

SAWGRASS WARS

"Captain Ahab"
Episode 8 - Season One

Written by

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Based on the Sawgrass Wars novella series
by Kurt Weichert

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FADE IN:

EXT. EVERGLADES CHANNEL - SKIFF - AFTERNOON

The skiff hits another wave and LAUNCHES JOHNNY MALONE above the wooden bench.

He lands hard.

Pain shoots from the bullet wound high on the back of his thigh directly into his spine.

Johnny grips the boat and glares at his son.

JOHNNY

Slow down.

BONES stands at the rear with one hand on the motor. Wind pushes dark hair from his face. He looks completely at home racing through the narrow channel.

BONES

I know how to drive.

JOHNNY

You know how to go fast. That ain't the same thing.

Bones increases the throttle.

The skiff SLAMS across another line of choppy water.

Johnny winces.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

B.

Bones laughs.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

We're not in a race.

BONES

Somebody might be following us.

JOHNNY

Then we shoot them.

Johnny catches himself.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

That is not the answer to every problem.

BONES

It's worked pretty good so far.

Dark clouds swallow what remains of the afternoon sun.
Lightning flickers beyond the trees.

The storm is miles away, but Johnny can smell rain crossing the sawgrass.

Bones eases into a mangrove channel. The water calms.

Johnny shifts carefully.

JOHNNY

You're enjoying this.

Bones looks ahead.

BONES

I've got to thank you, Malone.

JOHNNY

You mean Dad.

BONES

Sure.

JOHNNY

I am your father.

BONES

According to Ma.

Johnny ignores it.

JOHNNY

What are you thanking me for?

BONES

For giving me a purpose.

Johnny watches the back of his son's head.

JOHNNY

What purpose?

Bones turns, delighted.

BONES

I'm an outlaw, Malone.

The delight frightens Johnny.

For years, he imagined the man Bones might become -- his father's intelligence, his mother's strength, none of their mistakes.

College. Law. Legitimate business. Politics. Choices no Malone ever possessed.

But Bones grew up without him.

Other people taught the boy what the Malone name means.

BONES (CONT'D)

Like you.

JOHNNY

I'm a fucking accountant.

BONES

You keep saying that like anybody believes you.

JOHNNY

Because it's true.

BONES

Accountants don't blow up their houses.

JOHNNY

Some do.

BONES

Accountants don't disappear for twelve years.

JOHNNY

I had reasons.

BONES

Accountants don't hide five million dollars in a swamp.

JOHNNY

That was an unusual tax strategy.

Bones laughs.

For a moment, Johnny hears the child he remembers.

Then it is gone.

BONES

You get us that money, and I might start calling you Dad.

JOHNNY

You called me Dad twenty minutes ago.

BONES

Did I?

JOHNNY

Yes.

BONES

Must've been the excitement.

JOHNNY

Maybe you could call me Dad because I'm your father.

BONES

Maybe you could act like one.

Johnny looks toward the water.

That hurts more than the bullet.

Bones reduces speed as the channel narrows.

JOHNNY

What do you expect to get from this?

BONES

A shitload of money.

JOHNNY

For what?

BONES

You heard Alex. This is the down payment on our future.

JOHNNY

Crime isn't a future.

BONES

Not this again.

JOHNNY

I mean it.

BONES

So do I. Forget about sending me to college or buying me some little house where I can mow the grass every Saturday. School's over.

JOHNNY

You're eighteen.

BONES

As of today.

JOHNNY

That doesn't make you wise.

BONES

No, growing up in Dawber County did that.

Bones glances back.

BONES (CONT'D)

What did you think was going to happen? You and Bo and Kenny ran cocaine through here for years. Then you handed everybody to the Feds and disappeared. Half the kids in town blamed you because their fathers went to prison.

JOHNNY

I know.

BONES

No, you don't.

Bones faces forward.

BONES (CONT'D)

The older boys used to wait for me after school. Sometimes five or six of them.

Johnny's stomach tightens.

JOHNNY

Your mother never told me.

BONES

She probably figured you were too busy being an accountant.

JOHNNY

What happened?

BONES
I walked toward them.

JOHNNY
Why?

BONES
Because they were going to catch me
anyway.

Johnny sees a small boy walking toward older children who
intend to hurt him.

BONES (CONT'D)
Alex and Billy stopped them when
they were around. But they weren't
always around.

JOHNNY
Who were they?

BONES
What?

JOHNNY
The boys who hurt you.

Bones smiles faintly.

BONES
Doesn't matter.

JOHNNY
It matters to me.

BONES
I handled them.

JOHNNY
When?

BONES
When I got big enough.

The satisfaction in his voice answers the rest.

Johnny studies his son's shoulders. Bruised knuckles. Shotgun
within reach.

Johnny thought Bones would become like him.

Instead, Bones became what surviving Johnny Malone required.

JOHNNY

I'm sorry.

Bones does not respond.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

I mean it.

BONES

Then get us the money.

JOHNNY

You think money fixes everything?

BONES

No. But I'd like to find out for myself.

Johnny almost smiles.

JOHNNY

You're not dumb, son.

BONES

I know.

JOHNNY

You just don't think through your actions.

BONES

That sounds like something dumb people do.

JOHNNY

It's a skill you can learn.

BONES

Can you teach me?

JOHNNY

I can try.

Bones looks back.

BONES

That might be the first fatherly thing you've said.

The channel divides.

One route curves east into open sawgrass. Another narrows beneath mangroves forming a tunnel.

Johnny points.

JOHNNY
Take the tunnel.

Bones reduces the throttle.

BONES
You sure?

JOHNNY
My father took me through here
before I could walk. He knew every
channel between Gethsemane and the
Gulf.

BONES
I thought you grew up in Miami.

JOHNNY
I was born in Dawber County. My
father moved us after he got tired
of working for the Dawbers.

BONES
Smart man.

JOHNNY
He had his moments.

EXT. MANGROVE TUNNEL - SKIFF - CONTINUOUS

Bones guides the skiff beneath the canopy.

The sky disappears. Branches scrape the hull. Insects move
across black water.

BONES
How much farther?

JOHNNY
Slow down.

BONES
I am going slow.

JOHNNY
Slower.

BONES
What are you afraid of?

JOHNNY

Everything I didn't see coming the first time.

Bones pulls back until they barely move.

Johnny studies the roots.

The landscape changed over twelve years, but he recognizes what remains beneath the growth:

A split trunk shaped like an open hand.

A limestone ridge inches above the water.

An iron survey marker almost consumed by vines.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

There.

Bones follows his finger.

BONES

I don't see anything.

JOHNNY

You're not supposed to.

Johnny points to the tunnel's center.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Cut the engine.

Bones switches it off.

The sudden silence feels unnatural.

Water drips from branches. Thunder rolls in the distance.

Johnny rises carefully and takes a long boat hook from beneath the bench.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Kenny and I put five containers down here in 1991.

BONES

One million in each?

JOHNNY

Approximately.

BONES

What does approximately mean?

JOHNNY

It means we were in a hurry.

BONES

You ever count your own money?

JOHNNY

That's most of what I did.

Johnny indicates five positions around the skiff.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

We sealed the cash in waterproof bags, placed them in marine containers, and attached each to a weighted net. The weights held them underwater. The netting gave us something to catch.

Bones looks doubtful.

BONES

You left five million dollars tied to rocks?

JOHNNY

Large rocks.

BONES

That was your brilliant plan?

JOHNNY

No one found it.

BONES

Maybe it floated to Cuba.

JOHNNY

It didn't float.

BONES

How do you know?

JOHNNY

Because I used the word tethered when I explained it to Kenny.

Bones stares.

BONES

What does that mean?

JOHNNY

Tied.

BONES

Then say tied.

JOHNNY

Tethered is more accurate.

BONES

You always use words like you're
charging people by the syllable.

Johnny gives him the hook.

JOHNNY

The first should be off the bow.

Bones lowers the hook.

Mud.

Again.

Nothing.

BONES

You sure this is the spot?

JOHNNY

Yes.

BONES

Twelve years is a long time.

JOHNNY

I know where I hid five million
dollars.

BONES

You forgot you had a son.

Johnny says nothing.

Bones looks back, sees his father's face, and looks away.

He drags the hook across the bottom.

It CATCHES.

BONES (CONT'D)

Got something.

JOHNNY

Don't pull too hard. Find the net.

Bones adjusts and pulls steadily.

Muddy bubbles rise. Dark netting appears beneath the surface.

Bones grabs it with both hands. His back tightens as he lifts.

A BLACK MARINE CASE breaks the surface.

He hauls it over the side and drops it onto the floor. The skiff rocks dangerously.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Easy.

Bones falls to his knees and attacks the latches.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Wait.

BONES

For what?

JOHNNY

We make sure the seal held.

BONES

How?

JOHNNY

By looking before you tear it apart.

Bones ignores him and forces the case open.

Inside: a thick rubberized bag.

He rips it open.

Bundles of HUNDRED-DOLLAR BILLS spill across the skiff.

Bones freezes.

The anger leaves his face.

For the first time since Johnny returned, his son looks purely happy.

Bones holds two bundles beneath his nose.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Money doesn't have a smell when it's wrapped in plastic.

BONES

Smells rich to me.

JOHNNY

Keep your voice down.

Bones raises the bundles overhead.

BONES

We did it.

JOHNNY

That's one million. There are four more.

BONES

One million more than I had this morning.

Bones presses the money to his chest.

Johnny feels relief.

A moment they can share -- father and son, alone where Johnny's past waited for both of them.

Then Johnny realizes the money created the happiness his return could not.

JOHNNY

Put it back.

BONES

We just found it.

JOHNNY

And we'll lose it if you tip the boat. Seal the bag.

Bones reluctantly returns the bundles.

Johnny lowers the hook off the port side. His thigh throbs as he drags it across the bottom.

The hook catches the second net. Johnny pulls.

The container feels heavier than he remembers.

BONES

You need help, Old Man?

JOHNNY

I have it.

BONES

You're turning purple.

JOHNNY

I'm fine.

BONES

You look like you're giving birth.

Johnny pulls harder. Bones laughs until Johnny glares.

Then Bones grabs the net and helps lift.

They check the seal together.

The second million is intact.

The third rises more easily. Algae covers the outer case, but the bag inside remains dry.

Bones counts the cases.

BONES (CONT'D)

Three million dollars.

JOHNNY

Keep your voice down.

BONES

There ain't anybody out here.

JOHNNY

There is always somebody out here.

Bones takes the hook.

BONES

Where's the fourth?

Johnny points beyond the stern.

Bones lowers the hook. It catches on the third attempt.

As he pulls, Johnny hears something beneath the water.

Not a splash.

A displacement.

Something large changes direction below them.

JOHNNY

Stop.

Bones keeps pulling.

BONES

What?

JOHNNY

Let it go.

BONES

I've got the money.

JOHNNY

Bones, let go.

THE SURFACE ERUPTS.

A MASSIVE ALLIGATOR surges beneath the skiff and clamps its jaws around the rising container.

Bones falls backward as the boat tilts. The hook tears from his hands.

Johnny grabs the gunwale before going overboard.

The animal rolls. Its armored back breaks the surface.

A deep white scar crosses one eye.

Johnny recognizes it.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Smiley.

The alligator twists with the container in its jaws.

One tooth punctures the rubberized bag.

The seam splits.

Bundles of cash BURST into the water.

Bones stares.

BONES

No.

Smiley releases the ruined container.

Hundred-dollar bills float around the skiff.

BONES (CONT'D)

No!

Bones lunges over the side and grabs money.

Johnny seizes his shirt.

JOHNNY

Get away from the water.

BONES

That's a million dollars!

JOHNNY

And that's a fifteen-foot
alligator.

BONES

Help me!

Bones scoops soaked bundles into the boat.

The water EXPLODES again.

Smiley's jaws snap inches from his arm.

Johnny yanks Bones backward. They crash onto the cases.

Bones fights free and grabs the shotgun.

JOHNNY

Don't.

BONES

That thing took our money.

JOHNNY

It almost took your arm.

Bones chambers a shell.

Smiley's scarred head appears behind them.

Bones FIRES.

The blast rips through the tunnel. Water erupts beside the
alligator.

Smiley vanishes.

Bones fires again at a shadow beneath the surface.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Stop shooting!

BONES

I'm killing it.

JOHNNY

You can't see it.

BONES

I can see enough.

Johnny knocks the barrel up before Bones fires a third time.

The shot tears through branches. Birds scatter.

Bones shoves him away.

BONES (CONT'D)

Get off me.

JOHNNY

You're going to put a hole through the boat.

BONES

It stole a million dollars.

JOHNNY

It's an alligator. It didn't steal anything.

BONES

Then what do you call that?

They look at the loose bills drifting between the roots.

The punctured container sinks.

Smiley is gone.

Johnny takes the shotgun.

JOHNNY

You almost got yourself killed over money.

BONES

Our money.

JOHNNY

Money can be replaced.

BONES

You would say that.

JOHNNY

What does that mean?

BONES

You've got millions somewhere else.

Johnny does not answer.

BONES (CONT'D)

The Swiss accounts are real.

JOHNNY

We have another container to recover.

BONES

How much do you have?

JOHNNY

Find the fifth net.

BONES

Ten million? Twenty?

JOHNNY

Bones.

BONES

A hundred?

Johnny pushes the hook into his hands.

JOHNNY

Find the net.

Bones glares, then lowers the hook. The shotgun stays beside his foot.

The approaching storm darkens the tunnel.

After several minutes, the hook catches.

Together, they lift the fifth case.

The damage is visible before they open it: deep scratches, a crushed corner, water leaking through the seal.

BONES

Open it.

JOHNNY

There's no point.

BONES

Open it.

Johnny releases the latches.

The inner bag has collapsed. Gray water surrounds it.

Bones tears it open.

The money has fused into a wet, milky mass. Ink stains the water green and black.

Bones lifts what was once a bundle. It disintegrates in his hands.

BONES (CONT'D)

How much can we save?

JOHNNY

None.

BONES

Some of it has to be good.

JOHNNY

It's been underwater for years.

Bones opens another bundle. The paper falls apart.

He KICKS the case.

The skiff rocks.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Careful.

BONES

Three million.

JOHNNY

That's what survived.

BONES

Three million isn't five.

JOHNNY

It will have to be.

BONES

I promised Willis two.

JOHNNY

You didn't promise him anything. I did.

BONES

That leaves one million for us.

JOHNNY

One million dollars is still money.

BONES

Not for what Alex wants to build.

Johnny secures the intact cases.

JOHNNY

Alex has no idea what he wants to build.

BONES

He understands more than you think.

JOHNNY

He understands numbers and routes.
He doesn't understand prison.

BONES

Neither did you. You got everybody else sent there.

Johnny stops.

Bones stands over the ruined money, breathing hard.

Only thunder moves between them.

BONES (CONT'D)

What happened to Sanchez?

JOHNNY

What?

BONES

Everybody says his death is why you turned on Bo.

JOHNNY

It was.

BONES

So you destroyed the entire operation for one man?

JOHNNY

He wasn't one man.

BONES

What was he?

JOHNNY

My brother.

Bones absorbs it.

BONES

You burned everything down for him.

JOHNNY

Yes.

BONES

But not for me.

Johnny looks away.

JOHNNY

I left to keep you alive.

BONES

That's what you tell yourself.

JOHNNY

Bo threatened you and your mother.
The cartel believed I stole from
them. Mack Donnelly was hunting me.
If I stayed, every one of them
would've used you to reach me.

BONES

You still could've called.

JOHNNY

I watched when I could.

BONES

That ain't being a father.

JOHNNY

No.

The admission surprises Bones.

Johnny closes the case.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

I thought staying away protected
you. Maybe I was wrong.

BONES

You were.

JOHNNY

I know that now.

Rain begins to penetrate the canopy.

Bones watches money drift outside the skiff.

BONES

Bubs knew this was here?

JOHNNY

Yes.

BONES

You told him?

JOHNNY

I told him where we put it and how to reach it. I gave him permission to use it.

BONES

For what?

JOHNNY

Anything Dawber County needed. Food. Medicine. Keeping families from losing their homes after the arrests.

BONES

And he left it underwater.

JOHNNY

Yes.

BONES

Why?

JOHNNY

Because he considered it blood money.

Bones laughs bitterly.

BONES

Blood money could've helped Ma.

JOHNNY

Bubs believed the smuggling had already poisoned too many people in his congregation. He wouldn't use more poison to heal them.

BONES

That sounds like something people say when they ain't hungry.

JOHNNY

You don't know what Bubs survived.

BONES

I know he watched us struggle while
five million dollars sat in his
backyard.

JOHNNY

He believed touching it would bring
Bo, the cartel, and the government
down on everyone he tried to help.

BONES

Maybe he should've asked us.

JOHNNY

You were a child.

BONES

Ma wasn't.

Johnny has no answer.

Bones looks toward Gethsemane.

BONES (CONT'D)

I want to talk to him.

JOHNNY

Later.

BONES

Now.

JOHNNY

We have three million dollars
sitting in an open boat.

BONES

Willis can protect it.

JOHNNY

We don't know who's watching the
church.

BONES

Bubs owes me an explanation.

JOHNNY

Pastor Bubs spent six years in a
North Vietnamese prison camp. They
starved him, beat him, and broke
bones that never healed properly.
He never gave them what they
wanted.

Bones stares.

BONES
Why are you telling me that?

JOHNNY
Because if you plan to frighten
him, don't waste your time.

BONES
I don't want to frighten him.

JOHNNY
What do you want?

BONES
The truth.

JOHNNY
You may not like it.

BONES
I'm getting used to that.

An ENGINE growls beyond the mangroves.

Both men freeze.

The sound fades beneath thunder.

BONES (CONT'D)
That Willis?

JOHNNY
No.

BONES
How do you know?

JOHNNY
Willis said he has six airboats. We
would hear all of them.

The engine grows louder.

One boat. Moving slowly.

Searching.

Johnny returns the shotgun.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
Load it.

Bones chambers a fresh shell.

Johnny checks his pistol.

A SEARCHLIGHT sweeps across the branches behind them.

Johnny kills the skiff's running light.

Darkness closes around them.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Get the cases beneath the benches.

Bones hides the three million dollars.

The approaching engine slows.

A MAN'S VOICE carries through the tunnel. Indistinct.

A second voice answers.

Bones crouches by the motor.

BONES

What do we do?

Johnny watches the beam crawl across black water.

For the first time all afternoon, his son waits for him to decide.

Johnny raises the pistol.

JOHNNY

Now you learn to think before you shoot.

The searchlight sweeps closer.

Someone followed them into the swamp.

EXT. GETHSEMANE BAPTIST CHURCH - NIGHT

SUPER: MINUTES EARLIER

PASTOR BUBS opens the church doors before MACK DONNELLY reaches the steps.

Bubs stands beneath the entrance light, one hand on a wooden cane. Age has bent his shoulders but not diminished him. White shirt buttoned at the throat. Dark trousers freshly pressed.

Scars remain visible on his wrists.

Mack remembers what those scars cost Bubs in a North Vietnamese prison camp. The man was never broken.

AISHA REYES follows Mack up the steps.

BUBS
Agent Donnelly.

MACK
Pastor.

Bubs looks at Aisha.

BUBS
And you are?

AISHA
Special Agent Aisha Reyes.

BUBS
DEA?

AISHA
Yes.

Bubs steps aside.

BUBS
I suppose you should come in before
the storm arrives.

INT. GETHSEMANE BAPTIST CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Gethsemane is smaller than Mack remembers. Wooden pews face a plain pulpit. Photographs show picnics, baptisms, and generations of Dawber County families.

One photograph shows DEON CHILDRESS graduating from law school, Pastor Bubs and MILLIE beside him.

Mack stops.

MACK
You raised Deon.

BUBS
We helped.

MACK
He went to Reform Prison to see
Kenny Gregory.

Bubs does not react.

BUBS
So I heard.

MACK
He hasn't been seen since.

BUBS
Then perhaps the Drug Enforcement
Administration should find him.

MACK
We're working on it.

BUBS
Are you?

Aisha glances at Mack.

Bubs continues toward the pulpit.

BUBS (CONT'D)
You didn't drive from Miami to
discuss Deon.

MACK
No. We came to discuss Johnny
Malone.

Bubs stops.

BUBS
Johnny has been gone for twelve
years.

MACK
He's back.

BUBS
What makes you think that?

Mack removes an evidence bag from inside his jacket.

The scorched Vietnam lighter rests inside. The engraved words
remain:

SORRY, CHARLIE.

Bubs studies it.

BUBS (CONT'D)
Where did you find that?

MACK

Inside what was left of Johnny's house.

BUBS

Then perhaps he died there.

MACK

He didn't.

BUBS

You sound certain.

MACK

I know Johnny.

Bubs looks at the lighter.

BUBS

I once believed that too.

Mack returns it to his jacket.

MACK

Bo Dawber says you know where Johnny hid five million dollars.

Bubs walks behind the pulpit and rests both hands upon it.

BUBS

Bo Dawber has spent his life saying things.

MACK

He was very specific.

BUBS

Prison gives a man time to develop his imagination.

MACK

Did Johnny leave the money with you?

BUBS

No.

MACK

Do you know where it is?

Bubs stares at him.

Aisha steps closer.

AISHA

Pastor, two men may already be dead because of that money. Someone tried to murder an attorney on Alligator Alley. If Johnny returns for it, more people will die.

BUBS

People were dying long before Johnny Malone returned.

AISHA

Help us prevent another killing.

Bubs studies her.

BUBS

I have never touched Johnny's money.

MACK

That isn't what she asked.

BUBS

It is the answer I'm prepared to give.

MACK

Five million dollars could have kept this church open for generations.

BUBS

This church was not built with cocaine.

MACK

It could've fed your congregation.

BUBS

The same congregation Johnny's business helped poison?

MACK

You let it sit in a swamp?

Bubs's gaze hardens.

BUBS

There are some things a man cannot use without becoming part of how they were earned.

MACK
That sounds noble.

BUBS
It isn't nobility. It's fear.

Mack did not expect that.

MACK
Fear of what?

BUBS
What money makes men willing to do.

Thunder rattles the stained glass.

Mack looks toward the rear of the church.

MACK
Where's the water access?

Bubs says nothing.

Mack heads down a side aisle. Aisha follows.

INT. GETHSEMANE BAPTIST CHURCH - REAR HALL - CONTINUOUS

A small kitchen. Two classrooms. An office.

A rear door opens onto a covered walkway to the swamp.

EXT. GETHSEMANE BAPTIST CHURCH - DOCK - CONTINUOUS

A wooden dock extends into the channel.

A flat-bottomed AIRBOAT occupies the church's only slip, its propeller caged behind an elevated platform.

Bubs joins them.

BUBS
The church keeps that boat for
floods and emergencies.

MACK
This qualifies.

A GUNSHOT rolls across the swamp.

Bubs turns toward the mangroves.

A second shot.

Then a third.

Aisha draws her pistol.

AISHA

That sounded like a shotgun.

Mack is already moving.

Bubs blocks the walkway.

BUBS

That boat belongs to the church.

MACK

I'll bring it back.

BUBS

You do not have my permission.

AISHA

Exigent circumstances.

Bubs looks disappointed in her.

BUBS

That phrase has excused a great deal of sin.

AISHA

People may be in danger.

BUBS

People are always in danger when Mack Donnelly follows Johnny Malone.

Mack steps aboard.

Aisha finds two sets of protective earmuffs and hands one to him.

MACK

Where do the channels divide?

BUBS

About half a mile west.

MACK

Which one leads toward the mangroves?

BUBS

Both.

Mack puts on the earmuffs.

Bubs stays on the dock.

BUBS (CONT'D)

If Johnny is back, he didn't return
for the money.

MACK

What did he return for?

BUBS

His son.

Mack starts the engine.

The propeller ROARS, ending conversation.

Bubs raises a hand. His lips move, but Mack cannot hear him.

He does not need to.

The warning in Bubs's expression is enough.

Mack pushes off.

EXT. EVERGLADES CHANNEL - AIRBOAT - NIGHT

The airboat THUNDERS through the channel.

Aisha sits beside Mack, earmuffs on and pistol holstered.

The church searchlight sweeps over roots and walls of
sawgrass.

Conversation is impossible. Mack uses hand signals.

At the divide, he raises a fist and cuts the throttle.

The propeller continues spinning behind them.

They wait for it to stop, then remove their hearing
protection.

AISHA

You believe Dawber?

MACK

About the money?

AISHA

About Bubs.

MACK

Bo lies when the truth won't serve him. This time, it does.

AISHA

Bubs said he never touched it.

MACK

I believe him.

AISHA

Then why are we out here?

MACK

Because not touching money isn't the same as not knowing where it is.

Aisha studies the channels.

AISHA

Which way?

Mack examines the water.

Broken leaves and a thin film of fuel drift through the left channel.

MACK

Left.

AISHA

You sure?

MACK

No.

AISHA

That's comforting.

They replace the earmuffs.

Mack restarts the engine and guides the airboat beneath the mangroves.

EXT. MANGROVE TUNNEL - AIRBOAT - CONTINUOUS

The searchlight finds something floating.

MONEY.

Mack kills the engine.

The airboat glides on its remaining momentum. The propeller spins down.

When it stops, they remove the earmuffs.

A hundred-dollar bill floats beside the hull.

Then another.

Dozens drift between the roots.

Aisha retrieves one. Soaked but real.

AISHA

Well, I guess Bo's imagination is healthier than we thought.

Mack uses a push pole to move quietly through the floating cash.

A ruined black container rests against a root, punctured and torn.

Something large moves beneath the surface.

Aisha pulls her arm into the boat.

AISHA (CONT'D)

What did that?

MACK

Something that lives here.

Mack pushes around the bend.

A small SKIFF waits in the center of the tunnel.

BONES crouches at the motor with a shotgun.

JOHNNY stands at the bow with a pistol.

Three BLACK MARINE CASES are hidden beneath the benches.

Mack sees them anyway.

For twelve years, he imagined this moment: Johnny in a Colombian villa, leaving a Swiss bank, standing behind him in a parking garage with a gun.

Never this.

Johnny looks older, injured, exhausted.

But alive.

Mack forgets Aisha. The explosion. Oscar's orders. Every procedure he promised to follow.

MACK (CONT'D)

Johnny.

The name comes out quieter than intended.

Johnny raises his pistol. Bones aims the shotgun.

Mack poles the airboat closer.

Aisha raises her badge.

AISHA

Federal agents! Lower your weapons.

Bones looks at his father.

BONES

Can I shoot them?

JOHNNY

No.

BONES

Why not?

JOHNNY

Because shooting federal agents complicates things.

BONES

They followed us.

JOHNNY

Still complicated.

Mack brings the airboat alongside. The hulls bump.

MACK

Twelve years, Johnny.

Johnny barely reacts.

JOHNNY

You look terrible, Mack.

MACK

I was about to say the same thing.

JOHNNY

I've been shot. What's your excuse?

Aisha keeps her pistol on Bones.

AISHA
Put the shotgun down.

Bones smiles.

BONES
You first.

JOHNNY
Bones.

BONES
What?

JOHNNY
We're thinking before we shoot.

BONES
I thought about it.

JOHNNY
Think longer.

Mack looks at the cases.

MACK
You found it.

JOHNNY
Found what?

MACK
Don't.

JOHNNY
You're going to have to be more specific.

MACK
The money.

Johnny looks at the floating bills.

JOHNNY
Somebody appears to have littered.

MACK
Three cases. One million each?

JOHNNY
You were always good with numbers.

MACK

I learned from you.

JOHNNY

No, you learned enough to get dangerous.

Mack reaches for the skiff.

Johnny aims at his hand.

Aisha steps forward.

AISHA

Mr. Malone, lower the weapon.

JOHNNY

Am I under arrest?

AISHA

You are being detained for questioning.

JOHNNY

About?

AISHA

A residential explosion that killed several people.

JOHNNY

Haitians tried to murder me.

AISHA

Then come with us and make a statement.

JOHNNY

Do I look healthy enough for an interview?

AISHA

You look healthy enough to recover three million dollars.

Bones tightens his finger on the trigger.

Mack sees it.

MACK

Easy, kid.

BONES

Don't call me kid.

MACK
So you're Bones.

BONES
You've heard of me?

MACK
I arrested half the men who used to
bounce you on their knees.

BONES
You're Mack Donnelly.

Mack smiles.

MACK
My reputation precedes me.

BONES
My dad says you're an asshole.

Johnny looks at him.

JOHNNY
I don't remember saying that.

BONES
You didn't have to.

A distant ROAR enters the tunnel.

Everyone stops.

Another airboat.

The engine grows steadily louder, announcing its approach
before the vessel appears.

Mack turns toward the bend. Aisha raises her pistol.

Johnny signals Bones to cut the ignition. Bones nods but does
not start the engine.

A SECOND AIRBOAT emerges.

WAYLON WIGGINS, a uniformed corrections officer, stands at
the controls. His khaki shirt is soaked with sweat.

Two ARMED MEN ride in front -- one with an assault rifle, the
other with a twelve-gauge shotgun.

Wiggins sees the DEA badges and reduces speed.

Momentum carries the boat into the wider tunnel as the propeller slows.

Wiggins cuts the ignition and waits for the blades to stop.

The sudden quiet makes everything more dangerous.

Aisha raises her badge.

AISHA

DEA. Keep your hands where I can see them.

Wiggins draws a pistol.

WIGGINS

Step away from the money.

Mack moves between Wiggins and Johnny's skiff.

MACK

Corrections Officer Wiggins, lower your weapon.

Wiggins eyes Mack's badge.

WIGGINS

Warden says nobody takes that money.

Johnny studies the uniform.

JOHNNY

You boys come straight from work?

WIGGINS

Shut your mouth, Malone.

JOHNNY

That Bo's order or Kinder's?

Wiggins levels the pistol.

WIGGINS

Does it matter?

The rifleman OPENS FIRE.

Bullets rip through mangroves.

Mack tackles Aisha as rounds strike the airboat's metal cage.

The searchlight EXPLODES.

Wiggins restarts his engine. The ROAR swallows every other sound.

Johnny dives behind the bow and shouts at Bones.

JOHNNY

Start it!

Bones turns the key.

The outboard coughs but will not catch.

Bones fires toward Wiggins's airboat. The blast shatters part of its windshield.

The rifleman fires again.

Bullets punch through Johnny's skiff.

One marine case slides out. Its lid breaks open.

Bundles of cash spill across the floor.

Wiggins sees the money, points, and drives forward.

Aisha FIRES twice.

The rifleman spins and falls against the gunwale. His weapon drops into the water.

Wiggins's airboat RAMS the rear of Mack's.

Mack slams into the steering platform. His pistol falls to the deck.

The shotgun passenger jumps toward Johnny's skiff.

Bones meets him with the shotgun stock.

CRACK!

The blow breaks the man's nose and sends him into the water.

He surfaces between the boats, screaming.

Something moves beneath him.

A long armored back breaks the surface.

The man disappears.

Bones stares into the water.

BONES

Smiley ain't dead!

Johnny grabs his son's shirt and shouts into his face.

JOHNNY

Motor!

Bones returns to the controls.

Wiggins swings toward the skiff.

Mack retrieves his pistol and climbs onto the forward deck.

He FIRES.

One round shatters Wiggins's instrument panel. Another strikes the propeller cage.

Aisha joins him, firing at the engine housing.

The airboat coughs and loses power.

Wiggins uses his momentum to reach a wider pocket, works the rudders, and pulses the throttle.

The damaged propeller SCREAMS.

The boat begins a slow, violent turn.

Mack JUMPS from the church airboat onto Johnny's skiff.

The hull drops under his weight.

Johnny drives his pistol into Mack's ribs.

Mack catches his wrist.

Face-to-face.

Twelve years disappear.

Mack smells cigarettes, swamp water, and blood.

Johnny's eyes hold the contempt Mack remembers from the raid.

MACK

You should've stayed dead.

JOHNNY

You should've stayed undercover.

Mack twists Johnny's wrist.

Johnny punches him with the other hand.

Mack stumbles into a money case.

Bones turns from the motor.

BONES
Get off my father!

He swings the shotgun.

Mack ducks. The stock smashes a mangrove branch.

Johnny drives his shoulder into Mack's chest.

They crash into the gunwale. The skiff tilts.

Mack catches Johnny's shirt.

Johnny's hand finds the evidence bag inside Mack's jacket.

His fingers close around the scorched lighter.

His eyes change.

Mack tears the bag away and shoves it beneath his jacket before Johnny sees the engraving.

Not yet.

Aisha fires toward Wiggins.

A shotgun blast strikes the skiff.

Johnny shoves Mack away and points to the motor.

Bones tries again.

The outboard CATCHES.

The skiff surges.

Mack grabs the rear bench. Johnny kicks his hand.

Mack loses his grip and crashes into the church airboat.

Johnny and Bones accelerate through the gap.

Wiggins completes his turn. His damaged airboat retreats, propeller rattling violently.

Mack aims.

Aisha grabs his arm and points to the deck.

GASOLINE pours from a bullet hole in the church airboat's fuel line.

One muzzle flash could ignite them.

Mack lowers the weapon.

Wiggins disappears one way.

Johnny's outboard vanishes the other.

Silence returns.

Aisha reloads.

AISHA

You recognize him?

MACK

Wiggins. Corrections officer.

AISHA

He just tried to murder two federal agents.

MACK

He tried to take the money.

AISHA

On whose orders?

MACK

You heard him.

AISHA

Warden Kinder.

MACK

And Bo Dawber.

Aisha looks down the channel where Johnny escaped.

AISHA

You were right.

Mack keeps staring into darkness.

MACK

About which part?

AISHA

Malone's alive.

MACK

I told you.

AISHA

And the money is real.

Mack notices something beside his boot.

A bundle of hundred-dollar bills fell from the open case.

He picks it up.

A faded bank strap circles the wet currency, dated twelve years earlier: 1991.

AISHA (CONT'D)

How much do you think they recovered?

MACK

Three million.

AISHA

You sound sure.

MACK

I counted the cases.

AISHA

We need to call Oscar.

Mack slips the bundle inside his jacket.

Aisha notices.

AISHA (CONT'D)

That's evidence.

MACK

I know.

AISHA

It goes in a bag.

MACK

I don't have one.

AISHA

You have one holding Malone's lighter.

Mack touches the evidence bag.

MACK

That stays separate.

Aisha studies him.

Mack's phone VIBRATES.

AREA CODE 775. NEVADA.

He turns away and answers.

MACK (CONT'D)

What?

NEVADA MAN (PHONE)

You have forty-eight hours.

Mack looks into the tunnel.

MACK

I'm working on it.

NEVADA MAN (PHONE)

You said Malone was dead.

MACK

He isn't.

NEVADA MAN (PHONE)

Then your situation has improved.

MACK

I need more time.

NEVADA MAN (PHONE)

You had time.

A pause.

NEVADA MAN (PHONE) (CONT'D)

If we don't hear from you, we visit
your daughter.

Mack crushes the phone in his grip.

MACK

You stay away from her.

NEVADA MAN (PHONE)

Forty-eight hours.

The call ends.

Mack keeps the phone to his ear.

Aisha watches.

AISHA
Who was that?

MACK
Wrong number.

AISHA
You told a wrong number you were
working on something?

Mack pockets the phone.

MACK
Reno telemarketers are aggressive.

AISHA
Mack.

MACK
We need to get back to Gethsemane.

AISHA
What about Malone?

MACK
He has to return to dry land
eventually.

AISHA
And Wiggins?

MACK
He'll report to Kinder.

AISHA
Then Kinder knows Johnny recovered
the money.

MACK
So does Bo.

Aisha looks at the dead engine.

AISHA
And we're stranded in the swamp.

MACK
Temporary setback.

AISHA
You've been saying that about your
career for ten years.

Mack removes the wet bundle from his jacket.

He opens his wallet. Inside is a photograph of his DAUGHTER.

Mack places the wet money beside her picture. Then the evidence bag containing Johnny's lighter.

Money. Johnny. His daughter.

Mack looks at the lighter in the evidence bag.

SORRY, CHARLIE.

Mack sets a countdown on his phone: 48:00:00.

It begins.

Mack closes his hand around both the money and the lighter.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE EIGHT