

## **Jean Schramme - Script 1**

They call me 'Black Jack.'

My real name is Jean Schramme.

I am originally Flemish, a son of the Belgian bourgeoisie.

Yes, I was a settler in Belgian Congo, a colonizer if you want. At 22, I already owned a plantation of over 20 acres, which then grew to 15 square kilometers.

I believe that the Congo should remain a Belgian territory forever. I love the Africans who work for me, I'm their father, and they have to address me as such.

Everything changed in 1959. Riots broke out and the Congolese took to the streets to demand independence. The Belgian state agreed to grant Congo independence on 30 June 1960.

My entire plantation was destroyed by the anticolonialists, the followers of the new socialist government of Patrice Lumumba. I lost everything.

I didn't accept Congolese independence, and in the spring of 1960, I started to stockpile arms and ammunition. I attached a machine gun to my car to create a makeshift armored car. It was my own mission to defend the Belgians in Congo. I had to escape to British Uganda for a moment, but I went back to fight against the new, independent government of Congo later that year.

I signed up as a mercenary for the war in Katanga. I was paid by the Congolese politician Moïse Tshombe, who was funded by Western countries and companies. We were fighting for the secession of Katanga, a breakaway region, but in reality, the Western companies wanted to keep control over the mines in Katanga.

The United Nations were against the independence of Katanga and were defending the Congolese government.

Yes, we were fighting against the United Nations.

In the spring of 1961, I enlisted in Groupe Mobile E, a mercenary unit commanded by a hard-drinking Scotsman. The unit had a terrible reputation for cruelty.

Later, I recruited several British and white South African settlers to come with me to fight for Katanga secession, and I led my own unit of mercenaries. We were called Commando 10, or the Leopard Battalion.

In October 1961, with my unit Commando 10, I took the town of Kisamba, winning a battle against two battalions of the Congolese National Army. My military success was astonishing, and ever growing. At the end of the Katanga war I led a unit of 400 Katangese soldiers.

It was not over after Katanga. In 1964, I returned to Congo. This time I was not fighting against the government, but for the government. Our mission was to crush the threat of the Simba rebels, communists led by Pierre Mulele, former minister of education.

I was a mercenary, a commander. And I was well paid by the Western countries. Yes, I had changed sides, but it didn't matter to me which war I was fighting. I just wanted my property back. It didn't matter the war I was fighting, it was for the sake of maintaining my own presence in Congo.

In 1965 the Simba conflict came to an end and the Congolese military general Mobutu Sese Seko seized power. That was the end of 'democracy' in Congo for a few decades.

As dictator Mobutu was supported by the United States. France and Belgium preferred Moïse Tshombe, but the Americans didn't want him coming back to Congo. He died soon after in suspicious circumstances.

In 1967 I organized a revolt, a mutiny of mercenaries! Yes, I switched sides one more, but I was still receiving my orders and paychecks directly from Belgium. The French commando Bob Denard joined the mutiny too, betraying Mobutu and the Americans.

As a mercenary rebel, I then launched surprise attacks on three cities with my unit Commando 10. In the attack hundreds of Congolese soldiers and their families were killed. It was a great success. We occupied the city of Bukavu for seven weeks, defeating all Congolese army forces in the area.

When we finally had to surrender, we had to leave Congo for Rwanda, with 150 mercenaries, 800 Katanga soldiers, and 1500 women and children. They became hostages in my war.

With Bob Denard and the rest of my fellow mercenaries, we made history with these mutinies.

Don't provoke the mercenaries, we have no fatherland.

We are loyal only to war, our personal war, a war fought for war's sake.