

ADAPTED: THE REVENANT (2002) (Michael Punke)

QUICK THOUGHTS

- Phil Svitek
- Marisa Serafini

AUTHOR BACKGROUND (Michael Punke)

- Graduated from high school early to head to the University of Massachusetts, then transferred to George Washington University to study international affairs.
- Studied international affairs at George Washington University, then went to Cornell Law School
- Began working for then-Senator Max Baucus, Democrat of Montana, as the senator's international trade counsel. From there, he worked in the White House under President Bill Clinton as the director for international economic affairs, and served on both the National Security Council and the National Economic Council.
- Later took a job as a partner in the Washington office of the law firm Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw.
- Deputy United States Trade Representative and the United States ambassador to the World Trade Organization.
- Because of his government position, he can't give any interviews about the book, or even sign copies. Federal ethics rules prohibit him from any activities that would be "self-enriching" or could be seen as an abuse of his post. "It's been frustrating," said Stephen Morrison, the publisher of Picador. "Any other author would be out on press junkets, but he's not able to do any promotion at all."
- Mr. Punke was offered the ambassador position at the W.T.O., and the family moved to Geneva in 2010.

DEVELOPMENT/CONCEPTION

- Growing up in Torrington, Wyo., Mr. Punke learned to fly-fish when he was 5 and built his own rifle when he was 12. His parents, both teachers, took him and his brother hunting, hiking and fishing. In high school and college, he spent several summers working at a national park site as a historical re-enactor, dressed in an old army uniform at a 19th-century trading post.
- Mr. Punke's surprising path started with his fascination with the historical West.
- At home in Bethesda, Md., he did research by building lean-tos and setting up hunting traps with his kids.
- Mr. Punke got the idea for "The Revenant" about 18 years ago, while he was working at the law firm. He was on a plane reading a nonfiction book about the fur trade, his wife, Traci Punke, said. He came across a few lines about Hugh Glass, a trapper who was mauled by a grizzly bear in 1823, then dragged himself over hundreds of miles of wilderness to confront the men who abandoned him. Mr. Punke started researching the story and decided to write a novel about Mr. Glass. Mr. Punke woke up around 4:30 each morning to write for a few hours before work.

LEGEND OF HUGH GLASS

- **Hugh Glass** (c. 1783 – 1833) was an American [frontiersman](#), [fur trapper](#) and trader, hunter, and explorer. He is best known for his story of survival and retribution, after being left for dead by companions when he was mauled by a [grizzly bear](#)
- Born in [Pennsylvania](#) to [Scots-Irish](#) parents, Glass became an explorer of the [watershed](#) of the [Upper Missouri River](#), in present-day [Montana](#), [the Dakotas](#), and the [Platte River](#) area of [Nebraska](#)
- His life story has been adapted into two feature-length films: [Man in the Wilderness](#) (1971) and [The Revenant](#) (2015)

- They both portray the survival struggle of Glass, who (in the best historical accounts) crawled and stumbled 200 miles (320 km) to [Fort Kiowa, South Dakota](#) after being abandoned without supplies or weapons by fellow explorers and fur traders during [General Ashley's expedition](#) of 1823
- Despite the story's popularity, its accuracy has been disputed. It was first recorded in 1825 in [The Port Folio](#), a Philadelphia literary journal, as a [literary piece](#) and later picked up by various newspapers
- Although originally published anonymously, it was later revealed to be the work of [James Hall](#), brother of *The Port Folio*'s editor. There is no writing from Hugh Glass himself to corroborate the veracity of it. Also, it is likely to have been wildly embellished over the years as a legend

FILMIC ELEMENTS

- BEAR ATTACK!
- Scope of the Western Terrain
- Dreams/Illusions
- Battle Scenes/Fight Scenes

STORY LEGACY

- A new hardcover came out in 2015. Since then, "The Revenant" has sold more than half a million copies, and Picador has reprinted the book 21 times.

MOVIE DEVELOPMENT

- Movie rights were optioned by Warner Bros. in 2001, before the book was even sold, but the production never got underway.
- When word got out that a film starring Leonardo DiCaprio was in the works, Picador, an imprint of Macmillan, acquired reprint rights, and the novel got a second life.
- "There were definitely some frustrations along the way," Ms. Punke said. "We were familiar with the bureaucracy of D.C., not so much Hollywood. We were like, if it ever gets made, it will be a miracle."
- Leonardo DiCaprio went to such great lengths as a method actor on "The Revenant" that he devoured a raw slab of bison's liver.
- Film shoot plagued by severe weather, runaway costs, on-set quarrels, staff defections from the large crew.
- The actors entered into a real-life frozen jungle during a seven-month shoot in Alberta, Canada, using natural light (shot by cinematographer Emmanuel "Chivo" Lubezki) and fending off frostbite in temperatures that plunged to 40 degrees below zero.
- A lack of snow near the end of the shoot forced the production to shut down last spring, and add six days in July — mid-winter — in Argentina, which tacked millions to the already inflated budget, while Inarritu had to cobble together an edit without an ending.
- Inarritu demanded the production film in chronological order (he believes his actors' performances benefit from living with each scene as the audiences does), in the vast wilderness, using long takes reminiscent of "Birdman." New Regency greenlit the project at \$60 million (with a second budget estimate coming in at \$95 million), and continued to write checks as owner-billionaire Arnon Milchan watched the dailies.
- **2016 ACADEMY AWARDS WINS:**
 - Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role- Leonardo DiCaprio
 - Best Achievement in Directing - Alejandro González Iñárritu
 - Best Achievement in Cinematography- Emmanuel Lubezki
- **2016 ACADEMY AWARDS NOMINATIONS:**

- Best Motion Picture of the Year
- Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role
- Best Achievement in Film Editing
- Best Achievement in Costume Design
- Best Achievement in Makeup and Hairstyling
- Best Achievement in Sound Mixing
- Best Achievement in Sound Editing
- Best Achievement in Visual Effects
- Best Achievement in Production Design
- 2016 Golden Globes
 - WIN: Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture - Drama- Leonardo DiCaprio
 - NOMINATED: Best Original Score - Motion Picture - Ryuichi Sakamoto, Alva Noto
- **2016 SCREEN ACTORS GUILD AWARDS:**
 - WIN: Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Leading Role - Leonardo DiCaprio

SIMILARITIES/CHANGES/ADDITIONS/RETRACTIONS

- Film is set at a time of year when a grizzly bear (especially a mother bear with cubs) would be in hibernation (New Year's) The real-life Hugh Glass was mauled by a mother bear around May, 1823 - a time of year when bears are far less likely to be in hibernation
- Different motives for revenge (stolen goods vs son)
- The way natives were brought in
- Having a son
- How Bridger was treated
- Glass interacted with more people in book
- Natives have motives as do French in movie
- Glass doesn't rescue a Native woman
- Ending is completely different
 - In the movie, Glass locates Fitzgerald in the wilderness, nearly kills him in a bloody fight, then lets a group of Natives (the rescued woman among them) scalp and kill the man. The original showdown is rather less exciting. Upon hearing that Glass is coming for him, Fitzgerald quickly enlists in the US Army. Glass arrives and demands to meet Fitzgerald, but the Army won't allow a direct confrontation between the two of them. Instead, Fitzgerald is taken to a formal court. There, Fitzgerald lies, claiming that the boy took the gear and told him that Glass was dead.
 - Enraged, Glass pulls out a gun and shoots Fitzgerald in the shoulder before getting knocked out cold. Waking up in prison, a man gives him his Anstadt rifle back, tells him that Fitzgerald will stay in the Army, serving a punishment of two months of work without pay. The man then convinces Glass to let go off it, and Glass does so.
 - Now this is a major change. Author Michael Punke lets his Glass realize two things: for one, revenge won't be satisfying. The moment he holds back from killing the boy, Glass understands that shedding more blood won't help him. On the other hand, he makes a statement about civilization. In the old world, revenge was being settled by punching another man's face in. The new world doesn't allow such barbaric behavior, thus leading to an end that simply doesn't serve the animalistic thirst for blood. You might even say that the Army saving Fitzgerald's ass is an early sign of civilization's darker shades: that the powerful stand above the law. To them, Fitzgerald's availability as a soldier is more important than justice.

- Inarritu's arc for Glass is different. In the majestically filmed movie, it's all about the son. The moment Glass sees Fitzgerald slaying his son, there's only one thought left: to kill that man. About two hours of movie runtime later, he finally does get his fingers around Fitzgerald's throat. Now, he does not kill him, just lets him be killed by the Natives. Inspired by the Native who rescued him, Glass had a subtle change of heart and learned to let revenge "stay in the hands of the creator". Still, it doesn't change the end of his initial arc. He was out to see that man die, and it happened. Handing him over to the Natives could, in that moment, only lead to Fitzgerald's imminent death. Thus, he still killed him. The movie ends with DiCaprio hallucinating, blissfully satisfied. He's no longer haunted by the loss of his son and wife, and feels good again.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE PORTRAYAL FOR EACH CHARACTER?

- Leonardo DiCaprio - Hugh Glass
- Tom Hardy - John Fitzgerald
- Domhnall Gleeson - Captain Andrew Henry
- Will Poulter - Bridger
- Forrest Goodluck - Hawk
- Paul Anderson - Anderson

WHY ADAPT INTO MOVIE?

NEXT ADAPTED: *Never Let Me Go (2005) - Kazuo Ishiguro*