



*"I have lived long enough to know that any promise made beside the word 'forever' is no more than a lie agreed upon. There is no forever."*

*-Blackbeard (Edward Teach)*

A STARZ ORIGINAL SERIES

# BLACK SAILS

-Season Three -

## PRODUCTION NOTES

"Black Sails" is an epic pirate drama designed as a prequel to Robert Louis Stevenson's 'Treasure Island.' Combining classic characters from the book with real-life historical figures, the story depicts the bloody and protracted struggle for control of New Providence Island in the Golden Age of Piracy.

At the center of the action is Captain Flint, a man driven by his deep-seated rage and thirst for revenge against the Crown. The origins of that rage were revealed in season two of "Black Sails," ten years prior to the events of the first season. Meanwhile, the competing desires, betrayals, and power struggles of the inhabitants of Nassau continue to unfold. Season three (premiering Saturday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 at 9 PM ET/PT on STARZ), opens in the wake of the burning of Charles Town, where all the New World lives in fear of Flint. But as Flint's campaign of terror crosses over into madness, and new threats emerge to challenge his supremacy, it falls to John Silver to locate the man within the monster, before Flint's war against the world consumes them all.

On the pirate island of Nassau, it's a new day. With Eleanor Guthrie facing judgment in London, Jack Rackham sits atop a fortune in Spanish gold, hoping to secure his legacy as a king among thieves. To do so, he'll have to compete with the return of one of history's most notorious captains, Edward Teach, also known as Blackbeard, who holds a different vision for their home, as well as a complicated past with Rackham's chief ally, Captain Charles Vane. All will be tested when a new opponent arrives to claim Nassau, one the pirates never could have anticipated. It knows them. It understands them. And in the blink of an eye, it will do the one thing they never thought possible... turn them against each other.

Created by Jonathan E. Steinberg and Robert Levine, and executive produced by Steinberg and Levine, Platinum Dunes partners Michael Bay, Brad Fuller and Andrew Form, along with Dan Shotz and Chris Symes, the third season of "Black Sails" promises to take viewers on an unforgettable journey into the hearts of the men and women who choose to rise up, fly the black, and take what is theirs.

"The incredible world that Jon Steinberg and Robert Levine have created continues to unfold in season three. Flint's journey is riveting, and around him, Jon and Robert have woven an intricate web of conflict, betrayal, and redemption for the other characters that we believe will keep fans of the show coming back for more," says Carmi Zlotnik,



managing director of Starz. "We think that season three will bring even more of the drama and lore that has made "Black Sails" a hit both in the U.S. and internationally."

### Betrayals, Loss & New Alliances

In season three, we watch as Captain Flint struggles to cope with the loss of Miranda Barlow. His rage over her murder at the hands of a former ally launches him on a bloody and merciless campaign of terror across the New World. "The growing awareness of death and fear of the future that these characters experience reveals their innermost feelings and develops their acute awareness of themselves," says showrunner Jon Steinberg. "The loss of Miranda Barlow has put Flint in a place where he no longer has the partner he needs to be able to both be Captain Flint and live in a very dark world, but also to maintain his sense of self and his humanity. Without that anchor, he is spinning."

"Flint's rage is violent, it is vicious, it can attack anyone at any moment," says writer and executive producer Dan Shott. "It's both scary to England and to his men and the people around him. How is this going to affect him? Is he going to spiral out of control or is he going to lose himself? Is this going to be his end?"

The struggle for Nassau's survival drives the story in season three, says Toby Stephens (Captain Flint). "For Flint, Nassau represents everything that he is. He would be lost without it and he will do anything to get it back, including taking on the British. The stakes are enormous for him and this develops throughout the season."

After Charles Vane's dynamic rescue of Flint during the destruction of Charles Town, we watch as former rivalries transform into powerful yet fragile alliances. "Flint and Vane's relationship is never easy. It's always going to be complex. There is a yin and yang element, where they are together but they are always wrestling with one another," says Stephens.

Season three also depicts the evolution of John Silver into Captain Flint's most trusted confidant. "Silver started off as most objectionable to Flint when they first meet in season one, and now he is becoming really the only person who understands Flint and what his life is like," says Steinberg.

New characters include 'Edward Teach,' known also as the iconic 'Blackbeard,' and 'Woodes Rogers,' the new face of civilization in the West Indies.

One of the most notorious pirates to have ever lived, Blackbeard has returned to Nassau to settle some unfinished business, but in order to cement his legacy in this changed environment he has to challenge Nassau's most powerful denizens. "When Blackbeard returns to Nassau, he finds that through the decadence of success, the men have gone soft," says Ray Stevenson (Edward Teach). "They're not worthy to serve on ships. The pirates are not worthy to call themselves pirates. The captains don't deserve to be called captains. They're not the men he left behind. And this, this bites hard on him."

Woodes Rogers arrives in Nassau backed by immense power and armed with an insidious plan to end piracy for good. "Woodes Rogers is an adventurer. A privateer. A man who has circled the world conquering different areas, winning gold, fighting," says executive producer Dan Shott. "But now he wants to conquer the thing that is unconquerable. He wants to conquer Nassau. He wants to be the guy that everybody remembers that has come to Nassau and has neutered the pirates, put them down, and reclaimed Nassau for England."



### A Perfect Storm

In season three, the world of "Black Sails" expands massively, and features some incredible production feats, including an episode that depicts one pirate ship's catastrophic journey through the eye of a violent hurricane. "When I first heard about the storm sequence at the season three pitch I had no idea how I would do it," says executive producer Chris Symes.

To create the perfect storm, interior and exterior sets were built to tilt to almost forty degrees to replicate the force of gravity on a heeling ship. Symes came up with the ingenious idea of using jet engines to propel the air and water with the necessary force. "The only way we could do it was to use very high-powered wind machines and jet engines, which were brought in from the United Kingdom. We also built a four-propeller wind machine with a big V-8 engine in the middle of it, which was able to move an awful lot of air at about 50-miles-an-hour. This replicated a real storm and was a very unpleasant shooting environment."

Hurricane waves coming up over the ship were recreated with dump tanks filled with up to two tons of water, which could be released either all at the same time or one ton at a time. "Basically it was two tons of water falling onto the deck of the ship and washing the actors around on it. This was pretty hard to do and difficult for cast and crew to endure," says Symes.

Toby Stephens (Captain Flint) adds: "We were drenched and had water firing at us horizontally for two weeks, which was testing at times. But we knew that in the end it would be something never seen before on television-- not at this scale. For me that is really exciting. I can't wait for the audience to see it."

Emmy®-winning senior visual effects supervisor Erik Henry and his team completed the illusion, employing state of the art techniques to achieve maximum scale and authenticity in every shot. When confronting the challenge of creating massive, churning waves just off the decks of a stage-bound set, Henry employed an in-house team to oversee each shot. "The artists at these companies have created water that I think is very film-like. One really can't tell," says Henry. "All those things run through my mind when I'm finishing the shots. The kind of details that no one else needs to remember, but I have to make sure that I'm putting it all together. They always say you never finish an effects shot, you abandon it."

### The Maroon Camp

Season three also saw the creation of several new sets, including a sprawling Maroon camp housing hundreds of men, women and children. The camp set, comprising approximately 4400 square feet, is the first set built for "Black Sails" away from the Cape Town Film Studios. "The Maroon camp is a representative composite of a number of communities of escaped slaves that existed historically. The slaves would congregate in the wilderness to get away from the world that enslaved them. These camps insulated and protected these communities and they were very good at waging guerilla warfare against anybody who came after them," says Steinberg.

Blueprints were created based on drawings by celebrated production designer Wolf Kroeger. Kroeger was insistent that the camp be built using only materials – wood, clay, rope - that would have been available to the escaped slaves in this remote location at that time. "We, as much as possible, try to emulate what was available and the building methodology of the time," says supervising art director Christophe Dalberg. "We used the clay from the location for



any plasterwork and the timber we used was harvested from the local forest, which was actually a great help to the farmers as this was alien vegetation that needed to be uprooted."

"It was a pretty tough build," says Symes. A daily crew of over 50 people worked on location in soaring summer temperatures for close to three months. "The Maroon camp is a set that blows everyone away," says Symes. "The first time you see it, it's just awe-inspiring. The location is amazing and I think it is the most spectacular set we've built to date."

### Setting Sail

In addition to new sets, season three also welcomed a new ship to the already impressive fleet of full-scale sailing vessels on the Cape Town Studios set. Every ship in the Black Sails "fleet" boasts sails constructed from twelve-ounce canvas, and polyester manila rigging that easily passes for the real thing, minus the constant wear and tear. A crew of expert riggers handle the sails during shooting, completing the illusion that "Black Sails" ships are actually on the water.

Adding to the fleet of ships this season - which already boasts a half and full size hero ship (dubbed *The Walrus*), as well as a massive Spanish Man of War - is Captain Charles Vane's signature hunting sloop. The design team identified the ship from the historical records and then modeled it in a CAD program, which then was handed over to the construction department, led by master ship builder Gary Brown. "Gary literally starts forming the ship and he'll find the right line on it. In the design phase we will determine what is expected of the ship and ensure that there is sufficient space to accommodate cameras," says Symes.

### How to Hang a Pirate

Season three opens with Flint on a rampage, leading a murderous raid on a colonial town to target a magistrate guilty of hanging pirates. "The monster in Flint has emerged, the angst that is building up in him has emerged; he wants piracy to live on and for England to be squashed," says Shotz.

Season three depicts different methods of hanging, all of which were researched heavily to ensure historical accuracy. Public hangings in the town square were often designed to delay the moment of death, a way to ensure maximum theatricality and entertainment for the masses.

Expert stunt coordinator Franz Spilhaus and his skilled team worked to re-create these vicious executions, using a stunt jacket worn under the wardrobe called a "jerk vest." Cables were anchored to various 'pick points,' then manipulated to create different effects. "For example, where we really want to feature the neck and make it look like the neck is breaking, we'll pick a point from the side. When we are farther away and we want to see a more dramatic drop, the cable comes off the back of the harness and we can drop nicely into frame and it looks like the neck is breaking. If we want to do a snap hanging we'll take a pick point from between the shoulder blades, behind the stunt person's neck, and we put the safety line inside the rope rig that we're going to use, so the viewer never sees it," says Spilhaus. "We ensure that there is no load on the neck and we'll have a bungee cord that keeps tension but make sure the actor is completely safe. There is never any danger of the performer coming to harm."



### Dressed to Kill

Also returning for season three were the elegant and eye-popping contributions of costume designer Tim Aslam. After painstaking research to ensure authenticity, a team of about ten seamstresses built individual pieces by hand.

Says Aslam, "I look at original patterns and garments from the period and then I'll discuss it with my head tailor, who cuts the patterns and pieces of fabric and passes it on to the seamstresses who start to put the pieces together. It takes about a week to make a garment, and we are working on more or less five different costumes at the same time." Aslam also travels extensively to purchase the necessary fabric, with about 90 percent of the material coming from Europe and Turkey.

Season three features new wardrobe for just about every character on the cast. For Captain Flint, Aslam evolved his costume to reflect the character's emotional journey: "Flint's wardrobe starts off the same as last season and he wears his leather coat which is based on a Spanish coat from the period. He changes mid-season into a new coat, which has a similar look, but it is very dark, kind of rough. It reflects his mood and accounts for his transition into a darker frame of mind," says Aslam.

"Eleanor Guthrie was captured by the British at the end of season two and sent back to London, so when she returns to Nassau her look is more traditional and she wears typical 18<sup>th</sup> century wear including a corset. She has to get used to being bound into a corset and this is a representation of how she feels restricted by society and the establishment."

"Max's look this season is even more elaborate as she now has the means to wear more elaborate clothing. Last season she became the madam and this season she continues to gain power, and this is reflected in her wardrobe, with richer fabrics and more detailed costumes," says Aslam.

With the loss of Silver's leg at the end of season two, his wardrobe had to change substantially. "Silver has become rougher this season. He is going a bit more towards the 'Long John Silver' we know from the story. The peg leg was a bit of a challenge as we had to construct different pairs of trousers that enabled us to deal with the fact that he either had to wear a prosthetic, fake leg extension or he had to use a Chroma Key Sock to hide his leg for VFX. So the cut of the trouser is pretty normal but we had to just encompass various techniques for him to be able to disguise the real leg, which we were able to do quite easily."

Body shapes have changed considerably since the "Black Sails" period. "In general males and females were a lot smaller," Aslam learned. "Women wore corsets from an early age, which influenced their shape and people were sort of malnourished, as they didn't have the diet we have today. Our contemporary shape is a lot thicker. Shoulders now are much wider than people's shoulders used to be, which changes the silhouette a bit. Those are the sorts of things you have to be aware of when creating costumes."

### The Make Up of a Pirate

Head makeup artist Louise Coles and prosthetics designer Ashley Powell also make invaluable contributions to the character work on "Black Sails." "We do a lot of research," says Coles. "We look at paintings and read up on the history. With the British it's a very specific look but in Nassau we have a bit of creative license. As the seasons have progressed our pirates have become dirtier, filthier, and increasingly raw. In season three we have added another world as we now have the maroon camp. We try and link history and keep it consistent with the times."



In season three Captain Flint moves further and further away from his past as a British Naval captain. "He has a completely shaved head now, which was a big decision for us and I think it is great as he's in a darker place now," says Coles. "Eleanor Guthrie has also undergone a big change as she was a businesswoman and had a very practical look in previous seasons, but now we see her in prison and then influenced by the British fashions of the time, so we have given her a look that is a bit more formal."

"Silver has also gone through a transition from previous seasons and looks less like a boy and more like a man. His hair is longer, his facial hair has grown, he's got more dirt, and we've made him look older. He has been through hell, and his look reflects that," says Coles.

In order to create the prosthetics for Silver, Powell created three different legs: "Each leg is cast out of silicone and we hand-punch in hair, which takes about a day per leg. Each hair has to be individually punched in. Initially we started with a piece that could be put onto a sock and slipped on but when we get to the Maroon camp we made an animatronic or mechanized leg. We interchange the legs as we progress through the season. In the camp, the leg appears red and swollen and then after Dr. Howell inspects it and it is a bit more healed it just has bruising."

Many of the characters have scars, and Coles and Powell collaborate at length on the design, construction and application of these character-revealing details. "We discuss where the scar is going to be placed, how severe it needs to be and then I'll make about five different examples that we will test out. Once we have established which one we like there may be a process of refining that piece so that it looks really good on camera," says Powell. For false heads, like those used for hangings, decapitations or dead bodies, Powell takes a live cast of the actor and then works in clay and silicone to construct the most realistic replica.

The most challenging makeup work during season three revolved around the iconic character of Edward Teach, aka Blackbeard. "We wanted something special for our show that reflected the mood at this point in season three and also made it different from the other characters," says Cole. "Blackbeard is a character that everyone knows and has an opinion about. So it was a big collaboration between the different departments. We wanted to go with the iconic look: the black beard, the long hair, the grand look. Historically he was a very scary person and even had fireworks hanging off his hat. We brought in the beads in the beard but everything was scaled down. It works for the realism and grittiness of the show. It was the most challenging and most rewarding as it took a long time to construct."

Season three also features a unique and terrifying depiction of "Death," a mysterious figure who haunts the dreams of Captain Flint. This otherworldly apparition presented a unique prosthetics challenge for Powell. "Jon Steinberg came to us with this idea and we brought it to life. It started with conceptual drawings and references and then after we had approval on the marquette (scaled-down version) we then began sculpting around 21 different pieces for the character. This took about 11 hours to apply and then our actor still had to go on set, so we started at midnight and finished around 9am the next day and then of course still had a full day on set. But it was the most rewarding thing seeing it on camera," says Powell.