The Violence of Wine

A Series Bible Presentation
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Sandstone Artists
Genera: Abduction Thiller – Native Lands
Period: Current Day
Location: Crow – Cheyenne Nations

Contents

Logline

When his teenage daughter vanishes on a Crow reservation, FBI agent David Aarons confronts a labyrinth of cartel influence, jurisdictional loopholes, and betrayal — forcing him to fight outside the law to uncover whether she's alive or lost forever.

Tagline

"On sovereign land, the law has no power — but the cartel does."

Series Synopsis

FBI Agent David Aarons thought he understood the system — until his daughter Tyler disappeared. Stranded between federal limitations and tribal sovereignty, David and his estranged Crow wife, Debra Yellowhawk, search for answers in a world where the cartel thrives inside the cracks of the law.

The cartel operates in the shadows of sovereign Native lands in the vast wide-open Montana territory: moving drugs, recruiting girls, and paying off locals who look the other way. Their influence is felt everywhere, though rarely seen head-on — an invisible hand controlling the fate of the valley. Each episode exposes another layer of corruption, complicity, and silence, pulling David deeper into a war that pits his FBI training against his identity as a father.

At its heart, the series asks: how far would you go to find your child in a system designed to make her disappear?

Legal Boundaries: Native Nations & U.S. Jurisdiction

- Tribal Nations are sovereign entities with their own laws and police forces.
- Jurisdiction becomes fractured when crimes involve non-Natives on Native land: local tribal police may lack authority, while federal and state agencies hesitate or collide over control.
- Cartels exploit this "jurisdictional no man's land" — knowing enforcement is slow, patchy, and easily compromised.

Missing Persons Context

- Native American women and girls experience some of the highest rates of disappearance and homicide in the U.S.

- Thousands of cases remain unsolved, often due to legal gaps, underfunded tribal police, and lack of federal coordination.

- These disappearances form the haunting backdrop of the series, mirroring Tyler's uncertain fate.

The Cartel's Presence & Operations

- **Invisibility**: The cartel is rarely seen outright — their power is felt in missing girls, drug overdoses, and corrupt deals in the shadows.

- **Operations**: Recruitment at parties, trafficking across reservations, buying protection from compromised officials, blending into legitimate businesses.

- **Vision**: A hydra-like organization — messy, decentralized, with layers of deniability — making it nearly impossible to take down.

- **Impact**: Their menace lies not in flashy violence but in systemic rot: every silence, every payoff, every missing girl is proof of their reach.

Series Engine

Each episode blends a **procedural drive** (David and Debra chasing leads, confronting cartel influence, hitting jurisdictional roadblocks) with a **serialized spine** (the search for Tyler). The repeating tension: David uncovers fragments of cartel activity and institutional corruption, but every clue pulls him deeper into a war he can't win within the rules of law.

The season is driven by one question: *Is Tyler alive?*

Pilot Beat Sheet

- **Inciting Incident**: Tyler sneaks out to a party on the Crow reservation. The next day, two girls are found dead in the Bighorn River — Tyler is missing.

- **Midpoint**: David discovers cartel recruiters were at the party, and tribal police hesitate to pursue leads beyond their jurisdiction. His worst fears crystallize.

- **Point-of-No-Return**: David disobeys FBI orders to stand down, crossing into sovereign territory alone — risking his career, his marriage, and his freedom.

- **Final Image**: David stands at the riverbank at night, staring into the water where the bodies were found, whispering his daughter's name — knowing the cartel watches unseen.

Season One Overview

- **Objective**: David must find Tyler while navigating fractured jurisdictions and an invisible cartel presence.

- **Decisive Moves**:

    1. Exposing cartel infiltration of tribal politics.

    2. Going rogue after the FBI pulls out.

    3. Facing a choice between saving Tyler or blowing open the entire operation.

- **Season Drive**: The search for Tyler — alive, dead, or lost forever.

Character Arcs (Want / Need / Change)

- **David Aarons**: *Want*: Rescue his daughter. *Need*: Accept that justice requires breaking rules. *Change*: From law-abiding agent to desperate father going rogue.

- **Debra Yellowhawk**: *Want*: Stability. To protect her community. *Need*: Confront how silence enables the cartel. *Change*: From passive witness to active warrior.

- **Tyler Aarons**: *Want*: Freedom from cartel. *Need*: Realize the cost of reckless independence. *Change*: From naïve teen to survivor (if she lives).

Comps

- *Wind River* — borrowing the isolated Native setting and jurisdictional friction, subverting by focusing on a father's desperate personal stake.

- *Sicario* — borrowing the invisible menace of the cartel, subverting by rooting the story in sovereign Native land and its unique legal loopholes.

- *True Detective* — borrowing the brooding investigation tone, subverting by pairing federal procedure with familial, cultural conflict.

Why Now / Market Positioning

- **Target Buyers**: Netflix, FX, Amazon, Apple.

- **Tone**: Prestige crime thriller; brooding, procedural yet deeply personal.

- **Budget Lane**: Mid-range ($4–6M per episode); location-driven, with flashes of brutal action.

- **Why Now**: Public awareness of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) crisis is growing, yet largely underexplored on-screen. This series confronts that reality through a gripping personal story, offering both urgency and authenticity.

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