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The Broken Chain

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By DREW VOROS

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The "big picture" feel is here as director Lamont Johnson uses the sweeping camera work of William Wages to capture the feel of the Northeastern wilderness, complete with changing leaves in autumn, but the tension and true grit needed to fuel this story of broken loyalties during wartime is missing.

Holding up telepic's plot are factual elements that detail the important roles Native Americans played in the "white man wars."

Shifting loyalties between members of the Iroquois Confederacy and the French, English and, later, the Americans are depicted in the tale of Joseph Brandt (Eric Schweig), a young Indian warrior who so impresses an Englishman, Sir William Johnson (Pierce Brosnan), during the war with the French that he's taken out of the wilderness and put into world of the white man, where's he's educated and develops cynicism toward his people and upbringing.

Brandt's adulthood transformation is met with disdain by boyhood friend Lohaheo (J.C. White Shirt), who perceives this new "non-Indian" attitude as a type of possession as much as a betrayal to

Brandt's family and race.

As the friendship sours, tragic consequences lead to a fight between life and death, but the buildup to this hatred and animosity is slow, with too much pastoral storytelling rather than war drama.

The ensemble cast works fine enough, but no one stands out.

The waning pathos is made up for by some solid war action and a script by Earl Wallace that consistently injects historic relevance.

Pic is nice to look at, and music by Charles Fox is a successful accompaniment.

"The Broken Chain" is part of an ongoing TNT series that will focus on different Native American cultures and their roles in the formation of America.

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