



SAMUEL MASON (cont'd)
 fort with the scouts, also ignorant
 of the number of the bold encounter.
 His distraction allowed me to crawl
 behind a fallen tree, where I lay
 until the Indians fled. My band of
 14 had ridden into 100 savages...
 hidden in the corn and grass like
 ghosts. Of the 28 who faced the
 hundreds, five of us lived.

The men sit in silence but then a ruckus causes several of them to respond. Two men, JOHN SETTON and JAMES MAY, are presented to Mason by his scouts. Setton's face is turned down.

SCOUT 1

Captain, these two was making so much noise they never heard us ride up on 'em.

SCOUT 2

Damn sho', and we wasn't even trying to be quiet. This dark-one here...

(points to Setton)

... had this one...

(points to May)

... tied up, stringing him behind his horse. He says he wants to join up and brought you a bounty hunter as a token. He's got a reward paper with your name on it!

Setton doesn't speak nor raise his head.

JAMES MAY

Sir, I ain't hunting nobody, I promise ya. I swear to God! Two days ago I woke up to this man standing over me with a knife. He's had me tied up the whole time.

(looks at Setton)

Son of a bitch didn't give me no water and made me piss myself. What kind of man makes another man piss himself?!

SAMUEL MASON

Where'd the paper come from?

(CONTINUED)

JAMES MAY

I was given it back in Natchez. But sir, I ain't no bounty hunter. I ain't outfitted for it. I's given that paper in Natchez to pass along. Sir, could I have a drink?

One of Mason's scouts gives the man a drink of whiskey. He coughs violently and then continues.

JAMES MAY

The man handed it to me said he was going to make sure this paper was put on every fencepost from Natchez to Nashville. Sir, I'm just walking to Nashville to care for my mama. God's word on that.

SAMUEL MASON

Let me see the paper.

Scout 1 hands the reward poster to MASON. Nobody speaks as Mason studies the paper. He stands and turns his back to the fire to better read it. He brings the paper down and begins to speak.

SAMUEL MASON

Friends, it's nights like tonight that remind me how fortunate we are as we live. To happily remind me in the company of patriots and to drink the fruits of our labor, to live as free men, free men, given to us by the God of our very own blood. We chose our own path... a path that is different than the real crooks.

(he holds up the paper and
way... around...
... who... to bend... to their
will... by setting rules and
writing proclamations.

The men all cheer. Mason holds a bottle high then clears his throat like a judge about to pass sentence.

SAMUEL MASON

The noble Governor calls us "Pirates and Robbers". Well, he's got us there!

Everyone laughs and drinks.

(CONTINUED)