

Honor & Infamy
by
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Based on Actual Events

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MJR. ELLIOT (O.S.)
 Won't know what hit them, General.

MAJOR JOEL ELLIOT cinches his saddle and swings up. His voice comes indistinct. Ethereal.

MJR. ELLIOT
 Bloody perfect.

UNSEEN OBSERVER (O.S.)
 Ride hard and strong. Keep the boys tight. They'll try to pull you from the village. Don't let them draw you off -- let them draw you off.

MJR. ELLIOT
 They can run, General. Enjoy a bayonet up their backsides.

UNSEEN OBSERVER (O.S.)
 Move to your station, Major.

MJR. ELLIOT
 With honor, General.

EXT. BLACK KETTLE VILLAGE

A half-naked YOUTH lumbers from his lodge. As he urinates in the timber he spots a soldier through the fog.

His shrill cry brings his older brother from the lodge. The youth fires an old musket at the trooper.

EXT. ACROSS THE RIVER

UNSEEN OBSERVER (O.S.)
 Seventh Cavalry, advance!

The regimental band strikes up "GARY OWEN" as a volley of gunfire tears into the village.

EXT. BLACK KETTLE VILLAGE

Men, women, even children are cut down as they fall out of lodges. Some are half-clothed. Some naked. Most unarmed.

MAJOR ELLIOT

Rides his eighteen-man company at the head of the attack.

UNSEEN OBSERVER

Points a revolver at two cowering squaws.

UNSEEN OBSERVER (V.O.)
Back to your lodges!

A PIERCING WARCRY. A charging warrior bears in.

BAM! BAM! - without hesitation the observer shoots the young brave in the chest.

NEARBY

The old chief, BLACK KETTLE, plunges along the river's edge with his head wife. He waves two flags at Elliot. The white flag of peace and the U.S. Flag.

The major does not hesitate. He and his men trample the chief and his wife into the muddy water.

ON THE OUTSKIRTS

A group of warriors fire a few shots on Elliot before disappearing down a river path. Elliot rears his horse.

MJR. ELLIOT
To a brevet or a coffin, boys!

The company gives chase.

UNSEEN OBSERVER (V.O.)
Don't let them draw you off --
don't let them draw you off -- draw
you off.

EXT. SEVERAL MILES UPSTREAM

Elliot and his men pause on a rise.

MJR. ELLIOT
Damnation.

Large villages span out below. Hundreds of Indians swarm up.

EXT. SEVERAL MILES UPSTREAM - LATER

With horses shot for barricades, Elliot's men lay belly down, facing outward with feet touching in the center. A classic "last stand" pinwheel. Warriors creep in.

MJR. ELLIOT
Steady boys, save your rounds.
Choose your shots. General'll come
for us.

SERGEANT KENNEDY is shot in the right temple.

MJR. ELLIOT
Don't you abandon us.

EXT. SEVERAL MILES UPSTREAM - LATER

Elliot lays among his men. A bullet wound to the head, awash in blood, he clings to life. Indians move among the soldiers.

MJR. ELLIOT
God have mercy.

EXT. SEVERAL MILES UPSTREAM - LATER

Naked. Mutilated. Elliot stares at the observer with accusing eyes. Slashed throat. Genitals ripped off. Right hand gone. With a missing little finger he points a damning hand.

MJR. ELLIOT
We held as long as we could. Where
were you? You did this.

Hands outstretched, Elliot hobbles toward the observer.

INT. CUSTER HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

GENERAL GEORGE ARMSTRONG CUSTER, bolts up in his bed.

GENERAL CUSTER
Lord knows I'm sorry, Joel.

EXT. DEPARTMENTAL HEADQUARTERS, ST. PAUL (FEBRUARY 1876)- DAY

A thriving city pushes its civilized indifference upon the unsettled territories of the west.