.

James, a Nipmuck, silently endures racist remarks in Boston as he prepares to journey home after printing news of the English victory.

At dawn, Monoco and his warriors attack Lancaster. Mary notices Hanina missing when musket fire erupts. Townspeople seek refuge in her garrison house, but Monoco's warriors set it ablaze. As they try to escape, many are killed.

Mary is shot, and her daughter is gravely injured. Monoco spares them, forcing Mary to follow his warriors into the forest, bleeding and in shock.

In a montage, Mary struggles through the snow with her wounded daughter, while Weetamoo and Quinnapin lead refugees pursued by Mosely's militia. Joseph Rowlandson learns of Lancaster's destruction and rushes out in shock.

James endures harsh conditions, while Church and wounded survivors from the Great Swamp Fight are unloaded from a ship.

Mary, exhausted, stumbles in the snow. Monoco helps by placing Sarah on his horse but orders Mary to keep up. At camp, Mary and Sarah suffer from hunger and cold as the Natives celebrate. Mary prays for salvation, but her cries go unanswered.

At Menameset, Weetamoo and Quinnapin arrive with refugees, reuniting Weetamoo with her sister, Wootonekanuske. The Nipmucks welcome them, providing warmth and aid.

James encounters Mosely, who savagely beats captured Christian Natives. Mosely accuses James of being a spy and plans to take him to Boston.

Mary, too weak to walk, rides on a horse with Sarah. When she falls, Monoco warns her not to let it happen again. He later helps her dismount and gives her water as she prays for her daughter.

The next morning, Mary awakens to find Sarah dead. Heartbroken, she refuses to give up her daughter's body, but Monoco and Matchetehew forcibly take Sarah to bury, leaving Mary shattered and reciting scripture in grief.

At Menameset, Weetamoo and her sister enjoy making wampum belts while their children play. Their peace is interrupted by Monoco's return with Mary as a captive. Wootonekanuske is curious about the Englishwoman, remarking how English women rarely leave their homes.

In Boston, Mosely parades captives, including James, through hostile crowds. James is beaten before being thrown into an overcrowded jail cell.

At Menameset, Mary faces hostility and fear. Left alone in Monoco's wigwam, she prays for her children.

The next day, Weetamoo buys Mary and warns her to obey. Mary, weak and hungry, agrees and is finally given food.

Later, captive Robert Pepper reassures her that her children are alive and treats her infected wound, advising her to remain obedient.

In Boston, Mosely brings James and other captives before Governor Leverett and magistrates. Joseph Rowlandson demands answers about his family, but Daniel Gookin defends James, pointing out he was carrying Bibles.

Despite the crowd's anger, the court declares the prisoners innocent. However, Leverett orders all Praying Indians to be sent to Deer Island, sentencing them to likely death, leaving Gookin outraged.

At Menameset, Mary Rowlandson struggles with her infected wound, using oak leaves to bandage it. Weetamoo orders her to fetch firewood in exchange for food, calling her a "lazy Pukwudgie woman."

By the stream, Mary weeps over her daughter's bloodstain on her apron but is overjoyed when her son, Joseph, appears. He reassures her that he and his sister are safe.

Meanwhile, Joseph Rowlandson pleads with Governor Leverett for his family's rescue, but the governor offers little hope.

At Deer Island, Gookin and Green find the imprisoned Natives in terrible conditions. They locate a weak, disillusioned James and arrange for his release.

Back at Weetamoo's wigwam, Mary works on a deer hide. After Quinnapin returns from a raid, Weetamoo sends Mary to Hanina's place, where Matchetehew taunts her, claiming they ate her son. Later, Hanina throws ash in Mary's face, and she panics, stumbling into the snow to clean it off.

In the morning, Weetamoo finds a miserable Mary, who longs for home. Quinnapin gives Mary a Bible from a raid, and she tearfully asks to read from it. He then asks her to make a shirt for Mukki from blood-stained clothes, which Mary begins to salvage.

James works in Samuel Green's shop, printing posters labeling Natives as "Children of the Devil." Frustrated and disillusioned, James expresses his concerns to Gookin. Unbeknownst to him, a Mohegan tracker, under Cornelius Anderson's orders, follows him.

At Menameset, Mary is brought before Metacom by Weetamoo. Metacom reassures her that her children are safe, offers her food, and asks her to sew a shirt for his son.

Back at the wigwam, Weetamoo angrily throws Mary's Bible when she refuses to work on the Sabbath. Outside, James returns the Bible to her while the Mohegan tracker watches.

Meanwhile, Benjamin Church, recovering from a wound, learns that Mosely is planning an attack on Menameset. His pregnant wife, Alice, urges him to stay with her. Mosely leads a militia toward the village.

Quinnapin informs Weetamoo that Mosely is approaching, and with most warriors away, they must flee. Weetamoo orders Mary to help with preparations. Struggling with her injuries, Mary is forced to carry a heavy satchel under threat.

Mosely's militia reaches the abandoned Menameset and burns the village before deciding to pursue the fleeing women and children.

As Mary and the refugees march through the snow, Mosely's militia follows closely. Weetamoo teaches Mary survival skills as they face harsh conditions. When they reach a wide, icy river, the refugees build rafts to cross.

As they do, Mosely's militia fires on them, and a young woman is shot, swept away by the current. Weetamoo and Mosely lock eyes across the river before Mosely tasks the Mohegan tracker with retrieving Weetamoo's head.

Heartbroken, Mary watches the militia from the far bank and prays. Later, back in the wigwam, Mary helps protect Weetamoo's children when a Mohegan assassin sneaks in. Weetamoo and her sister kill the attacker, and Weetamoo nods in gratitude to Mary.

At dawn, Weetamoo helps lighten Mary's load before hearing distant gunfire. Realizing Quinnapin's warriors are fighting the English, Weetamoo urges the group to continue north. Meanwhile, Monoco ambushes English militia in Sudbury, while another militia massacres a defenseless Native village at Peskeompskut.

On the trail, Mary helps a struggling elderly Medicine Woman, with Weetamoo joining her. That night, Mary finishes sewing a shirt for a Native child, and the grateful mother gives her bear meat. Mary shares the meat with Weetamoo, who acknowledges her with a newfound respect.

The refugees enter a burnt English town, and though Mary is saddened, Weetamoo reassures her that no one was killed. As they scavenge for food and build shelter, Weetamoo and Wootonekanuske notice Mary adapting to their way of life.

Mary wakes to Mukki's coughing and discovers he has scarlet fever.

The Medicine Woman tries traditional remedies but warns the illness is serious. When Mukki worsens, Weetamoo asks for Mary's apron to make a poultice.

Mary initially refuses, but after reflecting and praying, she offers it, helping with the treatment. Despite their efforts, Mukki dies in Weetamoo's arms. Mary prays Psalm 23, but it cannot save him.

A ceremony is held for Mukki, and Weetamoo leads the procession to bury her son. Weetamoo, devastated, sits silently in grief, and Quinnapin comforts her when he returns. The next day, Weetamoo talks with Mary about the suffering caused by the war. She reflects on how the English settlers have changed and expresses her fear for the future. She informs Mary that they will soon leave for a council at Wachusett, and that the English governor is sending an emissary to negotiate Mary's return.

In a springtime montage, Mary travels with the refugees to Wachusett, feeling renewed hope. Upon arrival, she clutches her Bible, anxious but optimistic.

Inside Metacom's wigwam, he reunites with his family and expresses sorrow to Weetamoo for her loss. Mary asks about her children, but Metacom doesn't know their whereabouts, prompting her to search the village.

Mary confronts Matchetehew, who taunts her, but she stands up to him confidently. Amused, she throws a snowball at him, feeling empowered. Meanwhile, Native leaders, including Metacom, Weetamoo, and Monoco, hold a council to discuss their next steps.

James reads a letter from the English government, and Daniel Gookin arrives as the emissary to negotiate the release of captives. Metacom agrees to release Mary for a ransom of twenty pounds but remains undecided about peace talks.

Later, Weetamoo and Quinnapin discuss their dwindling supplies and plan to avoid conflict with Mosely by moving north. As spring arrives, Weetamoo gives Mary a purse in gratitude for her sacrifice of the apron, and informs her that her ransom has been paid, signaling her return home.

That night, Metacom, drunk and angry about unequal ransoms, confronts Mary, demanding more payment. Weetamoo's sister distracts him, allowing Mary to escape the situation. At dawn, Weetamoo wakes Mary and urges her to leave before Metacom wakes.

Quinnapin and Wootonekanuske take Mary to Daniel Gookin at Redemption Rock.

As Metacom approaches, Weetamoo urges Mary to leave quickly. After a silent farewell, Mary departs with Gookin.

A montage shows the ongoing violence of the war—ambushes, massacres, and town destruction. In Boston, Gookin takes Mary to a church where she joyfully reunites with her husband and children in an emotional embrace.

Meanwhile, Weetamoo and her sister dig up hidden seed corn as gunfire erupts nearby. Quinnapin is ambushed and captured by Benjamin Church's forces.

Weetamoo, hearing the gunfire, rushes back to find her people, including her sister and son, captured. She confronts Church, exchanges fire, is wounded, but escapes.

Captain Mosely and Cornelius Anderson gloat over Native prisoners, including James and Monoco, as they are marched to Boston.

Gravely wounded, Weetamoo attempts to swim across the Taunton River but is shot and dies in the water. Her body is later found and beheaded by militiamen, who celebrate her death.

In Boston, Mary, reunited with her family, reflects emotionally during a quiet dinner. Meanwhile, Metacom is ambushed and killed by a Native warrior under Church's command.

James remains imprisoned with Monoco, Quinnapin, and Matchetehew. Gookin arrives to free him, but James is bitter and reluctant, viewing English freedom with scorn.

After encouragement from Monoco and Quinnapin, James leaves, vowing to tell their story. Monoco, Quinnapin, and Matchetehew are later hanged, while James walks away.

Wootonekanuske and her son, Ahanu, are captured and marched to Taunton, horrified to see Weetamoo's head mounted on a pole. The captives cry in anguish as the militia forces them forward.

Benjamin Church has a reflective moment by a campfire, conversing with an old Native warrior named Conscience, acknowledging the moral toll of the war.

In Plymouth, Wootonekanuske, her son, and other captives are forced onto the ship "Seaflower," bound for slavery. Wootonekanuske despairs as the ship sails away.

Mary Rowlandson, back home, reflects on her captivity, haunted by her experiences. She finds solace in faith, contemplating the fragility of security and the inevitability of hardship.

"Seaflower" with her cargo of slaves sails into the distance at sunset.

Six years later, James is working at a printing press, printing 'The Sovereignty and Goodness of God: A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson' by Mary Rowlandson.

Disgusted, but bound.

King Philip's war devastated southern New England and still holds the grim record of having the highest per capita casualty rate in American history. The war was even worse for the People of the First Light. Those not killed were driven out of their lands or sold into slavery to work on sugar plantations in the Caribbean. Their descendants remain there today.

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