

## **John Adams Ep. 2 “Independence” Transcript**

***Pennsylvania State House (later known as Independence Hall), Philadelphia, 1775***

John Dickinson of Pennsylvania is addressing Congress, while John Adams and his cousin, Samuel Adams, both Massachusetts delegates, make snide comments.

Dickinson: I would read into the record, for the benefit of those delegates who are unable to remain to close of session, the declarations and resolves of this first congress. “Resolved, that to the recent grievous acts imposed by parliament on Massachusetts, we cannot submit. But in hopes that our fellow subjects in Great Britain will restore to us happiness and prosperity, rather than support the Massachusetts militia, we have agreed to pursue the following peaceable measures to publish a statement of the aforesaid to the inhabitants of British America.”

John Adams: Who need no reminders.

Dickinson: Two, to enter into a non-importation, non-consumption and non-exportation agreement of British goods.

John Adams: Which no one will honor.

Dickinson: And three, to prepare a loyal address to His Majesty.

Samuel Adams: Which His Majesty will not read.

John Hancock (president of the Congress): This Congress stands adjourned. The business of this Congress being concluded, all delegates...

John Adams: The business of this Congress has been to achieve nothing.

Hancock: ...the year of our Lord, 1775.

Later, at the home of John Dickinson, of Philadelphia, at his dinner table with some of the delegates.

Dickinson: You carry good news back home, Mr. Paine.

Massachusetts has made its cause plain to its sister colonies, and now it will be made plain to Parliament.

John Adams: I beg to differ, Mr. Dickinson. Nothing has been made plain. All this congress has shown is that every man in it thinks that he is a great man orator, a critic, a statesman. And therefore every man must show his oratory, his criticism, his political ability. If it were moved and seconded that two and three make five, we should spend two whole days debating the matter and only then pass a resolution in the affirmative.

Dickinson: Well, in that event, Mr. Adams, our adjournment comes not a moment too soon. A toast, gentlemen and ladies. May Boston's troubles soon be at an end and her people's natural rights as Englishmen be fully restored. May the sword of the parent never be stained with the blood of her children. God save the King.

All the guests at the table: God save the king.

**Opening Credits: John Adams Part II: INDEPENDENCE – showing battle flags flown during the fighting of the revolution.**

*Massachusetts, 1775*

John Adams is back at his home near Boston, Massachusetts, working his farm with his son, Johnny. His other children, Charles and Nabby, are playing and working in the yard.

Adams: There we are. Go on, get a feel for it. Put your hands in there. Deeper. Deeper. There. There, turn it, yeah? Now, the best recipe is equal parts salt marsh, upland soil and dung. Manure is an art, and I consider myself an accomplished artist. Smell that.

Johnny: I want to be a farmer too, papa.

Adams: Do you now? Farming is noble employment, Johnny. The noblest there is. And this farm will always be in our family. But it's to be school and the law for you. As it was for me.

A neighbor rides by, shouting: Mr. Adams! Mr. Adams! The British! The British are marching on Concord! The British are marching on Concord! To arms!

Adams (to the children and his wife): Go inside! Charles! Inside, Charles! Get inside! The first sign of trouble, you fly to the woods!

John Adams rides to where the fighting has been.

Colonial militia men are hurrying past: Stay with me! Come on, faster! Keep up, keep up!

Dr. Warren (Adams' physician): Someone he knows calls out to him: Mr Adams!

Adams: Doctor Warren! What in God's name has happened?

Warren: Gage sent a regiment to seize our powder and arms at Concord. Hundreds of our militia turned out. The British got nothing.

Adams: Where are they now? Are they close by?

Warren: We are chasing the bastards back to Boston, and we'll keep them there! Move! Come on, men.

(9 minutes)

Adams sees people suffering, stops to help. People are crying over their dead and wounded.

Adams (back at the farm, talking to his wife, Abigail): There can be no mistaking Britain's intentions now.

Adams (later, inside the house): If you had seen them, Abigail. An army of plain country boys with no

experience of professional soldiering. But their faces shining like the sun through a church window. Oh, we must support them...with guns and leadership...and faith in what they do.

Abigail: Say that, John. Say that to the Congress.

Adams: If I have to stand and rail until my voice breaks and my legs collapse beneath me. This time Congress will act.

Abigail: Men need to think that they have made their own decisions. Not had them forced upon them.

Adams: I don't have the time to coddle like a young girl courting a beau. To sit in Philadelphia listening to men talking to hear themselves talk, resolving nothing. To subject myself to that yet again, I cannot. I cannot.

### ***Philadelphia, Summer of 1775***

(Benjamin Franklin is arriving in a sedan chair, joking, praising the Massachusetts men, and mocking the British).

Franklin: Where are these gentlemen from Massachusetts? What have you done with these gentlemen from Massachusetts? Have you stolen these gentlemen from Massachusetts?"

(Franklin gets out of the sedan, walks towards the group of delegates, outside of the state house, pointing out the men from Massachusetts).

Franklin: There they are! All the way from Boston. Are they not a shame on their country? Are they not a disgrace to all civilized beings? Has not even the Reverend Ebenezer Slither declare them so? They have violated the fundamental rule of warfare, which is always to let the British win! Did they not pursue the British army with ungentlemanly haste after their cowardly victory at Concord?

(The gathered men laugh)

Mr. Rutledge (of South Carolina, a finely dressed young man, who does not seem amused): Must you be so extreme, Dr. Franklin?

Franklin: I'm an extreme moderate, Mr. Rutledge. I believe anybody not in favor of moderation and compromise out to be castrated. And that all this should be sent down to the To the Parliament, for they seem to need How shall I put it? Stones.

Rutledge bows and walks away.

Franklin: There. I think we scared him off. (Franklin walks over to Adams and the other Massachusetts men) I am very glad to have you gentlemen with us. Very glad indeed. (He bows to them, they bow back)

### ***Inside the Pennsylvania State House, the Congress is in session.***

Rutledge: I beg the good gentlemen here. I beseech you...

Adams: "Entreat," he left out "entreat."

Rutledge: ...I entreat you (the other men laugh) to remember that we remain the King's subjects, whatever the recent unpleasantness in Massachusetts. One rash action does not merit a rash response!

Men: Hear, hear!

Rutledge: Might must be met with reason, not arms!

Samuel Adams: I remind Mr. Rutledge and Mr. Duane (delegate from New York) that blood has been shed. Massachusetts' blood. While we debate, our militia is left without munitions, without arms, without even the slightest encouragement. (There is thumping on the desks, showing support for what he is saying).

Hancock (President of the Congress): Mr. Dickinson of Pennsylvania.

Dickinson: One colony cannot be allowed to take its sister colonies headlong into the maelstrom of war.

Men: Hear, hear!

Dickinson: Parliament will be eager to call a halt to hostilities, as are we. They will seek conciliation. We must offer them an olive branch. I move this assembly consider a humble and dutiful petition be dispatched to his Majesty, one that includes a plain statement that the colony desires immediate negotiation and accommodation of these unhappy disputes, and that we are willing to enter into measures to achieve that reconciliation.

Delegate: Second!

John Adams: Mr. Dickinson? The time for negotiation is past. The actions of the British army at Lexington and Concord speak plainly enough. If we wish to regain our natural-born rights as Englishmen Then we must fight for them.

Dickinson: I have looked for our rights in the laws of nature and can find them only in the laws of political society. I have looked for our rights in the constitution of the English government and found them there! Our rights have been violated, Mr. Adams, that is beyond dispute. We must provide a plan to convince Parliament to restore those rights! Do we wish to become aliens to the mother country? No, gentlemen, we must come to terms with the mother country. No doubt the same ship which carries forth our list of grievances will bring back their redress.

John Adams: Mr. Dickinson My wife and young children live on the main road to Boston, fewer than five miles from the full might of the British Empire. Should they sit and wait for Gage and his savages to rob them of their home, their possessions, their very lives? No, sir! Powder and artillery are the surest and most infallible conciliatory measures we can adopt!

Dickinson: If you explode the possibility of peace, Mr. Adams, and I tell you now, you will have blood on your hands!

Adams: And I tell you, Mr. Dickinson, that to hold out an olive branch to Britain is a measure of gross

imbecility.

Dickinson: If you New England men continue to oppose our measures of reconciliation, you will leave us no choice but to break off from you entirely and carry on the opposition in our own way.

Adams: I sit in judgment of no man's religion, Mr. Dickinson But your Quaker sensibilities do us a gross disservice, sir. It is one thing to turn the other cheek, but to lie down in the ground like a snake and crawl toward the seat of power in abject surrender, well, that is quite another thing, sir.

Hancock: Mr. Adams!

Adams: And I have no stomach for it, sir! No stomach at all!

Dickinson: We will exhaust all peaceful approaches, Mr. Adams. And we will do it with or without the approbation of you and your Boston insurrectionists!

Many in the Congress: Hear, hear!

Hancock: Mr. Dickinson's motion to send an Olive Branch Petition to His Majesty has been made and seconded. We shall proceed to a vote. New Hampshire?

New Hampshire delegate: New Hampshire votes no.

Hancock: Massachusetts?

Massachusetts delegate: Massachusetts votes no.

Hancock: Rhode Island?

Rhode Island delegate: Rhode Island votes no.

Hancock: New York?

New York delegate: New York votes yes!

Many in the Congress: Hear, hear.

Hancock: Connecticut?

Connecticut delegate: Connecticut votes no.

Hancock: New Jersey?

New Jersey delegate: New Jersey votes yes.

Many in the Congress: Hear, hear.

Hancock: Delaware?

Delaware delegate: Delaware votes yes.

Hancock: Pennsylvania?

Franklin, Pennsylvania delegate: Pennsylvania votes yes.

Hancock: Virginia?

Virginia delegate: Virginia votes yes.

Hancock: Maryland?

Maryland delegate: Maryland votes yes.

Hancock: South Carolina?

Rutledge, South Carolina delegate: South Carolina votes yes.

Hancock: Georgia?

Georgia delegate: Georgia votes yes.

*Later, at a pub, Franklin is talking to Dr. Rush. Adams goes over to talk to him.*

Franklin: The storm did not quite behave as it was meant to behave. Unlike the British army, it did not travel in a straight line.

Rush: As my brother told me at the time

Franklin: Mr. Adams.

Adams: Doctor.

Franklin: Dr. Rush has been telling me that he has bled most of Philadelphia. He quite swears by the regenerative powers of desanguination. Thus far, Philadelphia has survived.

Adams: Can I have a private word with you, doctor?

Franklin: Certainly, Mr. Adams. Gentlemen, if you If you'll excuse me.

(The other men get up, Adams greets them as they leave).

Adams: Mr. Rodney, Mr. Rush

(Adams and Franklin are left alone at the table).

Franklin: You seem a little distracted, Mr. Adams.

Adams: I had thought that you were with us.

Franklin: As I am, as I am.

Adams: But not enough to come out and say so.

Franklin: Politics is the art of the possible. What did you get by opposing the motion? It was carried with or without you. All you did was make enemies and make yourself feel better, of course.

Adams: Do you not believe in saying what you think?

Franklin: No, I'm very much against it. Thinking aloud is a habit responsible for much of mankind's misery. St. Thomas a Becket might have lived to a ripe old age if he... (Franklin stops himself and tries again). You insulted Mr. Dickinson. You insulted him in public.

Adams: Would you have me insult him in private?

Franklin: It's perfectly acceptable to insult someone in private. Sometimes they might even thank you for it afterwards. But when you do it in public, they tend to think you are serious.

Adams: I feel myself hated in this town.

Franklin: Go gently. I beg you. You are a guest in Philadelphia. Fish and guests stink after three days.

Adams chuckles.

Franklin: You would do well to seek out the gentlemen of Virginia.

Adams: Their vote went against me as well.

Franklin: Virginia must be won, Mr. Adams. Their wealth, prestige, their size – no other colony carries that much weight. And I think you'll find, despite their recent vote, that they are of your opinion.

Adams: And of your opinion, sir?

Franklin: My opinion is that I have no opinion. But I'll gladly come with you, to find out what my opinion might be. Diplomacy is seduction in another guise, Mr. Adams. One improves with practice.

***The next day, outside the Pennsylvania State House. Franklin is with Adams, seeking to introduce him to the men from Virginia.***

Franklin: Mr. Harrison, Mr. Lee. Gentlemen, good morning to you.

Adams: Mr. Lee? You are said to be the Cicero of Virginia. (Cicero was a great Roman orator).

Lee: Like you, Mr. Adams, we are arming ourselves for our own defense. Beyond that, the Virginia Convention has given us no instructions. Were it up to myself and Colonel Washington...

Franklin: Oh, yes indeed. Colonel Washington. (Washington walks over to the small group)

Adams: Good morning to you, Colonel. (He bows, as is the custom).

Washington: Mr. Adams.

(Adams has seen a black armband on Washington's arm)

Adams: Colonel, you are in mourning.

Washington: For Massachusetts, Mr. Adams. An attack made on one of our sister colonies is an attack made on all of us.

Adams: If only all of the Congress were of your sentiment, sir.

Washington: I am prepared to raise 1,000 men, subsist them at my own expense and march them myself to the relief of Boston.

Adams: We may yet have need of your generosity.

Washington: Not generosity, Mr. Adams, duty.

(Adams nods in astonishment and gratitude. Washington walks away).

Adams: A natural leader.

Franklin: He's always the tallest man in the room. He's bound to end up leading something.

Thomas Jefferson: When will we escape this dreadful city, doctor?

Adams: Philadelphia is not to your liking, sir?

Jefferson: I'd rather be in my own country. Would not you?

Adams: I would, Mr. Jefferson, yes.

Jefferson: Well, excuse me.

***Back in Massachusetts, the children are awakened by the sound of guns. They run into their mother's bedroom.***

Charles: Ma! Ma!

Nabby: Are those our guns, Mama?

Abigail: I pray they are.

(The family goes out to see if they can see anything. There is gunfire in the harbor).



The next morning, men are walking back from the battle past their home. Abigail and the children are offering water to their local militiamen.

Abigail: Would you like some water, sir?

Man: Thank you, ma'am.

Man: Thank you.

Man: Thank you, ma'am.

Abigail: We saw flames above the harbor.

Man: Gage's ships laid into us with cannon fire. They sent their butchers through the smoke up Bunker Hill.

Abigail: Dear God.

Man: We held them back. Thank you.

Abigail: Do I know that face? (She looks into one of the wagons and recognizes one of the dead men). I knew that face. Children, inside.

***Back in Philadelphia, after the news of the battle.***

Adams: General Warren is fallen at Bunker Hill Shot through the head Bayoneted and stripped of his clothes. I knew him, gentlemen. He was my physician. The full measure of British atrocity is too terrible to relate. Four hundred patriots dead. Not professional soldiers, ordinary citizens of Massachusetts who willingly gave their lives to defend what was rightfully theirs Their liberty. But they took with them more than 1,000 British soldiers and 100 of their officers.

(Men of the Congress look somber during Adams' story, recognizing the barbarity of what the British did, they applaud after that last line).

Adams: If this Congress does not support the Massachusetts militia, it could very well dissolve, gentlemen! Should that happen... (men shout in opposition) ...Should that happen, we will be left defenseless, gentlemen. I move that the Congress adopt the Massachusetts militia immediately!

(Some men of congress cheer him, others protest).

Hancock: Mr. Adams.

Samuel Adams: Second!

Dickinson: You are asking us to form an army, Mr. Adams. A force acting not for a single colony, but all 13! Now there's not a man here present who does not mourn the loss of the brave men of Massachusetts.

Men: Hear, hear!

Dickinson: But it is at such times that caution must prevail. It may be weeks before our last petition reaches the King, many weeks more before we may hope for a reply. While we await answer, we must avoid any escalation of the hostilities between us.

Men: Hear, hear!

Adams: The situation is perilous! What is required now is one able man to build and to lead this new continental army.

Rutledge: And who do you propose of the Massachusetts delegates should lead this...force?

Dickinson: Gentlemen, we move too quickly. We have not yet resolved the question of any continental army, much less who is to lead it.

Adams: I have but one gentleman in mind, known to all of us. Mr. President, I propose as commander in chief, our most honorable and esteemed delegate, the good gentleman from Virginia, Colonel George Washington.

(The men all look at each other, they are surprised at Adams' choice, as Washington is not from Massachusetts, and is admired by all of them).

Samuel Adams: Second!

Franklin: I commend your selection, sir. There is no more able soldier in all America. Colonel Washington would command approbation in all Americans, were he to accept the position that it is now our great honor to offer him.

Washington: If the Congress sees fit to honor me with the command, it will be my humble duty to serve.

Franklin: By your modesty, you show the wisdom of our choice.

Hancock: There are two motions on the floor. Should Congress adopt the Massachusetts militia and should Colonel Washington be appointed as commander in chief of this continental army? I think we should move towards a vote.

31 min

*Adams comes out of the Congress a few minutes later to find Washington.*

Adams: Congratulations, General Washington.

Washington: I am truly sensible of the high honor the Congress has done me. But I tell you now, I do not think myself equal to the command I am honored with.

Adams: Your men, your Continental Army, awaits you at Cambridge, sir. And I shall see you there on my return.

***Winter 1775. Some months later in Massachusetts, it's winter and the fighting has gone on. Adams and wife Abigail are on a hill overlooking the city from their farm.***

Abigail: Will General Howe attack again?

Adams: Impossible to say.

Abigail: What is that but an army of occupation? And the Congress goes on its knees to the King. Has the King deigned to reply? (John doesn't answer). I understand people like Mr. Dickinson and his friends all too well, John. Send a woman to the Congress. She might knock some sense into them.

Adams: It is not a question of men and women. It is a matter politics.

Abigail: Politics. Politics? And do women not live politics, John Adams? When I go to the cupboard and I find no coffee, no sugar, no pins, no meat, am I not living politics? This war touches people that your Congress treats with the same contempt King George deserves for the people of Boston. I mean women, yes, and slaves too, for that matter. Though I am sure you wish I would not mention that subject, as it might upset your southern friends.

Adams: You're harsh, madam.

Abigail: I am cold. And frightened. I am afraid this war will never end or begin.

Adams: I am frightened too, Abigail. And however much I talk and talk, I will never carry the Congress.

Abigail: It seems that I must come down to Philadelphia and box the ears of Mr. Dickinson and his cronies.

Adams: I must pray for guidance in all our endeavors, wherever they may lead us.

Abigail: And where will they lead us, John? I sometimes think we may be heading to a complete and irrevocable independence.

***A scene in Boston, Adams is consulting with Washington, whose troops are looking poorly. He has only 5000 of his original 20,000 left, as many have gone home and they have been decimated by small pox.***

Washington: The enemy are quite entrenched. To take Boston may mean its utter destruction. I could call on only 5,000 troops who are fit to fight.

Adams: I thought you had at least 20 000 men under your command?

Washington: A great many have gone home since their enlistments expired, New England men a good lot of them. I cannot conceal our condition from the British indefinitely. We have been decimated by the bloody pox. It is sheer providence they haven't discovered our predicament.

Adams: Upon my return to Philadelphia, I will make this situation known and the Congress will find whatever you require, sir.

Washington: Nothing has yet come from all their promises of powder, muskets supplies, Mr. Adams.

Adams: I will persuade them, sir. And I will also argue to the Congress that an alliance with France and Spain is essential. But above all, I intend to present them with a Declaration of Independency.

Washington: You've already spoken of this?

Adams: Oh no, no, no one speaks of it. At least not publicly. But it is the only sure guarantee of our liberty.

Washington: Independence will mean war from one end of the colonies to the other.

Adams: I have no illusions about that.

Washington: But first, let us free Boston. The rest will follow.

***Back in Adams' house, Adams is getting ready to go back to Philadelphia to Congress. Abigail is scrubbing the floor in a determined manner.***

Abigail: So many have been carried away by the bloody pox. We cannot risk infection in this house.

Adams: How you will manage this winter with the blockade, I don't know.

Abigail: We will manage. Somehow we will manage.

Adams: I should go before the weather worsens.

Abigail: Yes.

Adams: I would gladly take a walk in our garden with you when the spring comes.

Abigail: No more, John! No more.

(Adams is leaving on his horse while Abigail and the children watch sadly, with Charles being a angry that his father is leaving again).

Charles: I hate the Congress!

***Back in Philadelphia***

Adams: General Washington still awaits our reply to the problem of re-enlistments.

Man, handing a scroll to Hancock, whispering: The king's seal.

Adams: Now he respectfully suggests that a salary be granted our soldiers commensurate with their

sacrifice. But he has no money on hand to pay them. Tents, soap, shoes and blankets are also greatly wanting. The army recently took shipment of 50 crates of rifles, all without the flints required to shoot them! (no one seems to be listening, or caring)

(John Hancock stands, to read a royal proclamation. It's a reply to the Olive Branch Petition that had been sent to the king earlier. As he reads, the camera pans around the room at the shocked faces of the delegates in Congress.

Hancock: A proclamation by King George III. "Many of Our subjects, misled by a desperate conspiracy of dangerous and ill-designing men, have forgotten the allegiance which they owe to the power that has protected and supported them, and have declared rebellion and traitorously levied war against Us. It is the better part of wisdom to put a speedy end to such disorders. We have thought fit to issue Our royal proclamation that all our royal officers, both civil and military, are obliged to suppress such rebellion and bring the traitors to justice. When the unhappy and deluded multitude against whom this force shall be directed shall become sensible of their error, I shall be ready to receive the misled with tenderness and mercy. For those who persist in their treason...(he stops, shocked at what he's reading, then continues)...For those who persist in their treason, the punishment shall be death by hanging. Given in Parliament this 26th day of October in the year 1775." God save the King.

Samuel Adams: God damn the King!

Dickinson, looking pensive, concerned.

(Afterwards, Adams, Franklin, and Lee, from Virginia, are talking in a small group).

Franklin: God bless the King. Who else could have brought such a spirit of unity to this Congress? We will now all hang together. Or, most assuredly, we will all hang separately.

Adams: The question is no longer whether there shall be independence, but when.

Franklin: If we force a decision too soon, we may reap disaster. Independence without unanimity means nothing.

Adams: I'm in complete agreement, doctor.

Lee: I will leave immediately. The Virginia Convention must free us to act.

Adams: All thirteen clocks must strike at the same second. (A metaphor for the 13 colonies).

44 min.

***Massachusetts, at the Adams home, Abigail and the children are making bullets by the fire. They hear something outside. Charles jumps up and runs outside in the rain. Abigail grabs a musket from over the fireplace and goes outside.***

Nabby: Charles, Charles! Charles, come back!

Abigail: Children, step away from the door. Charles! Charles, go inside! Go inside! Go!

She steps out with the gun, sees that there are men and oxen pulling two great cannons. She recognizes a man on horseback.

Abigail: Mr. Knox. Mr. Knox!

General Knox: Mrs. Adams?

Abigail: You sold books to my husband, now look at you! What are you doing?

Knox: British guns captured at Fort Ticonderoga. General Washington may have some use for them.

Abigail: How on earth did you manage?

Knox: Rowed them across Lake George and hauled them over the Berkshires (mountains in the north). We call that one Liberty. And that big one there stuck in the mire, we call it Independency!

(Abigail smiles and nods in approval, and the men go on down the road).

(After, the guns are being set up in Boston).

***Back in Philadelphia, men from Massachusetts are telling the news of the guns and the battle in a celebratory mood.***

Man: When Howe saw the guns from Ticonderoga ringing the city he shouted, "Good God, these fellows have done more work in one day than I made my army do in three months." General Washington's surprise sent them scurrying like rats.

Adams approaches the men from Virginia: Mr. Lee, now is the time. And with your good news I can depend upon Virginia to lead the way.

Lee: The honor is mine, sir.

(Lee and the others make their way to the State house. Jefferson and Adams stay behind for a moment).

Adams: We are about to take a leap in the dark, Mr. Jefferson.

Jefferson: I would gladly lend my hand to sink the whole island of Great Britain in the ocean.

Adams: Now, I have not heard you say three words together in the last Congress. With such passion, I regret that you haven't made your mind more plainly known.

Jefferson: I have no gift for oratory.

***Inside the State House***

Hancock: The President recognizes Mr. Lee of Virginia. Order, gentlemen!

Lee: Resolved, That these united colonies are and of a right ought to be free and independent states; They are absolved of all allegiance to the British crown; and that all political connection between them and the country of Great Britain is and ought to be totally dissolved.

Duane: No!

Adams: Second!

Hancock: Second from Mr. Adams.

Rutledge: Am I to understand that Virginia has freed their delegates to propose this measure?

Lee: They have, sir. The liberation of Boston has quite convinced them.

Duane (of New York): The British may have abandoned Boston, Mr. Lee, but that is not an end to the business! General Howe is said to be awaiting reinforcements! Thousands of godless Hessian mercenaries among them. First they will attack New York, then this very city!

Rutledge: Two warships have been sighted sailing up the Delaware, gentlemen. What possible object can they have if not to take this Congress and every man in it by force?

Man from Pennsylvania: Our river defenses will hold them, sir!

Duane: How shall we fight them? With what navy shall we turn them back? England is poised to strike a fatal blow! I must ask again, why such haste? Why should we pull down the old house - before we are prepared to- (he is interrupted by shouting and grumbling men)

Adams: Because, Mr. Duane, the middle way that some in this chamber have been seeking is no way at all. Gentlemen, please hear me out, gentlemen! If we finally fail in this great and glorious contest, it will be by bewildering ourselves in groping for the middle way!

48 min

Dickinson: Gentlemen, Dr. Franklin knows England better than any man here. Can we not yet hope to see a clearer sky?

Franklin: Well, if my long residence in London as this colony's agent to the Court has taught me anything, Mr. Dickinson, it has taught me this: that given the choice between doing what is right and doing what is not right, his majesty's government will take the latter course every time.

(laughter, comments by group): Well said, well said.

Hancock: Dr. Franklin has the floor.

Franklin: The King refuses our petitions. He has branded us rebels. The question is not whether by a by a declaration of independence that we should make ourselves something we are not, but whether we should declare a fact something which already exists.

(Men in Congress vary in loudly expressing disapproval or agreement)

Dickinson: Only the voice of the people can proclaim independence.

Adams: No, no, Mr. Dickinson! The people wait for us to lead the way.

Men: Hear, hear!

Adams: And we must lose no time in leading them, sir. No time at all.

Rutledge: And just whom do you think will join us in this folly?

Adams: France, for one!

Duane: France!

(Men in Congress vary in loudly expressing disapproval or agreement)

Hancock: Gentlemen, gentlemen!

Adams: England is our common enemy, sir.

Duane: Mr. Adams would make us French subjects!

Adams: Partners, Mr. Duane, not subjects. General Washington's army needs arms and men! King Louis cannot be expected to acknowledge us until we have acknowledged ourselves and taken our rightful place as a sovereign power.

Hancock: Mr. Adams, Mr. Franklin has the floor.

Franklin: Mr. Adams is right. Let us send an envoy to King Louis while our affairs wear a hopeful aspect.

Dickinson: What if no alliance comes? What then, sir?

Adams: Then so be it.

Duane: "So be it"?!

(grumbling and shouting from some of the men)

Rutledge (angry, and emphatic): We will not vote for independence, Mr. Adams. Not now, not ever!

(More grumbling and shouting from some of the men)

(Later, in the evening, they are still talking and arguing).

Adams: Mr. Duane well knows that reconciliation would be as agreeable to my inclinations, and as advantageous to my interests as to any man's! But, I see no prospect for it, no probability, no possibility! And I cannot abide the hypocritical heart that pretends to expect peace when in truth it does not.



Duane: This Congress has no more right to pass such a resolution than parliament has! We must beware of overreaching!

Man: Aye!

Adams: When Demosthenes...(he stops to put his wig back on). When Demosthenes traveled as ambassador through Greece he did not go...

Hancock: Mr. Adams, you take us on a journey through time! If you plan on taking us to creation itself, I should like send word to my landlady, she should not waste any eggs for my breakfast.

Adams: He did not go, Mr. President, to propose a non-importation – or non-consumption agreement.

Rutledge: I beg your pardon, sir. Pray forgive me for not recognizing the worthy Demosthenes. I mistook you for a Massachusetts man.

Adams: Do you know the conduct of some states from the beginning of this affair has given me reason to suspect that it is their settled policy to keep to the rear of our confederacy come what may, so as not to harm their future prospects?

Hancock: Mr. Adams.

Adams: No, there are persons in Philadelphia to whom a ship is dearer than a city, and a few barrels of flour dearer than 1000 lives. Other men's lives.

Dickinson: That is an outrageous slander!

Hancock: Gentlemen, we cannot debate this endlessly. I call for a vote on Mr. Lee's resolution for independence. New Hampshire?

Delegate from New Hampshire: New Hampshire votes yes.

Hancock: Connecticut?

Delegate from Connecticut: Connecticut votes yes.

Hancock: New Jersey?

Delegate from New Jersey: New Jersey votes no.

Hancock: Georgia?

Delegate from Georgia: Georgia votes yes.

Hancock: Virginia?

Lee: Virginia votes yes.

Hancock: New York?

Duane: New York votes no!

Hancock: North Carolina?

Delegate from North Carolina: North Carolina votes yes.

Rutledge: One moment, please.

(They all wait, some whispering)

Rutledge: South Carolina, on behalf of its sister colonies...

Adams: States!

Rutledge: ...requests a postponement to seek new instructions. Twenty days should be sufficient.

Adams, to the other Massachusetts delegates: This is good.

Hancock (to Adams and the Massachusetts delegation): Any objections?

Adams: No, none, sir. No.

Hancock: Congress shall reconvene on July 1st to consider Mr. Lee's resolution.

Adams: Mr. President, perhaps a committee should be formed to present a statement to the people should the vote tend toward independence.

(Franklin looks wily, as if he's been expecting this).

Hancock: Mr. Dickinson?

(Dickinson shakes his head, he's not objecting).

Hancock: Form your committee, Mr. Adams.

55 min.

***Back in Massachusetts, on the Adams' farm. Charles is playing soldier while men are watering their horses and drilling.***

Charles: Present!

Washington: The thought of what awaits us in New York robs me of my sleep.

Abigail: Are you so certain of defeat?

Washington: To give battle to the British army, their ranks swollen with the 17,000 Hessians, I know not how our men will stand the test. General Howe elected to depart Boston in peace rather than lay waste to the city. New York may not be so fortunate.

Abigail: That such evil should befall a people. Could it be punishment for the sin of slavery?

Washington: I cannot say. We grow gloomy, Mrs. Adams. Forgive me. I had hoped this visit would be a respite from what weighs upon me. Is there some service I may do for you? For your family?

Abigail: There is one thing that I would ask. My correspondence with my husband is more important than I can say. It has become so difficult to get letters through, and fear of interception has limited what we may say to each other. If I could impose upon you to carry my letters

Washington: My own courier will take them safely to Philadelphia along with my dispatches.

Abigail: Thank you.

Washington: Your advice is greatly valued by Mr. Adams. The more quickly he receives it, the more quickly we may all be beneficiaries of your counsel.

***Back in Philadelphia, Adams is trying to talk Thomas Jefferson into writing the actual Declaration of Independence.***

Jefferson: I fear I cannot oblige you, sir, because If we are to achieve our longed-for separation from England, we must be ready in the state legislatures with new codes of law and governance and to that end all my time away from the assembly is taken up with urgent correspondence on a new constitution for Virginia.

Adams: We are of the same mind there. Massachusetts, too, must have its constitution. But I would have one founded on principles which could one day inform the confederacy of all the states, but we must first achieve this long-hoped-for separation, and to that end we must have a declaration of principles.

Jefferson: Should you not write this thing yourself?

Adams: No no. I do not have time. I head the board of war and ordinance as well as serving on 22 other committees. And the outcome of this great question is far from certain, so my energies must be spent in the debate on the floor.

Jefferson: And why me?

Adams: Reasons enough, sir.

Jefferson: What can possibly be your reason?

Adams: First, you are a Virginian, and a Virginian should be at the head of this business as it's the most powerful state. And second, I am obnoxious, suspected and unpopular. And you are very much otherwise. Third, and perhaps most important, I have read your summary view of the rights of British America and I have a great opinion of the elegance of your pen, and none at all of my own.

Jefferson: You're too modest, sir.

Adams: You're the first to find me so, sir. I am not by nature a humble man, but circumstances sometimes require a change of habits.

Jefferson: I see that you're quite decided.

Adams: That I am, Mr. Jefferson. Quite.

***Back in Massachusetts, Abigail has made a serious decision regarding the small pox epidemic. She is consulting with a doctor about getting the family inoculated against the small pox.***

Doctor: Have you consulted with your husband?

Abigail: Mr. Adams is not here and the pox is rampant.

Doctor: Inoculation is not without risk. The distemper manifests itself differently in each person. You and your children may experience some fever and inflammation, perhaps a form of the disease itself.

Abigail: I am aware of the risks.

Doctor: Some cases have even resulted in death.

***Philadelphia, early July 1776. Adams and Franklin are reading and reflecting on Jefferson's document, the Declaration of Independence.***

Adams: This is something altogether unexpected, not only a declaration of our independence, but of the rights of all men. No, this is well said, sir. Very well said. "The Christian King of Great Britain "has waged cruel war against human nature itself in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere."

Franklin: Yes, you lay the evils of slavery at the feet of the King, but you say nothing of slavery itself, sir. Now surely, if the trade is outlawed but ownership is not, then those unfortunate Negroes still in servitude will become a more lucrative commodity.

Jefferson: That's not what I intended, Dr. Franklin. Slavery is an abomination and must be loudly proclaimed as such, but I own that neither I nor any man has any immediate solution to the problem.

Franklin: Oh, well, it is no matter. The issue before us is independence and not emancipation.

Adams: Dr. Franklin, this document is – is something.

Franklin: Something our friends in the Congress will debate. But I will be very surprised if they will countenance an attack on slavery.

(The men silently agree about this.)

Franklin, reading: "We hold these truths to be sacred and undeniable, "that all men are created equal" Etcetera. "Sacred and undeniable." Smacks of the pulpit.

Jefferson: Does it?

Franklin: These truths are self-evident are they not?

Jefferson: Perhaps.

Franklin: Self-evident then. Self-evident?

(1:02)

Jefferson: Self-evident.

Franklin: Self-evident. Do not mistake me, sir. I share your sentiment.

Jefferson: Every single word was precisely chosen. I assure you of that, Dr. Franklin.

Franklin: Yes, but yours will not be the only hand in this document. It cannot be. They will try to mangle it, and they may succeed.

Adams: There may be expressions which I would not have inserted if I had drawn it up, but I will defend every word of it.

Jefferson: Well, it's what I believe.

Franklin (playing on the swivel chair he is sitting on): This is a marvelous invention, Mr. Jefferson.

Jefferson: Yes, I went through a number of variations. This is by far the most successful. The simplest is always the best. It's two seats and the top one swivels on rollers made from the window sash pulleys.

Franklin: Most ingenious.

***Massachusetts. The doctor is outside the Adams' house, with a wagon. Inside is a patient, covered in small pox, holding a cross. He is likely to die.***

Doctor (to Charles, the son of Abigail): Stay inside.

(The doctor takes a little pus and blood from the dying boy)

Doctor: One more time, lad.

(Inside the house, the doctor is inoculating Abigail. He puts some of the pus and blood inside the cut he has made in her arm. Inoculations in those days were "live," meaning that the person being inoculated was exposed to a light case of the illness, which their body could fight, and then they would usually get well. But there was risk, as the doctor explained).

Doctor: Just a small cut. Done. (He turns to the children). Who's first? (He sees that it's Charles). Ah, so it's you? What is your name?

Charles: Ch...Charles.

Doctor: Roll up your sleeve. (Charles rolls up his sleeve and bares his arm). That's it. Here we go. Just a small cut. (The doctor makes a small cut and inserts the material) Almost done. There you are, lad.

The doctor turns to Nabby.

Abigail: It'll hurt a little bit.

Nabby: I want papa.

Abigail: Papa's not here. We must depend upon ourselves.

Doctor: One more, one more. Almost done.

[Ended 2<sup>nd</sup> day of showing Fall 2019] 1:07

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***Back in Philadelphia, Adams and a few other men are discussing how to get the colonies united.***

(In the hallway of where Congress meets, Adams and Franklin are looking in at the men who will oppose them in arguing for independence, Dickinson, of Pennsylvania, Duane, of New York, and Rutledge, of South Carolina.)

Adams: There lies our battle. The others may yet come around, but Pennsylvania and New York are too self-interested, too Tory. Mr. Dickinson is too unbending. And too effective.

Franklin: Most effective, Mr. Adams, most effective.

Adams: And Rutledge.

Franklin, nodding to Adams: Good luck to you, sir.

(In the meeting hall)

Hancock: Congress will take into consideration the resolution concerning independence. Mr. Dickinson?

Dickinson: Gentlemen. The consequences involved in the motion now lying before us are of such magnitude that I tremble at the oppressive honor of sharing in its determination. My conduct this day, I expect, will give the finishing blow to my once great and now much-diminished popularity. Yet I had rather forfeit popularity forever than vote away the blood and happiness of my countrymen.

Dickinson: Independence will not strengthen us by one man! Nor by the least supply. But it may expose our soldiers to additional cruelties and outrages. The full fury of British rifle will be unleashed. Indians will be loosed on the frontier. Negros will rise up to slaughter us. New York may well be destroyed. By their own admission, the advocates of separation say foreign assistance will be necessary.

Dickinson: At what cost? Let us imagine a war without victors. And the guns all silent. Many would have bled and sacrificed only to have exchanged the light yoke of Great Britain for the heavy dominion of an alien power. Some have argued that America will become one great commonwealth. But what is to keep 13 unwieldy colonies from splitting asunder? I have a strong impression in my mind that this will take place. Oh, gentlemen. To escape the protection of Great Britain by declaring independence unprepared as we are would be to brave the storm in a skiff made of paper.

(Many men make knocking sounds of approval on the desks)

Hancock: President recognizes Mr. Adams, Massachusetts.

Adams: Objects of the most stupendous magnitude. Measures which will affect the lives of millions, born and unborn are now before us. We must expect a great expense of blood to obtain them but we must always remember that a free constitution of civil government cannot be purchased at too dear a rate as there is nothing on this side of Jerusalem, of greater importance to mankind.

Adams: My worthy colleague from Pennsylvania has spoken with great ingenuity and eloquence. He's given you a grim prognostication of our national future, but where he foresees apocalypse I see hope. I see a new nation ready to take its place in the world. Not an empire, but a republic. And a republic of laws, not men.

Adams: Gentlemen, we are in the very midst of revolution. The most complete unexpected and remarkable of any in the history of the world. How few of the human race have ever had an opportunity of choosing a system of government for themselves, and their children.

Adams: I am not without apprehensions, gentlemen. But the end that we have in sight is more than worth all the means. My belief says that the hour has come. My judgment approves this measure and my whole heart is in it. All that I have, all that I am and all that I hope in this life, I am now ready to stake upon it. While I'll live, let me have a country. A free country.

(There is a pause while the men look at each other, thinking about what he's said, then Samuel Adams, his cousin, thumps in approval and soon others do the same, and most rise to give him a standing ovation).

(Aftwards, Adams and Franklin are sitting on a bench out in the hall. Adams is worried that his speech did no good).

Adams: Idle misspense of time. Waste of breathe. I said nothing but what have been repeated and hackneyed in that room before a hundred times past these six months.

Franklin: Oh, on the contrary, Mr. Adams. You seemed quite carried out of yourself.

Samuel Adams (coming out to speak to Adams): Majority is ours, cousin. Nine to four in favor.

Adams: No, no, no. It must be unanimous. Where the devil is our friend Rodney?

Man: Gone back to Wilmington. Trouble with the Tories, there.

Adams: We will never win Delaware without him.

(Adams gets up and strides over to Mr. McKean, a delegate from Delaware)

Adams: Mr. Rodney must be found and fetched back here, Mr McKean.

McKean: Leave it to me.

(Edward Rutledge, of South Carolina, who had spoken so fervently against independence at an earlier session, comes up to Adams in the hall).

Rutledge: Mr Adams.

Adams: Sir?

Rutledge: A word with you, if I may? A private word.

(They get their hats and head outside).

Rutledge: South Carolina would be willing to consider casting her vote with the majority.

Adams: You surprise me, sir.

Rutledge: We know which way the wind blows, Mr Adams. South Carolina has never been opposed to the principle of separation from Britain. Only the haste to achieve it.

Adams: The times call for action, sir.

Rutledge: We Southerners are accustomed to more courtly forum.

Adams: You have something to ask in return.

Rutledge: Only your assurance that there will be no dissent from the other colonies – forgive me – states.

Adams: You have it, sir.

Rutledge: Gentlemen can always reach agreement.

(Adams nods).

(Later that evening, at a pub, Franklin and both John and Samuel Adams are speaking to Mr. Duane of New York, trying to convince him to vote for independence).

Duane: Admiral Howe has anchored 150 ships in view of Manhattan Island, and you ask me to consent to our own destruction.



Samuel Adams: Thirteen stand a greater chance than one.

John Adams: We do not ask you to join us. Only that you do not obstruct us.

Duane: New York would be willing to consider such an arrangement if you can deliver Pennsylvania.

(John Adams looks a little unsure if he can).

(Later, Adams and Franklin are at the home of John Dickinson, of Pennsylvania, who has spoken so strongly against independence).

Franklin: Consider this, Mr Dickinson: that two of Pennsylvania's own delegates, myself being one of them, rose up today in opposition to you.

Dickinson: I will not compromise my beliefs.

Adams: A man of your reputation and honesty, they should never compromise his beliefs, sir.

Dickinson: I thank you for that, Mr Adams. (to Franklin) Understand me, sir. Likely you're right, and we shall be driven to independence. But now, it's not the time for some dangerous and irrevocable an action. I cannot lend my voice to hasten our ruin.

Franklin: Perhaps if you're to find yourself, somehow, indisposed tomorrow? (he is suggesting that Dickinson could stay home and send word that he is too ill to attend Congress, therefore allowing the other Pennsylvania delegates to vote in favor of independence, without him having to compromise his beliefs).

***Back in Massachusetts at the Adams' home.***

(Abigail comes up the steps in her nightgown, with a bowl of water and a cloth. She hears her younger sons playing in their bedroom. The family is ill from their inoculations, but the boys seem to be doing pretty well. We see the older son, Johnny, in bed behind the smaller boys who are playing).

Abigail (to the little boys): Boys, shh. Be still.

(She takes the bowl into her daughter's room to bathe her face. Nabby has pocks on her face and looks flushed with fever).

Abigail: My brave girl.

(The older boys, Johnny and Charles, poke their heads into the room to see Nabby. Abigail looks at them).

Abigail: Come no further.

(the boys linger at the doorway. Charles has a toy in his hand).

Abigail (finishing wiping Nabby's face): There.

Charles comes in and lays his toy on his sister's chest.

Charles: Nabby, have a lion.

Abigail: Thank you, Charles. (to the boys) Bed! Bed!

(She turns back to Nabby)

Nabby: Ma. I'm hot

Abigail: Get cool. (She shows her the lion) Look what Charles gave you. (She continues to bathe her daughter's wrists and face).

### ***Back in Philadelphia.***

Hancock: This panel now comes to a vote. From a resolution proposed by Mr. Lee. "These colonies are and of right ought to be free and independent states. And that all political connection between them and the country of Great Britain is and of the right ought to be totally dissolved.

Clerk: New Hampshire?

Delegate from New Hampshire: New Hampshire votes yes.

Clerk: Rhode Island?

Delegate from Rhode Island: Rhode Island votes yes.

Clerk: Massachusetts?

Samuel Adams: Massachusetts votes yes.

Clerk: New York?

Duane: New York has yet to receive new instructions from its constituent assembly. We, therefore, respectfully abstain. (Meaning they don't vote yes, but they don't oppose it either)

Clerk: Connecticut?

Delegate from Connecticut: Connecticut votes yes.

Clerk: New Jersey?

Delegate from New Jersey: New Jersey votes yes.

Clerk: Pennsylvania?

Franklin (looking at Dickinson's empty seat): Ahem, Pennsylvania votes yes.

Clerk: Delaware?

Delegate from Delaware: Delaware votes yes.

Clerk: Virginia?

Lee: Virginia votes yes.

Clerk: Maryland?

Delegate from Maryland: Maryland votes yes.

Clerk: North Carolina?

Delegate from North Carolina: North Carolina votes yes.

Clerk: South Carolina?

Rutledge: South Carolina votes yes. (He sits and looks heavenward).

Clerk: Georgia?

Delegate from Georgia: Georgia votes yes.

Clerk: Vote stands. Twelve for independence. None against. One abstention. Resolution carries.

(Later, outside of the state house, with a crowd, and some troops assembled, John Hancock is reading the Declaration of Independence to the crowd, with the delegates from Congress looking on, including John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Samuel Adams, James Duane, and Edward Rutledge).

Hancock (reading): When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth to the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them A decent respect of the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation...

(the scene shifts to Massachusetts, where Abigail and the children are reading the Declaration at the bedside of Nabby who is recovering from her illness)

Nabby (reading from a parchment): "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain un—" what's that word there?

Abigail (looking at the paper): "unalienable."

Nabby: "...with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness..."

(the scene shifts back to Philadelphia, with the camera continuing to pan over all the delegates from the

Congress, including John Dickinson, who despite his Quaker heritage, is in uniform and is leading his local Philadelphia militia, again to John Adams, and to Benjamin Franklin. Some of the actual document is skipped in this reading.)

Hancock: "...That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is in the right of the people to alter or abolish it and to institute new government. The history of the present king of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states."

(The reading goes back and forth between Philadelphia and Massachusetts, where now Abigail is continuing to read to the children, while the camera goes back and forth between them. We see more of the delegates, including Samuel Adams and James Duane, and the crowd in Philadelphia listening, and then go back to Abigail and the children)/

Abigail: "In every stage of this oppression, we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms. Our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury, a prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant is unfit to be the ruler of the free people."

Hancock: "We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America solemnly publish and declare that these united colonies are and of right ought to be free and independent states that they're absolved from all allegiance to the British crown."

Abigail: And for the support of this declaration with a firm reliance on the protection of divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives our fortunes and our sacred honor."

(Charles sneezes)

Abigail: Bless you.

Hancock: God save our American states.

Crowd: God save our American states.

(Later, John is writing home to Abigail; Abigail is reading the letter while doing various chores around the farm. He calls Abigail, "My dearest friend" in his letters.)

John Adams: My dearest friend, the break is made. Now our work begins. You will think me transported with enthusiasm but I'm not. It is the will of Heaven that Britain and America should be sundered forever. It may be the will of Heaven that America shall suffer calamities still more wasting and distresses yet more dreadful. I am well aware of the toil and blood and treasure that it will cost us to maintain this declaration and support and defend these states. Yet, through all the gloom, I can see the raise of ravishing light and glory. I can see that posterity will triumph in that day's transaction.

John Adams Episode Scripts:

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