

PROGRAMMANUS



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THE CAMBRIA

Episode three – a spade's a spade

INTRO: *Mr. Frederick Douglass, an escaped slave, travels under the name of Mr. Johnson aboard the trans-Atlantic paddlesteamer Cambria. The year is 1845 and on the ship, there is a slave-owner, Mr. Dodd, who doesn't approve of a black man travelling 1st class. He makes Frederick change cabin with Miss Hutchinson, a singer with a bad cough. Meanwhile, in the present, an Irish couple, Colette and Vincent, are recording the story of Mr. Frederick Douglass for a Nigerian girl, Leanna, who is also an asylum-seeker. She was deported from Ireland and Vincent and Colette have lost track of her.*

VINCENT: Is it switched on?

COLETTE: Yeah.

VINCENT: And so, Leanna - wherever you are, somewhere in Nigeria - after that lovely day out at the lake, we dropped you and your mum back to the asylum-seeker reception centre in Sligo.

COLETTE: Don't worry, we'll make sure nothing bad happens, we said. We sent emails and made calls to TDs and councillors.

VINCENT: Some answered, some didn't bother.

COLETTE: There aren't many votes in raising the rights of asylum-seekers. Though a few did help.

VINCENT: But it always came down to the same thing: - it's the system.

COLETTE: Which is just what the American slaveholders said at the time that Barack Obama's great-great-great-grandfather arrived in the US from Ireland ..



VINCENT: You'd played with the old musicbox while we watched Obama in Dublin on the telly. We laughed at Enda nearly choking himself with excitement ..

V/O IRISH PM KENNY on TV: *"That boy said goodbye to a ravaged island. Millions had died or were leaving, packing their hopes and their dreams in beside the remnants of a life, stepping on to ships which for some was like stepping into space".*

ravaged
ödelagd
the remnants
resterna

COLETTE: Like you and your mum here in Sligo, immigrants squashed into very little space – one tiny room in an asylum-seeker centre, for over five years, while being put through a so-called process.

V/O OBAMA on TV: *"Frederick Douglass, an escaped slave, and our great abolitionist, forged an unlikely friendship right here in Dublin with your great liberator, Daniel O'Connell".*

VINCENT: .. and Obama's hero Frederick Douglass travelled from America to Ireland as a refugee slave with a false ID aboard The Cambria in 1845.

COLETTE: With a price placed on his head by slaveholders, posing as a Mister Johnson, Frederick has been moved from the first class cabin booked to cover his true identity.

JUDDY: I'd like to welcome all you first-class passengers not only to my Captain's table, but also to this voyage across the Atlantic aboard the newest Cunard steamship The Cambria.

DODD: Thank you so much for inviting me to share your table Captain Judkins, and to dine in the company of civilised and convivial gentlemen.

convivial
festlig/ sällskaplig

CECILY: (FIRMLY) Hello!

DODD: Oh - and I'm pleased to make the acquaintance of Miss Hutchinson also.

CECILY: Thank you Captain Judkins for upgrading me to first-class. I feel so much better already.

JUDDY: My pleasure, Miss Hutchinson!



| | | |
|---------|--|---|
| DODD: | You're clearly a lady of refined manners. And we look forward to hearing your choir give us a sample of their dulcet tones before we cast anchor in Cork. | dulcet <i>ljud</i> |
| CECILY: | I'm sure we could oblige, if that's your wish, Mister Dodd. | oblige <i>tillmötesgå</i> |
| DIGNAM: | Miss Cecily - a tender cutlet for you - ah-ah the plate is hot - allow me no-ow! | cutlet <i>kotlett</i> |
| CECILY: | Thank you. | |
| DODD: | Captain Judkins, may I take this opportunity to thank you for your prompt action in relation to the black minstrel scamp. | prompt <i>snabb</i> scamp <i>fuskare</i> |
| JUDDY: | The matter's closed Mister Dodd - | |
| CECILY: | Sorry -? | |
| DODD: | It is an undeniable fact that the wealth of our entire nation depends on the preservation of order as enshrined in our God-given laws. Give a Negro an inch and he will take your entire plantation! | enshrined <i>som det värnas om</i> |
| CECILY: | Captain! Explain what action Mister Dodd is referring to!? | |
| JUDDY: | A man by the name of Johnston was berthed in what is now your cabin. | |
| DODD: | Ye-es - he has a tricks box! And we're all going to get a look at what's inside when he performs his minstrel act for us. My daughter can't wait! | |
| CECILY: | Minstrel? | |
| JUDDY: | Well, actually, Mister Dodd, he turned down your kind offer on that subject. | |
| DODD: | He turned down two hundred dollars!? What kind of minstrel is this!? | |
| JUDDY: | He was quite emphatic. | |



DODD: I always thought these fellows would sing and dance at the drop of a hat, let alone two hundred dollars! Mighty strange! But the upshot of it is:- Miss Hutchinson, a choral performance on board ship garners you a purse of two hundred dollars!

CECILY: Captain! Did Mister Johnson move willingly to steerage?

JUDDY: Yes he did.

CECILY: And did he willingly turn down the performance fee?

JUDDY: Yes he did. Quite emphatically!

CECILY: But .. why!?

JUDDY: He didn't say.

CECILY: Wait a second! What's going on here!?

DODD: An excellent meal for one thing! The duck is superb!

CECILY: Captain! You're rather mute! Why was Mister Johnson the one to be sent to steerage!?

JUDDY: I'm captain of this ship, Miss Hutchinson. I make decisions based on a range of considerations learned over a lifetime at sea!

DODD: A spade's a spade, Miss Hutchinson! I am an American! I will not tolerate being berthed next to a black in a first class cabin! It is contrary to the Laws of our God-given nation!

CECILY: To some of it! Not to me! And I resent greatly, Captain Judkins, that I have been used to dress up your capitulation to slave law!

JUDDY: I did not capitulate to any such thing!

DODD: I fear your performance fee is slipping from your grasp Miss Hutchinson.

CECILY: Keep your fee! Put it where you think best! I will not sit and dine with people who assume ownership of other human beings.

garner
inbringa

resent
misstycka



DODD: For their own good! Quite clearly!

CECILY: Poppycock!

JUDDY: Mister Johnson was not nearly so exercised about the matter as you clearly are, Miss Hutchinson! And he, after all, is black!

CECILY: You should be ashamed of yourself! You let yourself be directed by Mister Dodd there, who measures his status by the number of people he claims to own!

DODD: Fee gone! Back to Mister Johnson with a higher offer, I fear! You, Miss Hutchinson, have been infected by the worst form of Northern humbug!

CECILY: No slaveholder will call me a humbug!

CREW: And away ha-ul away .. Oh you rio!
At Queenstown we'll anchor and there
I'll break free
'Cos we're bound for the Rio Lee.

FREDERICK: I watch the coast of America fade away far astern.
A burning sun sets. I turn to the bow. I face my
future. Of freedom. I am racing towards it.
Paddles chant my advance in the fastest vessel
known to man. The Cambria. The paddles seem to
mock me ..

PADDLES (DODD'S VOICE): Mister Johnson, Mister Johnson, Johnson, Johnson
the minstrel, Johnson the minstrel, the minstrel,
the minstrel ..

FREDERICK: Those paddles know the path to the depths of my
soul! Minstrelry is a perverse celebration of
powerlessness. I hated Sundays on the plantation,
when loudmouths danced and strummed and
clowned and strutted on copious doses of rum
freely supplied by our lawful owner!
That little girl Matilda with her magical musicbox
knows how to tie one up in knots. Maybe I should
take up her dada Dodd's offer. Two hundred
dollars to perform a show .. let's see, a couple of
plucks on my imaginary banjo, dik-a-dik-dik,
a few ham-bone slaps on my belly and thighs ..

Poppycock
Br. slang – bullshit

astern
akteröver

strum
knäppa
copious
kopiösa



My name is Frederick Johnson, I'm a-travelling in disguise,
With my identity mix and my box of tricks and my best-selling book of Lies!
I'll open up that musicbox, set the ballerina free,
I'll astonish folk,
I'll be so well-spoke ..
On the banks of the Rio Lee.

SOLOMON:

Douglass!

FREDERICK:

Suddenly, a voice seems to call me from the clouds!

SOLOMON:

I'm up here Fred!

FREDERICK:

Solomon!!

SOLOMON:

I'm coming down now! What are you doing dressed up like a dog's dinner!? You don't look like the Freddie Douglass I used to know! Oh the light shining out of you, Frederick-

FREDERICK:

Good to see you Solomon!

SOLOMON:

Like the good ol' days in New Bedford! Caulking the whaling-ships, remember!? You and me the number one team! You taught me how to read! And you told me who I was and where I came from and how I should be proud! You great orator, Frederick -

to caulk
att tåta

FREDERICK:

Solomon!

SOLOMON:

What's the matter with you!?

FREDERICK:

Stop calling me - Frederick Douglass!

SOLOMON:

What's wrong Freddie? It's your name, isn't it? I remember the day you chose it! How you roared it! Like this:- Behold Frederick-

FREDERICK:

Yes, but - .. Look:- I've written a book, with Frederick Douglass on the cover, and the slaveholders have put a price on my head. Two thousand dollars I'm told.

SOLOMON:

Two thousand dollars!?



FREDERICK: Dead or alive! And you know the law. If someone points at me and says "That is Frederick Douglass; he is an escaped slave", I'll be sent back in chains to Maryland! On this ship my name is Mister Johnson. It's a necessary lie. I'm a fugitive, Solomon!

SOLOMON: He-e-e-e-ey! (LOUDER) He-e-e-e-ey!

FREDERICK: (WORRIED) What!?

SOLOMON: You always said you'd tell your story! Frederick the Orator! Frederick the Author! You told me one night deep in the hold of an old whaling-ship!

FREDERICK: I did?

SOLOMON: Ye-e-es you did! And you read out speeches from that book you had nailed to the beam while you pumped.

FREDERICK: The Columbian orator – yes! Cicero. Thomas Paine. Daniel O'Connell.

SOLOMON: Your eyes are still the same even if you're dressed like a posh gobshite –

FREDERICK: A what?

SOLOMON: Derogatory term - Dignam the steward uses it a lot. Don't deny your name Frederick Douglass!

FREDERICK: Call me Mister Johnson!

SOLOMON: No! You set me on my path! I can't deny you! If I do I deny myself!

CECILY: (FROM AFAR) Mister Johnson!

FREDERICK: Remember what I said!

SOLOMON: I remember what you said! Back in New Bedford! "Never forget the line of wronged heroes you are descended from!" That's what you said! I'm going below to my comrades in the hold! Goodnight – Mister Johnson! Aha!

beam
*fartygssida/
däcksbalk*

**be descended
from**
härstamma från



SOLOMON: "We peel da meat.
Dey gib us da skin.
An dat's de way,
dey take us in".
You told me that! Oh no – Frederick Douglass told
me that!

CECILY: (ARRIVING) Mister Johnson! I've heard the whole
story! I want you to know I had nothing to do
with your transfer to steerage! I find it
indefensible, and I have told the Captain so!

indefensible
oförsvarbart

FREDERICK: I have no need for your support, requested or
otherwise. I am none of your business.

CECILY: I know you're a comic black minstrel, and per se
uncommitted to the struggle of your people.

FREDERICK: (QUIETLY, VERY INTENSELY)
I – am NOT – a minstrel.

CECILY: There's no need to deny your trade simply to
avoid criticism –

FREDERICK: Criticism!? I've taken my due share of "criticism"
in life! My critics have many times stung painfully!

CECILY: Well now, you showmen can be vain and perhaps
a little conceited.

vain
fåfång
conceited
självgod

FREDERICK: Can I ask you a question?

CECILY: By all means! Freedom of speech is something I
value dearly!

FREDERICK: Have you ever heard - of Frederick Douglass?

CECILY: (TITTERS) Frederick Douglass! Come now!
Everyone who has ears to hear has heard of
Frederick Douglass this past week ..

FREDERICK: For almost thirty years Frederick Douglass lived
his life – if such a phrase can be used – under the
yoke of slavery, branded as a piece of property,
worked as a beast of burden, whipped on the
whim of an owner so-decreed by Law!

CECILY: Barbarous! I whole-heartedly agree –



FREDERICK: Because of the colour of his skin! It's the way things are, you see, in our civilised nation! Slavery is allowed to be enforced, despite the rhetoric of our betters in Washington! Why don't you go back to your first class cabin and reflect a little on your sense of superiority that allows you to judge the actions of others you know NOTHING about! Goodnight Miss Hutchinson! I hope you regain your voice before we cast anchor!

CREW: And away ha-ul away .. Oh you rio!
At Queenstown we'll anchor and there
I'll break free
'Cos we're bound for the Rio Lee.

CECILY: Captain, far from being a banjo-plucking minstrel, he is in fact one of the most inspiring writers of the age! I've read his newly-published book from cover to cover! I have it here.

JUDDY: I'm very busy at present –

CECILY: It is the most potent weapon the abolitionist movement has to pursue the liberation of all slaves.

JUDDY: Miss Hutchinson, can I just say –

CECILY: Listen to this:- his own story:-

CECILY: “and my only recollections of my own mother, are of a few hasty visits made in the night on foot, when she was under pressure to return in time for the slave-driver's call at dawn. She walked twelve miles to see me, and had the same distance to travel over again before sunrise.

These little glimpses of my mother, meagre as they were, are ineffaceably stamped upon my memory. She was tall and finely-proportioned, of dark glossy complexion, with regular features and amongst the slaves was remarkably sedate and dignified. Her death soon ended the little communication that existed between us, and with it, I believe, a life full of weariness and heartfelt sorrow. Of my father I know nothing.

The opinion was whispered that my master was my father; of the correctness of this opinion I know nothing. (CECILY JOINS) Except to state that my skin is a lighter colour than those who were called my brothers and sisters”.

meagre
begränsade
ineffaceably
outplånbara
complexion
hy
sedate
lugn



CECILY: Who could remain unmoved Captain!? Surely it is not too much to ask to hear this famous man speak on board ship!?

EXTRO: This was the 3rd episode of six of the series the Cambria. All parts were played by Sorcha Fox and Donal O'Kelly. Music by Trevor Knight. The Cambria was written and directed by Donal O'Kelly of Benbo Productions.