

GEORGE WASHINGTON

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. DELAWARE RIVER, NJ - DUSK

TITLE: AMERICAN RETREAT FROM NEW JERSEY, 1776

GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON, driven beyond exhaustion, struggles to load the last of his militia into boats crossing the swollen Delaware River. British artillery shells slam to earth like freight trains, showering the terror-stricken troops with debris.

Washington wears a tall-collared woolen coat buttoned to his throat, a drenched hat. He's forty-three years old, face scratched up from smallpox.

FOREST

Continental running, tree to tree, firing, reloading on the run. They're a hard-core bunch only giving up ground an inch at a time. A red line of British Rangers suddenly appears in the deep green forest and looses a fusillade that blots out the world with smoke.

RIVER BANK

At the sound of the concentrated musket fire men panic, some heave away their muskets and leap into the river. Washington throws his hat on the ground, screaming at these ragged men.

WASHINGTON

It's just an advance party! Show
some guts! Damn it! Officers keep
your men in line!

Washington turns as GENERAL NATHANAEL GREENE rides up.
Greene is a young thirty, filthy, exhausted and spooked...
his eyes show he's seen horrors he once could have only
imagined. Greene dismounts, points up the slope toward a
wagon.

NATHANAEL GREENE

Sir, the wounded... up here!

But Washington moves toward an ARTILLERY CAPTAIN loading his
caissons onto a barge. Just a kid, lean, red-brown hair,
eighteen years old, his name is ALEXANDER HAMILTON.

WASHINGTON

Captain!

Hamilton runs to Washington's side as it starts to really
POUR. Face smudged with powder, his nose bleeding from
cannon concussion.

HAMILTON

Captain Alexander Hamilton, sir!

WASHINGTON

Hamilton, you're going to have to
cover our asses as we cross.

HAMILTON

We've got powder but no ball!

WASHINGTON

Then use rocks!

Hamilton salutes and runs back as another incoming artillery
round explodes in the river. As the downpour rages,
Washington follows Greene up the greasy slope to the wagons.

EXT. WAGON OF WOUNDED

Washington climbs onto the first wagon, looks into the mass
of tangled limbs. Greene climbs up behind, immediately turns
away. MEN with faces half shot off, burned raw, limbs

gone... a pile of living guts. He hates seeing this.

Washington climbs down, then up onto the other wagon, then comes down and joins Greene.

WASHINGTON

We can't take them. Are you all
right?

NATHANAEL GREENE

We're leaving them?

WASHINGTON

They're finished, they can't help
us anymore!

(face-to-face)

They've done their duty, General
Greene, now you do yours!

NATHANAEL GREENE

Yessir!

THE SHORE

Last SOLDIERS in the last boat watch as Washington moves to the shore for his boat. He feels their eyes on him. He returns the stare and the men look away.

A CONGREGATIONAL MINISTER confronts Washington, points at the wounded.

MINISTER

General it is against the law of
God to leave these men!

WASHINGTON

Is it? Then, by God, you stay with
them...

The Continental rearguard scramble out of the forest.
Washington frantically waves them toward the boats.

WASHINGTON

C'mon, my brave boys! Get in these
boats!

(to the reverend)

It's these men or those wounded,
reverend, and these men can fight.

MINISTER

Those men did fight for you, sir!

But Washington's already moving toward his boat.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON

and two GUNNERS roll their last cannon back into the river.
A Gunner smashes bottles into the muzzle, then picks up
stones from the river, jamming them in.

When the cannon is over its hubs in the water, Hamilton
sights it point-blank at the edge of the forest.

WASHINGTON'S BOAT

Washington and Greene push-off in a bateau flying the BLUE
AND GOLD FLAG OF THE COMMANDER AND CHIEF. SHOUTS rise up
from the forest...

THE FOREST SEEMS TO BLEED

as BRITISH RANGERS gush out of the woods.

HAMILTON...

fires his cannon -- the rock and glass hit the rangers like a
massive shotgun, ripping their pretty uniforms to shreds,
staggering their line back into the trees. Hamilton spikes
the cannon by breaking off a bayonet tip in the touch hole --
his crew runs into the water, splashing after one of the last
boats.

WASHINGTON'S BOAT

Washington with Greene being rowed into the mist.

ON THE SHORE

the Minister stands over the wagons of wounded, praying and talking to the men. A heap of burning gear throws off BLACK SMOKE.

Rangers swarm onto the shore in their arrogant, black trimmed red tunics. They're a cocksure hard-looking killing machine. Some fire at the boats as they sweep through. One knocks the Minister off the wagon, bayonets him on the ground. Rangers climb on the wagons, look down on the wounded... the shore disappears in the mist.

EXT. WASHINGTON'S BOAT - DUSK

Washington lowers his eyes. Greene watches Washington for a while, then they hear MUSKET FIRE from shore, and their boat is swallowed by the MIST...

INT. CONGRESS - AFTERNOON (PAST)

TITLE: 2ND CONTINENTAL CONGRESS, 6 MONTHS BEFORE

SAM ADAMS in our face -- eyes red, long stringy hair; he looks like a mad man howling from the podium. Sam is fifty three, but anger has kept him young.

SAM ADAMS

We have come here to tear down the
world! Knock out its teeth! Smash
its ribs! Rip out its heart and
throw the damn thing to the dogs!

Howls and applause from the delegates...

GEORGE WASHINGTON ENTERS

wearing a bright pressed uniform of a VIRGINIA MILITIA COLONEL, Washington's vigorous presence immediately commands attention.

JOHN ADAMS OF MASSACHUSETTS is by his side. John is forty, with the well-fed look of a prosperous lawyer. Entering on their coat-tails, and attending Washington, is a young black man dressed in the immaculate livery of a gentleman's personal slave. His name is BILLY LEE and he seems proud of his position.

SAM ADAMS

You all know me. Governor Gage of
Massachusetts has called me 'Sammy
the Malster'! So, I accept his
christening: I stand before you,
then, not as a delegate to the
Continental Congress, but as Sam
Adams, Boston's town drunk!

(cheers)

Tonight I am drunk on the beer of
revolution!

Applause and shouts surge around the hall accompanied by
shouts of 'TREASON' -- 'SIT DOWN, YOU FOOL'! Sam nods,
welcoming the love and the anger.

WASHINGTON

Well, John Adams, your cousin has a
marvelous gift.

JOHN ADAMS

Yes, an astonishing power over weak
minds.

DELEGATES DELUGE Washington, and he starts enthusiastically
shaking hands like a politician shaking out votes.

A tall, heavy-set man -- HORATIO GATES -- pushes through the

circle of fawning delegates, shakes hands earnestly with Washington.

WASHINGTON

Horatio! Horatio Gates, of course
you know John Adams of the
Massachusetts Delegation.

HORATIO GATES

Good day, Mister Adams... George,
what's the word from Boston?

WASHINGTON

The last I heard, a bunch of
drunken militia have dug in on
Breed's hill. With one stroke the
British could cut them off and
apparently their leaders are too
dumb to see it.

HORATIO GATES

Who's in command out there?

WASHINGTON

Who the hell knows? Everyone's
giving orders. It's all very
democratic.

HORATIO GATES

George, we've got to get you out
there before we lose our whole
army.

Exactly what John Adams wants to hear, he steps up to make
the point.

JOHN ADAMS

With your support, Horatio. As one
of our own who has seen combat with
the British, your opinion counts.

WASHINGTON

As does your ability, Horatio. We
must talk further, when it's more
convenient.

They shake hands again and then wade deeper into the morass
of delegates. Washington is instantly the politician again,
vigorously shaking hands, giving each delegate an earnest
nod, a smile. Sam Adams' voice rises above the hall.

SAM ADAMS

This is The Great Chance! To make
a world where all men and all women

may be equal, and may vote equally!

(hoots from the crowd)

Where we of European stock may live
in harmony with the natural natives
of this New World and learn from
them...

SHOUTS of RAGE. A furious delegate leaps up.

DELEGATE 1

Learn what, Adams? How to steal
cattle and drink till you puke!?

SAM ADAMS

Why, no! You in Delaware are
already passing excellent at that!

John Adams steers Washington toward a LEAN MAN smoking a thin
pipe. He's JOSEPH REED. John Adams speaks fast and low as
they approach.

JOHN ADAMS

Joseph Reed, from Philadelphia; a
first class administrator George
and he's got a heart set on being
your aide. Pennsylvania has the
wagons and teamsters you'll need

for an army, so his importance goes
beyond today's vote.

(all over him)

Ah! Joseph! Colonel Washington.
I'm extremely pleased to introduce
you to Joseph Reed, one of
Pennsylvania's most prominent
citizens.

Washington does his part, steps right up, shakes that hand,
flashes his smile.

WASHINGTON

I hear Pennsylvania is the only
northern state that doesn't do
everything Massachusetts tells it.

Reed and John Adams swap surprised looks and sly laughs.

JOSEPH REED

In that case sir, today will be
that exception.

More music to John Adams' ears.

WASHINGTON

We must talk at length, sir, when

it's more convenient.

They nod, smile, hand-shake and John Adams helps Washington slip away. But then they're aggressively confronted by a slim YOUNG RHODE ISLAND OFFICER: he's NATHANAEL GREENE in his very best dress uniform. Greene walks alongside, limping slightly.

NATHANAEL GREENE

Colonel Washington? Colonel
Nathanael Greene, Rhode Island
Militia.

WASHINGTON

Yes, yes, happy to meet you.

NATHANAEL GREENE

I... I'm possessed of the idea of a
command in your army, sir.

WASHINGTON

It isn't my army yet, Colonel
Greene. Looks like you've seen
some action -- did you hurt your
leg, in a fight?

NATHANAEL GREENE

I was born with a limp, sir.

(laughs)

The Militia used to hate it when I
marches with them because my pike
would always sway...

Shows him with his arms. Washington doesn't really know how
to react to this kid, keeps looking around the room.

WASHINGTON

But, you do come from a military
family?

NATHANAEL GREENE

I have commanded the Rhode Island
Militia for a year now.

(pause)

My father is an ironmaster. As was
I.

They arrive at the table seating the VIRGINIA DELEGATION
directly in front of the dais. Washington's about to sit
when he gets it; he turns to look at Greene.

WASHINGTON

A horseshoer?

NATHANAEL GREENE

Yes, but I've spent the last winter
studying all the great battles of
history. And I read the lives of
Caesar, Alexander, Hannibal...

(pause)

Sir, I'm volunteering you the
wholehearted support of the Rhode
Island army.

John Adams decides it's time to get rid of him.

JOHN ADAMS

Thank you Colonel Greene, for your
support. Colonel Washington will
decide about his officers later.
Thank you...

They shake hands as Washington and John Adams sit. Greene
nods, unsure, fades reluctantly into the crowd.

JOHN ADAMS

You won't be needing his largess,
Rhode Island is already committed
to your appointment.

WASHINGTON

I don't know: delivering men and
delivering men with their goodwill
are two different things. And, if
he's popular with his men...

Now Sam Adams delivers this DIRECTLY AT WASHINGTON and his
fellow Virginians. Washington listens as he and John sit,
but refuses to be ruffled.

SAM ADAMS

Our new world is for the Black
slave forced by British greed to
work like an animal! It is
necessary that we abolish this
tyrannical practise once and for
all! And not doing do, we make a
mockery of this whole business!

Before he's even finished, he's CRUSHED by CRIES, JEERS --
HUGE BOOS. But seventy year old BENJAMIN FRANKLIN jumps up,
spry as a kid, impatient to get the floor.

FRANKLIN

Gentlemen, gentlemen... It seems to
me that certain delegates here are
demanding England grant us rights
they're not willing to grant their

own people.

Everyone on the Virginia Delegation immediately turns to Washington who speaks for them all.

WASHINGTON

Ben, you know many of us in Virginia, including Thomas Jefferson, have tried to outlaw slavery. But the Burgesses will not have it!

FRANKLIN

(unimpressed)

Perhaps they would 'have it', Colonel Washington, if those who proposed the laws in the first place set an example. I should like to ask this question of your fellow delegate, Thomas Jefferson, who is conveniently absent.

VOICE

What's your argument, Franklin?

FRANKLIN

My point being: we've been

sharpening our damned theories for
years, but now reality is on us
like the furies! Is there truly
support for war -- all out bloody
war! -- for the nearly intangible
principles of the 'rights of man'
that no one in this room seems to
be able to agree on? Or is this
just some filthy scramble for
power?

DOGS CHARGE INTO THE HALL...

Big, tongue-slobbering hunting hounds leap onto tables, chase
a DELEGATE, raise hell. The tension cracks and the whole
place breaks into laughter. A LANKY MAN enters grandly
behind his dogs. Washington laughs with the rest, but then
John leans close.

JOHN ADAMS

Colonel Charles Lee... Hounds and
all. Quite the character. He's
got a tremendous reputation.

WASHINGTON

I think many would like to see him
commander-in-chief.

Lee struts around, getting greeted like he was The Pope.
Seeing Washington and John, Lee salutes them with a glass of
Madeira. Washington and John nod politely.

JOHN ADAMS

Alas for Colonel Lee, he was born
in England, so no one quite trusts
him. He's not our problem, George.
All these men will fall into line,
if Sam does. But Sam's going to
fight us, he's too powerful and too
righteous not to. And he still
wants Hancock over you.

(pause)

Well, let me talk to him one last
time...

John Adams heads across the room, shaking hands with other
delegates as he goes.

WASHINGTON

focuses on Sam Adams as he finishes his speech. The crowd
hushes, getting swept up. Washington is moved, despite
himself.

SAM ADAMS

The child of a dock worker who
dreams of entering parliament, is
beat down. A blacksmith's son who
would dream he could become a
governor, or a general, is beat
down. Under the system of the
European Kings, all who dream are
beat down... for centuries we have
been beat down! And now, we want a
new world!

(howls of support)

So, today we must confront the
King, his lords and ladies and
ministers and parliament and his
army... and kick them all in the
rump!

The place goes NUTS, people SCREAM Sam's name. Washington
looks around at the mesmerized mob, sees Greene applauding,
bursting with youthful passion. At this emotional peak, a
MILITIA CAPTAIN bulls through, holds up two flags in his
trembling hands.

MILITIA CAPTAIN

Listen! Listen to me! Colonel
Benedict Arnold and Colonel Ethan

Allen have taken Fort Ticonderoga!
By God, these be the British flags!

A unanimous GASP, then the congress breaks into CATERWAULING.
Washington shoves past the delegates, confronts the Militia
Captain.

WASHINGTON

Captain, how did the British fight?

MILITIA CAPTAIN

Fight? One man done got popped on
the head, then they fell on their
knees and begged for mercy -- The
British all be cowards.

With that the Captain turns to continue into the hall, but
Washington stiffens, won't move out of his way.

WASHINGTON

Don't you salute a superior
officer?

MILITIA CAPTAIN

You be from Virginia, Mister. I be
a New Hampshire man!

Washington's miffed. But the Captain has no time for him and shoves his way into the hall. Billy Lee enters, but now Washington sees John cornering Sam at the far end of the hall.

BILLY LEE

Colonel, sir, Mrs. Washington
inquires if you are going to join
her for dinner?

WASHINGTON

Tell Mrs. Washington I am
compelled to stay a while longer.

JOHN & SAM ADAMS

shouting as they push through the delegates. It's Dante's Ring Of Hell For Politicians; a gauntlet of groping hand shakes, back slaps, cheering sycophants whipped up by the news...

JOHN ADAMS

Washington is perfect. He's a
Southerner, he's a war hero and
he's rich!

SAM ADAMS

He's from Virginia -- there is no more classist, elitist... English place on earth than Virginia. And, what in hell has he done for our cause? Washington has been preaching compromise, compromise, compromise! Hancock acts, he led the Boston Tea party! That's why New England loves him.

JOHN ADAMS

Hancock led the Boston 'tea party' because he's a goddamned tea smuggler! He wasn't protesting inequality, he was eliminating competition. Now, you listen to me: we need to get a Southerner elected commander-in-chief, or the south will not fight! What have we been struggling for all these years? For this moment! And, if we fail now, remember: you stopped us!

Sam turns away and locks eyes with Washington...

EXT. OUTSIDE PHILADELPHIA - LATE AFTERNOON

WILD-EYED LOOTERS ransack a country estate -- rocks crash through windows, furniture smashed in heaps.

BENEDICT ARNOLD rides out of the dark on a jet black horse. He wears a Connecticut Militia uniform and a wool great coat. He's classically handsome with severe blue eyes.

Suddenly three armed MILITIA block his way with muskets and pikes. Uniforms can't hide backwoods yokels raised with a mistrust of anyone 'different'.

MILITIA MAN

Who are you? Come forward! Why
are you traveling alone!?

Arnold relaxes in the saddle and a BRACE OF PISTOLS shows just beneath his coat. He suddenly radiates a deadly samurai presence.

ARNOLD

Colonel Benedict Arnold.
Connecticut Militia, headed for
Congress in Philadelphia...

Awesome silence as LOOTERS gather around to view this man.

MILITIA MAN

Colonel Arnold! The same who took
Ticonderoga?

ARNOLD

The very same.

MILITIA MAN

Well, sir. We are honored.

(they stand aside)

Welcome to Philadelphia...

Arnold looks at the burning house, at the men, spurs on.

INT. CARPENTERS HALL (LIBRARY) - DUSK

Sam leans back against the edge of a bookcase, the volumes loom over him like the boundless, bookish contents of his mind. Washington stands beside a tall window. They face off, arms folded.

SAM ADAMS

You are a slave owner! You have
been illegally surveying lands
beyond the Ohio Valley! That land
belongs to the natives!

WASHINGTON

That land belongs to the strongest.

Sam blinks, wasn't expecting Washington to fight back.

SAM ADAMS

All people have rights!

WASHINGTON

Just because they are born?

SAM ADAMS

Yes!

WASHINGTON

Who says so?

SAM ADAMS

I say!

WASHINGTON

I see...

SAM ADAMS

And 'others', say... have you even
read Locke, Vattel, Voltaire,
Diderot...

WASHINGTON

Are these philosopher going to be
here to help you fight your war?
You know why I don't trust
revolutions? Because each of us is
who we are: we make speeches,
print pamphlets, and we never
change. The world is not a
philosophical abstraction, Mister
Adams, it's us. And, I don't
believe you can ever change human
nature.

Sam is horrified.

SAM ADAMS

Are you telling me that your
opinion is this revolution can
never succeed?

Before he can answer there's GUN FIRE from the street -- then
yowls and cheers.

EXT. BALCONY - DUSK

Sam and Washington rush out onto a balcony overlooking

Philadelphia. People in the streets are cheering wildly.
Washington yells down at the Militia guard on the front
steps.

WASHINGTON

Soldier! What's all the shouting
about?

SOLDIER

Boston! Boston! The British have
attacked the militia on Breeds Hill
in Boston! It's war! War!

Washington and Sam stare at each other. Sam takes a long
breath, sees they've come to the inevitable.

WASHINGTON

I know a bit about you, too, Sam.
To get us here, you've lied,
bullied... when there were no
revolutionaries, you hired thugs to
riot and pretend they were. Now
there are real revolutionaries in
Boston, and they're really
fighting. Why hesitate?

Off in the distance comes the SOUND OF PEOPLE blowing hunting

horns, beating pots and pans, singing: the noise of a
multitude camped on the outskirts of the congress.

SAM ADAMS

You hear that?

WASHINGTON

That? I hear a mob: unemployed,
drunkards, vagabonds... the world's
dregs.

SAM ADAMS

Well, I hear 'The People'.

(pause)

Indentured servants, freed
slaves... escaped slaves. The
world's castaways.

(pause)

And, my fear is, in the scramble
for power that's coming, you will
betray them.

ANOTHER ROAR moves through the crowd as BENEDICT ARNOLD rides
down the main street. His name is shouted by the crowd and
Washington leans over the edge as Arnold approaches.

WASHINGTON

Arnold! Benedict Arnold!

Arnold look up, sees Washington and salutes from his horse.
Arnold throws off the infectious confidence of youth like
beams of light.

ARNOLD

We've got to attack the British!
Now! Have they put you in charge
yet? Do we have an army yet? What
is happening?

WASHINGTON

Patience, Colonel Arnold.

(with a smile for Sam)

Active personalities terrify these
men. But, congratulations on your
victory at Ticonderoga...

Sam Adams gets the message.

SAM ADAMS

Give me an hour to talk with the
New England delegates.

They keep staring at each other, then Washington offers his
hand and they both manage a very lukewarm handshake.

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA STREETS - DUSK

Washington and Arnold are surrounded by the crowd, hands reaching out to touch these men as Arnold and Washington themselves shake hands.

Billy Lee walks ahead, helping to force a passage through the people as Washington and Arnold walk Arnold's horse through the streets toward the stable.

ARNOLD

I believe we can bring the British
to their knees in a single stroke.

INT. STABLES - MORNING

Arnold, stripped to the waist washing his horse and drawing a combat map on a mirror with a bar of soap. Washington's fascinated by Arnold's burning personality. They're drinking rum. All the while there's continual cheering and gun fire outside.

ARNOLD

I capture Quebec leading an Army by
river fordings through Maine... If
we don't do it, the British will

come down Champlain, take back
Ticonderoga and attack us in the
spring.

WASHINGTON

You'd have to travel hundreds of
miles through the wilderness.

ARNOLD

Over three hundred miles.

WASHINGTON

You seem pleased by the prospect.

ARNOLD

Exceedingly. Besides, if I had
half the wagons that were used to
lug the rum to Philadelphia for
this congress, I could move a whole
army to the moon!

Arnold returns to scrubbing his horse with a boar's hair
brush. Washington leans on the stall containing TRAVELER,
his white gelding. As they speak, Washington strokes
Traveler's mane. These are clearly two very 'hands-on' men,
as competent with horses and weapons as they are leading
soldiers.

WASHINGTON

What's your frank estimation of the British?

ARNOLD

Well, you fought with them against the French and Iroquois, how good were they then?

WASHINGTON

They died well. Otherwise, they didn't do much right. But if we have war, the British will surely send their best troops: right now they have no other enemies.

ARNOLD

And a French alliance?

WASHINGTON

Ben Franklin's going to Paris, but I think the French will be long on talk and short on guns. Our troops are mobs, they won't take orders, have no equipment... could they beat the British?

ARNOLD

It comes down to leaders. If our
leaders are ordinary men who truly
believe; if they go into the
forests with the troops, eat what
they eat, fight with them, perhaps
to die? The most common soldier
will defy your most depressing
expectation.

Washington smiles, drains his glass.

WASHINGTON

My experience is, the ones who know
the least will be the bravest.

Billy cautiously enters.

BILLY LEE

It's time, Colonel.

INT. CONGRESS - AFTERNOON

John Adams reads the great role of states. As he does, and
DELEGATES give their 'ayes', the names resound through the
hall. As he reads we pass over FACES: fearful, joyful,

tearful...

JOHN ADAMS

New Hampshire; Massachusetts; Rhode
Island; Connecticut; New York; New
Jersey; Pennsylvania; Delaware;
Maryland; Virginia; North Carolina;
South Carolina; Georgia...

He pauses to let the echoes die. John Adams savors the
moment. Then he spots Washington hanging back in the
shadows. Smiles.

JOHN ADAMS

There is a gentleman among us whose
skill and experience as an officer,
whose independent fortune, great
talents and excellent universal
character, command the approbation
of all America. I speak of
Virginia Delegate and Militia
Colonel, George Washington.

The hall breaks into roaring applause...

HALLWAY

Washington sits alone on a settee, listening to the applause... clearly wracked with doubt.

EXT. STREETS OF PHILADELPHIA - DAY

DEMONSTRATORS carrying a hanging effigy of King George III. They beat drums, shout slogans.

INT. WASHINGTON APARTMENT - DAY

Washington stands at the window watching the demonstration. He's in his best regimentals, still doing up the ridiculously tight collar.

MARTHA enters wearing an ornate gown that's not quite completely tied up. Martha is about the same age as George, handsome, but together the pair look strangely formal.

WASHINGTON

It's another demonstration against the king. This is the wildest yet.

MARTHA

My God, these people mean to go to war! They really mean it.

WASHINGTON

Surely you knew this was coming.

MARTHA

War? No! I did not! When you said compromise was possible I believed it was probable. There's no middle ground at all? We're the King's children!

Washington embraces her and makes her sit.

WASHINGTON

Our beloved father, the King, also refuses to bend.

MARTHA

But to go to war over trade, over money? Surely there's still time for a compromise.

WASHINGTON

Of course, if it were that simple.

(indicates the window)

These people? They're after something else...

MARTHA

My God, what?

WASHINGTON

The eternal dream of the
disenfranchised, my dear: a
classless world. Not a very real
expectation.

As Martha fumbles with her buttons, Washington helps.

MARTHA

Well, a very real expectation is
the British will hang you! They'll
burn Mount Vernon and they'll hang
you! Our marriage is a business
just as surely as...

WASHINGTON

I'm very aware of that.

MARTHA

I can not allow the fortune in
slaves my first husband created and
what our partnership has elevated,
to be destroyed...

WASHINGTON

Don't be ridiculous, of course that won't happen.

MARTHA

Have you been reading what Minister Jefferson has to say? If he had his way, all our slaves would be freed no matter what the outcome. And that would destroy us as surely as a British victory.

Washington smiles at the notion.

WASHINGTON

The day Tom Jefferson frees a slave I'll ride naked through the streets of Williamsburg on a mule.

(pause)

Tom Jefferson is one of those people who talks big and acts small. The only man out there who really does what he says is Sam Adams and everyone thinks he's crazy.

(pause)

Believe me, this 'disturbance' isn't going to last long. You have

to understand, congress is a
chicken coop full of foxes, Martha,
each and every one has his eye on a
nice, fat prize.

MARTHA

And, what 'prize' do you see? What
could we possible gain?

WASHINGTON

Everything. If we force Britain
into concessions it will open up
the western lands -- and that would
be a boon for our family. We
already have more slaves than we
need, but we need more land.

Then, in the chaos of cheering Washington hears people
calling HIS NAME. Martha watches Washington's expression as
he listens to the cheering.

MARTHA

And, if after all this is over and
the 'disenfranchised' want the
freedom you and everyone else
promised them? Our lives, our
fortunes, my children's future

depends on our slaves. George,
freed slaves are in the streets
demonstrating!

More sounds from the street: chanting, singing. Washington
smiles, trying to soothe her...

WASHINGTON

When my mother married my father,
she believed she had fulfilled her
dream of marrying 'up', like a
child's dream of going to heaven...
Yet the truth is, she just pulled
my family down. So, I'm still seen
as the badly-bred, half-educated
son of a failed landowner and a
social climbing barmaid... Each of
us -- Jefferson, John Adams... each
of us has found a way to climb over
the barriers that keep us from real
power... everyone is finding a way
to the top in this crisis.

(pause)

The south trusts me because I'm one
of their own as a slave owner, land
owner, I'll protect their 'rights';
the north because -- they claim --

I am about to lead an army in a
fight for absolute freedom... Or at
least the right to absolute free
trade. So, when it's over, we will
be positioned very, very well
indeed.

Washington rises now, crossed back toward the window. Seems
very sure about all this. Then a CHANT goes up from the
street: "Washington! -- Washington! -- Washington!"

WASHINGTON

But, as usual, it will not go well
for... them.

(pause)

Martha, you must trust me.

MARTHA

You're no fool, George. You never
have been.

They hold on each other a moment, embrace.

THE STREETS

The People... standing on wagons, one another's shoulders --
waving flags, yelling and cheering. A chant goes up:

"FREEDOM -- FREEDOM -- FREEDOM!" Among them is a solitary BLACK MAN, cheering and waving a flag over his head.

GREENE passes on horseback, leading a color guard of Rhode Island militia.

Washington nods as Greene salutes. Suddenly his eyes jerk back to a GROUP OF MEN carrying a hand-sewn banner that reads "OH, LIBERTY -- OH, VIRTUE -- OH, COUNTRY!"

Jarred by this image, Washington smiles, as if his mind were momentarily free of his ambitions.

WASHINGTON

"Liberty, Virtue, Country"...

That's from Cato... you know, that play about the noble Romans? As I was riding up to Philadelphia, I found myself thinking about the old days...

MARTHA

When you lived with the Fairfaxes?

WASHINGTON

When I was a young man we used to recite Cato... We would come

together recite it like they were
words from heaven. Devotion to
country, duty, purity of heart...
Purity of heart. I was drunk on
something then...

MARTHA

That's when Sally Fairfax was
tutoring you...

Washington smiles despite himself, remembering.

WASHINGTON

That's right...

MARTHA

And have you heard anything from
our dear friend, Sally?

(off his look)

What with all the rumors getting
back to England. I thought she
might inquire after us.

(pause)

But then I believe she always
looked down on us.

Washington winces at this remark. It seems that at this

moment he can't look at Martha.

WASHINGTON

Are you ready?

INT. CARPENTERS HALL - THAT NIGHT

Washington and Martha make a royal entrance, he in his perfect uniform, she in her splendid gown. Fawning delegates and their wives applaud. Billy Lee follows, holding their coats, the loyal slave. They pass famous faces: John Adams; Sam Adams; Benjamin Franklin... those oil paintings, but alive and applauding. George and Martha are like KING AND QUEEN.

INT. PALACE LIBRARY, LONDON - DAY

Chaos -- as if a war were already being fought. Wiry KING GEORGE III stands beside LORD GERMAIN who looks like a ferret. King George sucks furiously on a long, ivory pipe, coughing as he smears the air with greasy smoke. The library is packed with the spoils of world conquest: an Iroquois canoe; African shields... AIDS scamper in and out shuffling rolls of waxed canvas maps, tack hammers banging.

Stout and heavy GENERAL CORNWALLIS sits at the table sipping tea, his red regimentals glow in the gloom like some demon.

Near a globe, standing in the corner like he might be stuffed and on display, is the KING'S SECRETARY. He reads from the 'trades'.

KING'S SECRETARY

"General Washington is a man of means. Not only does he risk all but has insisted that he serve without salary; a noble gesture." So says the Times.

KING GEORGE

When you're rich you can afford to be noble. The American's battle cry is 'the rights of man' -- God help us! Tell me, Cornwallis, what the hell are we fighting for?

CORNWALLIS

We fight for the glory of England, sire.

KING GEORGE

What!? Are you out of your mind? Savages fight for glory -- I'll tell you what we fight for:

He jabs at Cornwallis' uniform.

KING GEORGE

(jacket)

Cotton, from Egypt.

(blouse)

Asian silk...

(buttons)

Indian copper...

(insignia)

African silver. Shit, you're a walking advertisement for empire now aren't you, General? Commerce is empire! The British East India Company against the French and Dutch East India Companies. Hudson's Bay Company against the French West India Company... we live in a world run by empires of companies.

(pause)

And, what we mean to resolve is: who owns the greatest repository of raw materials the world has ever seen. I'll tell you, it had better be us! If these stupid people gain

independence they could trade
resources for immense power...

KING'S SECRETARY

(continues reading)

"We must recall that General
Washington is one of our own. An
aristocrat, a lord over vast lands,
a slave holder..." So says the
News...

KING GEORGE

He's not a 'general'; he's a
disloyal subject! So, shut up!
This is the most... ghastly...
occurrence... in the whole history
of mankind. These people have gone
completely berserk! I am descended
from God! God! Clearly, they want
to wage war against God!

King George slams his fists on the table.

LORD GERMAIN

Our army sailing for New York is
over thirty thousand strong.

KING GEORGE

Thirty thousand! You hear that,
Cornwallis!?

LORD GERMAIN

That is, my Lord, the largest
single overseas force this nation
has ever dispatched.

Cornwallis crosses to the map, points at Lake Champlain.

CORNWALLIS

Our plan is to come down from
Canada by boat on Lake Champlain;
beats walking. Should get us into
Ticonderoga right on schedule.
Then, if our New York campaign
doesn't completely crush Washington
before winter, by spring, our two
armies will link up and... it will
be over.

KING GEORGE

Except for a lovely series of
treason trials. Should we bring
Washington to England?

LORD GERMAIN

Not if you want him to hang --
Parliament will likely make him
their darling and pardon him. Turn
him over to the American Congress;
they'll hang him to save their own
necks!

King George breaks into a torrent of laughter -- slaps his
knee, wipes tears from his eyes. There's a bright sparkle of
madness in his eyes. Turns to his Secretary.

KING GEORGE

Let's hear more! Come on, come on!

KING'S SECRETARY

"Washington's distinguished himself
during the so-called 'French and
Indian War'. Fighting with
Braddock he had two horses shot
from under him, several bullets
pierced his coat -- yet he was
never scratches. Savages who
fought against Washington that day
claim he is under an eternal spell
of a protecting manitou. They
believe the gods have preserved him

for eternity..." So says the
Guardian.

They all laugh. Then the King gets dead serious.

KING GEORGE

General Cornwallis, I want you to
punish these criminals, and this
peculiar Mister Washington...

CUT TO:

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA, DELAWARE RIVER - DAWN (END FLASHBACK)

Washington's boat run ground and empty, his blue and gold
Commander and Chief's flag looks forlorn amid growing SNOW
FLURRIES.

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA COUNTRYSIDE - MORNING

Washington rides Traveler to the rear of his troops, the now
GENERAL NATHANAEL GREENE Washington met at Congress and
Joseph Reed ride with him. Reed dispassionately ticks-off
the terrible news.

JOSEPH REED

Fifteen hundred killed, wounded or

missing in battle. Three thousand
men taken prisoner when the Hudson
forts surrendered. Another one
thousand five hundred lost to
desertion. And more than two
thousand lost on our retreat...
because their enlistments expired.

Washington stops his horse and turns away, overwhelmed by the
enormity of the disaster.

WASHINGTON

Any word from Canada?

JOSEPH REED

Spies from Quebec confirm that the
British are sending an entire fleet
down Lake Champlain...

WASHINGTON

A fleet?

NATHANAEL GREENE

How could they get a fleet onto
Lake Champlain? It's landlocked!

Reed eyes Greene as if he were an annoying imbecile.

JOSEPH REED

General, the enemy sailed the ships
in from England, took them apart
plank by plank and rebuilt them on
the lake. They have bomb ships,
mortar barges, the ship-of-the-line
Inflexible... altogether it is
estimated a fleet of some thirty or
more ships. The Iroquois have
joined them with one hundred war
canoes carrying more than a
thousand Mohawk sharp-shooters.

Staggering news. For a moment no one can speak, just the
sound of wind whipping around their horses.

WASHINGTON

My God... They mean to finish us.
What about Arnold? He's up there.

JOSEPH REED

What can he do? The British have
massive superiority.

Greene angrily circles his horse around to Washington's other
side.

NATHANAEL GREENE

I doubt Arnold will be afraid.

JOSEPH REED

If he isn't, then he's stupid.

Greene is taken aback, doesn't know how to respond to Reed's slap. Washington turns Traveler and continues. Reed spurs ahead and rides just behind Washington, stalking like a terrier. Greene glumly follows.

HILL TOP

Washington, Reed and Greene view the disheartening spectacle of the retreating army as it slogs agonizingly through the mud.

JOSEPH REED

Did God ever make such a pitiful
army?

NATHANAEL GREENE

These men have suffered but I
believe they will fight.

Reed spurs his horse, cutting in between Greene and

Washington.

JOSEPH REED

No officer is going to get these men to fight! They had the life crushed out of them on Long Island. At the most, perhaps we could make a feint at an outpost, then retire to protect Congress.

NATHANAEL GREENE

I hear General Lee is holding seven thousand fresh infantry back in New York -- why won't he come on!?

JOSEPH REED

General Lee is detained captain...

NATHANAEL GREENE

Detained by what?

JOSEPH REED

The British army, sir!

NATHANAEL GREENE

The British Army is right back there, across that river! Sir! I

think it must be something else
that detains General Lee.

WASHINGTON

Gentlemen!

(pause)

Nathanael, would you have one of
your men prepare a bodyguard for
Colonel Reed. Joseph, get to
Congress...

(hands him an envelope)

Here is a list of supplies in
detail. If Congress has to divert
food, weapons and powder from the
troops around Philadelphia, then I
order them to do so. I'm also
ordering any free troops to join
our forces here as fast as
possible. That includes General
Lee. Tell him he can bring his
damned dogs, but tell him to get
here.

Washington pauses, considering what he's about to say. He
looks at Greene, then to Reed.

WASHINGTON

I'm ordering that Negroes be
allowed to join the army.

Greene's eyes get real big.

JOSEPH REED

Congress is bitterly opposed to
allowing Negroes in the army!

NATHANAEL GREENE

We already have black soldiers in
our army...

JOSEPH REED

Unofficially, General Greene.

NATHANAEL GREENE

What's the difference?

Washington suddenly explodes -- sick of the bickering.

WASHINGTON

If we're going to last the winter I
need men! Make Congress understand
that two powerful British armies
are going to converge on this spot
come spring. One from the north

and one right across that river.

Washington wants to talk with Reed alone.

WASHINGTON

General Greene, will you please see
to that bodyguard.

Greene salutes, wheels his horse and canters off. Alone,
Washington confides in Reed.

WASHINGTON

If we have any hope for a
compromise or truce with England
now, we have to hold on here: our
men must believe they can win --
the British must believe that
somehow, in some mad, impossible
way we might actually be able to
hurt them.

JOSEPH REED

I understand, George.

Washington salutes -- Reed returns it, then shakes
Washington's hand a little too vigorously, turns his horse
and rides off.

FURTHER UP THE LINE

Two MILITIA OFFICERS fight, rolling in the crap. Militia howl at them, throwing rocks, snowballs. Snow flurries whirl around them as they roll in the slush.

Washington PLOWS into them with his HORSE, knocks one officer down, jumps off his horse, grabs the other officer by the collar. Washington swings one around as the other drops his sword, staggers back.

WASHINGTON

You are officers! Officers! Come
to attention! What is your
regiment!?

MARYLAND OFFICER

I'm from Maryland, sir! That scum
sucker from Connecticut...

WASHINGTON

You both are under arrest!

FIVE ARMED MILITIA close around the Connecticut Officer to protect him, some actually lift their guns, threatening Washington. Washington looks WILD.

HAMILTON

GUARD!

Mud-caked Alexander Hamilton appears with a handful of filthy artillery men holding pistols on the Connecticut Militia. Washington pulls one of his matched flintlock pistols, cocks it.

WASHINGTON

Mutiny and you will be shot!

By now they're surrounded by SOLDIERS, CAMP-FOLLOWERS -- everyone watching. Could go either way. Then, RHODE ISLAND MILITIA appear, flanking Greene.

NATHANAEL GREENE

Ready!

Like a well-oiled machine they drop to one knee, muskets leveled.

Washington shoves one mutineer back, then another, another...

WASHINGTON

You are all soldiers in the
American Army, you are no longer

just state militia! Get that
through your thick, backwoods
skulls! You all signed up for an
enlistment, and you will stay or be
shot as deserters!

(a breath)

Any man caught rioting will earn
himself fifty lashes! Any man
convicted of mutiny will receive
one hundred and fifty!

Gaping silence. These are extreme measures. One of the
would-be MUTINEERS scoffs, turns and heads back to the line.
The rest back off.

Washington gets a hard stare from the troops. Then he turns
and Greene follows.

WASHINGTON

The only way to get discipline into
these men is to beat it into them!
Fifty lashes each!

NATHANAEL GREENE

Sir, Congress hasn't issued their
pay for two months, many have not
eaten properly for at least that

long. You're being a little hard
on them, don't you think?

WASHINGTON

Nathanael, someone bred to station,
bred to being a gentleman -- unlike
these men -- his sense of duty
naturally prevails over the baser
needs.

NATHANAEL GREENE

Well sir, I was an ironmaster
before you got me. Maybe I will
let you down yet.

Greene turns to go, but Washington stops him.

WASHINGTON

I certainly didn't mean you. Of
course you are a gentleman, an
officer and a gentleman.

NATHANAEL GREENE

You wrong me, general; I am an
officer and a horse-shoer.

Greene salutes, gets a salute back and retires. Washington

swings into the saddle rides a few paces and finds Hamilton up to his knees in mud with two of his gunners trying to get one of the caissons unstuck. Washington studies Hamilton a second as if trying to figure this kid out.

WASHINGTON

How old are you, Captain?

HAMILTON

I'll be twenty next year, sir.

WASHINGTON

I'll expect you for dinner this evening, Captain Hamilton. For Christ's sake, have a bath.

HAMILTON

Delighted, sir.

Washington wheels into the saddle and continues up the line.

INT. DESERTED BARN - NIGHT

Candles and oil lamps that rim the inside of the old barn shimmer and flicker as wind wheezes through the walls. A handful of OFFICERS range around the barn, on barrels or benches around a table made from spare boards. Hamilton sits

beside Greene.

Washington sits at the head of this plank table, face
burnished by flickering candles. He looks tired.

WASHINGTON

I have just heard that General
Cornwallis is being recalled back
to England. He's leaving with his
wife for an extended... vacation.
I assume this means we are no
longer feared.

Silence broken by a few coughs, uncomfortable men clearing
their throats.

WASHINGTON

In the north General Arnold with a
handful of badly supplied men is
all that stands between us and a
second British army.

(some muttering)

Come Spring the British will be
unstoppable.

(dead silence)

So, my question to you is:
retreat, fight, or dig-in and

prepare for whatever may come at us
in the Spring. Each of you has
command of a body of men, you
should know their spirit. What do
you say?

(more throats clearing)

Speak up! I want to know what you
really think!

A tubby officer on his left rises.

TUBBY OFFICER

If I'm to judge from the mood of my
men...

WASHINGTON

Yes...

TUBBY OFFICER

Well then, retreat.

Washington nods to the next, a LEAN OFFICER.

LEAN OFFICER

Retreat and fall back on Congress.
If we can save Philadelphia and our
political leaders the British will

have to negotiate a peace.

Officers in all manner of uniforms respond, and as they go around the room all say 'retreat'. Then it's Hamilton's turn.

HAMILTON

We must fight! -- fight! --
fight!!! Attack them wherever they
hide! Burn their fleets, massacre
their armies -- drive them off the
continent!

Ringling silence. Greene, happily surprised refills Hamilton's glass with rum.

TUBBY OFFICER

How many men in your command,
Captain?

HAMILTON

Five, sir.

Laughter around the barn. But Washington smiles at Hamilton's spirit.

WASHINGTON

General Greene?

NATHANAEL GREENE

I'm with Captain Hamilton.

WASHINGTON

Yes, I thought that's how you'd
feel, Nathanael.

HAMILTON

Excuse me, General, but may I ask
how do you feel?

WASHINGTON

No one wants to turn the table on
the enemy more than I. But if
victory is remote and there's any
hope for a negotiated peace, we
must keep this army intact.

HAMILTON

Therefore, retreat.

Washington glares at Hamilton; he's rude.

WASHINGTON

I'm so inclined.

HAMILTON

Well, sir, then is it possible you
called us all here just to hear
what you wanted to hear.

A few officers chuckle at this silly alliteration.

WASHINGTON

I am open to your strategies,
captain.

More officers chuckle.

HAMILTON

Well, sir, my strategy would be to
arm people who want freedom and
have them attack people who want to
enslave them.

LEAN OFFICER

Which is exactly why no damned
Negros should be allowed in our
armies!

TUBBY OFFICER

Ridiculous! New England has had

African men in her Militias for
years. You southerners are just
a'feared 'cause you're slave
owners.

(correcting himself)
Beggin' your pardon, sir.

Washington feels the cut for just a second, goes on. But,
like a good politician, he's prepared.

WASHINGTON

I want to remind you all that black
minutemen fought alongside white
troops at Lexington and Concord.
Not in separate divisions -- they
fought together. Black and white
troops also fought together at the
battles of Breed's and Bunker Hill.
It was a black sharpshooter who
killed the British field commander,
Major Pitcairn.

LEAN OFFICER

A lucky shot!

WASHINGTON

We could use some luck!

After laughs:

NATHANAEL GREENE

What are we going to do then,
General? Retreat further or...

WASHINGTON

turns away from his officers. He stands in the dark a moment as a wind moves through the barn flickering the candles. He crosses to a window.

HIS POV

Camp fires of his army flicker against the cold wind, as fragile as candles.

RESUME WASHINGTON

Finally turning to face his officers. Hamilton immediately catches his eye -- Hamilton and Greene side by side like a pair of hopeful kids.

WASHINGTON

After giving the question careful
consideration I must agree with

Colonel Reed's original assessment:
our troops are too dispirited for a
counter-attack. For the present,
we'll continue our retreat toward
Newtown.

Hamilton looks dejected. Greene refills his glass.

HAMILTON

Sir, what am I going to tell my
men?

LEAN OFFICER

You tell them to march! All five
of them!

Howls of laughter from the other officers. But his time
Washington doesn't laugh.

EXT. BARN - NIGHT

All the officers are shuffling off into the night, but
Hamilton stays behind.

HAMILTON

General Washington, is there
actually going to be a compromise,

I mean, a 'deal' with England?

WASHINGTON

And is that the most horrible thing
in the world?

Hamilton starts to say something, but just salutes and starts
to go.

WASHINGTON

Captain, I want you to know that I
respect your openness. It would
make me happy if you'd join our
table for dinner from now on.

HAMILTON

With pleasure... and an honor.

(pause)

Did you hear about Nathan Hale?

WASHINGTON

That young school teacher... I
heard the British hung him as a
spy.

HAMILTON

But it's what he said, just before

they killed him: "I regret that I
have but one life to give to my
country."

Hamilton salutes again and heads off into the night.
Washington watches him a while, begins to return inside when
a SENTRY escorts a ROUGH LOOKING LIEUTENANT dressed in a
long, flannel jacket.

LIEUTENANT

Yessir. I am first lieutenant
Birdie McMullen. Jimmy -- my best
rifleman -- done shot a big buck,
sir. And our company of New
Hampshire volunteers is offerin' it
for your table.

WASHINGTON

Well, we have no table, but... come
on closer.

Three 'MILITIA' move into the light dragging a buck on a
litter. Washington looks them over: a ragged trio, no hint
of uniform, simple men. One is a MULATTO.

WASHINGTON

Thank you men, I accept.

LIEUTENANT

We'll dress it for you sir. Be
ready in the morning.

He salutes, Washington returns it.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Alone, Washington walks to the back of the old barn, still
lit by the remaining candles. He pours himself a tall glass
of rum, leaves the glass and crosses back to the window.

OUTSIDE

A YOUNG GIRL with a YOUNG SOLDIER, walk together toward the
encampment. They hang on to each other, warming each other
in the bitter cold; can just hear their laughter in the wind.

WASHINGTON

Watches them with a longing bordering on anguish. He moves
away from the window, picks up his glass and drains it. Then
a powerful wind RUSHES against the old walls SNUFFING OUT the
last candles.

INT. BELVOIR MANSION, VIRGINIA - DAY (FLASHBACK)

IMAGES FROM GEORGE WASHINGTON'S PAST...

Eighteen year old SALLY FAIRFAX is introduced by her husband, handsome WILLIAM FAIRFAX. Slim figure, pale face, jet hair; Sally has a mythic sensuality, the classic fearless face of youth.

WILLIAM

George! George, here she is;
George, the prize of my heart!
This is Sally Cary! Now, Mrs.
Sally Fairfax.

Her black eyes home in on us. Seeing everything from Washington's POV as she slowly circles him.

SALLY

So, you are William's wild young
neighbor? Or should I say,
'brother'; William claims you as a
member of his family. I have heard
so many unflattering tales about
you, and I understand, that except
for you, this 'family' is quite
cultivated.

WILLIAM

George, I'm sorry.

SALLY

Oh, but you must not mind my
talking about you! In fact,
William says my main job here at
Belvoir is to civilize you; to make
an honest English gentleman out of
you.

WILLIAM

That's not what I said! Now,
Sally, you're embarrassing me!
(to Washington)

Watch out for her, George; she
talks refinement, but she has a
barbarous soul!

INT. BELVOIR MANSION - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Sally's slim, provocative figure outlined before a blazing
hearth. In her lap is a tiny, gold-embossed book.

As she reads, we CIRCLE HER, seeing her from young
Washington's POV. She lightly places her small hand over the
top of her cleavage.

SALLY

"Let no torrent of impetuous zeal
transport thee beyond bounds of
reason: True fortitude is seen in
great exploits that justice
warrants and wisdom guides."

She pauses, looks up at young George Washington to make a
point.

SALLY

"All else is tow'ring frenzy and
distraction."

(pause)

George? It's your line...

NEW ANGLE

YOUNG GEORGE WASHINGTON hesitates. Other in the room
chuckle; they're rehearsing James Addison's CATO.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

Ah... "Pity that I have but one
life to lose for my country..."

William Fairfax laughs, loves play acting.

WILLIAM

Hey -- that's my line! Why, I
think George is infatuated with
you, Sally.

Sally smiles shyly, but is uncomfortable with the notion.

SALLY

Don't tease George.

More smiles, a girl giggles. Finally George Washington looks
down into Sally's deep eyes.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

I'm sorry, I am hopelessly lost...

Everyone laughs.

EXT. ROAD TO NEWTOWN - MORNING (PRESENT)

Washington in the saddle, surrounded by the gloom of a
growing storm, but his mind in the transcendence of memories.

Washington looks back at Billy Lee riding behind on Nelson --
Washington's black horse -- leaning into the icy wind and
snow. Washington looks ahead again, back into his memory.

EXT. FAIRFAX ESTATES - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Sally, William and George in the company of what are best described as members of Virginia's upper crust -- New World Landed Gentry.

They stroll through the fields of endless grain, the men with walking sticks.

Compared to the willowy William, and the other men, George looks tough. He leads his and Sally's horse. Because Sally's excited to see the estates, the three walk ahead of the rest. A fifty year old Protestant MINISTER trails by just a bit.

WILLIAM

The land here is best for grain and corn.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

Though, sometimes we get frost and that can cut the season.

SALLY

It's marvelous. To see wealth pour forth from the land.

MINISTER

A bounty from the bosom of heaven.

WILLIAM

We can grow three primary crops in
a season and, if we have some luck,
we get a forth. The temperature is
generally mild.

SALLY

Except for that, quite like home;
England, that is.

WILLIAM

Hear that, George? Sally's
actually taken to thinking of this
clod of earth as her home. And
it's her first tour. We're
gratified, aren't we George?

NEW ANGLE

They break clear of the wheat field onto a rolling field.
SLAVES hand cut, bail and stack wheat. WHITE THUGS patrol
the fields. Those on the perimeter carrying muskets, those
who walk among the slaves, pistols and short swords.

WILLIAM

Of course we have slaves here
instead of tenant farmers to make
the land pay. Our harvest is about
fourteen percent higher this year.

Sally is stunned silent, appalled by what she sees.

SLAVES

Struggle in the hot sun under tremendous loads of bailed
grain heaving them into wagons. One has a terrible limp;
another pocked from disease; all toil like animals.

SALLY

violently pushes past William, seems disoriented.

MINISTER

Oh, dear...

WILLIAM

Are you well, Sally?

Washington sees she's faint, drops the horses' reins and
rushes to her side. He takes her arm, moves her ahead as

fast as he can. William is just annoyed.

WILLIAM

God's sake, Sally...

NOW THEY ARRIVE AT THE SLAVE HUTS

WOMAN and CHILDREN, mostly naked, living in unbelievable filth. As they move out of the field toward the pastures, Washington does all he can to block Sally's view.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

We're almost away from here.

Sally nods, thankful, moves closer to Washington as William and the Minister catch up.

WILLIAM

The crowding is hard to bear, but
in the fall we consolidate the work
camps. Sally?

MINISTER

It's the wealth of the land, Mrs.
Fairfax. The slaves and indentured
servants. It's part of the system
of Virginia's wealth.

Sally doesn't want to hear more, and George is getting more and more fed up with William.

EXT. PASTURES - DAY

Away from the squalor of the slave camp, Sally suddenly sprints ahead to a stream where she sits on a rock, just staring at the pure flowing water.

William smiles at George, but wants to get on.

WILLIAM

Come on, Sally, we have so much
more to see. Show a little mettle!

Finally George turns to William, furious, fists clenched.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

Damn it, William! Damn it!

Minister backs off. William instantly composes himself.

WILLIAM

Well, George, we're going on then.
Stay with her a bit, all right?
There's a good man.

He continues on with the others, the Minister talking happily as they go.

EXT. STREAM - DAY

George sits beside Sally, sees she was crying and is just wiping her eyes.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

I should take you right back to
Belvoir.

Sally wants to burst out weeping or shouting, instead she seals her emotion.

SALLY

Where... do those men come from,
George?

YOUNG WASHINGTON

Africa, of course.

SALLY

Africa? That's so far? How do
they get here?

YOUNG WASHINGTON

Slavers capture them and bring them
here.

SALLY

Capture them? Well, I've never
seen anything like it, so... of
course I'm curious.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

Sally, our slave system is a
British law...

She suddenly pulls away from him, stands, glaring.

SALLY

Did I say anything? We must be...
who we must be.

She turns away and George can't tell if she's crying again.
He stands and reaches out to hold her -- but she pulls loose
and runs off down the dirt road. As she does she pulls off
her scarf and her long, black hair flows free in the wind...

INT. BELVOIR LIBRARY - DAY

Sally's delicate hand arches out in front of a monumental

bookcase. George's rough hand reaches out, can't quite bring himself to touch Sally's. Through the window one can see, hear a summer storm raging.

SALLY

I shan't break.

George and Sally face each other in the library as his hand finally touches hers. George seems to feel that touch through his whole body.

SALLY

The word 'minuet' finds its source in minitus, which is Latin meaning 'small' or 'orderly'.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

Or, 'civilized'.

SALLY

In the minuet, George, every movement is significant, like the strut of cranes...

Sally does a half-revolving, staggered walk using his hand as a pivot point.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

Cranes? Who needs to walk like a crane?

SALLY

That's just my interpretation.
Actually it's a dance designed as a sentiment of courtly manners.
You see? Walk in a gently 'Z'.
There are four distinct movements...

Washington reaches out, puts his hands on her waist.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

I've seen them do this.

Sally holds back when she sees the look in George's eyes.
She deftly moves away.

SALLY

It's less a true dance than an expression of polite deportment...

Duly rebuffed George lower his hands.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

What do you really think of the
minuet, anyway?

SALLY

It's stupid, of course.

Washington is thrown by this, as if a whole new facet of her
personality just lurches out.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

Then why are you teaching me...?

SALLY

Perhaps you best ask, why you wish
it. You asked William to teach you
manners, philosophy, decorum... as
I said, it's completely stupid.

A clock strikes in another room.

SALLY

Stupid tea time...

NEW ANGLE

Sally and George seated, properly, quietly, sipping tea.

SALLY

What attracts me and frightens me
about America... it's the wildness
that's so different from England,
from English culture. That's what
it's about back there: insulating
yourself from whatever might really
touch you. Anything you can heap
between you and... that.

She points out the window. George looks out as the summer
storm rages, rain beating against the glass.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

Well, you get storms in London.

Feeling her eyes on him he turns back and finds she's staring
at him.

SALLY

No, we have weather. Sometimes, if
things get completely out of hand,
we have actual gusts. But we
never, ever allow this to happen.

They listen to the storm for a time as it whips the trees,
eyes locked as if in an embrace. Finally, embarrassed, he

toys with his cup.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

I always though London was the
place to be: capital of the world,
the most spectacular city on earth.

SALLY

The place to want to be is America.
Every English child dreams of it.
I dreamt it.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

I think America suits you.

She angles her head as if moment by moment she were looking
at him with 'different eyes'.

SALLY

Do you? When I saw those men
yesterday in the field... and the
women and children in those hovels?
I'm not so sure if America is as
far from England as I'd hoped.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

It's the freest land on earth.

SALLY

Is it? Well, I'm scared of what
we've become in our freedom.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

Well, we must be who we must be...

Sally finally loses patience with him, rises to the window.
George follows.

SALLY

And to think I am teaching you to
become one of them...

YOUNG WASHINGTON

What else should I become? There's
no difference between Virginia and
England. I must be educated if I'm
to take my place in society. My
father couldn't afford to send me
to England for school -- he made a
shambles of our fortunes. Everyone
laughs at me.

She turns to face him and their bodies press together... not
expecting him to be so close. She gazes at him a moment,

seeing just how vulnerable he really is.

SALLY

I don't laugh at you, George. I
like you.

(long pause while this
sinks in)

I like you because you will never,
ever make it as an aristocrat...
and that's because you're
completely incompetent at hiding
your feelings.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

I think I will disappoint you.

But Sally laughs. They're very close now nearly kissing.

SALLY

Oh, George, I think you and I have
very little control over what we
are going to do...

Then she gets a grip, turns and walks straight out of the
room.

INT. MOUNT VERNON/MAIN ROOM - EARLY EVENING

William stands before his family. Two HOUSE HOLD SLAVES like fixtures in the rear. The Upper Crust is present tonight, the same strolling gentry from the slave camp, Minister and all. William primes them with a chorus-like prolegomenon.

WILLIAM

Ladies and gentlemen, for your
entertainment and elucidation, our
unpretentious company of
dramaturgic artisans, presents that
Tale of the celebrated protector of
Rome. The man who dared resist the
wretched tyrants Crassus, Pompey,
and Caesar in his fatal fight to
uphold the Roman Senate and save
sacred democracy: We give you
Joseph Addison's Cato... My lovely
wife herself plays Marcia, daughter
of Cato, young George Washington,
Numidia's hero Juba! And I,
myself, ever your humble servant,
as Cato!

Crackling applause.

INT. KITCHEN - EARLY EVENING

Sally and George as George checks his buttons and collar in a mirror. Sally gets a wicked smile, reaches onto the cold fire pit beneath the stove and comes up with handfuls of soot, straddles his lap. George can't believe that she could be so bold, and Sally pauses just a second to give him a lustful smile -- the second he's distracted she smears the charcoal on his face.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

What are you doing?

SALLY

Let's get you darker!

YOUNG WASHINGTON

You're out of your mind!

SALLY

Why? Juba was an African and you want to look the part -- hold still.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

They can use their imaginations.

SALLY

Those people? I doubt they'd think
of this. Ooo, you're wonderful
this color!

She keeps smearing as fast as she can, then turns George
around to face the mirror.

SALLY

Behold! Juba of Numidia! African
warrior and defender of liberty!

AND GEORGE

fascinated and terrified.

INT. DRAWING ROOM

William as Cato, Sally as Marcia and George as Juba -- on
'stage' before the room of spectators. William is not amused
as the elite of Virginia giggle at George's wild war-paint
smear of charcoal, giggle more at George and Sally's obvious
friendship.

SALLY (AS MARCIA)

I've been surprised in an unguarded
hour, But must not now go back; the
love that lay, Half smothered in my

breast, has broke through all, Its
weak restraints, and burns in its
full lustre. I cannot, if I would,
conceal it from thee.

YOUNG WASHINGTON (AS JUBA)
I'm lost in ecstasy! And dost thou
love, Thou charming maid?

SALLY (AS MARCIA)
And dost thou live to ask it?

WILLIAM (AS CATO)
My daughter, I ask only...

YOUNG WASHINGTON (AS JUBA)
(cuts him off)
This, this is life indeed! Life
worth preserving, Such life as Juba
never felt till now.

SALLY (AS MARCIA)
Juba, thy arm! Oh, let me rest
upon it -- The vital blood that had
forsook my heart, Returns again in
such tumultuous tide, It quite
o'ercomes me. Lead me to my

apartment!

People TITTER.

WILLIAM (AS CATO)

'Tis true, ofttimes...

But George cuts him off again, and it's really just George and Sally 'getting it on' through their lines.

YOUNG WASHINGTON (AS JUBA)

I am so blest I fear 'tis all a
dream. Fortune, thou now hast made
amends for all Thy past unkindness;
I absolve my stars. Juba will
never at his fate repine; Let
Caesar have the world, if Marcia's
mine!

George sweeps Sally up in his arms and carries her off to loud applause and chuckles from the pack of friends. William looks around, smiles sickly.

INT. KITCHEN

Still angry, William nearly throws a wet cloth into George's hands.

WILLIAM

For God sake, get that horrid stuff
off your face. You look like a
damned slave! It's damned
humiliating.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

Juba was a Numidian.

WILLIAM

He was not black! He was... tan!
Weathered!

George tries not to laugh as he wipes the soot off his face.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

I see, so if you squint hard
enough, Juba of Numidia becomes an
Englishman?

MORE applause O.S. Sally runs in, grabs his hand tugs him
back out.

SALLY

Come on! It's our second bow!

(to William)

Weren't we wonderful?

INT. DRAWING ROOM

The Upper Crust have gathered around Sally and George, some holding drinks. They're fascinated by the pair as if they could smell a scandal.

SALLY

Think what the play means, William.
Perhaps these words have a place in
the real world.

WILLIAM

Words, words, words!

(some laughs)

Sally has been tutoring George in
the philosophies, isn't that right?

YOUNG WASHINGTON

William, we've been studying hard,
I really know my stuff.

WILLIAM

Don't be silly, you have whole
worlds to fathom.

Sally smiles right at George.

SALLY

Remember, George, "It is dangerous
to be right in matters on which the
established authorities are wrong."

YOUNG WASHINGTON

That's good... who?

SALLY

Voltaire, of course...

Some appreciative chuckles. George is into it now.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

"I can be expected to look for
truth but not find it." Diderot.

More laughter; Sally senses they think it's all very 'cute'.
She looks from George to the others, eyes fixing in the end
on the Minister.

SALLY

Ah! Well, here's my Diderot: "I
have only a small flickering light
to guide me in the darkness of a

thick forest. Up comes a
theologian and blows it out."

William is mortified. Minister's face contorts, finally
spews a laugh...

MINISTER

Come now, that's not philosophy it
has no context. Philosophy is the
thinnest, most concisely rendered
portion of the whole of life as can
possibly be embraced by the
cognizant spirit of the Christian
mind.

A spattering of applause and all seem impressed... but not
George.

YOUNG WASHINGTON

Voltaire says: "When he who hears
doesn't know what he who speaks
means, and when he who speaks
doesn't know what he himself means
-- that is philosophy."

Sally breaks into a fit of laughter, grabs William's arm.

SALLY

Well, I think George has got it!

But William would love to get them gone.

WILLIAM

George, would you be so kind as to see Sally home? Yes, and here's a challenge for you both -- and I'll bet you can't beat it -- walk all the way home speak not one single word!

Laughter and applause from the drawing room set.

EXT. DIRT ROAD TO BELVOIR - NIGHT

In the night so black they could be drifting in outer space, Sally and George walk together in silence. An OWL hoots in the forest that seems to be closing in on them as the road narrows entering the woods. They swap looks, laugh. Then she grabs her mouth, tries to stifle her laugh and that makes them laugh more. But they don't talk. Suddenly they stop.

THEY'VE COME ON...

The moon rising over the river -- in this primal landscape

where there are no artificial lights, it looks like it's setting the forest and water on fire.

GEORGE & SALLY

turn to each other, then smile because they can't talk... then they just GRAB EACH OTHER, kissing, hanging on to each other.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Sally and George mauling each other beneath a huge oak. Her skirt shifted up as George runs his hands up her thigh. Her long, pale leg nearly glows in the dark. Kissing wildly, groping: two kids who've been aching to get their hands on each other. He pulls her blouse open, shifting aside the cotton to get his hands on her breasts.

In his frustration he finally has to tear through all that cotton and silk and suddenly she's naked -- and it's startling seeing her naked after all the layers.

CLOSER...

Two feral souls, both naked. George is not loving her like a gentleman; his hands all over her. But she responds to this wild child, lifts her leg around him and pulls him in tight

between her thighs.

EXT. ROAD TO NEWTOWN - DAY (PRESENT)

Washington, alone on Traveler, memories biting into him like the freezing wind and snow... on a journey back into his soul.

EXT. MOUNT VERNON - DAY (FLASHBACK)

It's ten years later, and an OLDER GEORGE WASHINGTON rides out of the horizon on a grey mare. He wears the deep blue, gold and crimson trimmed uniform of a colonial officer.

As he gets closer, we see George is now a man with a powerful physique. His face shows scars from smallpox, and his eyes, those of a man who has seen awful things. Very much like the Washington of the Revolution.

NEW ANGLE

SALLY FAIRFAX, now a woman of classic beauty and stature, waves her hiking staff when she sees Washington. Sally's hair has gotten long and her eyes still shine with that keen intelligence.

As Washington nears he reins-in, dismounts. If Sally thought

she was going to be collected she gives that up, throws down her staff and they embrace, kiss...

INT. BEDROOM, MOUNT VERNON

The pair in bed, but Sally facing away from Washington as he lies beside her toying with her hair; they've just finished making love.

SALLY

Well, the widow Curtis will bring you riches, position, land, even half-grown children. You won't have to do anything at all! You shan't have to do another thing to prove yourself.

WASHINGTON

You know very well who it is that I love.

SALLY

Is that the truth? Well, we can't carry on like animals any longer.

She's out of bed, pulling on her clothes. Washington watches her. Then he rises, tries to take her in his arms but she

turns away, crosses to the window.

SALLY

George, you know I only love you,
but...

WASHINGTON

But not more than your comfort.

SALLY

And what is this, then? Been off
to fight the French because you are
a patriot? Or is this you, gaining
your long sought after rise in
society by becoming victorious in
war!?

WASHINGTON

That's a lie!

SALLY

Is it? William says now you have
requested a British Commission, why
not colonial? I'll clear it up for
you, sir, because as a British
officer you can lord over colonial
yokels -- more than that, it will

even get you into polite society!
Your dream come true, George, the
only dream that really matters to
you.

WASHINGTON

Perhaps you've been counting my
acres, Mrs. Fairfax, and discovered
exactly how poor I really am.

SALLY

Now that is a lie! See how much
you want to create a scandal in
exchange for a glowing reputation
and polite society laid at your
feet! When you break off your
engagement to Martha Curtis, I'll
divorce William! Do you hear? You
get what you want from this world,
then throw it all away on love!

WASHINGTON

I'd throw everything away for you.

Sally laughs bitterly, then turns to look out the window.

SALLY

You remember, George, when we were
'studying' the great philosophers?

WASHINGTON

I remember a pair of young
philosophers once, who laughed at
the world.

SALLY

Well, I remember a philosopher who
said something that I used to think
was just another of those stupid
class denouncements... but which I
now see means us all.

WASHINGTON

Really? Which precious homily was
it?

SALLY

"Mankind is born free, but
everywhere he is in chains..."

INT. MOUNT VERNON - DAY

WASHINGTON, immaculate in his uniform, escorts MARTHA down a
line of upper crust Virginians who've come to welcome them

home after their wedding. The line of beautifully dressed, BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE applaud, smiling at this land and slave rich couple.

Washington loves this adoration symbolic of the whole line of Washingtons finally breaking through into the aristocracy. All those perfumed, smiling bodies, bejeweled and starched. But then he comes on over-smiling, over-applauding Sally Fairfax.

She's with her husband, William. Washington hesitates, just long enough for the two to connect. Martha connects too, instantly and intuitively. They move on down the line. Martha all smiles, Washington only trying now. He pauses, looks back and sees that Sally looks like she might cry...

THOSE UPPER-CLASS PEOPLE...

wonderful, careless smiling faces, filled with hidden hatred and contempt. As if those mocking faces knew that George and Sally had finally succumbed.

EXT. NEWTOWN - EARLY EVENING (END FLASHBACK)

The American Camp: make-shift shelters and tents rise out of the midst of the men crowding around camp fires.

A TINY CABIN sits in the center of this activity, a thin line of smoke drifting from the old stone chimney.

INT. CABIN - AFTERNOON

Washington alone at a plank table, nursing his memories and a glass of Madeira. Slowly he realizes there's someone knocking at the door. Washington rises, opens the door and comes face-to-face with Benedict Arnold. Arnold flashes a huge smile and a snappy salute. Though clean shaven, uniform spotless, he looks like he hasn't slept in days.

WASHINGTON

Arnold!

ARNOLD

I've come to report that we've had
a bit of luck!

Suddenly Greene and Hamilton are in the doorway, Hamilton carrying Arnold's pack.

NATHANAEL GREENE

General Arnold attacked the whole
British fleet on Lake Champlain --
and he stopped them!

HAMILTON

He attacked them with old converted barges and fishing boats -- and he stopped them!

INT. WASHINGTON'S CABIN - AFTERNOON

Arnold, Greene, Hamilton and Washington, drinking as they warm themselves by a miserable hearth. Hamilton and Greene mesmerized by Arnold's account. As he talks, Arnold rolls up his pant leg and agonizingly removes a bloody dressing showing a terrible musket wound.

ARNOLD

I anchored those tubs in the lee of Valcour island, spread them in a crescent to concentrate their fire. The British sailed around the island and we bushwhacked 'em! In the end, of course, they were too strong for us, but we hurt them and we delayed 'em long enough. When they realized they'd have to conquer Ticonderoga in the dead of winter. Well, they packed everything up and sailed back to Canada. So, we had some luck.

It's like a staggering weight has been lifted from Washington's shoulders.

WASHINGTON

Damn-it! You've given us a whole new season, Benedict! And Congress thinks that the British are going to ride right over us come spring. Now half their army is back in Canada.

ARNOLD

Congress has picked up it's skirts and is racing for Baltimore. They're not waiting for spring! Of course, they still had time to deny my promotion. Even John Adams voted against it...

WASHINGTON

Why in hell would John do that? Why in hell would any of them do that? After all you've done, it's unbelievable!

ARNOLD

Oh, they have reasons... there's a lot of confusion these days.

WASHINGTON

They don't trust me, that's the truth isn't it? Sam Adams never did.

ARNOLD

But trust you to do what? One side in Congress wants compromise; another glorious battle; some surrender -- some, of course, just want power and money.

(pause)

But if you don't mind my asking, George, what are your plans?

Washington hesitates, then...

WASHINGTON

We're in bad shape, Benedict, moral is low. Before I can do anything, I need Lee and his seven thousand troops. I've ordered him to join us three times. In my last letter I all but begged him to come here.

The man is insubordinate.

ARNOLD

The man's waiting for you to get
wiped off the stage so he can
become commander and chief.

Washington takes a deep drink, rises and tosses another scrap
of wood on the fire. Arnold seems to be hiding something.

WASHINGTON

What else? Come on, Benedict.

There's a knock -- Hamilton opens the door and a BODYGUARD
enters, salutes.

BODYGUARD

Colonel Reed's returned, sir. Says
he brings greetings from Congress.
And a scout's come in from New
Jersey...

WASHINGTON

I'll be along presently.

They wait for the bodyguard to leave, Washington stands in
front of Arnold, indignation rising.

WASHINGTON

Go on... I want to hear everything.

ARNOLD

Congress is talking -- openly --
about replacing you with Lee.

WASHINGTON

Is that a fact.

ARNOLD

It is.

NATHANAEL GREENE

But it was General Washington who
sent you north and you were
victorious.

ARNOLD

No, no! Congress says that I
failed and that George is
responsible.

Washington is struck silent. He turns away from the group
for a moment.

ARNOLD

What do you think, George, shall I
resign? It's what they want.

WASHINGTON

Don't do anything rash, please,
Benedict.

NATHANAEL GREENE

They're just disgusting, jealous,
bottom-feeding swine. It's their
nature.

WASHINGTON

You have a free tongue, Captain
Hamilton.

Hamilton shuts up, drinks. Washington continues to Arnold.

WASHINGTON

The army needs you.

ARNOLD

The army can survive without me.

WASHINGTON

Then, I need you. We all do.

Without your victory the men would
have no hope at all.

ARNOLD

Someday, George, you may need to
act for the good of the people no
matter what Congress thinks that
is. It may come down to us, or
them someday. You or them. Cicero
was right: was is 'a time when the
laws are silent'.

WASHINGTON

I hope I never have to believe
that.

ARNOLD

Christ, George, Joseph Reed's been
writing letters back to Congress
attacking you. Your own aide!

Arnold rises, stretches his wounded leg and suddenly his
exhaustion shows through; he casts a longing look at
Washington's small bed.

WASHINGTON

Make yourself at home, Benedict.

Arnold just collapses down on the bed, and as he falls asleep.

ARNOLD

Say, are there any women in this town?

Hamilton unfolds a blanket, but Washington takes it from him and covers the sleeping Arnold.

EXT. NEWTOWN CAMP - AFTERNOON

An ORNATE COACH is 'parked' just inside the picket lines. Washington checks it out, then spots Joseph Reed talking with his bodyguard. Reed's uniform has transformed into a garish, custom-made thing almost dripping braid. His bodyguards look like professional hit men. Reed suddenly spots Washington as he walks up behind him. He steps back and they trade salutes.

WASHINGTON

Colonel Reed...

JOSEPH REED

George! So good to be back!

Washington walks ahead. Reed hesitates, then strides to catch up.

EXT. ENCAMPMENT - AFTERNOON

Washington and Joseph Reed walk through the camp, flanked by his bodyguard; they make Washington uncomfortable.

Though it's bright sunshine outside, it's bitter cold and the wind SIGHS. Washington barely feels it, Joseph Reed hugs himself against the cold.

JOSEPH REED

That damned Arnold is here, isn't he? Did you know he lost all his ships? Outrageous and completely unacceptable.

WASHINGTON

Joseph, the British spent thousands of pounds and precious months putting together a fleet that Arnold stopped by sacrificing a heap of old barges. In my opinion he saved my army.

JOSEPH REED

Well, George, Congress just passed
a resolution censuring Arnold for
destruction of government property.
I wouldn't cast my fate with that
man.

Now they stop to overlook the camp; snow falls; men and women
struggle to make shelters. Then he sees Hamilton at the
bottom of the hill talking with an IROQUOIS SCOUT.

JOSEPH REED

The winds of change are blowing
fierce, George! Congress is making
marvelous friends. A whole grand
scheme is being forged that will
finally set this country right.

Washington eyes Reed like he's lost his fucking mind.

WASHINGTON

A grand scheme?

JOSEPH REED

A ground swell-Christian movement,
George, you see?

WASHINGTON

No. As a matter of fact I haven't
the slightest idea what you're
talking about.

JOSEPH REED

To assert the rights of our
founding fathers! This country was
colonized by Christians! This
shall become a Christian
revolution. Surely as a good
Christian you understand that!

Washington looks Reed over as if trying to decide how to deal
with this. Hamilton rushes up, running so fast he nearly
stumbles -- salutes...

HAMILTON

Sir! Cornwallis has moved a whole
German mercenary army into Trenton.

JOSEPH REED

Hessians! That's right across the
river from us! Right there! And
behind them, a days march, is the
whole British Army. Sir, we are
kicked out of New Jersey forever!
Blocked from ever returning to New

England!

HAMILTON

We are not blocked! Except by the
congress and their lack of support!

WASHINGTON

That will do, Captain Hamilton!

Furious, embarrassed, Hamilton salutes, turns and leaves.
Reed just shakes his head.

JOSEPH REED

Be careful of that one. He's a
Jew, you know. Yes, it's true!
The bastard son of some Jewess, and
a drunken peddler. No wonder he
identifies with these creatures.

Washington's revolted by Reed, but says nothing. Reed turns,
looks down at the men and women in the camp.

JOSEPH REED

Look at these people! They must be
freezing. Hard to imagine why they
stay at all. Do you think it's got
to do with the animal in their

nature? I mean to say, this class of mankind is half way between Negroes and real humans. As half animals, perhaps the elements don't bother them so much. That's why we must make us a purely Christian land...

Washington eyes this piece of human dogshit.

WASHINGTON

I'm not a Christian, Joseph. So please, let's not insult one another by continuing this conversation.

Washington starts back, Reed at his heels.

JOSEPH REED

What do you mean you're not a Christian? Of course you're a Christian, we're all Christians...

WASHINGTON

I mean, I'm a Deist. A belief I share with the likes of Tom Jefferson and Ben Franklin. Surely

you knew that.

JOSEPH REED

No, I did not. Really? Well, what
the hell is a deist, precisely?

Washington turns on him.

WASHINGTON

One who believes that God sent this
world spinning, then got the hell
out of the way, just to see what
mankind would do to itself.

Washington stands back, gives him a curt salute, turns and is
gone. Reed holds his salute over-long...

INT. TAVERN - NIGHT

OPEN on a PRETTY RED HAired GIRL, about twenty, flirting with
a couple of FARM BOYS. Her eyes STRAY our way...

AT A CORNER TABLE...

Washington, Arnold, Greene and Hamilton, drinking and eating.
The four are separated from a full house of FARMERS and YOUNG
PEOPLE by a pair of armed BODYGUARDS. By now everyone seems

used to their presence.

The Red Head catches Washington's eye; he smiles slightly, looks away. Arnold's refreshed, ready to take on the world again. Washington is drinking heavily, but Greene is drunk and quiet -- seems to be just an observer.

HAMILTON

Some say that Hessians are
invincible.

ARNOLD

They always say that.

WASHINGTON

They're among the best divisions
the British have. No conscripts,
no impressed recruits, just
professional killers.

HAMILTON

It's a wonder they find the British
cause worth dying for.

Arnold eyes the sharp little Red Head.

ARNOLD

Well, now there's something worth
dying for. What do you think?

HAMILTON

Hmmm... she's beneath me, I'm
afraid.

ARNOLD

I wish she was beneath me.

Drunken laughter. They watch as the Red Head, flirts
viciously with the farm boys.

ARNOLD

Unfortunately, I'll never get the
chance. I'm leaving in an hour for
Congress to scream like a violated
virgin about my promotion. Wasting
my time, naturally... Look at her
teasing those bumpkins.

HAMILTON

What does she see in them?

WASHINGTON

Well, as any farmer knows, a jenny
always enjoys being penetrated by a

disproportionately sized jackass.

Arnold and Hamilton howl.

ARNOLD

After visiting Congress I know what
it's like being violated by come
disproportionate asses!

(pause)

Ah, if she only knew that the most
important men in the country --
possibly the world -- are sitting
at this table...

WASHINGTON

We're so damned important! Look at
us -- Nathanael, you were a horse-
shoer, Benedict, before this?

ARNOLD

Well, truth be told? I was a
pharmacist. Alexander?

Hamilton hesitates.

HAMILTON

I was a clerk's apprentice on Saint

Croix. But, then I went to King's
College.

WASHINGTON

To learn to shoot cannon?

ARNOLD

Well, George, who were you?

WASHINGTON

I? You all know my history.

For a moment everyone seems satisfied, or at least that
they're going to let this pass. But Greene's not satisfied,
and he's innocent and drunk enough to finally speak his mind.

NATHANAEL GREENE

Sir, if you don't mind my saying, I
don't understand your history at
all. I mean, why would you want to
win the war? You're not after
glory, like Benedict...

(pause)

You're a slave owner, and yet you
invite blacks to fight in your
army.

WASHINGTON

You don't believe I can fight from
a sense of duty and patriotism?

NATHANAEL GREENE

No. We're all of us after
something. It's easy for me to
fight for the common man. My
father could only dream that I
would be... a general someday? And
what of my daughter or son? I know
what I'm after.

(pause)

But now, with all this talk about
compromise? It means the rich will
just be more wealthy and the common
man has no hope.

WASHINGTON

I will not betray you, Nathanael.

NATHANAEL GREENE

But you are an aristocrat and a
slave owner. Sir.

Washington lets this sink in.

WASHINGTON

At one time I could have chosen not
to be.

NATHANAEL GREENE

Then, maybe I do see what you're
after -- perhaps... you get to
chose again...

Washington just stares at Greene; the kid is right and he
knows it.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

Washington goes down into the camp, just looking at his
soldiers. When they recognize him, some jerk to attention
and he casually returns their salutes.

-- A BLACK MAN and his YOUNG WIFE work together cleaning his
musket and bayonet...

-- A GROUP OF MEN sit around a fire, playing cards.

-- An OFFICER plays his fiddle while enlisted men dance.

Suddenly Washington comes across a long line of CONTINENTALS
squatting on the ground. A CONTINENTAL MAJOR leaps to

attention, salutes. Washington returns Continental Major's salute.

WASHINGTON

Major, who are you? Your orders,
please.

The Major gets real nervous...

CONTINENTAL MAJOR

Done got no orders sir... we're
General Lee's division.

WASHINGTON

What? Where is General Lee? Who
ordered you to march here?

CONTINENTAL MAJOR

Nobody done. The British done
captured General Lee in a New
Jersey whore house... then, well,
we couldn't find nobody home down
at Congress so we come to see you.
Ain't this where the war be?

Washington looks like he might kiss him.

WASHINGTON

Yes! This is where the war be!

I'll bet you men could use some hot
rum!

Continental Major BEAMS.

EXT. WASHINGTON'S CABIN - DAY

Officers scurry, maps pulled... Joseph Reed looks up with his
best lost puppy look.

JOSEPH REED

Trenton!? But the enemy is there!

Some nervous laughter.

JOSEPH REED

But the Hessians are there! No one
can beat them! That's why
Cornwallis stationed them there!
They have the post of honor! They
are invincible!

WASHINGTON

They are also very religious. So,
we will attack them three days from

now, on Christmas. One force under me, and another to the south under Colonel Cadwalader...

JOSEPH REED

George, I'm afraid if you go through with this madness I must tender my resignation as your aide. I see where we're headed, you're putting your trust in the likes of Hamilton and Arnold...

WASHINGTON

How many generals do we have like Arnold? He's got guts -- he's vain, and he fights!

JOSEPH REED

And, Hamilton? Greene?

WASHINGTON

(after a pause)

They help me understand why we fight.

JOSEPH REED

Understand? You need to be

listening to people like John
Adams, and to keep the best
interest of the country first in
your mind!

WASHINGTON

Joseph, are you afraid to cross
that river with me?

(long pause)

I accept your resignation. With
regret. You have leave to return
to Philadelphia...

NATHANAEL GREENE

We've come for the password, sir.

Washington looks at Reed, then Greene.

WASHINGTON

'Victory or death', tell everyone.
In two hours I will address the
men.

EXT. CAMP - DAY

Washington sits on Traveler facing the parade-rest lines of
Militia: Washington on his white horse, state Militia in

rags or wildly disparate uniforms. Hear only the wind.

WASHINGTON

Today your country and I, your
commander, ask you to be brave. On
Christmas day we are going to cross
back over the Delaware River, into
New Jersey and attack the German
mercenary forces at Trenton. These
men are the best the British have
got. But the Germans are good
Christians and as it's still
Christmas, I'm betting they're
still a little drunk when we pay
our visit.

Some laughter from the soldiers. Encouraged, Washington goes
on.

WASHINGTON

Of course, they're not expecting us
to come back for a visit, but as
it's Christmas, and we being good
hosts, we wouldn't think of letting
another day pass without dropping
by and exchanging musket and cannon
balls with them. But to make this

party a success, I must ask each
and every one of my soldiers -- no
matter where in America you are
from -- to work for the good of the
whole. Cooperate, listen to your
officers and remember that this is
a surprise party so for God's sake,
keep quiet!

Pause for more laughter.

WASHINGTON

We've had some hard luck. But
that's changing. If you value your
freedom, be brave.

(pause)

I have here a poem that was taken
from the journal of a Hessian Major
at the battle of Long Island
describing our army: "The rebel
clowns, oh what a sight, So awkward
was their figure. 'Twas yonder
stood a filthy wight, And here and
there a nigger."

Washington shuts the journal which is ornate, obviously
expensive, and drops it in the mud. He turns his horse and

rides toward the river. At orders, the men march after him, trampling the journal into oblivion.

EXT. DELAWARE RIVER - NIGHT

Washington's boat, slipping through the darkness. Washington sits in the bow, hat off, scarf wrapped tight, keeping low. Creaking oars of the small fleet.

Washington looks back at the lights on the Pennsylvania shore, bobbing, far off. He takes a close look at the men in his boat...

Terrible mess of men. Two wear RED RIBBONS on their arms. Not one has a uniform. There's two BLACK SOLDIERS. Washington knows he's being weighed, knows he's nearing a moment of truth with these men.

PILOT

Ice ahead!

The ROWERS slow. The PILOT moves up to sit right beside Washington. Everyone holding their breath. First a sound like tiny bells TINKLING. The sound is loud, stretching up the river. It goes on and on, eerie and beautiful. But the soldiers swap terrified looks.

WASHINGTON

Just a little music, boys!

PILOT

Shell ice, sir...

Now ice blocks CLUNK against the sides of the boats. The chunks get bigger, jarring the boat. The Pilot looks at Washington, but Washington just keeps watching the river.

A wind kicks up, snow swirling around them. Suddenly they're swallowed by white.

PILOT

We can't see ahead, General.

WASHINGTON

We can't see going back, either.

PILOT

What if the others turn back?

Washington doesn't answer. A Black Soldier comes forward with a pole, starts the tedious process of pushing aside the chunks of ice.

A massive floe materializes off the starboard bow. The Pilot

holds up his hand and the rowers slow. He moves downstream and the rowers veer around the floe. As they pass the floe, a heavy WIND nails them. The boat heels, heads up, for a second it might capsize. The leeward rowers strain.

Washington wipes away the snow from his hair and face. He hangs to the bow as the boat swings leeward and settles against the wind. Freezing spray douses everyone. The wind eases back.

SOLDIER 1

I don't see any other boats!

WASHINGTON

Steady men. It won't be long now.

PILOT

Keep rowing!

SOLDIER 2

I can't hear their oars. We're
alone... they've all turned back!

The MOON half breaks through lighting up the river downstream. All eyes strain, but the boats below are gone.

SOLDIER

God they turned back! Colonel
Cadwalader turned back!

For a moment, everyone stops rowing. Then the moon breaks completely through and everyone looks UPSTREAM... And as far as the eye can see, are BOATS. Washington nods, gratified... Way off, from the bow of a barge, someone is waving his hat.

WASHINGTON

Come on boys, the rest of the army
is still here! Row, damn-it! Row!

EXT. BARGE - NIGHT

It's Alexander Hamilton, waving. Looks half frozen to death.

AND WASHINGTON...

Smiles grimly, making contact with this kid. He waves his hat back.

EXT. NEW JERSEY, ROLLING LANDSCAPE - DAWN

Frozen ruts of a dirt road dusted with white. It leads past a broken-down cottage and vanishes behind snowy hills. In the distance we hear feet CRUNCHING in the snow.

NEW ANGLE

CLOSE-UP -- feet heavily wrapped in rags followed by others in boots and more rags... crunching in the snow. Hands clutch muskets.

EXT. SENTRY COTTAGE

A HESSIAN emerges from the cottage carrying a musket. A COMRADE follows, still buttoning up his shirt; he does not want to be up. They scan the hills as the wind hustles the sound around and away from us.

Now the sound is gone. The second Hessian turns back, the first keeps listening... Suddenly a fast-beating military SNARE DRUM hammers at them from the distance, shattering the silence.

WASHINGTON'S FORCES

... a scarred military drum, gloved hands holding the sticks in clenched fists -- hammering. Behind is MOVEMENT: hands on muskets, sword hilts, the steam and breath of an army in motion.

RESUME HESSIANS

The first Hessian struggles to fix a bayonet to his musket.
A BUGLE begins a sharp, staccato cry from the horizon.

The second Hessian falls to his knees in the snow, starts the painfully complex task of loading his musket.

As the Hessians wheel, a mass of ragged, filthy, half-starved SOLDIERS howls over the crest of a hill. For a second the Hessians are stunned by what they see! It's Washington's army, a pitiful mass of half-dressed, half-armed men.

At the crest of the hill, mounted surrealistically on a white charger, is WASHINGTON.

TRENTON OUTSKIRTS

Hessians try to form, slipping on the ice. A single troop struggles to swing a cannon into place as the AMERICAN ARMY pours into the narrow streets. Most carry muskets, bayonets. But many have swords, even axes, knives; a barbarian horde. Greene leads the right wing: wide-eyed a kid but a vet.

The Hessians have wheeled their cannon, OFFICERS ordering fire.

Greene sees them, points his sword, screaming orders. Men drop to their knees around him, FIRE... the world is

smothered in SMOKE.

A sixty caliber musket ball sleet hits the cannon. Hessians drop, the cannon carriage DISINTEGRATES.

HAMILTON

cannon in place, rakes the streets with grape shot...

IN THE STREET

the fighting is hand-to-hand, bayonets and axes crashing.
The Hessians start to give, falling back.

WASHINGTON

rides through the streets on Traveler, urging his men on as they mop-up. Resistance melting.

To his left, Nathanael Greene leads his men on foot, going house-to-house, routing out Hessians, marching them down the street.

Suddenly a handful make a SUICIDE bayonet charge, straight at Washington. Spontaneous fire from the Continentals stops them.

Washington stops his horse, wipes the sweat and snot off his face, surveys the town. Suddenly, all the firing has stopped. HE OWNS THE TOWN.

INT. DARKENED ROOM - NIGHT

Someone RAPS urgently on the door.

ORDERLY (O.S.)

My Lord! My Lord!

A hand turns up an oil lamp, and we see Cornwallis, in his bed, shaking off sleep.

CORNWALLIS

Yes...?

ORDERLY (O.S.)

My Lord, Washington has attacked
Trenton! The whole Hessian army is
prisoner!

Cornwallis heaves out of bed in his underwear, crosses to the door. He opens it and the bright winter sun pours in,
BLINDING HIM.

EXT. TRENTON - DAY

BRIGHT SUN on a bitter cold day as Washington slowly rides his white charger through the center of town, surrounded by flanks of his soldiers. They wave hats, scraps that could be flags. The bell of the old church at Trenton clangs over and over.

Washington gets to the center of the square, trots in a circle, waves his hat in a salute to his troops. His uniform is stained with mud, hair messed. Greene and Hamilton ride beside him, cheering with the rest. Finally the crowd makes it impossible for them to continue. While Hamilton and Greene hold back, Washington dismounts and hands the reins to Billy Lee.

He walks among the cheering men, Billy staying close, leading the horse. Men and women mob him, but never quite getting up the nerve to actually touch him. The cheering goes on and on and on...

SAM ADAMS (V.O.)

My God, we have a hero on our
hands!

INT. TAVERN, BALTIMORE - DAY

Gloomy Sam Adams, John Adams and Joseph Reed sit at a corner

table, hammering down ale. Looks like they've been at it a while.

JOHN ADAMS

Let's not over do it...

SAM ADAMS

I tell you every damned place I go
the man is adored! "General
Washington! Champion of Trenton!
Savior of the Republic!" And you
should hear the way people are
deprecating Congress!

JOHN ADAMS

Makes you gag.

SAM ADAMS

Gag on your own invention, then.

JOHN ADAMS

Oh, come now...

SAM ADAMS

You invented this, this...

JOSEPH REED

This 'king'...

Pause as they digest Reed's remark.

JOHN ADAMS

You think that?

SAM ADAMS

He has the soul of an aristocrat
who'd like nothing more than to
become a king in the minds of the
people!

An AIDE dashes in, out of breath. He leans on the table,
talks low.

AIDE

Cornwallis left last night by
forced march for Trenton! He has a
huge force -- as we speak -- he's
maneuvering to trap Washington.

SAM ADAMS

As we speak? Does the Congress
know?

(Aide nods)

Tell us when you hear for certain.

Aide scampers off. All swap looks, trying to look dismayed.

JOHN ADAMS

No one wants another failure right now, God knows. But people like Arnold and, God knows, I'm having my fears about General Washington.

SAM ADAMS

Finally!? It's people like these who, as soon as they get a little power, want more and more.

(waves to Barkeep)

More ale, here!

JOHN ADAMS

Again, just to touch on a touchy subject, but... would the people accept another leader over Washington?

JOSEPH REED

It sounds like after today, they may not have that choice.

EXT. TRENTON - MORNING

Washington's pitiful army lined up 'on parade'. We see now truly awful they are clothed, armed. Greene and Hamilton stand to the flanks as Washington pleads with his men.

WASHINGTON

I know how you feel -- I do! We all want to go home! I know your enlistments are up, but we beat the Hessians, boys! We can beat them again!

Washington looks for a sympathetic face as he moves down the ranks. All he gets are hard stares.

WASHINGTON

Cornwallis is coming here now, you licked his best troops! He's scared boys! Are we just going to hand him back all we've won?

(pause)

Come on! Come forward! Who will volunteer to save America? Do it for me, boys!

No one. Washington throws his hat on the ground in disgust. He crosses to a trough and splashed his face with cold water.

He looks at them.

WASHINGTON

I'll offer ten dollars a man who
will stay beyond the end of his
enlistment. Ten dollars! Just to
stay one month beyond his time!
One month!

Sudden buzz in the ranks; men swap looks. Washington nods,
smirks bitterly. But still the men hesitate.

WASHINGTON

If this army goes home before its
business is finished, then your
comrades died for nothing! I'm
begging you!

And he really is begging. The men must feel it because a New
Hampshire Militia MAN swaps looks with his companions,
hesitates, then steps forward. Another and another.
Finally, the whole army. Washington takes a deep breath,
smiles and pats the New Hampshire boy on the shoulder.

But there's no cheering; the way the men look at him
Washington knows he still has to prove himself.

EXT. CORNWALLIS' CAMP, OUTSIDE TRENTON - NIGHT

From a hill outside his camp, Cornwallis watches the horizon of campfires burning in the distance from Washington's encampment. An ANXIOUS OFFICER stands beside him.

OFFICER

Will we attack tonight, sir?

CORNWALLIS

I don't want my tired men fighting
this dark. Listen, what's that?

Silence. In the distance the sound of SHOVELS and PICKS from Washington's lines.

CORNWALLIS

They're digging in. That's my man.
Predictable... to the end.

EXT. WASHINGTON'S LINES - NIGHT

A SOLDIER stands nervous guard while a COMRADE feeds a bonfire. Another SOLDIER sits on a rock, whacking the ground with a SHOVEL. But he's not digging. Weary, he passes the shovel to his friend who starts whacking too... they're just making NOISE.

EXT. ROAD TO PRINCETON - NIGHT

A WAGON rolls over the icy road, its rim wrapped in rags to kill the sound. Those ragged feet shuffling in the snow. They pass a hand-cut road sign: 'PRINCETON'.

EXT. TAVERN, BALTIMORE - MORNING

Sam and John Adams with Reed, devouring a huge breakfast -- sausage, breads, butter, fruit... The Aide rushes in, breathless, nearly hysterical with happiness.

AIDE

My God! My God! My God!

SAM ADAMS

My God, what?

Aide's eyes get wet, the kind of eyes that only see VISIONS.

AIDE

Washington! He out flanked
Cornwallis in the night, attacked
the British army at Princeton!

EXT. PRINCETON - MORNING

Bright day dazzling off snow. Washington on a hilltop,
astride his white charger, sword raised, his army rallying
around him, fearless. Every button on Washington's coat
beams back sunlight, his sword flashes like silver.

AIDE (V.O.)

At Princeton, he rallied the entire
American Army in the face of death!

Washington points downhill with his sword...

BELOW

Grenadiers shooting up at the rebel commander: every
sharpshooter trying to bring him down. British COLONEL
MAWHOOD -- blond, arrogant -- points his sword back up at
Washington.

AIDE (V.O.)

Every enemy sniper was shooting at
him! But he never got a scratch!

AMERICAN TROOPS

charge down the hill with a vengeful passion, collide with
the Grenadiers and sweep them into oblivion.

AND WASHINGTON

He sees the men on the offensive, turns once to look scornfully down into the muzzles of all the muskets in the universe.

AIDE (V.O.)

It's a miracle! A miracle!

INT. TAVERN

Silence as the panting aide grabs a cup of milk and gulps it down. Then, outside, the sound of CHURCH BELLS. First one, then three then more.

JOHN ADAMS

Gentlemen, it's not a hero, we have
on our hands; it's a god!

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF PRINCETON - DAY

In the distance, smoke trails up from the horizon. Colonel Mawhood sits on his horse beside a mounted Cornwallis on a snowy field. Mawhood's two spaniels yip annoyingly at the horse's heels. They ride through the bodies of Washington's dead.

CORNWALLIS

No uniforms. No coats, even? In
this weather?

MAWHOOD

No, my lord.

CORNWALLIS

What sort of boots would you say
he's wearing? I should say, no
sort of boots at all. Aren't those
rags wrapped around his feet? Is
that what he marched here in?

MAWHOOD

Yes, my lord.

CORNWALLIS

And, is that a pitchfork beside
him?

MAWHOOD

(hesitating more)

Many of them, many did not possess
proper arms. My lord.

Disgusted, Cornwallis lets this sink in, nudges his horse along. Mawhood trails. They come upon the body of a BLACK MAN.

CORNWALLIS

Negroes? Washington has black men
in his army? Are they good
fighters?

(not waiting for an
answer)

What's that red ribbon on his arm,
Colonel?

MAWHOOD

Because they have hardly any
uniforms, they designate officers
with colored ribbons. My lord.

CORNWALLIS

By red, what rank would you say
this black, officer, soldier is,
Colonel?

MAWHOOD

I, don't know what color is what
officer, my lord...

Cornwallis gives him the hard stare.

CORNWALLIS

But not a general, surely?

Not needing nor wanting a reply, Cornwallis spurs on, and as he crests Millet's Hill he discovers the slope is COVERED with dead British soldiers in their nice, bright uniforms. Cornwallis reins-in, surveys the slaughter with humiliation and awe.

INT. BRITISH PALACE - NIGHT

King George leans over his map of the colonies, his fingers on the edges of his empire as if he could hold the whole thing together with his bare hands. He sits in the room which is in half light, staggered, worried, drinking. With him is GENERAL 'GENTLEMAN JOHNNY' BURGOYNE, one of God's great elitist fops.

KING GEORGE

Where have all my champions gone?
My Gawain? Galahad? Who among my
nobles will defend the realm? I am
bleeding for some pure man, some
virtuous poet to do us this great
service... for our country. For

our kind.

GENERAL BURGOYNE

I am that man, My Lord.

KING GEORGE

What do these people want, General
Burgoyne? Right? Unqualified
natural freedom? There is no such
stupid state of being. The Garden
of Eden? Is that what they think
they've found? Man is an animal
whose natural states is that of
unremitting barbarism. They steal
from each other; they kill each
other; they even eat each other!
Without the structure of an
enlightened, ruling class, they
will plummet into a hell of greed.
Where, in the end, they will simply
rename something else, 'upper
class'.

EXT. FORESTS, NEAR MORRISTOWN - DAY

Washington rides slowly at the head of his soldiers. Greene
and Hamilton beside him. Long coats with ice-caked collars

wrapped to their chins, breath steaming. BILLY LEE trails behind Washington, riding NELSON, carrying his own small pack of goods.

WASHINGTON (V.O.)

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 the separate
and equal station to which the Laws
of Nature and of Nature's God
entitle them...

The army staggers against slashing winds that shake ice and snow from the trees. Coughing, limping, freezing they march. Towering pines surround them. Rag-wrapped feet leave a trail of blood in the snow.

EXT. WASHINGTON'S TROOPS - MORRISTOWN - DAY

Washington's army standing at attention on the snow dusted fields of the encampment at Morristown. Moving up the line, we focus on the BLACK FACES amid the whites.

WASHINGTON (V.O.)

A decent respect to the opinions of
mankind requires that they should
declare the causes which impel them
to the separation.

WASHINGTON...

Stands on a hill overlooking his troops and the new camp --
proud of these men. Hamilton and Greene flank him at
attention.

WASHINGTON (V.O.)

We hold these truths to be self
evident, that all men are created
equal, that they are endowed by
their Creator with certain
unalienable Rights, that among
these are Life. Liberty, and the
pursuit of Happiness.

EXT. MORRISTOWN ENCAMPMENT - MORNING

STARVED MEN rushing from shelters made of planks, canvas, old
doors and branches... reaching out begging as a fancy painted
CARRIAGE drawn by two horses clatters through the encampment.
Martha Washington leans from the window as the soldiers flock
around her carriage. She's putting pennies in their

outstretched hands.

MARTHA

Go forth and sin no more... go
forth and sin no more... go
forth...

Martha nods grimly to these wretched souls. She is an absolute embodiment of aristocracy.

INT. WASHINGTON'S CABIN - MORNING

Washington stands at the window, paper and pen in hand watching this pitiful scene.

INT. WASHINGTON'S CABIN/LATER - DAY

George Washington and Martha in the midst of an argument, both on their feet, pacing around the inside of the room like caged animals.

MARTHA

Did you know that Jefferson has
proposed a law in Virginia aiming
at an absolute separation of state
from the church?

WASHINGTON

I think I heard that.

MARTHA

It's an anti-Christian dogma! I
cannot believe you are so calm
about it!

WASHINGTON

What else? From Virginia?

MARTHA

Well, I wouldn't want to trouble
you with this now.

Washington shakes his head; knows she's been saving the best
for last.

WASHINGTON

Martha... what?

MARTHA

Virginia is outraged with your
order allowing Negroes to fight in
the army. There's a deep feeling
of hurt and betrayal. They wanted
you commander because they expected

you would look out for our
interests.

WASHINGTON

To win this war I need an army.

MARTHA

Oh, indeed? You know very well
people are frightened of arming the
Negroes! They beg you to consider
the future. What good is a
revolution if it overturns those
things we cherish!?

WASHINGTON

What's the point of a revolution if
it doesn't?

MARTHA

Some things must never change.

WASHINGTON

Is that why you come in here
tossing pennies to my starving men?
It's damned condescending!

MARTHA

Don't condescend to me! We have
both of us prospered from the
arrangements of our kind...

WASHINGTON

Our 'kind'? What is that supposed
to mean? These men are all I have
left and they stay because they
will fight! They desire it! They
seek it! Of course Virginia is
terrified! For my soldiers this is
a war to obliterate the 'upper
class' from the face of the earth!
Should I tell them all to go home
because if they win it will ruin
me!? It is impossible for me to
imagine that Negroes are fighting
so that only white men may be free!
If we win this war they will own
this country too!

Martha just gawks at him.

MARTHA

Well, we must keep in mind the
Dower Laws. One third of
everything we have is mine and

since our Negroes have been
interbreeding, it would be legally
impossible to distinguish them.

WASHINGTON

Martha! For God's sake!

MARTHA

Leave me, now sir, I am tired.

WASHINGTON

Come out and meet my soldiers.

They're good people.

Martha looks away, as if trying to imagine this.

MARTHA

Not today.

WASHINGTON

I want you to see our hospital.

MARTHA

I don't want to see your hospital.

She grabs her cape and leaves. Washington follows her.

EXT. CAMP - DAY

Martha starts to get into her coach, but then stops. She crosses to the edge of the slope looking down on the camp and pauses to look it over.

Hanging laundry and half-torn tents. Men dressed in tattered uniforms: WHITES, BLACKS... and then a pretty young GIRL in uniform passes below.

Then Martha turns, finds Washington is watching her. For a moment they hold on each other, then she climbs into her coach and is gone.

EXT. WASHINGTON'S QUARTERS - AFTERNOON

Washington comes in to find Billy Lee singing to himself, pointing a pistol at the wall. With two huge strides Washington crosses the room and grabs the gun. The hammer drops as he yanks it away but doesn't fire.

WASHINGTON

Wil! What the hell are you doing!?

He grabs Billy by the collar, pulls him so they're face-to-face. Washington takes a deep sniff of his breath. He winces.

WASHINGTON

My God, have you been drinking!?

He shoves Billy away. Billy staggers a bit, then points at the pistol.

BILLY LEE

You, you just need a new flint,
General.

WASHINGTON

You are never, never to touch my
guns! Do you understand!?

BILLY LEE

Yes, General. But if you have to
shoot somebody, you can't.

WASHINGTON

None of the servants is to touch a
gun! You know that!

BILLY LEE

Well... I misunderstood, then.

Billy turns away.

WASHINGTON

Misunderstood what!?

BILLY LEE

A lot of years have gone by.

WASHINGTON

What? What are you talking about?

BILLY LEE

That you would have known you can
trust me.

Billy turns to a dress jacket hanging on a chair, starts the tedious work of shining the uniform buttons. Washington gets a grip, examines the pistol; sees he's right.

WASHINGTON

I'm sorry, Wil.

Billy looks up at Washington like he's never been apologized to before in his life.

BILLY LEE

Me? You apologizing to me?

WASHINGTON

Yes, William. I am apologizing.

EXT. CAMP - DAY

A VERY YOUNG MAN in an extraordinary ornate, custom-made officer's uniform stands outside Washington's cabin, pacing. He's got bright red hair, and is nineteen years old. He is the MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE. As soon as Washington emerges from his cabin, Lafayette salutes.

LAFAYETTE

Good afternoon, mon general, I am the Marquis de Lafayette. I am here both as an official and unofficial emissary of his Majesty Louis VI, King of France. I have been commissioned major general in the American army... by Congress, in that capacity I am but a humble volunteer in your army...

Washington frowns, keeps moving. Lafayette hesitates, then catches up.

LAFAYETTE

However, through my relations with

members of his majesty's court, I
am a representative of the French
government whose deepest desire is
to be one people, united with our
American brothers in arms to defeat
the rapacious armies of King George
of England. Vive la France! Vive
l'Amerique!

WASHINGTON

We have more officers created by
Congress than we know what to do
with.

LAFAYETTE

But, general, I assure you my
motives are sincere.

As Lafayette follows Washington, he fumbles for papers.
Finally Washington stops to deal with Lafayette.

LAFAYETTE

Sir, please accept my commission
from Congress... and...

(a little picture)

You must see this portrait of my
beautiful wife, Adrienne, we had

the most perfect little baby girl
just before I left. Her name is
Henriette...

WASHINGTON

What I want to know is sir: where
is your daddy?

Lafayette takes this, then:

LAFAYETTE

My father died when I was a tiny
child. He was killed at the battle
of Minden -- in Europe. He was
fighting against the British troops
led by Lord Germain -- the present
advisor to King George. I assure
you that from that day forward I
have been a man.

This gets Washington's attention. He nods, continues with
Lafayette following again.

INT. OFFICER'S MESS - DAY

Washington, Nathanael Greene, Arnold, Hamilton and other
OFFICERS are pressed into the small room. Bread is passed,

glasses of rum. Lafayette wilts into a chair. As Washington speaks it's clear these men are too overwhelmed by the grinding day-to-day misery and frustration to believe in much anymore. Washington indicates Lafayette who springs to his feet as Washington consults his commission papers.

WASHINGTON

Gentlemen, my I introduce a French gentleman, recently appointed major general by Congress...

(some groans)

Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette. General Lafayette has brought us the greetings and goodwill of his countrymen, and... how many cases of muskets, Mon petite Marquis?

LAFAYETTE

Uh... none just now, but...

Hoots, laughs and sarcastic applause. Lafayette wilts back into his chair.

WASHINGTON

Now, news about what has been holding up the shipment of coats

for the men. It seems they are done but have no buttons because Congress is debating over what the buttons should say on them.

(groans)

But, they're anxious to know what we think. Some suggestions are: "Unity and Peace"; "Freedom and Peace"; "Unity, Freedom and Peace"; "Christ's Army"; "God's Army"; "Don't Tread on Us"; and "The Holy Alliance of Mankind and Christ made Manifest On Earth", which would be a very large button, indeed.

More groans, a few chuckles. Lafayette is stunned.

WASHINGTON

Now, the questions of boots... they were produced at enormous expense by a 'friend of Congress', crated, and -- just before they were to be brought here -- they vanished.

NATHANAEL GREENE/OTHERS

What!?

WASHINGTON

All we know is the British have
discovered that it's sometimes
cheaper to buy supplies from
friends of Congress than to ship
them here from England.

(to Lafayette)

As you can see, we are one people,
under God, united in greed.

EXT. ENCAMPMENT - DAY

Washington leads Lafayette to the corrals.

WASHINGTON

The men rely on Congress for pay.
But Congress won't pay the men with
gold, because they would have to
authorize a general tax and they
won't because they refuse to trust
the notion of a centralized
government.

He reaches into his coat, hands Lafayette two bank notes,
stops, faces Lafayette while he examines them.

WASHINGTON

'Continental', Congress' paper money. It was worthless to start with, but as you see, counterfeiters have made them even less than worthless. Can you tell which one is fake?

LAFAYETTE

I... they look both the same.

WASHINGTON

The one with 'Philadelphia' spelled correctly is the counterfeit.

Washington continues to the nearest corral. As they arrive, Lafayette hands him back the Continentals.

WASHINGTON

No, please; an advance on your salary.

LAFAYETTE

Mon General, I have come here to learn and to give, not to take. I am serving without salary.

WASHINGTON

You must be very rich.

LAFAYETTE

I am. Then, I understand you too
serve without salary. You know,
since your charming little
victories at Trenton and Princeton,
the French court is softening. I
expect any time now a ship load of
supplies...

WASHINGTON

'Charming little victories?'
Please don't expect much more of
us, Monsieur.

LAFAYETTE

I only meant...

WASHINGTON

These supplies...?

LAFAYETTE

Muskets and uniforms and Bayonets.

WASHINGTON

And how rusty are these muskets?

LAFAYETTE

Sir, these are our finest firearms
from the armory at Charleville!
They are a gift from the people of
France!

Washington gives Lafayette the once-over. Still can't
believe the kid is for real.

WASHINGTON

Well, we will accept these charming
little gifts. When we see them.
Meanwhile, please, take your pick
of a horse.

LAFAYETTE

I rode here, on my horse.

WASHINGTON

Chose another. Any general worth
anything should have a brace of
horses.

They salute and Washington walks off leaving him at the
corral. Hamilton and Greene intercept him, walk.

HAMILTON

Are you going to keep him, sir?

WASHINGTON

We better, Congress invented him.

NATHANAEL GREENE

Maybe he can fight...

THEIR POV

Teamsters gathered around Lafayette perched on a rail,
telling them a joke -- the teamsters crack-up.

AND WASHINGTON

Reassessing this kid...

NATHANAEL GREENE

The men seem to like him. Maybe he
could shake off some of our gloom.
And, he's the only real evidence we
have that anyone else in the world
cares about our revolution.

HAMILTON

Nathanael's right.

WASHINGTON

If we can get coats and boots for
these men I don't care if they're
made in France or hell.

Lafayette races up, wants to walk with the big boys; smiles,
salutes. Washington completes his thoughts.

WASHINGTON

Because, if the British got off
their asses and came up here, now,
we would be smashed. And the
revolution would be finished.

(to Lafayette)

Tell King Louis, it's that bad.

LAFAYETTE

Yes, I will write him and tell his
ministers and the court.

They form a little circle around Lafayette.

NATHANAEL GREENE

We need muskets, powder!

HAMILTON

And the men need to believe that
someday France will join us.

As he speaks, they watch soldiers.

THOSE FACES...

Filthy, humiliated humanity. A group sharpens logs into
punji stakes, others stitch tattered uniforms.

WASHINGTON

It's impossible to stop these men
deserting in winter, you might as
well stop geese from migrating.

HAMILTON

They go back home to keep their
families alive, stay into the
spring to plant. Then, they start
coming back to us.

LAFAYETTE

Like flowers after the snow melts.

WASHINGTON

When the snow melts, mon petite
Marquis, I suspect the only thing

blossoming will be bright red
British soldiers.

INT. KING'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Lord Germain and King George sit at a long table laden with fruit, drink, meat and bread -- LORDS and LADIES adorn the table like baubles.

At the head of the table stand two SERVANTS. One is made up as an IROQUOIS, the other as an American MOUNTAIN MAN. They are, naturally, absurd sketches. Each servant holds a paint pot and a thick brush. Between them is a map of the thirteen colonies. King George meanders to his feet, wine in hand.

KING GEORGE

My Lords and Ladies, tonight's
entertainment will be the slaughter
of the American Rebel Armies.

Applause. King George gestures to the Iroquois Servant who dips his brush into his pot. It comes back dripping RED... he slowly, delicately, paints a THICK RED LINE dripping down from Quebec, along the west bank of Lake Champlain...

KING GEORGE

Seven thousand strong, our

magnificent army of the North, as
we drink, is rolling down the
Champlain Valley like the mighty
Juggernaut, crushing all resistance
before it.

EXT. FOREST, NORTHERN NEW YORK - DAY (SPRING 1777)

MOHAWK BRAVES dressed in thick deer skin cloaks, carrying
muskets, walk slowly, easily through the forest. Beyond, in
a primeval glory, is the Champlain Valley with Lake Champlain
stretching out forever. The BAGPIPER of a HIGHLANDER
DIVISION gently plays the 'Ode to Saint Brendon'.

AMERICAN SCOUTS

Run from the onslaught, some are massacred by a concentrated
fusillade from the British muskets.

EXT. KING'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Lords and Ladies are applauding as if they could actually see
the slaughter taking place in upstate New York. Now the
Mountain Man lifts his dripping red brush and draws a bloody
line in from the Chesapeake toward Pennsylvania...

KING GEORGE

To the south of New England, our
second, vast host of fifteen
thousand, will thrust inland,
smashing Mister Washington's army --
perhaps taking the rebel capital --
and swing up to link with our
northern force.

EXT. BRANDYWINE CREEK - DAY

Washington at the head of his army, drowning in black powder smoke as they slowly give ground to an irresistible British force. All around him men fight and die. Washington shouts orders over the explosions, trying to hold the line. Smoke, screaming, chaos... Lafayette reins-in, yelling and gesturing toward their right -- a hail of musket balls rakes the ground and Lafayette tumbles from his horse.

Washington jumps down from Traveler, shoves Militia into a ragged line -- in line, he yells and they blast into the British line. Then they continue to retreat, Hamilton helping carry Lafayette from the field.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA - DAY

TITLE: PHILADELPHIA, SEPTEMBER, 1777, British ENTER

PHILADELPHIA FROM THE SOUTH...

Lord Cornwallis leads his splendidly dressed regiments as bagpipes howl, snare drums snap, marching into Philadelphia.

ANOTHER PART OF TOWN

TITLE: PHILADELPHIA, CONGRESS EVACUATES TO THE NORTH...

Terrorized civilians fleeing out the other end of the city like rats. The lead rats are MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, their wagons packed to overflowing.

INT. KING'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

More applause. Then, the Iroquois Servant continues the southward run of his bloody brush, toward Albany. But the brush SLIPS north of the goal, at SARATOGA...

EXT. SARATOGA BATTLEFIELD - DAY

Benedict Arnold screams in our face and CHARGES.

In a BALLET OF CARNAGE, Arnold rages through the British lines on his charger, sword sweeping as he leads an attack. He seems to be everywhere, and men unhesitatingly follow him into the lines of British Bayonets...

As the British line disintegrates and the beaten redcoats throw down their muskets in defeat, Arnold is shot out of the saddle.

CLOSER ON ARNOLD

Being carried off the field in a litter. He's a bloody mess, half conscious, groggy, trying to joke with his men who carry him like he was the dying Christ. He manages to salute them with his cap -- and the men break into CHEERS -- it's glorious, heroic...

ARNOLD (V.O.)

Congress wants to court martial
me...

INT. WASHINGTON'S HQ, VALLEY FORGE - NIGHT

Washington, Greene and Arnold around a table in the dingy light of oil lamps and candles. Arnold has just arrived. Billy Lee takes his cape and Arnold comes the rest of the way into the room, hobbling on a crutch.

WASHINGTON

I'm ashamed to say, I'm not
surprised to hear it.

Washington is absorbed by a large map on the table. A bottle of Madeira is open and all drink. A fire from a stone hearth barely seems to light the room. Arnold comes closer to the map and only then does Washington turn to shake his hand.

WASHINGTON

Welcome, Benedict; splendid work.

Arnold accepts his greeting, but is puzzled by their gloom. Washington turns back to his map.

WASHINGTON

I received the request for your
court martial three days ago.
Amazing how rapidly Congress can
act when motivated.

Arnold feels a bit guilty.

ARNOLD

I'm accused of using some
government wagons to ship personal
property.

HAMILTON

Congress has been using our supply
wagons for years to ship their

black market goods -- probably
their whores!

WASHINGTON

They're after both of us, Benedict.
There is a plot in Congress to have
me replaced, perhaps with General
Horatio Gates.

Washington circles out of the way, then brings a lamp to give
Arnold a better view of the map.

WASHINGTON

Have a look.

THE MAP

Oiled canvas that shines slightly in the light. It's a
fairly crude but comprehensive rendering of the Pennsylvania
countryside.

WASHINGTON (O.S.)

The British are going to evacuate
Philadelphia in the spring.

ARNOLD HOLDS UP A CANDLE

has a close look. Hamilton and Greene join them.

WASHINGTON

Our plan is to hit them as they
leave.

ARNOLD

While they're strung out?

WASHINGTON

Exactly. We'd attack the baggage
wagons and the rear guard. It
would cause the line to buckle.
Then we hit the center with our
main force and cut them in half.

NATHANAEL GREENE

What do you think?

ARNOLD

Lovely, but your men can't get weak
knees.

WASHINGTON

They're ready. Believe me, the
ones that stayed on here at Valley
Forge are ready for anything. Of

course, we get nothing from
Congress. They need boots,
coats... we desperately need food.

ARNOLD

Same old story.

Washington pours himself a fresh glass, nearly downs the
whole thing with a gulp. Now Arnold sees how drunk he really
is.

WASHINGTON

Except I believe it's pointed and
intentional now.

Washington hesitates, whether it's his boozy head or that he
just can't find the words...

WASHINGTON

There was this anonymous pamphlet
circulated at Congress which says I
am personally responsible for all
our hardships. And... that I have
encouraged the people of America to
make me into a God! Benedict, it
says that I have gone mad!

ARNOLD

That can't be.

WASHINGTON

There's this whispering campaign
against me ever since Gates won at
Saratoga.

ARNOLD

Gates? He used my battle plan and
I humbly submit that without me
he'd still be back at Saratoga
waiting for the British to attack.

(pause)

George, why haven't you moved into
the Potts' house back at the creek?
Much more befitting of a Commander
and Chief than your field tent.
And... you could entertain. I
think you need to entertain more.
Seriously! Get a few New Jersey
whores up here, invite some
Congressmen... couldn't hurt.

WASHINGTON

As soon as the men have good
shelters I'll move. Perhaps Martha

will join me this winter.

ARNOLD

There, then, you can have sort of a
normal life.

But immediately its clear that Washington is absorbed with
fear of treachery.

WASHINGTON

Have you heard? The British are
negotiating to make a trade for
General Lee.

ARNOLD

I'm sure his dogs will be
overjoyed.

WASHINGTON

The point being: he's also a
candidate for my job.

(turns back to the map)

If we can pull this off, maybe I
can restore their faith in me.

Arnold sees that Washington is truly shaken. Arnold pours
himself a glass and Washington toasts him.

WASHINGTON

Well, Benedict, here's to the two
most hated men, on both sides of
this war.

Hamilton and Greene rise, join the toast. Lafayette burst
through the door -- full of his usual exuberance, but leaning
on an ornate cane with a carved silver head. Lafayette LIMPS
up, shouting, waving his cane and a packet of letters over
head.

LAFAYETTE

My people! My people! My people
have declared themselves for
America! France will fight with us
as comrades against England!

Washington and Arnold shake hands. Lafayette's tears of joy
suddenly turn to sobs.

WASHINGTON

What is it, Marquis?

LAFAYETTE

(holds up a letter)

My baby daughter has died... my

baby... mon petite Henriette...

Washington doesn't know what to do. He approaches Lafayette, clumsily, wants to comfort him. But Lafayette nods, turns. He walks away, then stands, back to Washington and Arnold, leaning on his cane. If he's crying, he doesn't want anyone to see. Greene approaches, watches Lafayette, hands Washington a letter...

NATHANAEL GREENE

From Congress...

EXT. VALLEY FORGE - DAY

A double line of CONTINENTALS, drilling. It's flesh cracking, lung-stopping COLD here. Everyone's breath clouds. When men aren't handling their muskets they bury their hands in their armpits, pockets. It's a bad eastern winter.

Arnold, Hamilton, Greene and Lafayette follow Washington, but it's like a gimp parade: Arnold on crutches, Lafayette hobbling with his cane, and Greene with his congenital limp.

Washington turns, frowns at them and they stop. Arnold strikes a majestic pose. Washington smiles grimly and shakes his head.

EXT. PARADE GROUNDS - DAY

Washington addressing the army. Men in the cold, waiting, rubbing their hands.

WASHINGTON

Men, I just received an urgent communication from Congress and they asked that I read it to you... please stand at ease.

(pause)

"Today, King Louis of France has formally recognized the sovereignty of the American Colonies." This means we can finally expect help from France!

Men break into cheering. Washington silences them.

WASHINGTON

But there's more: "This day, to demonstrate heart-felt gratitude for the suffering of our forces for the sake of liberty and freedom, it is decreed... it is decreed that all troop observe a day of fasting."

Moment of silence. Then the men laugh. A few at first, but it spreads instantly through the whole line. Some even applaud at this madness.

Washington laughs too, stands in front of his troops sharing a good, heart-warming belly laugh. For the first time the men and their leader have genuinely connected and it has a psychological healing effect on him. Washington turns, puts his big hands on Lafayette's shoulders.

WASHINGTON

Marquis, as of today, you will have
command of your own cavalry
division.

Lafayette gawks at Washington, overwhelmed. Then he turns to face the rapped heap of soldiers on parade -- grins like a kid seeing his first piece of ass. Washington continues with Arnold.

WASHINGTON

Benedict, soon as the British
vacate, I want you to take a
division and march to Philadelphia.
Until you're sure order has been
restored I'm declaring martial law.

It's bound to be a quiet job and
this is one time Congress will be
happy to see you.

EXT. NEW JERSEY TOWN, SPRINGTIME - DUSK

The American Army marching through a devastated town, Greene
and Lafayette leading. Lafayette prances at the head of his
new cavalry division: they're polished to the max, every man
wears a white PLUME in his hat... Lafayette's proud of them.

Now they see the brutal destruction: bodies, crying women,
houses in flame. A lone COLT stands braying over its dead
mother in a field.

LAFAYETTE

The British are not very happy at
giving up Philadelphia. They take
it out on the whole country.

NATHANAEL GREENE

As soon as we contact their
rearguard, we fight. George will
be up with the main force by noon.

EXT. FIELD, NEW JERSEY - DAY

Washington on horseback, riding slowly with Hamilton at the head of Continentals. Another RIDER trots up along the line, DOGS hustling around his horses hooves. It's GENERAL CHARLES LEE. He salutes. The two eye each other with ill-disguised disdain.

WASHINGTON

General Lee, welcome back. I'm
happy you've decided to join us.

GENERAL LEE

More than that, sir... my orders
from Congress.

He hands Washington a paper. Washington reads, looks ill.
Hands it back.

GENERAL LEE

I am to take command of Major
General Lafayette's division and
lead the attack.

WASHINGTON

Lafayette will not be happy...

Lee is immediately defensive and antagonistic.

GENERAL LEE

Congress made me second in command,
you have no right to deny me.

Washington looks the man over.

WASHINGTON

General, I believe our men are
going to destroy Cornwallis' army
tomorrow. They've looked forward
to that pleasure for a long time,
so I highly recommend you pay
strict attention to General
Greene's plan of battle.

But all Lee does is salute.

GENERAL LEE

If I'm going to catch up by
tonight, I'd best get going.

Lee turns his horse and canters off, dogs barking at his
horse's heels.

HAMILTON

What are we going to do?

WASHINGTON

Get the body of our army up to
Greene's vanguard as fast as we
can. All the damned fool has to do
is hit the British rearguard and
then hold for us.

EXT. GENERAL LEE'S TENT - NIGHT

Lee, drinking heavily, throwing scraps from his plate to his
coven of dogs. Laughing. Lafayette and Greene enter but
hold back.

GENERAL LEE

What is your pleasures, General
Greene and Major General Lafayette?

NATHANAEL GREENE

We would like to consult with you
on your plans, sir.

GENERAL LEE

Quel sort de plan?

Lafayette hesitates over the clumsy French, over the
question.

LAFAYETTE

Why, your battle plan, sir.

GENERAL LEE

(drunk and angry)

I do understand your language

Monsieur!

LAFAYETTE

Oui, General, certainement...

He dismisses the pair with a brisk gesture.

GENERAL LEE

You're nothing but children, and
you question me? Gentlemen, we hit
the British rearguard at dawn; then
my plan will become clear to you as
it unfolds. Good night.

They hesitate, but Lee hunches over, stroking one of his
hounds, seems lost to the world.

EXT. MONMOUTH - MORNING

HEAD-ON of Washington at a full gallop -- hair whipping, coat
open to a sweat drenched blouse. O.S., sounds of musket fire

and cannons.

Washington brutally reins-in his horse skidding on its hind legs to a stop in the face of retreating Continentals.

Lafayette rides in their midst, trying to stop their retreat from becoming a rout.

WASHINGTON

My God! Who ordered this retreat?!

LAFAYETTE

General Lee, sir!

WASHINGTON

Get these men back in line!

Washington reels his horse, charges off.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

Washington gallops into the retreating troops. It's not a rout; they look pissed-off.

WASHINGTON

All right men! Stop and reform
your ranks! Officers! Bring your
men around!

The men immediately stop, turn, assembling before their officers. General Lee rides on the scene, looks wild. They're in a 'sea' of men, and as they shout, the men listen.

WASHINGTON

What the goddamned hell do you
think you are doing!?

GENERAL LEE

The British! These men cannot
stand against them!

WASHINGTON

What do you know about these men!?
They can stand against anything!
They've seen more war than most
field generals! They are not
cowards, sir! They are not afraid!

Hamilton charges into the pack. Yells at Lee.

HAMILTON

We will stand here! Stand and die
on this spot!

GENERAL LEE

Oh? Fine, let's get these men
turned and then I will be delighted
to die, right here, on this spot.

Washington points below, to a line of Continentals, holding
back a wave of redcoats.

WASHINGTON

Who is that!?

GENERAL LEE

That's Greene. He's supporting our
reconsolidation.

WASHINGTON

Marquis! Get these men reformed,
send Steuben and Wayne out on the
left...

Washington curses, spurs ahead.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

Washington full gallop, balls whizzing around his head, fog
banks of black-powder smoke gathering. Washington arrives at
Greene's line, reins in.

Greene and a thin line of men -- black and whites -- hunker down behind a hedgerow. They're hard-pressed, bodies on all sides, dead horses -- many soldiers are shirtless in the deadly heat. Greene shouts up to Washington.

NATHANAEL GREENE

What the hell are we doing?

WASHINGTON

You've got to stop them here or our whole line will cave-in!

(yells to all)

It's all right boys, I'm here!

Men CHEER Washington as he waves his hat.

A BLACK OFFICER rushes up to Greene, keeping low.

BLACK OFFICER

General! Fresh enemy unit!

Through the haze and blur of battle can be seen an approaching line of RED. Colors fly, bagpipes wheeze, drums beat. It's terrifying. THE LINE COMES ON.

EXT. HEDGEROW - DAY

Washington fearlessly trots up and down the American lines.

WASHINGTON

Boys! These men coming are the
Royal Fusiliers!

As he trots he unbuttons his tunic, sweating in the intense heat. He wipes sweat off his forehead with his hat, then throws it away. Excited, happy to see his men take on these British gems, taking this very personally, hating all these aristocratic gentlemen's guts.

WASHINGTON

They're Noblemen every damned one!
From the best families in England!
Knights and barons! The cream of
the British army! And you know
what they think of us! Come on,
men! Show them who we are!

Washington, too emotional to go on; wants them to hold, to win. Looks down to see faces of the American Soldiers locked on him.

And at that moment, for the first time, they know Washington is one of them. And Washington knows it too...

NATHANAEL GREENE

Ready arms!

THAT RED LINE...

erupts in SINGING, a song-chant like a soccer rally.
Flawless, Oxford Voices ringing out in the hot air. They
level bayonets. Bag pipes HOWL. It happens FAST.

HEDGEROW

Greene stands up beside Washington's horse, screams so he can
be heard over everything.

NATHANAEL GREENE

FIRE!!!

The hedgerow vomits musket fire. Fusiliers grab their faces,
their ripped-out guts. The bagpipe goes out like the
grotesque farting of a punctured balloon. The Fusiliers
waver, fall back.

Their handsome young COMMANDING OFFICER rallies them, his
back to the American lines. He extolls them, holding his
sabre on high. He has a beautiful voice.

BRITISH COMMANDER

For shame, Royal Fusiliers! For
shame!

AMERICAN LINES

men reloading, fixing bayonets... listening to the British
Commanding Officer. Black and White soldiers exchange
looks...

BRITISH COMMANDER (O.S.)

Is the finest blood of England to
be spilled by an army of Niggers
and Mongrels!? Never! On to the
day, boys! On to the day!

Washington watches his men, sees their reactions, knows he
doesn't have to say a thing.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

British Commander whips his sabre in a circle over his head.

BRITISH COMMANDER

Our England!

(his men cheer)

Our King!

(cheer again)

On to the day!!!

The Fusiliers start coming. Determined. Washington sits on his horse, watching, letting Greene handle it. Greene grabs a man who rises to fire, pulls him back.

NATHANAEL GREENE

Wait boys! Wait!

The Fusiliers get closer, closer; maybe too close. They start singing.

NATHANAEL GREENE

FIRE!!!

Smoke and flame blast the British lines. Then the Americans charge out like a spontaneous gush of emotion.

Fighting is bloody hand to hand -- bayonets rip out guts, men scream, swords flash. The Fusiliers fight, their colors go down and they break and run.

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

Troops cheering, Lafayette waves his hat. Hamilton looks like he'll wet his pants for joy. Greene's men surge after the retreating British. Washington on his white horse rushes

forward with them.

ON WASHINGTON

Charging on, having the best day of his life, chasing England and all she represents back into hell. Chasing the ghosts of his past, the addiction to aristocracy...

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

Cornwallis arrives, corpulent and sweating. But he brings Ranger reinforcements.

Washington and Greene call the men back. They fall back reluctantly, standing and firing as they do. Cornwallis' AIDE tumbles from his saddle. Another OFFICER goes down.

Cornwallis is stunned by the accuracy. His Rangers take cover, crouching behind rocks and trees. Cornwallis hesitates stymied. Then he sees a man on a WHITE HORSE galloping across the battlefield. Knows who it is.

CORNWALLIS

Sharp-shooters! Kill that officer
-- that man on the white horse!
Kill him!

Sharp-shooters FIRE...

EXT. HILLTOP - LATE AFTERNOON

Washington gallops toward the crest, when he and his horse go DOWN. Men shout, Hamilton rushes forward. But Washington stands, unhurt. He leans over Traveler, feels for a pulse in its throat. He's dead.

BILLY LEE

General Washington?

Washington looks up: Billy Lee has come forward on NELSON. Billy dismounts, hands Washington the reins. Billy looks genuinely terrified for his own ass and for Washington. Washington heaves up onto the horse.

AND CORNWALLIS...

Sees it's Washington being cheered by his men, can't believe his eyes.

CORNWALLIS

Shit! Shit!!!

EXT. WASHINGTON'S CAMP - NIGHT

Soldiers lying on the ground, exhausted, passing buckets of water, crusts of bread and rum. But Washington's still got the stench of the hunt in his nostrils, out among the men.

WASHINGTON

You did good, boys! You beat them!

Don't be broken hearted! Tomorrow!

We'll get the bastards before they
get away! Tomorrow! Tomorrow!

Washington comes to Lafayette and his division, the one Lee took over. They're shot to hell. Lafayette walks through them, hugging men, steadying them with strong words. His uniform is SATURATED with the blood of the wounded he's been embracing. Washington is moved.

EXT. WASHINGTON'S CAMP - DAWN

Washington, Hamilton, Greene, Lafayette and Lee stand on the hilltop above the battlefield. It's empty.

NATHANAEL GREENE

They're gone. Pulled out in the
middle of the night. They got away
from us.

Washington looks out at the dawn, bitterly disappointed.

EXT. NEAR MONMOUTH - DAY

Washington and Billy Lee ride along together ahead of the army.

WASHINGTON

Wil...

BILLY LEE

Yes, general?

WASHINGTON

You've served me loyally, year
after year, without complaining.
I've thought hard about you this
past winter. I want to free you,
Wil. I want to give you your
freedom, after this battle is
fought.

BILLY LEE

Yes, general.

WASHINGTON

Wil, I'm giving you your freedom.
Do you understand?

BILLY LEE

No. I guess.

WASHINGTON

You'd have money every year, so you
wouldn't have to work. You can
stay at Mount Vernon as long as you
want...

Billy nods, but just keeps riding in silence. Washington
rides alongside again, trying to pursue the issue.

EXT. STREETS OF PHILADELPHIA, 1778 - DAY

A MOB surges around the outside of a house, pelting the
windows with rocks, screaming out of control. They're
supported by half a dozen PENNSYLVANIA MILITIA. In the midst
of the shouting crowd, someone carries a huge CRUCIFIX.

Behind them, in an unbelievably ornate coach, is JOSEPH REED,
dressed in expensive finery, obviously directing the mob. On
the roof of his ornate coach a MAN with a trumpet and a blue
uniform shouts orders from Reed to the mob.

BENEDICT ARNOLD

suddenly trots out onto the street on a grey horse. At first no one notices him, then a few point his way until finally, awed by his presence, they fall silent.

A DOZEN CONTINENTALS move in from the sides, supporting Arnold. The Continentals stand, bayonets, poised, war veterans all, black men and white -- look incredibly hard core compared with the over-primped, candy-ass Pennsylvania Militia. Reed shouts at Arnold, furious.

JOSEPH REED

Clear those men out, Arnold! We have come to arrest a Tory and confiscate his estate! We are here to cleanse this town of all Tories!

ARNOLD

As military commander of Philadelphia, it is my duty to protect the lives and property of all civilians. Under whose direction beside your own do you operate, mister Reed?

JOSEPH REED

I take my orders from God!

ARNOLD

Well, my orders come from a higher
authority: General Washington.
Disperse or die!

Pennsylvania Militia getting nervous. Reed gestures and the man on his coach blasts his trumpet -- the Militia charges, screaming, waving swords and bayonets. Arnold's men calmly take aim and FIRE. The Pennsylvania Militia scream back in retreat, flooding around a furious Joseph Reed.

EXT. STREETS OF PHILADELPHIA, NEXT DAY - NIGHT

Washington and Arnold ride through the eerily quiet Philadelphia streets, Billy Lee behind. They're flanked on each side by three BODYGUARDS who wear long white leather dusters and carry short muskets in one hand braced on their knees. The only sound is the clack-clack-clack of their horses' hooves.

ARNOLD

That scum Joseph Reed... they're
calling him the 'King of
Pennsylvania'. The man's a budding
Cromwell. He condemns rich Tories
to death and then 'appropriates'
their property for himself.

Naturally, the pig hates me for
every Tory I've saved.

WASHINGTON

Couldn't you have appealed to
Congress?

Arnold barks a laugh.

ARNOLD

They love Reed and his inquisition!
I think they hope to share in his
disgusting profits! It's becoming
the American way!

WASHINGTON

You go too far, Benedict.

They rein-in. Just above them TWO BODIES dangle from ropes,
hanging right over the main road. Each has a sign around his
neck: "DEATH TO TORIES".

ARNOLD

These men were taken from their
homes at night, tried by Reed's
courts -- which Congress recognizes
-- and, well, you can see.

WASHINGTON

(to his bodyguard)

Cut those men down.

(and Arnold)

Congress is pushing ahead with your
court-martial. Benedict, trust me
to handle this.

Arnold looks away, too furious to reply. One of the
bodyguards stands in his stirrups and cuts the bodies down
with his sabre.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA ESTATE - NIGHT

Martha Washington sits as the person of honor among the row
of 'upper class' LADIES. Two SLAVES stand behind Martha,
waiting on her every need.

Washington dancing while CONGRESSMEN and their WIVES WATCH.
There's another crowd here: Wealthy MEN and WOMEN who look
all the world like aristocrats.

Washington dances with a very pretty, very young woman.

Finally the music ends, and everyone applauds. Washington
bows to his partner. There's a hint that he'd like to

continue this dance behind closed doors, and it's clear she's willing... but, he keeps his composure.

John Adams approaches, shakes hands with Washington, whispers in his ear. Washington follows him, but snags another glass of Madeira on the way.

EXT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Sam Adams and Joseph Reed are waiting. They all rise, all shake hands with Washington. Washington smiles, sits. It's clear from the start that he's had a lot to drink.

WASHINGTON

Gentlemen, let me get to the point,
I can't see the wisdom of pursuing
this old court-martial against
General Arnold.

JOSEPH REED

The man is a traitor!

WASHINGTON

How can you say that?

Sam Adams cuts in, trying to tread lightly.

SAM ADAMS

Did you know he is engaged to Peggy Shippen? She's the daughter of a Tory, George.

JOSEPH REED

Arnold supports the British cause!

WASHINGTON

If he supports the British why is it that every time he gets near them he kills so many of them?

(pause)

Unlike General Lee... who you and Congress backed for second in command and who is a goddamned incompetent!

JOHN ADAMS

Lafayette is a child!

WASHINGTON

Lafayette is my friend!

(laughs)

He believes in glory and truth and the freedom of all mankind; so, of course he's a child. But he would

have died before he would have let
me down.

SAM ADAMS

Is that your test of patriotism,
George; if a man will die for you?

WASHINGTON

God damn you, Sam Adams! You
wanted a revolutionary army and now
that we've really got one it scares
you more than it does the British!

JOSEPH REED

You are a pagan criminal!

Washington grabs Reed in his huge hands, slams him up against
the wall as John and Sam try to hold him back.

WASHINGTON

I swear to your God and my God,
Reed, if you sponsor any more
terrorist acts in Philadelphia I
will send in the army!

Just then, an attractive women enters. ABIGAIL ADAMS. She
just stares at this scuffle, maintains totally.

ABIGAIL ADAMS

My dear, are you keeping General
Washington all night?

JOHN ADAMS

Abigail... You know Abigail?

Everyone cools-it. Washington turns, nods politely.

WASHINGTON

Mrs. Adams. I promise I'm nearly
done here.

As she turns for the door, Washington happily escorts her.

ABIGAIL ADAMS

Well, no more secrets, all the
ladies want to know: who was that
darling young woman you were
dancing with?

WASHINGTON

She's a mechanic's daughter, Mrs.
Adams, as a matter of fact.

Uncomfortable moment while Abigail sorts this out.

ABIGAIL ADAMS

Well, I suppose a working girl
stays pretty healthy; I can see why
she can keep going all night. I
mean...

WASHINGTON

Martha rarely dances, so she can
hardly deny me the pleasure of a
good dance now and again.

Abigail smiles weakly... what does he mean by that?

JOHN ADAMS

My dear, tell the ladies I'll
return the general to them shortly.
Please.

She nods, Washington opens the door for her, then turns on
the others.

WASHINGTON

Arnold is indispensable, do you
understand? I need Arnold to help
me win this war!

JOSEPH REED

Well, I shall deny him to you! He
is evil on earth!

WASHINGTON

Are you all going insane!?
Benedict Arnold! The man who
stopped the British on Lake
Champlain! Who carried the day at
Saratoga! Goddamn-it, Joseph, you
own two mansions, ride in an
expensive, Tory coach! You are all
nothing but a pack of greedy pigs!

Washington's mouth starts BLEEDING; he coughs, chokes on the
blood; rushes to a ceramic basin and gags up the blood that
rushes out like his anger. Reed shouts at him while he's
defenseless.

JOSEPH REED

You will court-martial Arnold the
traitor! Or I will deny your army
teamsters and wagons for your
spring offensive! Congress will
back me, George.

Reed turns and stalks out of the room. Silence. Washington

recovers as John hands him a towel. Can tell John doesn't feel right about this.

JOHN ADAMS

George, I'm sorry. We all know the army will acquit Arnold...

WASHINGTON

Of course the army will acquit him, that's not the point... Arnold is a man and will understand. What I need to understand is, John, Sam... what is happening here?

(no answer)

Who are those people in there? The fat ones in silk?

JOHN ADAMS

They are... friends of Congress.

WASHINGTON

Is that where our meat and boots and uniforms and muskets went?

John looks Washington in the eye, looks away.

JOHN ADAMS

Partially...

SAM ADAMS

It's the political 'cost of doing
business', George.

WASHINGTON

Tell me, John, Sam: are all
revolutions doomed to be won by the
young and then ruined by old fools?
Or is it just old fools using the
young to get fat?

(pause)

I will notify General Arnold of our
decision. Good night...

Washington walks out.

EXT. CONGRESS BALCONY - DAY

To the sound of drums and fife, the American Army marches
through Philadelphia. Washington stands in his best uniform
on the balcony where he and Sam Adams once discussed the
revolution. Behind Washington, and at all the windows and
other balconies, wealthy men and women and members of
Congress view the passing troops.

The army is proud, but in rags. They carry their home-made flags and muskets proudly. March like heroes. A TITTING starts behind Washington; a couple of high-class ladies giggling at this rag-tag army. The tittering spreads uncontrollably, though people try not to laugh, they can't help it. When the American Flag passes, Washington stands tall and salutes. The SOLDIERS look up at him as the tittering continues behind Washington...

EXT. ARNOLD'S HOUSE, PENNSYLVANIA - NIGHT

And Benedict Arnold, reading a letter. He rises, hands shaking, puts the letter down and limps across to the window. He opens it and lets the wind blow in his face. His wife, PEGGY SHIPPEN enters. She's blond, young, beautiful and pregnant. Arnold puts a strong arm around her.

ARNOLD

General Washington has thrown me to
the dogs.

EXT. FORT ARNOLD/WEST POINT - MORNING

Washington opens the door and enters, followed by Hamilton and Lafayette. The room is quiet. As they come all the way in, a CAPTAIN rises, hands Washington a sheath of papers.

CAPTAIN

General Washington?

WASHINGTON

Where is General Arnold?

CAPTAIN

You had better read these.

Washington takes the papers, crosses the room and sits near a window. He unfolds them, starts to read. Peggy Shippen SCREAMS from O.S. The screams get louder, everyone rushes toward them except Washington who is staggered by what he's reading.

Peggy half falls into the room. Her gown is ripped open, she clutches her baby to her breast and she SCREAMS. She points at Washington.

PEGGY SHIPPEN

There's the man who will kill my
baby! Murder my baby!

Hamilton and Lafayette hold her back as two servants cover her with a blanket and drag her screaming from the room.

LAFAYETTE

My god, what has happened?

As Peggy's wailing voice continues O.S., Washington slowly hands the papers to Hamilton.

WASHINGTON

A British spy was caught with the plans to West Point in his boot, written in General Arnold's hand. Colonel Hamilton, send the guard and see if they can catch up with Arnold.

Hamilton bolts for the door. Washington continues to Lafayette. All the while Peggy's plaintive howl continues O.S.

WASHINGTON

He included a copy of our agenda. So, the British could ambush us. He set us up to be killed. You, me and Alexander. Do you understand? We can expect a British attack at any time.

EXT. FORT ARNOLD/WEST POINT - NIGHT

Greene's troops camped outside in the cold, fires burning, food cooking. No complaints. The army is mature.

Greene paces, rubbing his hands together. He paces to the main wall. Colonials, two ranks deep, face the Hudson River. Among the mostly white troops are black faces. The men surround Washington, fiercely protective in a way that suggests both intense love and extreme paranoia...

EXT. FORT OFFICE - NIGHT

Washington at the window watching the troops. Hamilton and Lafayette enter with Greene.

HAMILTON

General Greene is here. There are two other divisions here.

WASHINGTON

Colonel Hamilton. Anyone who served under Arnold, I want them shipped north. I don't want any troops here who served under Arnold.

Hamilton hesitates, swaps a look with Lafayette. Salutes.

HAMILTON

Yessir.

WASHINGTON

Did you know that Arnold left the entire defenses of this fort in complete disrepair? Most of our cannons are so neglected they may as well have been spiked!? You realize what would happen if this fort fell? The whole Hudson would be open to them!

Washington moves forward, falters. Hamilton and Lafayette see he's been drinking. They say nothing. Washington returns to the window, looking into the blackness, clings to a glass of Madeira, two pistols on the table. He's watching LIGHTS on the Hudson.

WASHINGTON

Colonel Hamilton, you think this is all my fault, don't you?

Hamilton is stunned.

HAMILTON

Sir, I think no such thing.

WASHINGTON

Don't lie to me, Hamilton! If I
had not court-martialed Arnold...

HAMILTON

Sir, Arnold is a traitor.

WASHINGTON

I must tell you sir you treat me
with disrespect!

HAMILTON

I am not conscious of it, sir! But
since you have thought it necessary
to tell me so, we part!

Horrendous silence. Hamilton waiting for a way out of this,
Lafayette and Greene waiting for Washington to give it to
him.

WASHINGTON

Very well, sir; if it be your
choice!

Stunned, Hamilton straightens. He looks at Lafayette and
Greene. He spins, and walks off. Silence.

WASHINGTON

Nathanael, I'm sending you to
Virginia to head the southern army,
to harass Cornwallis. Marquis, you
must go with him.

NATHANAEL GREENE

I'm honored, but, reluctant to
leave you.

LAFAYETTE

I feel the same, sir.

WASHINGTON

I will continue with our French
allies, concentrating on New York.

NATHANAEL GREENE

Sir, I have to act on instructions
from you ordering thirty copies of
your own dress uniform...

WASHINGTON

(defensive)

They're for my bodyguard. I have
an absolute conviction that Arnold

is planning to have me
assassinated! It will be harder if
I am surrounded by a body of men
who look like me, don't you think?

NATHANAEL GREENE

Yes sir, it's a wise idea...

EXT. TAVERN - NIGHT

Washington and a pair of FRENCH OFFICERS, flanked by
BODYGUARD that all look JUST LIKE WASHINGTON. One of the
officers has a girl on his lap, laughing. Washington looks
around, seeing a fairly sophisticated crowd, not rustics.
His eyes LOCK with those of a BLONDE. Beautiful, blue
eyed...

INT. WASHINGTON'S ROOM - MORNING

Washington wakes to discover the young girl standing at his
window, watching the sunrise. She's naked. Washington sits
up in bed, leans his head on his knee, admiring her.

EXT. BELVOIR - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Sixteen year old George Washington and eighteen year old
Sally Fairfax making love in a field, in the bright southern

sunshine.

INT. WASHINGTON'S ROOM - MORNING (PRESENT)

Washington stands at the window as if he were looking directly out on the past.

BLONDE

What are you looking at?

WASHINGTON

The sunrise.

He turns around to face her and smiles.

BLONDE

Will you ever think of me again?

Washington laughs, smiles.

WASHINGTON

My dear, I can never stop thinking about you.

EXT. CORNWALLIS' HQ, YORKTOWN - DAY

Lord Cornwallis sits at a badly scarred table, in a filthy

uniform, needing a shave, drunk.

TITLE: 'YORKTOWN, VIRGINIA, OCTOBER 1781'

Cornwallis stands as an aide who is clean-dressed and shaved arrives on horseback. Cornwallis hesitates, summons his strength: he straightens and salutes. It is the most miserable moment in his life. All around are the ruins of his HQ.

EXT. YORKTOWN - DAY

On one side of a field, a line of French Infantry. The French look perfect, their magnificent uniforms glow in the afternoon sun.

On the other side, American Infantry -- Continentals and Militia. They are a ragged mob, filthy, patched and mismatched. But they stand just as rigid as the French.

At the end of the field, between both lines, George Washington sits on Nelson. French officers nearby. Hamilton, Lafayette and Greene are mounted and near Washington. All GLOW with the glory of the moment.

Down the line march the defeated forces of Cornwallis. Their colors furled in shame, without arms, their band plays 'The

World Turned Upside-down'.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF YORKTOWN, ONE WEEK LATER - DAY

Washington and Lafayette ride toward each other. Behind Lafayette are four French Officers and a wagon with his luggage. Two armies face one another: American and French and these two men ride between. Hamilton and Greene are mounted, with the American force.

When they are together, they dismount. Lafayette wears a great coat, ready for a long overland trip. Washington in a perfect uniform, but open at the neck. They stand, just watching each other. Finally they smile. They step forward. Two men who have seen and sometimes done unspeakable things.

LAFAYETTE

Ah, les bons vieux temps ou nous
etions si malheureux!

(smiles, translates)

Oh, the good old times when we were
so unhappy!

They embrace.

EXT. THE ROAD OUT OF YORKTOWN - DAY

Lafayette mounted on a dapple grey, turns and waves his plumed hat to the armies standing at ease. All CHEER.

AND WASHINGTON

waves his sword on high. As Lafayette turns and goes he lowers the sword...

EXT. WASHINGTON'S HQ, NEWBURGH NY - DAY

Soldiers, led by their officers stand before Washington's HQ, musket barrels down in the dirt. They shout as Washington rides through the camp on Nelson. He's horrified by the demonstration.

INT. WASHINGTON'S HQ, NEWBURGH NY - DAY

As Washington climbs the stairs, Hamilton is waiting for him.

WASHINGTON

What is this?

HAMILTON

Congress has informed the army that it is bankrupt and cannot pay the soldiers pensions.

Washington is staggered. Hamilton hands him a letter.
Washington starts reading, is appalled.

WASHINGTON

This is a declaration of
insurrection! Who wrote this!?

HAMILTON

No one knows...

INT. WASHINGTON'S ROOM - DAY

Washington stands by the window, sipping Madeira while
Hamilton 'works on him'.

HAMILTON

After all these men have done!
Many have lost everything! Their
loved ones, their property! That
pension was the single thing that
kept them going!

Hamilton gets near Washington, getting personal, summoning
emotional spirits.

HAMILTON

George, remember that night when we

were drinking with Arnold?

WASHINGTON

To hell with Arnold...

HAMILTON

He warned you some day you might
have to act for the good of the
people -- even if it was against
Congress.

(pause)

George, the time has come for you
to declare yourself king of
America. Listen to me, the whole
army would rise up as one and place
you on a throne! George, you must
declare yourself with us or against
us.

WASHINGTON

Is this a coup? Alexander, are you
trying to tell me that I might be
assassinated if I don't agree?

Hamilton says nothing, doesn't have to. Washington sits,
thinks.

WASHINGTON

What's your advice, Alexander?

HAMILTON

March on Philadelphia! Get Joseph Reed, and the pigs in Congress, the speculators, who've grown fat off the war! Get them all! Sweep them aside!

Silence. Washington stares hard at Hamilton.

WASHINGTON

I want to address the officers, all the officers. Next Friday. Can we arrange it at the mess?

HAMILTON

Yes, I believe so.

WASHINGTON

Well, if it's my last order, then I order them to be there!

(softer)

Tell them I will give them my decision then.

Hamilton salutes, leaves. Washington sits in silence, can hear the shouting, chanting men outside.

INT. WASHINGTON APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Martha stands at the open window; Washington on a love seat, watching her.

MARTHA

Do you remember, eight years ago,
when you stood at that window in
Philadelphia, the night before your
appointment, and you told me what
this was all about?

Washington smiles, thinking.

MARTHA

It's just as you said, then: you
ended up with everything. What are
you going to do with it? Eight
years ago you were sure you knew.

Washington rises, veers directly to the window. But now Martha's genuinely curious, wants to understand and she moves to his side.

MARTHA

Share it with me, George. What is it that's out there now, eight years different? The men who were in power at the beginning are still in power; the big landowners and slave holders haven't changed. What really has changed?

We MOVE IN ON WASHINGTON...

INT. PALACE LIBRARY, LONDON - DAY

King George III toying with a globe as if he could see the changes sweeping the world. Benedict Arnold, dressed in full British regimentals, and two fretting MINISTERS sit across.

KING GEORGE

Washington has got everything... and I have lost it all: beautiful America. America the treasure we fought so long and so hard to keep. We burned their towns; we captured their cities; we blocked their ports; we beat them repeatedly in open combat. How did it end like this after eight years?

MINISTER 1

My Lord, Parliament and the people
simply lost the will to fight.

King George gestures impatiently.

KING GEORGE

If you're going to lie, then
convince me that I should not
abdicate.

BOTH MINISTERS

My Lord! My God, no!

King George scoffs at their groveling support.

KING GEORGE

Good, good; that's better.

(Ministers continue to
protest)

I am beginning to see that it would
be an error for me to abdicate.
General Arnold?

ARNOLD

Your Majesty, it is not too late to

defeat the Americans; if you have
seen my proposal...

KING GEORGE

Yes, General Arnold, I have seen it
and Cornwallis tells me it's a
brilliant campaign plan. But, it
seems you left the Americans too
soon and came over to me too late.

(rigid smile)

Because now, the game is up.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

King George and Benedict Arnold walking together past seeming
endless paintings of British Monarchs.

KING GEORGE

I wonder what 'General' Washington
will do. They say he plans to
retire, just leave the stage. What
do you think, Benedict?

ARNOLD

After fighting eight years? I know
Washington, I know his soul, I know
his mind: he's an aristocrat.

They pass heading toward the shadows of the lower hallway.

KING GEORGE

You think he'll seize power?

ARNOLD

Well, if he doesn't he'll be better
than us. In fact he'll be the
greatest man in the world...

They disappear into the shadows.

INT. NEWBURGH MESS - DAY

Washington steps before the gathering of officers. He clears
his voice and the officers go quiet. He looks at them for a
long time. Takes a speech from his coat.

WASHINGTON

I have noticed by my calendar that
today is the Ides of March.

(deathly silence)

I believe that when we all leave
here, the world will look
differently upon that date.

(reads)

"A scrap of paper has circulated recently through our ranks. This dreadful alternative of either deserting our country or turning our arms against it has something so shocking in it that humanity revolts at the words.

(pause)

Are we here today going to cast a shade over that glory which we have so justly acquired and tarnish the reputation of an army which is celebrated through all Europe for its patriotism?

(pause)

I say we must not. I have been asked to consider becoming dictator or king of America. I say we cannot allow this to happen here! For if we do, we again set in motion the endless wheel of revolution, betrayal and despotism.

(pleading)

As you value your own sacred honor; as you respect the rights of humanity, you must give eternity at least one distinguished proof of

unexampled patriotism and virtue!
And if you will -- by the dignity
of such conduct -- you will afford
occasion for posterity to say: had
this day been wanting, the World
had never seen the last stage of
perfection to which human nature is
capable of attaining."

Washington puts down his paper. Looks up at his officers.

THE OFFICERS...

a sea of cold, heartless stares. Hamilton, in particular,
looks away.

RESUME WASHINGTON

Unnerved by their utter lack of emotion. He takes a deep
breath, reaches into his coat and produces another paper.
He's getting desperate.

WASHINGTON

I have here a letter from the
Congressional Delegation of
Virginia. They asked I read
this...

(starts to read)

"With heavy heart and good
conscience we implore you to trust
in our sincerity..."

Washington hesitates, squints at the text. The Officers get restless. Frustrated, and almost without thinking, Washington reaches into one pocket, then another... and comes up with a tiny set of silver framed spectacles. As he puts the silver bows over his ears the irony catches him and he breaks his sternness and smiles to his men.

WASHINGTON

You have seen me grow grey in your
service. Now you see me growing
blind.

Men GASP. It's like they've been shaken from a dream and suddenly remember who and where they are. Several hide their eyes and WEEP. Washington just looks at them, understands what has happened, understands that he has won.

INT. WASHINGTON'S ROOM, NEWBURGH - NIGHT

Washington, alone, drinking. There's a knock, the door edges open and Alexander Hamilton comes in. He looks for all the world like an admonished son. Washington smiles, then

Hamilton.

HAMILTON

The officers have voted unanimously
to support you sir... and Congress.

(after a moment)

I support you too, George.

Washington stands, they look at one another for a moment,
then they embrace.

EXT. NEWBURGH CAMP - DAY

Washington astride Nelson, bidding good-bye to his troops.
All are assembled. He removes his hat, lifts it in salute,
turns, and trots away.

The soldiers raise their hats... then just watch this man who
has led them through eight years of untold hardship, vanish
from their lives...

EXT. ON THE ROAD - DAY

Washington and Billy riding slowly through the pristine New
Jersey countryside.

WASHINGTON

Wil, I want to remind you of a
conversation we started just before
Monmouth...

BILLY LEE

I ain't forgot about the freedom.

Ride in silence for a time. Billy just looks angry.

WASHINGTON

Well, what have you thought?

BILLY LEE

Well, general, I think I ain't got
no school learning, I ain't got no
trade... and I'm a drunk. So, I
think there ain't much left to be
set free.

Billy just keeps riding. Washington wants to say something,
but clearly he doesn't know what he can possibly say.

FADE TO:

EXT. MOUNT VERNON - DAY

As George Washington -- now dressed in civilian clothes --

rides up to the mansion on Nelson he slows. On the porch are Greene and Hamilton.

TITLE: MOUNT VERNON 1786 (3 YEARS LATER)

Washington dismounts and glad to see them, shakes hands all around.

WASHINGTON

Well, this must be about something!

NATHANAEL GREENE

It is; we need you George.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Washington, Hamilton and Greene walking, talking; Washington leading Nelson to cool him down. The air is crisp and windy, but it's a beautiful day, and the image is like some gorgeous American primitive -- heavenly and essential.

HAMILTON

Have you decided if you are going
to join the Virginia Delegation to
the Constitutional Convention?

WASHINGTON

I'm not sure.

HAMILTON

George, you're the only man the
people trust... trust with power.
They know you won't betray them.

WASHINGTON

But it's more than just that, am I
right?

NATHANAEL GREENE

If the constitution is ratified...
we'll have a country. They'll want
to elect you president of the
convention, which means president
of the country.

WASHINGTON

You know, I came back to Mount
Vernon to retire. I don't need to
be in government.

HAMILTON

That's why the people trust you
George. Without someone at the
convention, who has the people

behind him, everything will fail.

Will you do it?

WASHINGTON

You're asking me to be president of
a republic, not king? Not a
dictator over subjects?

NATHANAEL GREENE

That's right.

Washington turns away for a moment, strokes Nelson's
forehead, thinking...

INT. PRESIDENTIAL RESIDENCE, NYC - EVENING

George Washington stands before a mirror, adjusting his
formal jacket. Martha helps him, getting his sleeve ruffles
right.

Billy Lee brings him a glass of Madeira. Billy is dressed
almost more magnificently than Washington, walks with a limp.

BILLY LEE

Lots of people out there, general.

MARTHA

There should be, General
Washington's guest list, contrary
to Mister Hamilton's suggestion,
isn't very particular.

WASHINGTON

Well, this party is open to
everyone, isn't it? Isn't it just
open to America?

INT. GREAT HALL - EARLY EVENING

GUESTS mingle, clearly they're from all stations of life. A
SOLDIER, dressed in the simple blue with trim uniform of an
American militiaman, steps up to an open door, clears his
throat. And for the first time utters these words:

MILITIA MAN

Ladies and gentlemen. May I
present... the President of the
United States of America...

Washington enters. There's a moment of dead silence, a few
breaths taken... the moment where, for the first time since
the destruction of the Roman Republic by Caesar, a true
democracy again exists on earth. The room breaks into
applause.

ON WASHINGTON

Humbled by the overwhelming responsibility he's taken on.
Yet beaming, knowing that a great quest has been so perfectly
fulfilled. His eyes stray around the room. Suddenly they
come to rest...

HIS POV

It's William Mercer's nearly psychedelic primitive painting
of the battle of Princeton.

FADE TO:

EXT. MOUNT VERNON, 1798 - DAY

Washington walks the fields outside Mount Vernon. Sleeves
rolled back, shirt unbuttoned, wind in his hair. He carries
pen and paper -- thinking and composing... like a kid again.

WASHINGTON (O.S.)

"My dear Sally, years have passed
since we were last together.
They've been times of astonishing
change, sometimes tragic and
sometimes truly wonderful. But I

wanted you to know, that nothing
will ever destroy my memory of
those happy days -- the happiest in
my life -- when we lived together
in our youth. I have wondered
often that you should not prefer
spending the Evening of your life
among us, your dear friends, in the
country you so dearly loved, rather
than close the final scene in a
foreign place.

(pause)

A Century hence if this Country
keeps united, it bids fair to be
one of the greatest and happiest
nations in the world."

FADE OUT.