**LINCOLN**

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Based in Part on

Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln

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Final Shooting Script

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**EXT. BATTLEFIELD, JENKINS' FERRY, ARKANSAS - DAY**

Heavy grey skies hang over a flooded field, the water two

feet deep. Cannons and carts, half-submerged and tilted,

their wheels trapped in the mud below the surface, are still

yoked to dead and dying horses and oxen.

A terrible battle is taking place; two infantry companies,

Negro Union soldiers and white Confederate soldiers, knee-

deep in the water, staggering because of the mud beneath,

fight each other hand-to-hand, with rifles, bayonets,

pistols, knives and fists. There's no discipline or strategy,

nothing depersonalized: it's mayhem and each side intensely

hates the other. Both have resolved to take no prisoners.

**HAROLD GREEN (V.O.)**

Some of us was in the Second Kansas

Colored. We fought the rebs at

Jenkins' Ferry last April, just

after they'd killed every Negro

soldier they captured at Poison

Springs.

**EXT. PARADE GROUNDS ADJACENT TO THE WASHINGTON NAVY YARD,**

**ANACOSTIA RIVER - NIGHT**

Rain and fog. Union Army companies are camped out across the

grounds. Preparations are being made for the impending

assault on the Confederate port of Wilmington, North

Carolina.

Two black soldiers stand before a bivouacked Negro unit:

HAROLD GREEN, an infantryman in his late thirties, and IRA

CLARK, a cavalryman in his early twenties. ABRAHAM LINCOLN

sits on a bench facing Harold and Ira; his stovepipe hat is

at his side.

**HAROLD GREEN**

So at Jenkins' Ferry, we decided

warn't taking no reb prisoners.

And we didn't leave a one of `em

alive. The ones of us that didn't

die that day, we joined up with the

116th U.S. Colored, sir. From Camp

Nelson Kentucky.

**LINCOLN**

What's your name, soldier?

**HAROLD GREEN**

Private Harold Green, sir.

**2.**

**IRA CLARK**

I'm Corporal Ira Clark, sir. Fifth

Massachusetts Cavalry. We're

waiting over there.

He nods in the direction of his cavalry.

**IRA CLARK (CONT'D)**

We're leaving our horses behind,

and shipping out with the 24th

Infantry for the assault next week

on Wilmington.

**LINCOLN**

(to Harold Green:)

How long've you been a soldier?

**HAROLD GREEN**

Two year, sir.

**LINCOLN**

Second Kansas Colored Infantry,

they fought bravely at Jenkins'

Ferry.

**HAROLD GREEN IRA CLARK**

That's right, sir. They killed a thousand rebel

soldiers, sir. They were very

brave.

(hesitating, then)

And making three dollars less

each month than white

soldiers.

Harold Green is a little startled at Clark's bluntness.

**HAROLD GREEN**

Us 2nd Kansas boys, whenever we

fight now we -

**IRA CLARK**

Another three dollars subtracted

from our pay for our uniforms.

**HAROLD GREEN**

That was true, yessir, but that

**CHANGED -**

**IRA CLARK**

Equal pay now. Still no

commissioned Negro officers.

**LINCOLN**

I am aware of it, Corporal Clark.

**3.**

**IRA CLARK**

Yes, sir, that's good you're aware,

sir. It's only that -

**HAROLD GREEN**

(to Lincoln, trying to

change the subject:)

You think the Wilmington attack is

gonna be -

**IRA CLARK**

Now that white people have

accustomed themselves to seeing

Negro men with guns, fighting on

their behalf, and now that they can

tolerate Negro soldiers getting the

same pay - in a few years perhaps

they can abide the idea of Negro

lieutenants and captains. In fifty

years, maybe a Negro colonel. In a

hundred years - the vote.

Green's offended at the way Clark is talking to Lincoln.

**LINCOLN**

What'll you do after the war,

Corporal Clark?

**IRA CLARK**

Work, sir. Perhaps you'll hire me.

**LINCOLN**

Perhaps I will.

**IRA CLARK**

But you should know, sir, that I

get sick at the smell of bootblack

and I can't cut hair.

Lincoln smiles.

**LINCOLN**

I've yet to find a man could cut

mine so it'd make any difference.

**HAROLD GREEN**

You got springy hair for a white

man.

Lincoln laughs.

**4.**

**LINCOLN**

Yes, I do. My last barber hanged

himself. And the one before that.

Left me his scissors in his will.

Green laughs.

TWO WHITE SOLDIERS have come up, two young kids, nervous and

excited.

**FIRST WHITE SOLDIER LINCOLN**

President Lincoln, sir? Evening, boys.

**SECOND WHITE SOLDIER**

Damn! Damn!

We, we saw you, um. We were at, at -

**FIRST WHITE SOLDIER**

We was at Gettysburg!

**HAROLD GREEN SECOND WHITE SOLDIER**

You boys fight at Gettysburg? DAMN I can't believe it's -

**FIRST WHITE SOLDIER (CONT'D)**

(to Green, with mild

**CONTEMPT)**

Naw, we didn't fight there.

We just signed up last month.

We saw him two years ago at the

cemetery dedication.

**SECOND WHITE SOLDIER**

Yeah, we heard you speak! We...

DAMN DAMN DAMN! Uh, hey, how tall

are you anyway?!

**FIRST WHITE SOLDIER**

Jeez, SHUT up!

**LINCOLN**

Could you hear what I said?

**FIRST WHITE SOLDIER**

No, sir, not much, it was-

**SECOND WHITE SOLDIER**

(he recites, fast and

**MECHANICALLY:)**

"Four score and seven years ago,

our fathers brought forth on this

continent a new nation, conceived

in liberty and dedicated to the

**5.**

proposition that all men are

created equal."

**LINCOLN**

That's good, thank you for -

**FIRST WHITE SOLDIER**

"Now we are engaged in a great

civil war, testing whether that

nation or any nation so conceived

and so dedicated can long endure.

We are, we are, we are met on a

great battlefield of that war."

**LINCOLN**

Thank you, that's -

**SECOND WHITE SOLDIER**

"We have come to dedicate a portion

of that field as a final resting

place for those who here gave their

lives that that nation might live.

It is..."

(He chokes up a little.)

**FIRST WHITE SOLDIER**

His uncles, they died on the second

day of fighting.

**SECOND WHITE SOLDIER A VOICE (O.C.)**

I know the last part. "It is, Company up! Move it out!

uh, it is rather -"

Soldiers all over the field rise up at the mustering of the

troops. Names of regiments, brigades, divisions are called:

all across the field, the men put out fires, put on

knapsacks.

**LINCOLN**

(to the two white

**SOLDIERS:)**

You fellas best find your company.

**FIRST WHITE SOLDIER**

**(SALUTING LINCOLN:)**

Thank you, sir. God bless you!

**LINCOLN**

God bless you.

The second white soldier salutes, and the two move out.

**6.**

Green salutes Lincoln as well and glances at Clark, who

remains, looking down. Green leaves. Clark looks up, salutes

Lincoln and, turning smartly, walks toward his unit.

Then he stops, turns back, faces Lincoln, who watches him. A

beat, and then, in a tone of admiration and cautious

admonishment, reminding Lincoln of his promise:

**IRA CLARK**

"That we here highly resolve that

these dead shall not have died in

**VAIN -- "**

Clark salutes Lincoln again, turns again and walks away.

Lincoln watches him go. As he walks into the fog, Clark

continues reciting in a powerful voice:

**IRA CLARK (CONT'D)**

" - That this nation, under God,

shall have a new birth of freedom --

and that government of the people,

by the people, for the people,

shall not perish from the earth."

Lincoln watches Clark until the fog's swallowed him up.

**TITLE:**

**JANUARY, 1865**

**TWO MONTHS HAVE PASSED SINCE ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S RE-ELECTION**

**THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR IS NOW IN ITS FOURTH YEAR**

**EXT. A SHIP AT SEA - NIGHT**

A huge, dark, strange-looking steamship, part wood and part

iron, turreted like a giant ironclad monitor, is plowing

through the choppy black waters of an open sea.

Lincoln is alone, in darkness, on the deck, which has no

railing, open to the sea. The ship's tearing through rough

water, but there's little pitching, wind or spray. The deck

is dominated by the immense black gunnery turret.

**LINCOLN (V.O.)**

It's nighttime. The ship's moved

by some terrible power, at a

terrific speed.

Lincoln stares out towards a barely discernible horizon,

indicated by a weird, flickering, leaden glow, which appears

to recede faster than the fast-approaching ship.

**7.**

**LINCOLN (V.O.)**

Though it's imperceptible in the

darkness, I have an intuition that

we're headed towards a shore. No

one else seems to be aboard the

vessel. I'm alone.

**INT. MARY'S BOUDOIR, SECOND FLOOR OF THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT**

The room's cozy, attractive, cluttered, part dressmaker's

workshop, part repository of Mary's endless purchases:

clothing, fabrics, knicknacks, carpets. Books everywhere.

Lincoln reclines on a French chair, too small for his lengthy

frame. He's in shirtsleeves, vest unbuttoned and tie

unknotted, shoeless. He has an open folio filled with

documents on his lap.

MARY LINCOLN sits opposite, in a nightgown, housecoat and

night cap. She watches him in her vanity mirror.

She looks frightened.

**TITLE: THE WHITE HOUSE**

**LINCOLN**

I could be bounded in a nutshell

and count myself a king of infinite

space...were it not that I have bad

dreams.

I reckon it's the speed that's

strange to me. I'm used to going a

deliberate pace.

Mary looks at him, stricken with alarm.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

I should spare you. I shouldn't

tell you my dreams.

**MARY**

I don't want to be spared if you

aren't! And you spare me nothing.

He looks down at the carpet, then back up at her.

**MARY (CONT'D)**

Perhaps perhaps it's the assault on

Wilmington port. You dream about

the ship before a battle, usually.

**8.**

**LINCOLN**

(rapping lightly on his

**FOREHEAD:)**

How's the coconut?

**MARY**

Beyond description.

She delicately touches her head.

**MARY (CONT'D)**

Almost two years, nothing mends.

Another casualty of the war. Who

wants to listen to a useless woman

grouse about her carriage accident?

**LINCOLN**

I do.

**MARY**

Stuff! You tell me dreams, that's

all, I'm your soothsayer, that's

all I am anymore, I'm not to be

trusted with - Even if it wasn't a

carriage accident, even if it was

an attempted assassination -

**LINCOLN**

It was most probably an -

**MARY**

It was an assassin. Whose intended

target was you.

**LINCOLN**

How's the plans for the big shindy

progressing?

**MARY**

I don't want to talk about parties!

You don't care about parties.

**LINCOLN**

Not much but they're a necessary -

Mary studies Lincoln, thinking. Then a revelation:

**MARY**

I know...I know what it's about.

The ship, it isn't Wilmington Port,

it's not a military campaign! It's

the amendment to abolish slavery!

Why else would you force me to

**9.**

invite demented radicals into my

home?

Lincoln closes his folio.

**MARY (CONT'D)**

You're going to try to get the

amendment passed in the House of

Representatives, before the term

ends, before the Inauguration.

**LINCOLN**

**(STANDING:)**

Don't spend too much money on the

flubdubs.

Mary stands, goes up to him.

**MARY**

No one's loved as much as you, no

one's ever been loved so much, by

the people, you might do anything

now. Don't, don't waste that power

on an amendment bill that's sure of

defeat.

Seeing that he's not going to discuss this, she turns away,

walking to an open window.

**MARY (CONT'D)**

Did you remember Robert's coming

home for the reception?

Lincoln nods, though Mary isn't bothering to look at him.

**MARY (CONT'D)**

I knew you'd forget.

She closes the window.

**MARY (CONT'D)**

That's the ship you're sailing on.

The Thirteenth Amendment. You

needn't tell me I'm right. I know I

am.

She watches as he leaves the room, smiling in bitter victory:

she's right.

**10.**

**INT. HALLWAY, LEAVING MARY'S BOUDOIR - NIGHT**

Lincoln encounters ELIZABETH KECKLEY, a light-skinned black

woman, 38, Mary's dressmaker and close friend, holding a dark-

blue velvet bodice embroidered with jet beads.

**LINCOLN**

It's late, Mrs. Keckley.

**ELIZABETH KECKLEY**

(holding out the bodice:)

She needs this for the grand

reception.

Lincoln bends down to look at the intricate beading.

**ELIZABETH KECKLEY (CONT'D)**

It's slow work.

He nods, smiles, straightens up.

**LINCOLN**

Good night.

He continues down the hall. Mrs. Keckley starts to enter

Mary's boudoir, then stops, sensing something amiss. She

calls quietly after Lincoln:

**ELIZABETH KECKLEY**

(concerned, a little

**EXASPERATED:)**

Did you tell her a dream?

**INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, SECOND FLOOR, WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT**

A working room, sparsely furnished. Lincoln's desk is heaped

with files, books, newspapers. The desk's near a window, now

open. Comfortable chairs and a rocker are in a corner. Near

the fireplace, in which embers are dying, there's a long

table, eight chairs around it, settings by each chair of

inkwells and pens.

Dozens of maps cover the walls and the crowded bookcases.

Lincoln opens the door and enters to find his 10 year-old son

TAD LINCOLN near the hearth, sleeping, sprawled on a very

large military map. Lead toy soldiers are scattered across

it.

A large mahogany box, imprinted ALEXANDER GARDNER STUDIOS,

is open near Tad's head. The box contains large glass plates,

each framed in wood; these are photographic negatives. Tad's

been looking at several, which lie near him on the map.

**11.**

Lincoln kneels by Tad and looks down at the map, a

topographical and strategic survey of the no-man's land

between Union and Confederate forces at Petersburg. He

scrutinizes the precisely drawn blue and grey lines.

He lifts one of the glass plates and holds it to the

firelight: it's a large photographic negative of a young

black boy. There's a caption, in elegant cursive script:

"Abner, age 12 - $500"

And another: "Two young boys, 10 & 14 - $700"

Lincoln puts the plates back in the box and closes the lid.

Carefully brushing the toy soldiers aside, he lies down

beside Tad. He touches Tad's hair and kisses his forehead.

Tad stirs as Lincoln gets on all fours; without really waking

up, knowing the routine, Tad climbs onto his father's back.

Tad holds on as his father stands, weary, and maybe a little

surprised to find his growing son slightly heavier than he

was the night before.

**TAD**

**(FAST ASLEEP:)**

Papa...

**LINCOLN**

Hmm?

**TAD**

Papa I wanna see Willie.

**LINCOLN**

**(WHISPERING:)**

Me too, Taddie. But we can't.

**TAD**

Why not?

**LINCOLN**

Willie's gone. Three years now.

He's gone.

Lincoln carries Tad out of the room, closing the door.

**EXT. OUTSIDE THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON - MORNING**

A new flagpole is being dedicated. Lincoln, in a black

overcoat and his stovepipe hat, and Treasury Secretary

WILLIAM FESSENDEN, 59, stand by the pole. They face an

audience of officials, clerks, dignitaries, wives, soldiers.

A Marine band finishes a jaunty instrumental rendition of "We

Are Coming Father Abra'am."

**12.**

Two soldiers fasten a flag to the halyards. Lincoln moves

into place; as the crowd applauds, he takes a sheet of paper

from inside his hat and glances at it. Then he looks up.

**LINCOLN**

The part assigned to me is to raise

the flag, which, if there be no

fault in the machinery, I will do,

and when up, it will be for the

people to keep it up.

He puts the paper away. The audience waits, expecting more.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

That's my speech.

He smiles at them. They applaud, some laughing. As Lincoln

turns the crank, hoisting the flag, a solo trumpet plays "We

Are Coming Father Abra'am" and the audience joins in. Among

them, Secretary of State WILLIAM SEWARD, 64, in a thick,

exquisite winter coat and hat, and Lincoln's dapper assistant

secretary, JOHN HAY, 27. Seward looks pleased.

**AUDIENCE**

"We are coming, Father Abra'am,

three hundred thousand more,

From Mississippi's winding stream

and from New England's shore..."

We leave our plows and workshops,

our wives and children dear,

With hearts too full for utterance,

With but a silent tear.

We're coming Father Abra'am..."

**EXT. A CARRIAGE, PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, WASHINGTON - MORNING**

In a four-door carriage, top down, Seward sits opposite

Lincoln. Hay, next to Seward, organizes papers in a portfolio

on his lap.

**SEWARD**

Even if every Republican in the

House votes yes - far from

guaranteed, since when has our

party unanimously supported

anything? - but say all our fellow

Republicans vote for it. We'd still

be twenty votes short.

**LINCOLN**

Only twenty.

**13.**

**SEWARD**

Only twenty!

**LINCOLN**

We can find twenty votes.

**SEWARD**

Twenty House Democrats who'll vote

to abolish slavery! In my opinion -

**LINCOLN**

To which I always listen.

**SEWARD**

Or pretend to.

**LINCOLN**

With all three of my ears.

**SEWARD**

We'll win the war soon - It's

inevitable, isn't it?

**LINCOLN**

Ain't won yit.

**SEWARD**

You'll begin your second term with

semi-divine stature. Imagine the

possibilities peace will bring!

Why tarnish your invaluable luster

with a battle in the House? It's a

rats' nest in there, the same gang

of talentless hicks and hacks that

rejected the amendment ten months

back. We'll lose.

Lincoln smiles.

**LINCOLN**

I like our chances now.

**INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, THE WHITE HOUSE - MORNING**

Lincoln is at his desk, Hay feeding him documents to read and

sign. Seward warms himself by the fireplace, holding a

brandy.

**SEWARD**

Consider the obstacles that we'd

face. The aforementioned two-thirds

majority needed to pass an

amendment: we have a Republican

**14.**

majority, but barely more than

fifty percent -

**LINCOLN**

Fifty-six.

**SEWARD**

We need Democratic support. There's

none to be had.

**LINCOLN**

Since the House last voted on the

amendment there's been an election.

Sixty-four Democrats lost their

House seats in November. That's

sixty-four Democrats looking for

work come March.

**SEWARD LINCOLN**

I know, but that's - They don't need to worry

about re-election, they can

vote however it suits `em.

There's a knock at the office door.

**SEWARD LINCOLN**

But we can't, um, buy the (to Hay:)

vote for the amendment. It's Might as well let `em in.

too important.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

I said nothing of buying anything.

We need twenty votes was all I

said. Start of my second term,

plenty of positions to fill.

Hay opens the door to the outer office, admitting the sound

of a sizable crowd. JOHN NICOLAY, 33, Lincoln's rather severe

German-born senior secretary, ushers in MR. JOLLY, mid-40s,

mud-spattered coat, hat in hands, followed by MRS. JOLLY,

similarly road-worn, holding a suitcase. Lincoln stands.

**JOHN NICOLAY**

Mr. President, may I present Mr.

and Mrs. Jolly who've come from

Missouri to -

**MR. JOLLY**

From Jeff City, President.

Lincoln shakes Mr. Jolly's hand. Mrs. Jolly curtseys.

**15.**

**LINCOLN**

Mr. Jolly. Ma'am. This by the

fire's Secretary of State Seward.

Seward nods slightly as he lights a Cuban cigar.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

Jeff City.

Lincoln looks at the Jollys. They are worried and a little

awed.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

I heard tell once of a Jefferson

City lawyer who had a parrot that'd

wake him each morning crying out,

"Today is the day the world shall

end, as scripture has foretold."

And one day the lawyer shot him for

the sake of peace and quiet, I

presume, thus fulfilling, for the

bird at least, its prophecy!

Lincoln smiles. The Jollys don't get it. Mr. Jolly looks back

at Seward, who gestures for him to speak, then exhales a

plume of smoke.

**MR. JOLLY**

(launching into his

**PREPARED SPEECH:)**

They's only one tollbooth in Jeff

City, t' the southwest `n this man

Heinz Sauermagen from Rolla been in

illegal possession for near two

yar, since your man General

Schofield set him up there. But

President Monroe give that tollgate

to my granpap and Quincy Adams give

my pap a letter saying it's our'n

for keeps. Mrs. Jolly got the -

(to his wife:)

Show Mr. Lincoln the Quincy Adams

letter.

Mrs. Jolly opens the suitcase and begins to dig frantically

for the letter.

**LINCOLN**

That's unnecessary, Mrs. Jolly.

Just tell me what you want from

me.

Seward exhales more smoke.

**16.**

Mr. Jolly starts coughing, while Mrs. Jolly tries to fan away

the cigar smoke with the Quincy Adams letter.

**MRS. JOLLY**

Mr. Jolly's emphysema don't care

for cigars.

**SEWARD**

Madame. Do you know about the

proposed Thirteenth Amendment to

the Constitution -

**MRS. JOLLY**

Yes sir, everybody knows of it. The

President favors it.

**SEWARD**

Do you?

**MRS. JOLLY**

We do.

**SEWARD**

You know that it abolishes slavery?

**MRS. JOLLY**

Yes sir. I know it.

**SEWARD**

And is that why you favor it?

**MRS. JOLLY**

What I favor's ending the war.

Once't we do away with slavery, the

rebs'll quit fighting, since

slavery's what they're fighting

for. Mr. Lincoln, you always says

so. With the amendment, slavery's

ended and they'll give up. The war

can finish then.

**SEWARD**

If the war finished first, before

we end slavery, would -

**MRS. JOLLY**

President Lincoln says the war

won't stop unless we finish slavery-

**SEWARD**

But if it did. The South is

exhausted. If they run out of

bullets and men, would you still

**17.**

want your, uh - Who's your

representative?

**LINCOLN**

Jeff City? That's, uh, Congressman

Burton?

**MRS. JOLLY**

"Beanpole" Burton, I mean, Josiah

Burton, yes, sir!

**LINCOLN**

(to Mrs. Jolly:)

Republican. Undecided on the

question of the amendment, I

believe. Perhaps you could call on

him and inform him of your

enthusiasm.

**MRS. JOLLY**

Yeah...

**SEWARD**

Madam? If the rebels surrender next

week, would you, at the end of this

month, want Congressman Burton to

vote for the Thirteenth Amendment?

Mrs. Jolly is puzzled, and looks to Mr. Jolly. Then:

**MRS. JOLLY**

If that was how it was, no more war

and all, I reckon Mr. Jolly'd much

prefer not to have Congress pass

the amendment.

Mr. Jolly nods. Seward glances at Lincoln, then turns back to

**THE JOLLYS:**

**SEWARD**

And why's that?

Mr. Jolly's surprised: the answer's so obvious.

**MR. JOLLY**

(in a hoarse voice:)

Niggers.

**MRS. JOLLY**

If he don't have to let some

Alabama coon come up to Missouri,

steal his chickens, and his job,

he'd much prefer that.

**18.**

Seward takes the letter from Mrs. Jolly and hands it to

Lincoln.

**SEWARD**

(to Lincoln, quietly:)

The people!

I begin to see why you're in such a

great hurry to put it through.

**LINCOLN**

(to Mr. Jolly:)

Would you let me study this letter,

sir, about the tollbooth? Come back

to me in the morning and we'll

consider what the law says.

Lincoln stands.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

And be sure to visit "Beanpole" and

tell him that you support passage

of the Amendment. As a military

necessity.

The Jollys nod, skeptical now.

**NICOLAY**

(to the Jollys:)

Thank you.

Nicolay escorts them out. Before he closes the door:

**LINCOLN**

Oh, Nicolay? When you have a

moment.

Nicolay nods and steps into the anteroom, where dozens more

petitioners are waiting to speak with Lincoln. Hay confers

with the doorman. Seward closes the door behind them.

Lincoln kneels at the fireplace, stoking the fire. He puts

more wood in, then stands. Seward watches him, then:

**SEWARD**

If procuring votes with offers of

employment is what you intend, I'll

fetch a friend from Albany who can

supply the skulking men gifted at

this kind of shady work. Spare me

the indignity of actually speaking

to Democrats. Spare you the

exposure and liability.

**19.**

There is a sharp knock on the closed door, followed by two

long ones.

**LINCOLN**

Pardon me, that's a distress

signal, which I am bound by solemn

oath to respond to.

Lincoln opens the door. Tad enters, cross.

**TAD**

Tom Pendel took away the glass

camera plates of slaves Mr. Gardner

sent over because Tom says mama

says they're too distressing, but-

**LINCOLN**

You had nightmares all night,

mama's right to -

**TAD**

But I'll have worse nightmares if

you don't let me look at the plates

again!

**LINCOLN**

Perhaps.

**SEWARD**

We can't afford a single defection

from anyone in our party...not even

a single Republican absent when

they vote. You know who you've got

to see.

Nicolay enters. Lincoln turns to him.

**LINCOLN**

Send over to Blair House. Ask

Preston Blair can I call on him

around five o'clock.

**SEWARD**

(a shudder, a swallow of

**BRANDY:)**

God help you. God alone knows what

he'll ask you to give him.

**INT. THE LIBRARY, BLAIR HOUSE, WASHINGTON - EVENING**

Lincoln's perched on the edge of an ottoman.

**20.**

**LINCOLN**

If the Blairs tell `em to, no

Republican will balk at voting for

the amendment.

The room is baronial. PRESTON BLAIR, patriarch of his wealthy

and powerful family, 72 years old, sits facing his son,

MONTGOMERY BLAIR, 50, whip-thin. A fire blazes in a massive

fireplace behind Monty. Preston's handsome, elegant daughter,

ELIZABETH BLAIR LEE, 45, sits across from Monty, next to Tad,

who's wearing a Union infantryman's uniform, a real musket by

his side.

**MONTGOMERY BLAIR**

No conservative Republican is what

you mean -

**PRESTON BLAIR**

All Republicans ought to be

conservative, I founded this party -

in my own goddamned home - to be a

conservative antislavery party, not

a hobbyhorse for goddamned radical

abolitionists and -

**ELIZABETH BLAIR LEE**

Damp down the dyspepsia, daddy,

you'll frighten the child.

**MONTGOMERY BLAIR**

**(TO LINCOLN:)**

You need us to keep the

conservative side of the party in

the traces while you diddle the

radicals and bundle up with

Thaddeus Stevens's gang. You need

our help.

**LINCOLN**

Yes, sir, I do.

**MONTGOMERY BLAIR**

Well, what do we get?

**ELIZABETH BLAIR LEE**

Whoo! Blunt! Your manners, Monty,

must be why Mr. Lincoln pushed you

out of his cabinet.

**PRESTON BLAIR MONTGOMERY BLAIR**

He was pushed out - I wasn't pushed.

**21.**

**ELIZABETH BLAIR LEE (CONT'D)**

**(SMILING SARCASTICALLY:)**

Oh of course you weren't.

**PRESTON BLAIR MONTGOMERY BLAIR**

He was pushed out to placate (to Tad:)

the goddamn radical I agreed to resign.

abolishonists!

**ELIZABETH BLAIR LEE (CONT'D)**

(a nod at Tad:)

Oh Daddy, please!

**PRESTON BLAIR**

You don't mind, boy, do you?

**LINCOLN**

He spends his days with soldiers.

**TAD**

They taught me a song!

**PRESTON BLAIR**

Did they? Soldiers know all manner

of songs. How's your brother Bob?

**TAD**

He's at school now, but he's coming

to visit in four days! For the

shindy!

**PRESTON BLAIR**

At school! Ain't that fine! Good

he's not in the army!

**TAD**

Oh he wants to be, but mama said he

**CAN'T -**

**PRESTON BLAIR**

Dangerous life, soldiering.

**ELIZABETH BLAIR LEE**

Your mama is wise to keep him clean

out of that.

**PRESTON BLAIR**

Now your daddy knows that what I

want, in return for all the help I

give him, is to go down to Richmond

like he said I could, soon as

Savannah fell, and talk to

Jefferson Davis. Give me terms I

**22.**

can offer to Jefferson Davis to

start negotiating for peace. He'll

talk to me!

**MONTGOMERY BLAIR**

Conservative members of your party

want you to listen to overtures

from Richmond. That above all.

Two black servants who have entered begin to pour and serve

tea.

**MONTGOMERY BLAIR (CONT'D)**

They'll vote for this rash and

dangerous amendment only if every

other possibility is exhausted.

**PRESTON BLAIR**

Our Republicans ain't

abolitionists. We can't tell our

people they can vote yes on

abolishing slavery unless at the

same time we can tell `em that

you're seeking a negotiated peace.

The Blairs look at Lincoln, waiting for an answer.

**EXT. OUTSIDE BLAIR HOUSE - NIGHT**

A light snow's beginning to fall. A lacquered coach stands

outside the house, the Blair crest in gold on its doors.

Elizabeth Blair Lee, a blanket in her arms, comes out of the

house, talking to LEO, an elderly black servant, formerly a

slave belonging to the Blairs. They're followed by an elderly

black woman in a housekeeper's uniform.

**ELIZABETH BLAIR LEE**

Leo, it's a hundred miles to

Richmond. Get him drunk so he can

sleep.

**LEO**

Yes'm.

Elizabeth goes to the carriage, where Preston awaits. She

passes the blanket through the carriage window and tucks it

around her father.

**ELIZABETH BLAIR LEE**

Here, daddy.

**23.**

**PRESTON BLAIR ELIZABETH BLAIR LEE**

Oh! Thank you. (fussing with the

**BLANKET:)**

Let's fix this up...

**PRESTON BLAIR**

Where's my hat?

**ELIZABETH BLAIR LEE**

Leo has your hat. All right?

As Leo climbs into the carriage, Elizabeth kisses her hand,

then slaps the kiss on her father's cheek.

**ELIZABETH BLAIR LEE (CONT'D)**

Go make peace.

**INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, WHITE HOUSE - MORNING**

The cabinet has assembled. Lincoln heads the table, Seward at

his left and EDWIN M. STANTON, Secretary of War, 51, barrel-

shaped, long bearded, bespectacled, at his right. Next to him

are Secretary of the Navy GIDEON WELLES, 63, luxurious white

hair (it's a wig) and a flowing snowy beard; Postmaster

General WILLIAM DENNISON, 50; Secretary of the Interior JOHN

USHER, 49; Secretary of the Treasury WILLIAM FESSENDEN, 59;

and Attorney General JAMES SPEED, 53.

Nicolay and Hay are in chairs behind Lincoln, taking notes.

**LINCOLN**

**(TO STANTON:)**

Thunder forth, God of War!

Stanton clears his throat. He's noticed the singed edge.

**STANTON**

We'll commence our assault on

Wilmington from the sea.

**(PEEVED:)**

Why is this burnt? Was the boy

playing with it?

**LINCOLN**

It got took by a breeze several

nights back.

**STANTON**

This is an official War Department

map!

**24.**

**SEWARD**

And the entire cabinet's waiting to

hear what it portends.

**WELLES**

A bombardment. From the largest

fleet the Navy has ever assembled.

**LINCOLN**

**(TO WELLES:)**

Old Neptune! Shake thy hoary locks!

Welles stands.

**WELLES**

Fifty-eight ships are underway, of

every tonnage and firing range.

Welles gestures on the map to the positions of many ships.

**STANTON**

We'll keep up a steady barrage. Our

first target is Fort Fisher. It

defends Wilmington Port.

Stanton indicates the lines tracing artillery trajectories.

These converge particularly heavily on Fort Fisher.

**JAMES SPEED**

A steady barrage?

**STANTON**

A hundred shells a minute.

There's a moment of shocked silence.

**STANTON (CONT'D)**

Till they surrender.

**WILLIAM FESSENDEN**

Dear God.

**WELLES**

Yes. Yes.

**LINCOLN**

Wilmington's their last open

seaport. Therefore...

**STANTON**

Wilmington falls, Richmond falls

after.

**25.**

**SEWARD**

And the war... is done.

The rest of the cabinet applauds, foot stomping, table

slapping. Only John Usher doesn't join in.

**JOHN USHER**

Then why, if I may ask are we not

concentrating the nation's

attention on Wilmington? Why,

instead, are we reading in the

**HERALD -**

(he smacks a newspaper on

**THE TABLE)**

- that the anti-slavery amendment

is being precipitated onto the

House floor for debate - because

your eagerness, in what seems an

unwarranted intrusion of the

Executive into Legislative

prerogatives, is compelling it to

it's... to what's likely to be its

premature demise? You signed the

Emancipation Proclamation, you've

done all that can be expected -

**JAMES SPEED**

The Emancipation Proclamation's

merely a war measure. After the war

the courts'll make a meal of it.

**JOHN USHER**

When Edward Bates was Attorney

General, he felt confident in it

enough to allow you to sign -

**JAMES SPEED**

**(A SHRUG:)**

Different lawyers, different

opinions. It frees slaves as a

military exigent, not in any other -

**LINCOLN**

I don't recall Bates being any too

certain about the legality of my

Proclamation, just it wasn't

downright criminal. Somewhere's in

between. Back when I rode the legal

circuit in Illinois I defended a

woman from Metamora named Melissa

Goings, 77 years old, they said she

murdered her husband; he was 83. He

was choking her; and, uh, she

grabbed ahold of a stick of fire-

**26.**

wood and fractured his skull, `n he

died. In his will he wrote "I

expect she has killed me. If I get

over it, I will have revenge."

This gets a laugh.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

No one was keen to see her

convicted, he was that kind of

husband. I asked the prosecuting

attorney if I might have a short

conference with my client. And she

and I went into a room in the

courthouse, but I alone emerged.

The window in the room was found to

be wide open. It was believed the

old lady may have climbed out of

it. I told the bailiff right before

I left her in the room she asked me

where she could get a good drink of

water, and I told her Tennessee.

Mrs. Goings was seen no more in

Metamora. Enough justice had been

done; they even forgave the

bondsman her bail.

**JOHN USHER**

I'm afraid I don't -

**LINCOLN**

I decided that the Constitution

gives me war powers, but no one

knows just exactly what those

powers are. Some say they don't

exist. I don't know. I decided I

needed them to exist to uphold my

oath to protect the Constitution,

which I decided meant that I could

take the rebels' slaves from `em as

property confiscated in war. That

might recommend to suspicion that I

agree with the rebs that their

slaves are property in the first

place. Of course I don't, never

have, I'm glad to see any man free,

and if calling a man property, or

war contraband, does the trick...

Why I caught at the opportunity.

Now here's where it gets truly

slippery. I use the law allowing

for the seizure of property in a

war knowing it applies only to the

property of governments and

**27.**

citizens of belligerent nations.

But the South ain't a nation,

that's why I can't negotiate with

'em. So if in fact the Negroes are

property according to law, have I

the right to take the rebels'

property from `em, if I insist

they're rebels only, and not

citizens of a belligerent country?

And slipperier still: I maintain it

ain't our actual Southern states in

rebellion, but only the rebels

living in those states, the laws of

which states remain in force. The

laws of which states remain in

force. That means, that since it's

states' laws that determine whether

Negroes can be sold as slaves, as

property - the Federal government

doesn't have a say in that, least

not yet -

(a glance at Seward,

**THEN:)**

- then Negroes in those states are

slaves, hence property, hence my

war powers allow me to confiscate

`em as such. So I confiscated `em.

But if I'm a respecter of states'

laws, how then can I legally free

`em with my Proclamation, as I

done, unless I'm cancelling states'

laws? I felt the war demanded it;

my oath demanded it; I felt right

with myself; and I hoped it was

legal to do it, I'm hoping still.

He looks around the table. Everyone's listening.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

Two years ago I proclaimed these

people emancipated - "then,

thenceforward and forever free."

But let's say the courts decide I

had no authority to do it. They

might well decide that. Say there's

no amendment abolishing slavery.

Say it's after the war, and I can

no longer use my war powers to just

ignore the courts' decisions, like

I sometimes felt I had to do. Might

those people I freed be ordered

back into slavery? That's why I'd

like to get the Thirteenth

Amendment through the House, and on

**28.**

its way to ratification by the

states, wrap the whole slavery

thing up, forever and aye. As soon

as I'm able. Now. End of this

month. And I'd like you to stand

behind me. Like my cabinet's most

always done.

A moment's silence, broken by a sharp laugh from Seward.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

As the preacher said, I could write

shorter sermons but once I start I

get too lazy to stop.

**JOHN USHER**

It seems to me, sir, you're

describing precisely the sort of

dictator the Democrats have been

howling about.

**JAMES SPEED**

Dictators aren't susceptible to

law.

**JOHN USHER**

Neither is he! He just said as

much! Ignoring the courts? Twisting

meanings? What reins him in from,

from...

**LINCOLN**

Well, the people do that, I

suppose. I signed the Emancipation

Proclamation a year and half before

my second election. I felt I was

within my power to do it; however I

also felt that I might be wrong

about that; I knew the people would

tell me. I gave `em a year and half

to think about it. And they re-

elected me.

**(BEAT)**

And come February the first, I

intend to sign the Thirteenth

Amendment.

**INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, WHITE HOUSE - EARLY AFTERNOON**

Nicolay opens the door to the crowded outer office to admit

perpetually worried JAMES ASHLEY, 42, (R, OH). Tad eyes him

from a chair by the window.

**29.**

Lincoln enters the room with Seward.

**LINCOLN**

Well, Mr. Representative Ashley!

Tell us the news from the Hill.

Lincoln shakes his hand and warmly claps the discombobulated

but flattered representative on the shoulder.

**JAMES ASHLEY**

Well! Ah! News -

**LINCOLN**

Why for instance is this thus, and

what is the reason for this

thusness?

**JAMES ASHLEY**

**I...**

**SEWARD**

James, we want you to bring the

anti-slavery amendment to the floor

for debate -

**JAMES ASHLEY SEWARD**

Excuse me. What? - immediately, and - You are

the amendment's manager, are

you not?

**JAMES ASHLEY**

I am, of course - But -

Immediately?

**SEWARD**

And we're counting on robust

radical support, so tell Mr.

Stevens we expect him to put his

back into it, it's not going to be

easy, but we trust -

**JAMES ASHLEY**

It's impossible. No, I am sorry,

no, we can't organize anything

immediately in the House. I have

been canvassing the Democrats since

the election, in case any of them

softened after they got walloped.

But they have stiffened if

anything, Mr. Secretary. There

aren't nearly enough votes -

**LINCOLN**

We're whalers, Mr. Ashley!

**30.**

**JAMES ASHLEY**

Whalers? As in, um, whales?

Lincoln moves in, standing very close to Ashley.

**LINCOLN**

We've been chasing this whale for a

long time. We've finally placed a

harpoon in the monster's back.

It's in, James, it's in! We finish

the deed now, we can't wait! Or

with one flop of his tail he'll

smash the boat and send us all to

eternity!

**SEWARD**

On the 31st of this month. Of this

year. Put the amendment up for a

vote.

Ashley is agog.

**INT. THADDEUS STEVENS'S OFFICE IN THE CAPITOL - EVENING**

The room's redolent of politics, ideology (a bust of

Robespierre, a print of Tom Paine), long occupancy and hard

work. On the wall opposite a massive desk hangs a faded

banner: "RE-ELECT THADDEUS STEVENS, REPUBLICAN TICKET, 9TH

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT, LANCASTER PENNSYLVANIA". At the desk

sits THADDEUS STEVENS (R, PA), 73, bald under a horrible red

wig, a gaunt, powerful face resembling Lincoln's, though

beardless and bitter.

In the office are Ashley, Speaker of the House SCHUYLER

COLFAX (R, IN), formidable Senator BLUFF WADE (R, MA), who's

never smiled, and ASA VINTNER LITTON (R, MD).

**BLUFF WADE**

Whalers?

**JAMES ASHLEY**

That's what he said.

**BLUFF WADE**

The man's never been near a whale

ship in his life!

**(TO STEVENS:)**

Withdraw radical support, force him

to abandon this scheme, whatever

he's up to - He drags his feet

about everything, Lincoln; why this

urgency? We got it through the

Senate without difficulty because

**31.**

we had the numbers. Come December

you'll have the same in the House.

The amendment'll be the easy work

of ten minutes.

**ASA VINTNER LITTON**

He's using the threat of the

amendment to frighten the rebels

into an immediate surrender.

**SCHUYLER COLFAX**

I imagine we'd rejoice to see that.

**ASA VINTNER LITTON**

Will you rejoice when the Southern

states have re-joined the Union,

pell-mell, as Lincoln intends them

to, and one by one each refuses to

ratify the amendment? If we pass

it, which we won't.

**(TO STEVENS:)**

Why are we co-operating with, with

him? We all know what he's doing

and we all know what he'll do. We

can't offer up abolition's best

legal prayer to his games and

tricks.

**BLUFF WADE**

He's said he'd welcome the South

back with all its slaves in chains.

**JAMES ASHLEY**

Three years ago he said that! To

calm the border states when we were-

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

I don't.

This confuses the room. Stevens turns to Vintner Litton.

**THADDEUS STEVENS (CONT'D)**

You said "we all know what he'll

do." I don't know.

**ASA VINTNER LITTON**

You know he isn't to be trusted.

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

Trust? I'm sorry, I was under the

misapprehension your chosen

profession was politics. I've never

trusted the President. I never

**32.**

trust anyone. But... Hasn't he

surprised you?

**ASA VINTNER LITTON**

No, Mr. Stevens, he hasn't.

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

Nothing surprises you, Asa,

therefore nothing about you is

surprising. Perhaps that is why

your constituents did not re-elect

you to the coming term.

(collecting his cane and

**STANDING:)**

It's late, I'm old, I'm going home.

Stevens limps to the door, opens it, and turns.

**THADDEUS STEVENS (CONT'D)**

Lincoln the inveterate dawdler,

Lincoln the Southerner, Lincoln the

capitulating compromiser, our

adversary - and leader of the

godforsaken Republican Party, our

party - Abraham Lincoln has asked

us to work with him to accomplish

the death of slavery in America.

**(BEAT:)**

Retain, even in opposition, your

capacity for astonishment.

Stevens leaves, shutting the door. They watch him go, Ashley

excited, Litton unmoved, insulted, skeptical.

**INT. PRIVATE DINING ROOM, OLD TAVERN IN WASHINGTON DC - NIGHT**

In a cramped private alcove, a low, sagging timber ceiling,

sooty walls, sawdusted floor, ancient curtain closing it off,

Seward sits at a small table with ROBERT LATHAM, an Albany NY

political operative, RICHARD SCHELL, a Wall Street

speculator, and W.N. BILBO, a Tennessee lawyer and lobbyist.

A chandelier with candles drips wax on them.

On the table, a leather folio lies open: prospectuses for

jobs in the administration. Latham and Schell study these.

Bilbo is studying Seward.

**SEWARD**

The President is never to be

mentioned. Nor I. You're paid for

your discretion.

**33.**

**W.N. BILBO**

Hell, you can have that for

nothin', what we need money for is

bribes. It'd speed things up.

**SEWARD**

No. Nothing strictly illegal.

**ROBERT LATHAM**

It's not illegal to bribe

Congressmen. They starve

otherwise.

**RICHARD SCHELL**

I have explained to Mr. Bilbo and

Mr. Latham that we're offering

patronage jobs to the Dems who vote

yes. Jobs and nothing more.

**SEWARD**

That's correct.

**W.N. BILBO**

Congressmen come cheap! Few

thousand bucks'll buy you all you

need.

**SEWARD**

The President would be unhappy to

hear you did that.

**W.N. BILBO**

Well, will he be unhappy if we

lose?

A WAITRESS brings in a platter of roasted crabs, which she

slams down on the table, and leaves.

**SEWARD**

The money I managed to raise for

this endeavor is only for your

fees, food, and lodgings.

**W.N. BILBO**

Uh huh. If that squirrel-infested

attic you've quartered us in's any

measure, you ain't raised much.

**RICHARD SCHELL**

Shall we get to work?

Bilbo takes a mallet to a crab, smashing it!

**34.**

**INT. FLOOR OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES - DAY**

A gavel slams down on a sounding block in an attempt to

silence the raucous tumult in the large chamber. It subsides

enough for Colfax to be heard from his chair atop the central

**DAIS:**

**SCHUYLER COLFAX**

The House recognizes Fernando Wood,

the honorable representative from

New York.

**TITLE: THE HOUSE DEBATE BEGINS**

**JANUARY 9**

Floor and balcony are full, although the desks of

representatives from seceded states are bare and unoccupied.

On the Democratic side, 81 members applaud FERNANDO WOOD (D,

NY) as he takes the podium. The Democratic leadership,

including GEORGE YEAMAN (KY), has gathered around House

minority leader GEORGE PENDLETON(OH). On the Republican side

of the aisle, enraged booing from the 102 Republicans,

including HIRAM PRICE (IA), GEORGE JULIAN (IN), Vintner

Litton and Ashley, all gathered around Stevens's desk.

**FERNANDO WOOD**

Estimable colleagues. Two bloody

years ago this month, his Highness,

King Abraham Africanus the First -

our Great Usurping Caesar, violator

of habeas corpus and freedom of the

press, abuser of states' rights -

**HIRAM PRICE FERNANDO WOOD**

(loud:) - radical republican autocrat

If Lincoln really were a ruling by fiat and martial

tyrant, Mr. Wood, he'd'a had law affixed his name to his

your empty head impaled on a heinous and illicit

pike, and the country better Emancipation Proclamation,

for it! promising it would hasten the

end of the war, which yet

rages on and on.

Murmuring from the floor and the balcony, in the front row of

which Mary and Elizabeth Keckley sit. Mary turns her gaze

from the floor to watch Latham and Schell, a few seats away,

scrutinize the floor, whispering, Latham taking notes. Schell

holds the leather prospectus folio in his lap. Bilbo sits

behind them.

They study the other NY Democrats - CHARLES HANSON, NELSON

MERRICK, HENRY LANFORD, HOMER BENSON, GILES STUART - who

**35.**

comprise a cluster of glum uncomfortable passivity on that

side of the aisle.

**FERNANDO WOOD (CONT'D) ROBERT LATHAM**

He claimed, as tyrants do, (whispering to Schell:)

that the war's emergencies The New York delegation's

permitted him to turn our looking decidedly uninspired.

army into the unwilling

instrument of his monarchical

**AMBITIONS -**

Wood points at Stevens, granite-faced. Stevens's eyes burn

back at Wood.

**FERNANDO WOOD (CONT'D)**

- and radical Republicanism's

abolitionist fanaticism!

This prompts shouts and boos from the Republicans.

**FERNANDO WOOD (CONT'D)**

His Emancipation Proclamation has

obliterated millions of dollars'

worth of personal property rights -

Schell examines the Pennsylvania Democrats: an openly

appalled ARCHIBALD MORAN, AMBROSE BAILER, and, chewing his

thumb, a painful fake grin pinned to his face, ALEXANDER

COFFROTH. Schell leans in to Latham.

**FERNANDO WOOD (CONT'D) RICHARD SCHELL**

- and "liberated" the Over in Pennsylvania - who's

hundreds of thousands of the sweaty man eating his

hopelessly indolent Negro thumb?

refugees, bred by nature for

servility, to settle in ROBERT LATHAM

squalor in our Northern Unknown to me. Seems jumpy.

cities!

**RICHARD SCHELL**

Perhaps he'll jump.

Cheering and booing.

In the Connecticut delegation, JOHN ELLIS winds his pocket

watch, looking contemptuously at Wood. Schell makes a note.

**36.**

**FERNANDO WOOD (CONT'D) W.N. BILBO**

But all that was not enough Jesus, when's this son-of-

for this dictator, who now liberty sonofabitch gonna sit

seeks to insinuate his down?

miscegenist pollution into

the Constitution itself! RICHARD SCHELL

John Ellis is going to break

his watch if he doesn't stop -

**FERNANDO WOOD (CONT'D)**

We are once again asked - nay,

commanded - to consider a proposed

thirteenth amendment which, if

passed, shall set at immediate

liberty four million coloreds while

manacling the limbs of the white

race in America. If it is passed -

but it shall not pass!

Wild cheering and booing.

**FERNANDO WOOD (CONT'D) ROBERT LATHAM**

Every member of the House What's more interesting is

loyal to the Democratic Party how dismal and disgruntled

and the constituents it Mr. Yeaman appears. He should

serves shall oppose- be cheering right now, but...

**W.N. BILBO**

Looks like he ate a bad

oyster.

Thaddeus Stevens calls out from his desk.

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

A point of order, Mr. Speaker, if

you please? When will Mr. Wood -

**FERNANDO WOOD**

Mr. Speaker, I still have the floor

and the gentleman from Pennsylvania

is out of order!

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

- when will Mr. Wood conclude his

interminable gabble? Some of us

breathe oxygen, and we find the

mephitic fumes of his oratory a

lethal challenge to our pleural

capacities.

Wild cheering, applause from the Republicans.

**37.**

**FERNANDO WOOD**

We shall oppose this amendment, and

any legislation that so affronts

natural law, insulting to God as to

man! Congress must never declare

equal those whom God created

unequal!

The Democrats cheer. Mary watches with concern. Mrs. Keckley

is angry and uncomfortable.

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

Slavery is the only insult to

natural law, you fatuous

nincompoop!

**GEORGE PENDLETON**

Order! Procedure! Mr. Speaker, Mr.

Wood has the floor!

**(TO STEVENS:)**

Instruct us, Oh Great Commoner,

what is unnatural, in your opinion?

Niggrahs casting ballots? Niggrah

representatives? Is that natural,

Stevens? Intermarriage?

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

What violates natural law? Slavery,

and you, Pendleton, you insult God,

you unnatural noise.

An avalanche of boos and cheers as Democrats surge towards

Wood, Republicans towards Stevens. Ashley rushes to Colfax,

**CALLING:**

**JAMES ASHLEY**

Mr. Colfax! Please, use your gavel!

They are -

(to the Democrats:)

You are out of order!

**(TO COLFAX:)**

Direct the sergeant of arms to

suppress this!

(back to the Democrats:)

We are in session!

**INT. SECOND FLOOR CORRIDOR OF THE WHITE HOUSE - MORNING**

The corridor as usual is lined with petitioners. They've

lined up along both sides of the wall and are hooting,

laughing, clapping and cheering, egging on Tad as, with

furious concentration, he drives a cart pulled at

considerable speed by a large and seriously annoyed goat down

**38.**

the hall. White House doorkeeper and unofficial child-minder

TOM PENDEL follows, admonishing the petitioners as he goes.

**TOM PENDEL**

Please don't encourage this! Don't

encourage this!

ROBERT LINCOLN, 21, enters from the stairs carrying several

pieces of large and heavy luggage.

Tad sees him, jumps out of the goat cart, runs up to and

tackles Robert, causing him to drop his luggage. They embrace

as Pendel captures the goat and leads it away.

**TAD**

You're back you're back you're back

you're back you're -

**ROBERT**

**(LAUGHING)**

I am. Your goat got big.

Robert disentangles himself from Tad and hands him a

suitcase.

**ROBERT (CONT'D)**

Here, help me get one of these to

my room.

(a nervous glance at the

door to Mary's bedroom

**SUITE:)**

Is she in there?

As Robert hoists the rest of the luggage himself, Tad

chatters and A PETITIONER comes forward. He grabs the trunk

as Robert's lifting it.

**39.**

**TAD PETITIONER**

She's asleep, probably, they You need help, sir? I can...

went to see Avonia Jones last

night in a play about ROBERT

Israelites. Daddy's meeting No, sir, I don't. No.

with a famous scientist now

and he's nervous because of PETITIONER

how smart the man is and the Could you bring your pa this

man is angry about, `cause letter I writ about my

there's a new book that Sam insolvency proceedings?

Beckwith says is about

finches, and finches' beaks, ROBERT

about how they change, it Let it go please, thank you.

takes years and years and You deliver your own

years but - goddamned petition, thank

you...

**PETITIONER**

Please, please.

Robert wrestles the trunk out of the man's grasp just as Mary

enters the hall and sees him.

**MARY**

He's here...

(calling down the hall:)

He's here, Mrs. Cuthbert! He's

here!

**(TO ROBERT:)**

Robbie... Oh Robbie! Robbie!

**ROBERT**

**(EMBRACING HER:)**

Hi, mama. Hey. Hey...

**MARY (CONT'D)**

**(OVERJOYED)**

Oh!

She instantly eyes Robert's amount of luggage with suspicion.

**MARY (CONT'D) TAD**

You're only staying a few - but what's made everyone

days. Why'd you pack all of really cross with the man,

that? the man who wrote the finch

book, is he says people are

ROBERT cousins to monkeys, but he

Well, I don't know how long was going to say -

**I'M -**

**MARY (CONT'D)**

**(TO TAD:)**

Go tell your father Robert's home!

**40.**

**TAD**

Mr. Nicolay says daddy's secluded

with Mr. Blair.

**MARY**

Tell him anyway.

Tad drops the suitcase and runs to the office. Mary strokes

Robert's face, looking concerned.

**MARY (CONT'D)**

You forget to eat, exactly like

him.

**ROBERT**

**(LAUGHS)**

No...

**MARY**

You'll linger a few days extra,

after the reception, before you go

back to school.

**ROBERT**

Well, I don't know if I'm gonna go

back to -

She stops him with an alarmed look.

**MARY**

We'll fatten you up before you

return to Boston.

**ROBERT**

All right, mama.

**MARY**

All right.

(beaming at him,

**ADORINGLY:)**

Oh Robbie...

**INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, WHITE HOUSE - MORNING**

Preston Blair, still in his traveling cloak, and Lincoln

stand near the fireplace facing one another.

**PRESTON BLAIR**

Jefferson Davis is sending three

delegates: Stephens, Hunter and

Campbell: Vice President of the

Confederacy, their former Secretary

of State, and their Assistant

**41.**

Secretary of War. They're coming in

earnest to propose peace.

Both men look into the fire. Preston moves closer.

**PRESTON BLAIR (CONT'D)**

I know this is unwelcome news for

you. Now hear me: I went to

Richmond to talk to traitors, to

smile at and plead with traitors,

because it'll be spring in two

months, the roads'll be passable,

the Spring slaughter commences.

Four bloody Springs now! Think of

my Frank, who you've taken to your

heart, how you'll blame yourself if

the war takes my son as it's taken

multitudes of sons. Think of all

the boys who'll die if you don't

make peace. You must talk with

these men!

**LINCOLN**

I intend to, Preston. And in

return, I must ask you -

**PRESTON BLAIR LINCOLN**

No, this is not horsetrading, - to support our push for

this is life and - the amendment when it reaches

**THE -**

There's a knock on the door.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

Not now!

Robert enters. Nicolay stands behind him, apologetic.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

Oh. Bob. I'm sorry. Welcome home.

He shakes hands with his son, stiffly.

**ROBERT**

Thank you.

**LINCOLN PRESTON BLAIR**

(to Robert:) (pointedly:)

I'm talking to Preston Blair, You're looking fit, Robert.

we - Harvard agrees with you. Fit

ROBERT and rested.

Mr. Blair.

**42.**

**LINCOLN**

(dismissing Robert,

**UNINTENTIONALLY ABRUPT)**

Just give us a moment please,

Robert. Thank you.

He turns to Preston. Robert, stung, hesitates, then leaves

the room, Nicolay shutting the door behind him.

**PRESTON BLAIR**

I will procure your votes for you,

as I promised. You've always kept

your word to me. Those Southern men

are coming.

(taking Lincoln's hand)

I beg you, in the name of Gentle

**CHRIST -**

**PRESTON BLAIR (CONT'D) LINCOLN**

Talk peace with these men. Preston, I understand...

**LINCOLN**

**(SHARPLY)**

I understand, Preston.

**EXT. ON THE MALL - AFTERNOON**

JACOB GRAYLOR (D, PA) and Bilbo walk outside the Capitol.

Graylor looks over the prospectuses.

**ROBERT LATHAM (V.O.)**

We have one abstention so far -

**RICHARD SCHELL (V.O.)**

Jacob Graylor -

Graylor selects one and hands it to Bilbo.

**RICHARD SCHELL (V.O.)**

He'd like to be Federal Revenue

Assessor for the Fifth District of

Pennsylvania.

**INT. A BEDROOM IN THE ST. CHARLES HOTEL - NIGHT**

A small room, two beds, in disarray: newspapers, overflowing

ashtrays, whiskey bottles empty on the floor. Latham and

Schell stand at a table strewn with the remnants of a poker

game. Bilbo lies on one of the beds. All three are in their

shirtsleeves. Seward is at the table.

**43.**

**ROBERT LATHAM**

- so the total of representatives

voting three weeks from today is

reduced to 182, which means 122 yes

votes to reach the requisite two-

thirds of the House. Assuming all

Republicans vote for the

amendment...?

Seward nods, less assertively than Latham would like.

**ROBERT LATHAM (CONT'D)**

Then, despite our abstention, to

reach a two-thirds majority we

remain 20 yeses short.

**INT. THE OLD TAVERN, WASHINGTON - NIGHT**

Bilbo is drinking schooners of beer with EDWIN LECLERK (D,

OH) and CLAY HAWKINS (D, OH). Hawkins listens as Bilbo gives

his pitch. LeClerk looks at the prospectuses.

**ROBERT LATHAM (V.O.)**

For which we're seeking from among

64 lame duck Democrats. Fully 39 of

these we deem unredeemable no

votes.

LeClerk throws his beer in Bilbo's face, soaking Bilbo and

the prospectuses. Hawkins looks shocked. LeClerk storms out.

**INT. THE ROOM IN THE ST. CHARLES HOTEL - NIGHT**

**W.N. BILBO**

The kind that hates niggers, hates

God for making niggers.

**ROBERT LATHAM**

The Good Lord on High would despair

of their souls.

**SEWARD**

**(DISTASTEFULLY:)**

Thank you for that pithy

explanation, Mr. Bilbo.

**RICHARD SCHELL**

We've abandoned these 39 to the

Devil that possesses them.

**44.**

**EXT. A WORKING CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD IN WASHINGTON - DAY**

Schell stands at the door of a small, grubby row house. He

presents the folio, warped from its beer bath, to WILLIAM

HUTTON(D, IN), eyes red from crying, dressed in mourning

black.

Hutton slams the door in Schell's face. A funeral wreath that

adorns the door falls to the ground. A daguerreotype attached

to the wreath depicts a young officer, Hutton's brother

Frederick.

**INT. THE ROOM IN THE ST. CHARLES HOTEL - NIGHT**

**RICHARD SCHELL**

The remaining lame ducks, on whom

we've been working with a purpose -

Schell hands Latham a stack of folded prospectuses, each with

a name scrawled on it.

**ROBERT LATHAM**

Charles Hanson.

**EXT. IN FRONT OF THE CAPITOL - TWILIGHT**

Representatives Merrick, Lanford, Benson, Stuart and Hanson,

the New York lame ducks, descend the stairs, discussing the

opening of the amendment debate, to which they've just been

listening.

Latham smoothly holds Hanson back from the group, extending a

hand, the still pristine portfolio under his arm. He smiles

as the other NY lame ducks proceed down the stairs, unaware,

then nods his head back up toward the Capitol steps, where

Bilbo and Schell wait. Latham opens the folio as he talks to

Hanson.

**INT. THE ROOM IN THE ST. CHARLES HOTEL - NIGHT**

**ROBERT LATHAM**

Giles Stuart.

**INT. THE TREASURY DEPARTMENT - DAY**

In the grand lobby there are Federal bank windows. Schell is

in line at one of these behind Giles Stuart, who completes a

transaction and leaves, counting money. Bilbo, barrelling the

other way, intentionally slams into Stuart, causing him to

drop his money. Bilbo and Schell both kneel to help.

**45.**

Schell places the open folio in Stuart's hands. As the men

pile his recovered money into the folio, Stuart's puzzled,

then intrigued. Schell gives him a meaningful look.

**CLOSE ON A SMALL WOODEN FILE BOX**

A folded prospectus, now with the name "Stuart" scrawled on

it, is added to a growing file.

**INT. THE US PATENT OFFICE, WASHINGTON - DAY**

Visitors file past cabinets containing animal and plant

specimens and inventions; the line circles around a large

case in which an amputated leg capped with a brass plate is

displayed. A sign identifies it: LEFT LEG OF GENERAL DANIEL

**SICKLES, AT GETTYSBURG, JULY 5, 1863.**

**ROBERT LATHAM (V.O.)**

Nelson Merrick.

Latham looks through the case at Schell, who's next to Nelson

Merrick, who nods, solemnly staring at the leg. Schell

proffers Merrick the folio. Merrick flips through the folio.

**ROBERT LATHAM (V.O.)**

Homer Benson.

**INT. A WORKINGMENS' LUNCHROOM, WASHINGTON - DAY**

A hall packed with working men, soaped-up windows. A GYPSY

FIDDLER saws away. Homer Benson, incongruous in a suit,

slurps. As he lifts his spoon to his mouth, the folio is

placed in front of him. He looks over, puzzled, as Schell

smiles and extends a hand.

Benson takes the folio. Schell slides his chair closer.

**INT. THE ROOM IN THE ST. CHARLES HOTEL - NIGHT**

Another prospectus joins the pile: "Benson"

**ROBERT LATHAM**

And lastly...

Bilbo retrieves a paper from the floor and hands it to

Seward.

**W.N. BILBO**

Clay Hawkins. Of Ohio.

**46.**

**EXT. A WOODS ALONG THE POTOMAC RIVER - MORNING**

Bilbo walks with Clay Hawkins, who peruses the folio. Bilbo

has a small covered wicker basket slung over his shoulder.

Hawkins follows, happy and sick with fear.

**CLAY HAWKINS**

T-tax collector for the Western

Reserve. Th-th-that pays

handsomely.

**W.N. BILBO**

Don't just reach for the highest

branches. They sway in every

breeze. Assistant Port Inspector of

Marlston looks like the ticket to

me.

**CLAY HAWKINS**

Uh, boats, they, they make me sick.

Bilbo retrieves a snare; a small bird is trapped by the foot.

Bilbo stuffs the bird in the basket.

**CLAY HAWKINS (CONT'D)**

So just stand on the dock. Let the

Assistant Assistant Port

Inspector's stomach go weak.

Bilbo eyes Hawkins, who anxiously eyes the folio.

**INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, WHITE HOUSE - EARLY EVENING**

Seward hands the last prospectus to Nicolay, who unfolds it,

places it on top of the other prospectuses, and records

details about Hawkins's appointment in a notebook. Seward

smokes a cigar, Nicolay a pipe. Lincoln sits, feet up,

examining a newspaper.

**SEWARD**

And lastly, Democratic yes vote

number six. Hawkins from Ohio.

**LINCOLN**

Six.

**SEWARD**

Well, thus far. Plus Graylor's

abstention. From tiny acorns and so

on.

**LINCOLN**

What'd Hawkins get?

**47.**

**JOHN NICOLAY**

**(STILL WRITING:)**

Postmaster of the Millersburg Post

Office.

**LINCOLN**

He's selling himself cheap, ain't

he?

**SEWARD**

He wanted tax collector of the

Western Reserve - a first-term

congressman who couldn't manage re-

election, I felt it unseemly and

they bargained him down to

Postmaster.

**(TO NICOLAY:)**

Scatter `em over several rounds of

appointments, so no one notices.

And burn this ledger, please, after

you're done.

Lincoln stands.

**LINCOLN**

**(TO NICOLAY:)**

Time for my public opinion bath.

Might as well let `em in.

Nicolay helps Lincoln trade his shawl for his overcoat in

preparation to meet the public.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

Seven yeses with Mr. Ellis!

Thirteen to go!

**SEWARD**

One last item, an absurdity, but -

My associates report that among the

Representatives a fantastical

rumor's bruited about, which I

immediately disavowed, that you'd

allowed bleary old Preston Blair to

sojourn to Richmond to invite Jeff

Davis to send commissioners up to

Washington with a peace plan.

Lincoln is silent. A horrifying reality dawns for Seward:

**SEWARD (CONT'D)**

I, of course, told them you would

never...Not without consulting me,

you wouldn't...Because why on earth

would you?

**48.**

**EXT. IN AN OPEN FIELD NEAR PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA - EVENING**

THREE UNION CAVALRY OFFICERS consult with THREE CONFEDERATE

CAVALRY OFFICERS, all mounted. The officers exchange

documents and salutes.

**TITLE: NO MAN'S LAND**

**OUTSIDE PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA**

**JANUARY 11**

The ranking Confederate trots to a buggy in which three

Confederate officials sit: Vice President ALEXANDER STEPHENS,

53, short; JOHN A. CAMPBELL, Assistant Secretary of War, 54;

and Senator R.M.T. HUNTER, 56. They're well-dressed for

winter, Stephens especially heavily bundled.

Stephens, Campbell and the indignant Hunter leave the buggy

and are escorted by Confederate officers to the waiting

company of Union cavalry and infantry.

A Union Army ambulance, a large American flag painted on one

side, driven by TWO BLACK SOLDIERS, stands near broken wagons

and a derelict cannon. ANOTHER BLACK SOLDIER stands at

attention by the ambulance's rear door.

The soldier, staring coldly at these men, gestures brusquely

to the ambulance. The Confederate peace commissioners

hesitate; Hunter stares in horror at the black soldiers. Then

Stephens pushes past Hunter. He nods to the soldier.

**ALEXANDER STEPHENS**

(with polite dignity:)

Much obliged.

He boards the ambulance. His fellow delegates follow in his

wake, Hunter glaring with defiant hatred at the soldiers

before climbing in.

**INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, WHITE HOUSE - EARLY EVENING**

Seward stands, stunned. Lincoln sits at the cabinet table.

Nicolay is gone.

**SEWARD**

Why wasn't I consulted?! I'm

Secretary of State! You, you, you

informally send a reactionary

dottard, to - What will happen, do

you imagine, when these peace

commissioners arrive?

**49.**

**LINCOLN**

We'll hear `em out.

**SEWARD**

Oh, splendid! And next the

Democrats will invite `em up to

hearings on the Hill, and the

newspapers - well, the newspapers -

the newspapers will ask "why risk

enraging the Confederacy over the

issue of slavery when they're here

to make peace?" We'll lose every

Democrat we've got, more than

likely conservative Republicans

will join `em, and all our work,

all our preparing the ground for

the vote, laid waste, for naught.

**LINCOLN**

The Blairs have promised support

for the amendment if we listen to

these people -

**SEWARD**

Oh, the Blairs promise, do they?

You think they'll keep their

promise once we have heard these

delegates and refused them? Which

we will have to do, since their

proposal most certainly will be

predicated on keeping their slaves!

**LINCOLN**

What hope for any Democratic votes,

Willum, if word gets out that I've

refused a chance to end the war?

You think word won't get out? In

Washington?

**SEWARD**

It's either the amendment or this

Confederate peace, you cannot have

both.

**LINCOLN**

"If you can look into the seeds of

time, And say which grain will grow

and which will not, Speak then to

me..."

**SEWARD**

Oh, disaster. This is a disaster!

**50.**

**LINCOLN**

Time is a great thickener of

things, Willum.

**SEWARD**

Yes, I suppose it is - Actually I

have no idea what you mean by that.

Lincoln stands.

**LINCOLN**

Get me thirteen votes.

(in a thick Kentucky

**ACCENT:)**

Them fellers from Richmond ain't

here yit.

**INT. INSIDE THE AMBULANCE WAGON - DAY**

The ambulance has come to a stop. The rear door opens and the

soldiers immediately hop out. The commissioners squint,

blinded, into the dazzling sunlight, at the River Queen,

Grant's side-wheel steamer, docked on the banks of the James

River.

**TITLE: US ARMY HEADQUARTERS**

**CITY POINT, VIRGINIA**

**JANUARY 12**

**INT. LINCOLN'S BEDROOM, SECOND FLOOR OF THE WHITE HOUSE -**

**LATE AFTERNOON**

Tad, in fancy military uniform, sits on the bed, Gardener's

box of glass negatives open beside him. He holds up a plate

to a lamp:

An old black man with a thick beard and hair, shirtless.

Tad looks at another plate:

A young black woman, headscarf, huge ugly scar across her

cheek and down her neck.

He studies these with solemn concentration.

**ROBERT (O.C.)**

You drafted half the men in Boston!

What do you think their families

think about me?

**51.**

Lincoln is being dressed in formal wear by his valet, WILLIAM

SLADE, a light-skinned black man in his 40s. Robert, already

in his morning suit, is standing by the door.

**ROBERT (CONT'D)**

The only reason they don't throw

things and spit on me is `cause

you're so popular. I can't

concentrate on, on British

mercantile law, I don't care about

British mercantile law. I might not

even want to be a lawyer -

**LINCOLN**

It's a sturdy profession, and a

useful one.

**ROBERT**

Yes, and I want to be useful, but

now, not afterwards!

Slade hands Lincoln his formal gloves.

**LINCOLN**

I ain't wearing them things, Mr.

Slade, they never fit right.

**WILLIAM SLADE**

The missus will have you wear `em.

Don't think about leaving `em.

**ROBERT**

You're delaying, that's your

favorite tactic.

**WILLIAM SLADE ROBERT**

(to Robert:) You won't tell me no, but the

Be useful and stop war will be over in a month,

distracting him. and you know it will!

**LINCOLN**

**(TO ROBERT:)**

I've found that prophesying is one

of life's less prophet-able

occupations!

He accepts the gloves. Slade laughs a little, Robert scowls.

Tad holds another glass negative up to the light.

**TAD**

Why do some slaves cost more than

others?

**52.**

**ROBERT**

If they're still young and healthy,

if the women can still conceive,

they'll pay more -

**LINCOLN**

Put `em back in the box. We'll

return them to Mr. Gardner's studio

day after next. Be careful with

`em, now.

(tugging at his gloves:)

These things should've stayed on

the calf.

**TAD**

(to Slade, putting the

**PLATES AWAY:)**

When you were a slave, Mr. Slade,

did they beat you?

**WILLIAM SLADE**

I was born a free man. Nobody beat

me except I beat them right back.

There's a knock on the door and Mrs. Keckley enters.

**ELIZABETH KECKLEY**

Mr. Lincoln, could you come with me-

**WILLIAM SLADE**

**(TO TAD:)**

Mrs. Keckley was a slave. Ask her

if she was beaten.

**TAD LINCOLN**

Were you - (shakes his head)

Tad.

**ELIZABETH KECKLEY**

**(TO TAD:)**

I was beaten with a fire shovel

when I was younger than you.

**(TO LINCOLN:)**

You should go to Mrs. Lincoln.

She's in Willie's room.

**ROBERT**

She never goes in there.

Lincoln starts towards the door just as John Hay enters,

dressed in the uniform of a Brevet Colonel.

**53.**

**JOHN HAY**

The reception line is already

stretching out the door.

Robert shoots an angry, envious glance at Hay's uniform as

Lincoln, Slade, Mrs. Keckley and Hay leave. Robert calls to

**HIS FATHER:**

**ROBERT**

I'll be the only man over fifteen

and under sixty-five in this whole

place not in uniform.

**TAD**

I'm under fifteen and I have a

uniform.

Robert storms out.

**INT. THE PRINCE OF WALES BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Lincoln enters a dark room, its heavy drapes closed against

the dim afternoon light. There are two beds. One is stripped

bare. The other is canopied with a thick black veil.

Mary, dressed in a deep purple gown with black flowers and

beading, perfectly pitched between mourning and emergence, is

seated at the head of the canopied bed. On a nightstand next

to the bed there's a toy locomotive engine, a tattered book

of B&O railroad schedules.

Mary holds a framed photograph: an image of WILLIE, 12,

handsome, bright-eyed, confident.

Lincoln crosses to the window.

**MARY**

My head hurts so.

**(BEAT)**

I prayed for death the night Willie

died. The headaches are how I know

I didn't get my wish. How to endure

the long afternoon and deep into

the night.

**LINCOLN**

I know.

**MARY**

Trying not to think about him. How

will I manage?

**LINCOLN**

Somehow you will.

**54.**

**MARY**

**(SAD SMILE:)**

Somehow. Somehow. Somehow... Every

party, every... And now, four years

more in this terrible house

reproaching us. He was a very sick

little boy. We should've cancelled

that reception, shouldn't we?

**LINCOLN**

We didn't know how sick he was.

**MARY**

I knew, I knew, I saw that night he

was dying.

**LINCOLN**

Three years ago, the war was going

so badly, and we had to put on a

face.

**MARY**

But I saw Willie was dying. I saw

**HIM -**

He bends and kisses her hand.

**LINCOLN**

Molly. It's too hard. Too hard.

Mary stares up at him, her face heavy and swollen with grief.

**INT. THE EAST ROOM, WHITE HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON**

Mary, radiant, her charm turned to its brightest candlepower,

is greeting the Blairs, who are part of a long receiving

line. The Blairs proceed from Mary to Lincoln.

**TITLE: GRAND RECEPTION**

**JANUARY 15**

The enormous room is splendid, decked with garlands of

flowers, tall candelabra burning, flags from Army divisions.

An orchestra plays.

Lincoln and Tad stand together. Slade is near Lincoln. Mary's

a distance away from Lincoln, to his right.

Robert takes his place next to his mother, as conspicuous as

he'd feared he'd be in his civilian clothes.

**55.**

A sea of people surround the President and his family.

Nicolay, Hay and several clerks channel the crowd waiting to

greet the Lincolns into the line: wealthy people, many more

middle-class people, some working people and farmers, and

many officers and soldiers.

Tad watches his father shake hands. Lincoln is in his

element. He stands close to each person, touches each one

gently, stoops to be nearer them; he puts everyone at ease.

He's bothered only by the white kid gloves he's wearing. He

tugs at the right-hand glove.

**WILLIAM SLADE**

(with a glance in Mary's)

She's just ten feet yonder. I'd

like to keep my job.

Lincoln takes off the right-hand glove - his hand-shaking

hand - but keeps the other glove on.

Approaching Mary on the line, Stevens, Ashley, Senators Bluff

Wade and CHARLES SUMNER, all in formal wear except Stevens.

**MARY**

Senator Sumner, it has been much

too long.

**CHARLES SUMNER**

"Oh, who can look on that celestial

face and -"

Cutting him off, she pretends not to recognize Ashley.

**MARY**

And...?

**JAMES ASHLEY**

**(CONFUSED)**

James Ashley, ma'am, we've met

several times -

But she ignores him and greets Stevens.

**MARY**

(her Southern accent

becoming more lustrous:)

Praise Heavens, praise Heavens,

just when I had abandoned hope of

amusement, it's the Chairman of the

House Ways and Means Committee!

Stevens bows to her.

**56.**

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

Mrs. Lincoln.

**MARY**

Madame President if you please!

**(LAUGHS)**

Oh, don't convene another

subcommittee to investigate me,

sir! I'm teasing! Smile, Senator

Wade.

**BLUFF WADE**

**(NOT SMILING:)**

I believe I am smiling, Mrs.

Lincoln.

**MARY**

I'll take your word for that, sir!

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

As long as your household accounts

are in order, Madame, we'll have no

need to investigate them.

**MARY**

You have always taken such a

lively, even prosecutorial interest

in my household accounts.

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

Your household accounts have always

been so interesting.

**MARY**

Yes, thank you, it's true, the

miracles I have wrought out of

fertilizer bills and cutlery

invoices. But I had to! Four years

ago, when the President and I

arrived, this was pure pigsty.

Tobacco stains in the turkey

carpets. Mushrooms, green as the

moon, sprouting from ceilings! And

a pauper's pittance allotted for

improvements. As if your committee

joined with all of Washington

awaiting, in what you anticipated

would be our comfort in squalor,

further proof that my husband and I

were prairie primitives, unsuited

to the position to which an error

of the people, a flaw in the

democratic process, had elevated

us.

**57.**

Lincoln, suddenly without anyone in line to receive, looks to

see the backlog forming behind the radicals. He notes the

exchange, but says nothing. Robert sees him looking.

**MARY (CONT'D)**

The past is the past, it's a new

year now and we are all getting

along, or so they tell me. I gather

we are working together! The White

House and the other House? Hatching

little plans together?

Robert leans in to her.

**ROBERT**

Mother?

**MARY**

What?

**ROBERT**

You're creating a bottleneck.

**MARY**

Oh!

**(TO STEVENS:)**

Oh, I'm detaining you, and more

important, the people behind you!

How the people love my husband,

they flock to see him, by their

thousands on public days! They will

never love you the way they love

him. How difficult it must be for

you to know that. And yet how

important to remember it.

She gives him a slight, lethal smile. He holds the look; his

poker-face yields to a barely perceptible smile, amused and

perhaps a little admiring.

**INT. THE WHITE HOUSE KITCHEN - EVENING**

The kitchen's piled with unwashed cookware, eggshells, flour

bins, muffin and pastry molds, spoons and knives, the

detritus of the preparations for the finger food served at

the reception, which has now transitioned into a dance and is

still underway upstairs. Music, the tramp of dancing feet and

rhythmic clapping is audible.

A BLACK FOOTMAN carrying a huge tray laden with dishes and

cups comes down the stairs. He hastily beats a retreat when

he sees Lincoln and Thaddeus Stevens quietly talking amid the

mess.

**58.**

**LINCOLN**

Since we have the floor next in the

debate, I thought I'd suggest you

might...temper your contributions

so as not to frighten our

conservative friends?

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

Ashley insists you're ensuring

approval by dispensing patronage to

otherwise undeserving Democrats.

**LINCOLN**

I can't ensure a single damn thing

if you scare the whole House with

talk of land appropriations and

revolutionary tribunals and

punitive thisses and thats -

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

When the war ends, I intend to push

for full equality, the Negro vote

and much more. Congress shall

mandate the seizure of every foot

of rebel land and every dollar of

their property. We'll use their

confiscated wealth to establish

hundreds of thousands of free Negro

farmers, and at their side soldiers

armed to occupy and transform the

heritage of traitors. We'll build

up a land down there of free men

and free women and free children

and freedom.

The nation needs to know that we

have such plans.

**LINCOLN**

That's the untempered version of

reconstruction. It's not... It's

not exactly what I intend, but we

shall oppose one another in the

course of time. Now we're working

together, and I'm asking you -

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

For patience, I expect.

**LINCOLN**

When the people disagree, bringing

them together requires going slow

till they're ready to make up -

**59.**

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

Ah, shit on the people and what

they want and what they're ready

for! I don't give a goddamn about

the people and what they want! This

is the face of someone who has

fought long and hard for the good

of the people without caring much

for any of `em. And I look a lot

worse without the wig. The people

elected me! To represent them! To

lead them! And I lead! You ought to

try it!

**LINCOLN**

I admire your zeal, Mr. Stevens,

and I have tried to profit from the

example of it. But if I'd listened

to you, I'd've declared every slave

free the minute the first shell

struck Fort Sumter; then the border

states would've gone over to the

confederacy, the war would've been

lost and the Union along with it,

and instead of abolishing slavery,

as we hope to do, in two weeks,

we'd be watching helpless as

infants as it spread from the

American South into South America.

Stevens glares at him, then smiles.

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

Oh, how you have longed to say that

to me. You claim you trust them -

but you know what the people are.

You know that the inner compass

that should direct the soul toward

justice has ossified in white men

and women, north and south, unto

utter uselessness through

tolerating the evil of slavery.

White people cannot bear the

thought of sharing this country's

infinite abundance with Negroes.

Lincoln reaches over to Stevens and gives his shoulder a

vigorous shake. Stevens endures this.

**LINCOLN**

A compass, I learnt when I was

surveying, it'll - it'll point you

True North from where you're

standing, but it's got no advice

**60.**

about the swamps and deserts and

chasms that you'll encounter along

the way. If in pursuit of your

destination you plunge ahead,

heedless of obstacles, and achieve

nothing more than to sink in a

swamp, what's the use of knowing

True North?

**INT. MARY'S BOUDOIR, THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT**

Spectacles on, Lincoln unlaces Mary's corset.

**LINCOLN**

Robert's going to plead with us to

let him enlist.

He's unlaced enough; she unhooks the front and steps out of

her corset and petticoats, turns to him in her plain thin

chemise and drawers.

**MARY**

Make time to talk to Robbie. You

only have time for Tad.

**LINCOLN**

Tad's young.

**MARY**

So's Robert. Too young for the

army.

**LINCOLN**

Plenty of boys younger than Robert

signing up...

**MARY**

Don't take Robbie. Don't let me

lose my son.

There's a knock on the door. Mary turns to it, furious:

**MARY (CONT'D)**

Go away! We're occupied!

Lincoln opens the door. Nicolay's standing there.

**JOHN NICOLAY**

Secretary Stanton has sent over to

tell you that as of half an hour

ago, the shelling of Wilmington

harbor has commenced.

**61.**

Lincoln leaves with Nicolay. Mary watches, frozen, unable to

let him go, knowing she can't stop him.

**INT. THE TELEGRAPH OFFICE, WAR DEPARTMENT - LATE NIGHT**

The telegraph office looks improvised, even after four years.

Formerly the War Department library, it's lined with

bookcases stuffed with bundled dispatches. Telegraph cables

stretch across the ceiling to the cipher-operators' desks.

Stanton, perpetually exhausted and impatient, storms down the

stairs with Welles and the chief telegraph operator, MAJOR

THOMAS ECKERT, 40, in his wake.

**STANTON**

They cannot possibly maintain under

this kind of an assault. Terry's

got ten thousand men surrounding

the Goddamned fort! Why doesn't he

answer my cables?

**WELLES MAJOR ECKERT**

Fort Fisher is a mountain of It's the largest fort they

a building, Edwin. Twenty-two have, sir. They've been

big seacoast guns on each reinforcing it for the last

rampart - two years -

They reach the desks for the key operators. Among these,

SAMUEL BECKWITH, 25, and the key manager, DAVID HOMER BATES,

22, sit at their silent keys, waiting to receive news.

Stanton scribbles furiously on Beckwith's small notepad.

**STANTON (CONT'D)**

They've taken 17,000 shells since

yesterday!

**WELLES STANTON**

The commander is an old goat. I want to hear that Fort

Fisher's ours and Wilmington

MAJOR ECKERT has fallen!

They said -

**STANTON (CONT'D)**

Send another damn cable!

Stanton thrusts the cable at Beckwith, who taps it out

immediately.

Stanton turns to a table where the large map of Wilmington

from the Cabinet meeting is laid out, heavily scribbled-on.

GUSTAVUS FOX, assistant Secretary of the Navy, and CHARLES

BENJAMIN, Stanton's clerk, are checking the marks on the map

against a stack of dispatches.

**62.**

**STANTON (CONT'D)**

The problem's their commander,

Whiting. He engineered the fortress

himself. The damned thing's his

child; he'll defend it till his

every last man is gone. He is not

thinking rationally, he's -

**LINCOLN (O.C.)**

(hollering!)

"Come on out, you old rat!"

Everyone's startled, and confused. They all turn to Lincoln,

who sits in Major Eckert's chair, wrapped in his shawl.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

That's what Ethan Allen called to

the commander of Fort Ticonderoga

in 1776. "Come on out, you old

rat!" `Course there were only forty-

odd redcoats at Ticonderoga. But,

but there is one Ethan Allen story

that I'm very partial to -

**STANTON**

No! No, you're, you're going to

tell a story! I don't believe that

I can bear to listen to another one

of your stories right now!

Stanton stalks out, shouting down the corridor as he goes:

**STANTON (CONT'D)**

I need the B&O sideyard schedules

for Alexandria! I asked for them

this morning!

Lincoln pays no attention to Stanton's fulminations and

continues with his story.

**LINCOLN**

It was right after the Revolution,

right after peace had been

concluded, and Ethan Allen went to

London to help our new country

conduct its business with the king.

The English sneered at how rough we

are, and rude and simple-minded and

on like that, everywhere he went,

till one day he was invited to the

townhouse of a great English lord.

Dinner was served, beverages

imbibed, time passed, as happens,

and Mr. Allen found he needed the

**63.**

privy. He was grateful to be

directed thence - relieved you

might say.

Everyone laughs.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

Now, Mr. Allen discovered on

entering the water closet that the

only decoration therein was a

portrait of George Washington.

Ethan Allen done what he came to do

and returned to the drawing room.

His host and the others were

disappointed when he didn't mention

Washington's portrait. And finally

His Lordship couldn't resist, and

asked Mr. Allen had he noticed it,

the picture of Washington. He had.

Well, what did he think of its

placement, did it seem

appropriately located to Mr. Allen?

Mr. Allen said it did. His host was

astounded! Appropriate? George

Washington's likeness in a water

closet? Yes, said Mr. Allen, where

it'll do good service: the whole

world knows nothing'll make an

Englishman shit quicker than the

sight of George Washington.

Everyone laughs.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

I love that story.

Beckwith's and Bates's keys starts clicking. They transcribe

furiously.

There's a general rush to the operators' desks. Lincoln walks

quickly over, and is joined there by Stanton, who arrives

just as the first dispatch has been completed and is being

decoded. Stanton and Lincoln hold hands, as they've done many

times, waiting for news of the battle.

Bates hands the decoded cable to Benjamin, who reads it

quickly, then announces to the room:

**CHARLES BENJAMIN**

Fort Fisher is ours. We've taken

the port.

**WELLES**

And Wilmington?

**64.**

Eckert shakes his head as Beckwith hands him the next

telegram.

**MAJOR ECKERT**

We've taken the fort, but the city

of Wilmington has not surrendered.

A beat as this sinks in. Then:

**STANTON**

How many casualties?

Eckert looks up at Stanton and Lincoln, stricken.

**INT. THE HOUSE CHAMBER - DAY**

One representative's reading a paper with the headline: THE

FALLEN AT WILMINGTON, followed by hundreds of names.

Pendleton and Wood are conferring.

**FERNANDO WOOD**

Heavy losses.

**GEORGE PENDLETON**

And more to come.

**FERNANDO WOOD**

Sours the national mood. That might

suffice to discourage him -

**GEORGE PENDLETON**

To what? To bring this down? Not in

a fight like this. This is to the

death.

**FERNANDO WOOD**

It's gruesome!

**GEORGE PENDLETON**

**(GETTING UPSET:)**

Are you despairing, or merely lazy?

This fight is for The United States

of America! Nothing "suffices". A

rumor? Nothing! They're not lazy!

They're busily buying votes! While

we hope to be saved by "the

national mood?!"

He looks over at Stevens, who's at his desk consulting with

Ashley and Julian.

**65.**

**GEORGE PENDLETON (CONT'D)**

Before this blood is dry, when

Stevens next takes the floor, taunt

him - you excel at that - get him

to proclaim what we all know he

believes in his coal-colored heart:

that this vote is meant to set the

black race on high, to niggerate

America.

**FERNANDO WOOD**

George, please. Stay on course.

**GEORGE PENDLETON**

Bring Stevens to full froth. I can

ensure that every newspaperman from

Louisville to San Francisco will be

here to witness it and print it.

Colfax gavels the chamber to order, as George Yeaman

approaches the podium.

**SCHUYLER COLFAX**

The floor belongs to the

mellifluent gentleman from

Kentucky, Mr. George Yeaman.

**GEORGE YEAMAN**

I thank you, Speaker Colfax.

The Democrats applaud as Yeaman takes his place at the podium

and surveys the chamber.

**GEORGE YEAMAN (CONT'D)**

Although I'm disgusted by slavery

I rise on this sad and solemn day

to announce that I'm opposed to the

amendment. We must consider what

will become of colored folk if four

million are in one instant set

free.

Cheers and boos.

**ASA VINTNER LITTON**

They'll be free, George! That's

what'll become of them! What'll

become of any of us?! That's what

being free means!

Schell, Latham, and Bilbo are perched in their usual gallery

seats, taking notes.

**66.**

**RICHARD SCHELL**

Think how splendid if Mr. Yeaman

switched.

**ROBERT LATHAM**

(shaking his head:)

Too publicly against us. He can't

change course now.

**W.N. BILBO**

Not for some miserable little job

anyways.

**GEORGE YEAMAN**

And, and! We will be forced to

enfranchise the men of the colored

race - it would be inhuman not to!

Who among us is prepared to give

Negroes the vote?

He's momentarily silenced by cheers and boos throughout the

chamber.

**GEORGE YEAMAN (CONT'D)**

And, and! What shall follow upon

that? Universal enfranchisement?

Votes for women?

Yeaman is stopped, baffled and dismayed by the explosion he's

provoked.

**INT. AN EMPTY COMMITTEE ROOM, THE CAPITOL - DAY**

Hawkins enters and stops when he sees Pendleton and Wood.

It's a trap. LeClerk follows, closing the door.

**FERNANDO WOOD**

Bless my eyes, if it isn't the Post

Master of Millersburg Ohio!

Hawkins looks at LeClerk, who guiltily avoids his glance.

**GEORGE PENDLETON**

Mr. LeClerk felt honor-bound to

inform us. Of your disgusting

betrayal. Your prostitution.

**FERNANDO WOOD**

Is that true, Postmaster Hawkins?

Is your maidenly virtue for sale?

Hawkins sinks.

**67.**

**EXT. A WOODS ALONG THE POTOMAC RIVER - MORNING**

Bilbo and Clay Hawkins are again in the woods. Bilbo, with

his basket, clutches a pair of noisy snared partridges.

**CLAY HAWKINS**

My neighbors hear that I voted yes

for nigger freedom and no to peace,

they will kill me.

**W.N. BILBO**

A deal's a deal and you men know

better than to piss your pants just

cause there's talk about peace

talks.

**W.N. BILBO (CONT'D) CLAY HAWKINS**

My neighbors in Nashville, Look, I'll find another job.

they found out I was loyal to

the Union, they came after me

with gelding knives!

Hawkins runs away from Bilbo. Bilbo chases him.

**CLAY HAWKINS W.N. BILBO**

(to himself, as he YOU DO RIGHT, CLAY HAWKINS!

runs:) AND MAKE YOURSELF SOME MONEY

Any other job. IN THE BARGAIN -

**CLAY HAWKINS**

(turning back to Bilbo:)

I want to do right! But I got no

courage!!!

Hawkins runs away, sobbing. Bilbo pursues.

**W.N. BILBO**

Wait!! You wanted, what was it, tax

man for the Western Reserve, hell

you can have the whole state of

Ohio if you -

Bilbo stops, winded.

**W.N. BILBO (CONT'D)**

Aw, crap.

**EXT. IN A BACK ALLEY, SOMEWHERE IN WASHINGTON - AFTERNOON**

Seward, smoking unhappily, strides toward his carriage, with

Schell, Latham and Bilbo in pursuit.

**68.**

**SEWARD**

Eleven votes?! Two days ago we had

twelve!! What happened?

**RICHARD SCHELL ROBERT LATHAM**

It's the goddamned rumors There are defections in the

regarding the Richmond ranks... Yes! The peace

delegation. offer!

**SEWARD ROBERT LATHAM**

Groundless. I told you that. And yet the rumors persist.

**RICHARD SCHELL**

They are ruining us.

**RICHARD SCHELL**

Among the few remaining

representatives who seem remotely

plausible there is a perceptible

increase in resistance.

Seward has reached the carriage, Bilbo alongside him. Before

the Secretary of State can climb on board, Bilbo shuts the

carriage door. Seward is outraged.

**W.N. BILBO**

Resistance, hell! Thingamabob

Hollister, Dem from Indiana? I

approached him, the sumbitch near

to murdered me!

**EXT. A STREET IN GEORGETOWN - NIGHT**

Bilbo is talking to HAROLD HOLLISTER (D, IN), who pulls out a

derringer. Bilbo bolts, dropping the folder. He stops, runs

back, and bends to retrieve the folio as Hollister fires the

gun over Bilbo's head.

**EXT. IN A BACK ALLEY, SOMEWHERE IN WASHINGTON - AFTERNOON**

Seward, now inside the carriage, slams the door.

**SEWARD**

Perhaps you push too hard.

**W.N. BILBO**

I push nobody. Perhaps we need

reinforcements. If Jeff Davis wants

to cease hostilities, who do you

think'll give a genuine solid shit

to free slaves?

**69.**

**SEWARD**

Get back to it, and good day,

gentlemen.

Schell and Latham lean in to the carriage.

**RICHARD SCHELL**

We are at an impasse.

**ROBERT LATHAM**

Tell Lincoln to deny the rumors.

Publicly.

**RICHARD SCHELL**

Tell us what you expect of us.

**SEWARD**

I expect you to do your work! And

to have sufficient sense and taste

not to presume to instruct the

President. Or me.

Schell steps up on the running board, intent.

**RICHARD SCHELL**

Is there a Confederate offer or

not?

**EXT. THE JAMES RIVER DOCK AT CITY POINT, VIRGINIA - DAY**

ULYSSES S. GRANT, 43, 5'7", beard, uniform worn and rumpled,

crosses the dock, followed by three aides.

They approach the gangway for the River Queen.

**INT. THE RIVER QUEEN SALOON, CITY POINT, VIRGINIA - DAY**

Grant and the commissioners stand in an expansive cabin at

the stern, patriotically decorated, large windows.

Grant hands the commissioners' peace proposal back to them.

He's scribbled notes all over the document.

**GRANT**

I suggest you work some changes to

your proposal before you give it to

the President.

**R.M.T HUNTER**

We're eager to be on our way to

Washington.

**70.**

**ALEXANDER STEPHENS**

Did Mr. Lincoln tell you to tell us

this, General Grant?

Grant fixes Stephens with a look - bemused, a little

disappointed.

**GRANT**

It says..."securing peace for our

two countries." And it goes on like

that.

**ALEXANDER STEPHENS**

I don't know what you -

**GRANT**

There's just one country. You and

I, we're citizens of that country.

I'm fighting to protect it from

armed rebels. From you.

**ALEXANDER STEPHENS**

But Mr. Blair told us, he, he told

President Davis we were -

**GRANT**

A private citizen like Preston

Blair can say what he pleases,

since he has no authority over

anything. If you want to discuss

peace with President Lincoln,

consider revisions.

He lights a cigar.

**ALEXANDER STEPHENS**

If we're not to discuss a truce

between warring nations, what in

heaven's name can we discuss?

**GRANT**

Terms of surrender.

**EXT. THE JAMES RIVER DOCK AT CITY POINT, VIRGINIA - DAY**

As a somber Grant disembarks with his aides from the River

**QUEEN:**

**GRANT (V.O.)**

"Office United States Military

Telegraph, War Dept. For Abraham

Lincoln, President of the United

States. January 20, 1865. I will

**71.**

state confidentially that I am

convinced, upon conversation with

these Commissioners, that their

intentions are good and their

desire sincere to restore peace and

union. I fear now their going back,

without any expression of

interest..."

Seward's voice takes over from Grant's.

**GRANT (V.O.) (CONT'D) SEWARD (V.O.)**

"...from anyone in authority, "...from anyone in authority,

Mr. Lincoln..." Mr. Lincoln..."

**INT. SEWARD MANSION, LAFAYETTE SQUARE, WASHINGTON - NIGHT**

Seward's in a fancy robe and slippers, reading a telegram.

**SEWARD**

"...will have a bad influence.

I will be sorry should it prove

impossible for you to have an

interview with them. I am awaiting

your instructions. U.S. Grant,

Lieutenant General Commanding

Armies United States"

Lincoln is in his coat, shawl over his shoulders, holding his

hat.

**LINCOLN**

After four years of war and near

600,000 lives lost. He believes we

can end this war now.

My trust in him is marrow deep.

Seward looks up at Lincoln, then down again at the telegram.

He stands and crosses to Lincoln.

**SEWARD**

You could bring the delegates to

Washington. In exchange for the

South's immediate surrender, we

could promise them the amendment's

defeat. They'd agree, don't you

think? We'd end the war. This week.

Lincoln has closed his eyes.

**72.**

**SEWARD (CONT'D)**

Or. If you could manage, without

seeming to do it, to -

Lincoln shakes his head "no."

**SEWARD (CONT'D)**

The peace delegation might

encounter delays as they travel up

the James River. Particularly with

the fighting around Wilmington.

Within ten days time, we might pass

the Thirteenth Amendment.

**INT. HALLWAY, THE WHITE HOUSE - LATE NIGHT**

Lincoln, shawl still wrapped around him, walks the long empty

hall.

**INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, WHITE HOUSE - LATE NIGHT**

Lincoln sits before an open window. He's dishevelled, in

shirtsleeves an unbuttoned vest, next to an inkwell, papers

and books of law scattered about, and a lit candle in a

candlestick, guttering. Grant's telegraph is in one hand, and

in the other hand, his spectacles and, dangling from a chain,

his open pocket watch. His bare left foot keeps time with the

watch's loud ticking. He stares out into the cold night.

**INT. JOHN HAY AND JOHN NICOLAY'S BEDROOM - EVEN LATER**

The room is spare and neat. Nicolay and Hay are asleep in

their beds.

Lincoln is sitting at the foot of Hay's bed, spectacles on,

reading a petition, the others in his lap, pencil in hand.

**LINCOLN**

Now, here's a sixteen year old boy.

They're going to hang him...

Hay startles awake, then settles. He's used to this.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

(he reads a little

**FURTHER:)**

He was with the 15th Indiana

Calvary near Beaufort, seems he

lamed his horse to avoid battle.

I don't think even Stanton would

**73.**

complain if I pardoned him? You

think Stanton would complain?

Nicolay stirs in the next bed.

**JOHN HAY**

Ummm... I don't know, sir, I don't

know who you're, uh... What time is

it?

**LINCOLN**

It's three forty in the morning.

**JOHN NICOLAY**

(not waking up:)

Don't... let him pardon any more

deserters...

Nicolay's asleep again.

**JOHN HAY**

Mr. Stanton thinks you pardon too

many. He's generally apoplectic on

the subject -

**LINCOLN**

He oughtn't to have done that,

crippled his horse, that was cruel,

but you don't just hang a sixteen

year old boy for that -

**JOHN HAY**

Ask the horse what he thinks.

**LINCOLN**

- for cruelty. There'd be no

sixteen year old boys left.

(a beat, then:)

Grant wants me to bring the secesh

delegates to Washington.

**JOHN HAY**

So... There are secesh delegates?

**LINCOLN**

(scribbling a note,

signing the petition:)

He was afraid, that's all it was.

I don't care to hang a boy for

being frightened, either. What good

would it do him?

He signs the pardon. Then he gives Hay's leg a few hard

thwacks and a squeeze. It hurts a little. Hay winces.

**74.**

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

War's nearly done. Ain't that so?

What use one more corpse? Any more

corpses?

Putting the rest of the petitions on Hay's bed, he stands to

leave.

**JOHN HAY**

Do you need company?

**INT. HALLWAY, THE WHITE HOUSE - LATE NIGHT**

As before, Lincoln continues his slow and solitary walk.

**LINCOLN (V.O.)**

Times like this, I'm best alone.

**INT. THE TELEGRAPH ROOM, WAR DEPARTMENT - PRE-DAWN**

Lincoln is seated at Eckert's desk, shawl wrapped around his

shoulders, glasses on; he stares down into his hat, held

between his knees. Homer Bates and Sam Beckwith are waiting

for him.

Lincoln draws a handwritten note from his hat and carefully

unfolds it.

**LINCOLN**

"Lieutenant General Ulysses S.

Grant, City Point. I have read your

words with interest."

Sam Beckwith transcribes Lincoln's words into code on a pad

with a pencil.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

"I ask that, regardless of any

action I take in the matter of the

visit of the Richmond

commissioners, you maintain among

your troops military preparedness

for battle, as you have done until

now."

He stops for a moment. Beckwith waits, pencil poised.

Lincoln looks at the note, folds it, tucks it in a band

inside his hat.

**75.**

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

"Have Captain Saunders convey the

commissioners to me here in

Washington."

**(ANOTHER PAUSE)**

"A. Lincoln." And the date.

**SAMUEL BECKWITH**

**(WHILE WRITING:)**

Yes sir.

Lincoln places the hat on the floor.

**SAMUEL BECKWITH (CONT'D)**

Shall I transmit, sir?

**LINCOLN**

(a beat, then:)

You think we choose to be born?

**SAMUEL BECKWITH**

I don't suppose so.

**LINCOLN**

Are we fitted to the times we're

born into?

**SAMUEL BECKWITH**

I don't know about myself. You may

be, sir. Fitted.

**LINCOLN**

**(TO HOMER:)**

What do you reckon?

**HOMER BATES**

I'm an engineer. I reckon there's

machinery but no one's done the

fitting.

**LINCOLN**

You're an engineer, you must know

Euclid's axioms and common notions.

**HOMER BATES**

I must've in school, but...

**LINCOLN**

I never had much of schooling, but

I read Euclid, in an old book I

borrowed. Little enough ever found

its way in here -

(touching his cranium)

- but once learnt it stayed learnt.

**76.**

Euclid's first common notion is

this: "Things which are equal to

the same thing are equal to each

other."

Homer doesn't get it; neither does Sam.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

That's a rule of mathematical

reasoning. It's true because it

works; has done and always will do.

In his book, Euclid says this is

"self-evident."

**(A BEAT)**

D'you see? There it is, even in

that two-thousand year old book of

mechanical law: it is a self-

evident truth that things which are

equal to the same thing are equal

to each other. We begin with

equality. That's the origin, isn't

it? That balance, that's fairness,

that's justice.

He looks at his scribbled note, then at Sam and Homer.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

Read me the last sentence of my

telegram.

**SAMUEL BECKWITH**

"Have Captain Saunders convey the

commissioners to me here in

Washington."

**LINCOLN**

A slight emendation, Sam, if you

would.

Beckwith writes as Lincoln dictates.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

"Have Captain Saunders convey the

gentlemen aboard the River Queen as

far as Hampton Roads, Virginia, and

there wait until..."

**(BEAT)**

"...further advice from me. Do not

proceed to Washington."

**77.**

**INT. HOUSE CHAMBER, THE CAPITOL - LATE MORNING**

The chamber's noisy and packed. In the balcony's front row, a

wall of newspapermen, notebooks at the ready.

**TITLE: HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**JANUARY 27**

Ashley, Colfax, and Stevens approach Stevens's desk. Colfax

nods towards the journalists in the balcony:

**SCHUYLER COLFAX**

The World, the Herald and the

Times, New York, Chicago, the

Journal of Commerce, even your

hometown paper's here.

**JAMES ASHLEY**

**(TO STEVENS:)**

Say you believe only in legal

equality for all races, not racial

equality, I beg you, sir.

Compromise. Or you risk it all.

Stevens sees Mary, with Mrs. Keckley, claiming front seats

from two journalists.

**INT. HOUSE CHAMBER, THE CAPITOL - LATER**

Stevens, at the podium, is being challenged by Fernando Wood,

standing at his desk.

**FERNANDO WOOD**

I've asked you a question, Mr.

Stevens, and you must answer me. Do

you or do you not hold that the

precept that "all men are created

equal" is meant literally?

All eyes are on Stevens, the chamber quiet except for a

scratching sound: the journalists have begun scribbling.

**FERNANDO WOOD (CONT'D)**

Is that not the true purpose of the

amendment? To promote your ultimate

and ardent dream to elevate -

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

The true purpose of the amendment,

Mr. Wood, you perfectly-named,

brainless, obstructive object?

**78.**

**FERNANDO WOOD**

You have always insisted, Mr.

Stevens, that Negroes are the same

as white men are.

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

The true purpose of the amendment -

Stevens looks up at the balcony, at the waiting journalists,

and Mary, who raises her eyebrows, then at Ashley and Litton

at their desks. Seward watches from the balcony.

Stevens returns to Wood.

**THADDEUS STEVENS (CONT'D)**

I don't hold with equality in all

things only with equality before

the law and nothing more.

**FERNANDO WOOD**

**(SURPRISED:)**

That's not so! You believe that

Negroes are entirely equal to white

men. You've said it a thousand

**TIMES -**

**GEORGE PENDLETON**

(leaping to his feet)

For shame! For shame! Stop

prevaricating and answer

Representative Wood!

**THADDEUS STEVENS GEORGE PENDLETON**

I don't hold with equality in (stands:)

all things, only with After the decades of fervent

equality before the law and advocacy on behalf of the

nothing more. colored race -

**JAMES ASHLEY**

**(LEAPING UP:)**

He's answered your questions! This

amendment has naught to do with

race equality!

Pendleton persists, through cheers and catcalls.

**GEORGE PENDLETON THADDEUS STEVENS**

You have long insisted, have I don't hold with equality in

you not, that the dusk- all things only with equality

colored race is no different before the law and nothing

from the white one. more.

**79.**

Among the amendment's supporters, including Vintner Litton, a

GROUP OF WOMEN SUFFRAGISTS in the balcony, and Elizabeth

Keckley, there's visible, audible shock and dismay at

Stevens's capitulation. Mary's surprised by Stevens, and

impressed.

**MARY**

(whispering to Mrs.

**KECKLEY:)**

Who'd ever've guessed that old

nightmare capable of such control?

He might make a politician someday -

**ELIZABETH KECKLEY**

**(STANDING ABRUPTLY:)**

I need to go.

Mary's startled. Mrs. Keckley leaves the balcony, pushing

past journalists. On the floor:

**GEORGE PENDLETON**

Your frantic attempt to delude us

now is unworthy of a

representative. It is, in fact,

unworthy of a white man!

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

(giving in to his anger:)

How can I hold that all men are

created equal, when here before me -

(pointing to Pendleton:)

- stands stinking the moral carcass

of the gentleman from Ohio, proof

that some men are inferior, endowed

by their Maker with dim wits

impermeable to reason with cold

pallid slime in their veins instead

of hot red blood! You are more

reptile than man, George, so low

and flat that the foot of man is

incapable of crushing you!

General uproar.

**GEORGE PENDLETON**

**HOW DARE YOU!**

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

Yet even you, Pendleton, who should

have been gibbetted for treason

long before today, even worthless

unworthy you ought to be treated

equally before the law! And so

again, sir, and again and again and

**80.**

again I say: I DO NOT HOLD WITH

**EQUALITY IN ALL THINGS. ONLY WITH**

**EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW.**

Ashley sits, nearly weeping with relief, while the chamber

explodes: laughter, applause, boos.

**GEORGE PENDLETON**

**MR. SPEAKER, WILL YOU PERMIT THIS**

**VILE BOORISH MAN TO SLANDER AND TO**

**THREATEN ME AND -**

The journalists pack up their notebooks; this is fun, but not

newsworthy, and only a few bother to record it.

Stevens limps out through the aisle to wild Republican

applause. He looks up to the balcony; Mary is looking down

approvingly. He looks down before she can see him smile.

**INT. A CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE HOUSE CHAMBER - LATER**

Stevens sits on a bench, alone, thinking, troubled. Asa

Vintner Litton approaches him.

**ASA VINTNER LITTON**

You asked if ever I was surprised.

Stevens nods.

**ASA VINTNER LITTON (CONT'D)**

Today, Mr. Stevens, I was

surprised. You've led the battle

for race equality for thirty years!

The basis of, of every hope for

this country's future life, you

denied Negro equality! I'm

nauseated. You refused to say that

all humans are, well... human! Have

you lost your very soul, Mr.

Stevens? Is there nothing you won't

say?

Stevens nods, then, quietly:

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

I'm sorry you're nauseous, Asa,

that must be unpleasant.

I want the amendment to pass. So

that the Constitution's first and

only mention of slavery is its

absolute prohibition. For this

amendment, for which I have worked

all of my life and for which

**81.**

countless colored men and women

have fought and died and now

hundreds of thousands of soldiers -

no, sir, no, it seems there is very

nearly nothing I won't say.

**EXT. THE STREETS OF WASHINGTON - MORNING**

Lincoln and Robert are in the buggy driven by the old

soldier; a young bodyguard soldier sits beside the driver,

his rifle uselessly tucked under his legs. Lincoln is on one

side reading over a stack of documents. Robert's on the other

side of the buggy, staring sullenly at his feet.

The buggy stops outside an army hospital. Lincoln packs up

his papers.

**ROBERT**

I'm not going in.

**LINCOLN**

You said you wanted to help me.

**ROBERT**

This is - This is just a clumsy

attempt at discouragement. I've

been to army hospitals, I've seen

surgeries, I went and visited the

malaria barges with mama.

**LINCOLN**

She told me she didn't take you

inside.

**ROBERT**

I snuck in after - I've seen what

it's like. This changes nothing.

**LINCOLN**

At all rates, I'm happy to have

your company.

Stepping out of the buggy, he hands his folio to the

bodyguard and enters the army hospital.

**INT. ARMY HOSPITAL - MORNING**

He's met in the antechamber by an ARMY SURGEON.

**LINCOLN**

Morning, Jim.

**82.**

**ARMY SURGEON**

Hello, Mr. President.

**LINCOLN**

Good to see you again.

They move into the main ward, Lincoln removing his hat.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

Well, boys, first question: You

getting enough to eat?

He walks from bed to bed, shaking hands with each patient.

Most are amputees.

**FIRST PATIENT**

Hello, sir.

**LINCOLN**

What's your name, soldier?

**FIRST PATIENT**

Robert.

**LINCOLN**

Robert. Good to meet you, Robert.

**SECOND PATIENT**

Nice to meet you.

**LINCOLN**

What's your name?

**SECOND PATIENT**

Kevin.

**LINCOLN**

Tell me your names as I go past. I

like to know who I'm talkin' to.

Kevin.

**THIRD PATIENT**

Mr. President. John.

**LINCOLN**

John. I've seen you before.

**FOURTH PATIENT**

Mr. President...

**EXT. OUTSIDE THE ARMY HOSPITAL - MORNING**

Robert, brooding, waits in the buggy.

**83.**

Hearing a creaking, rumbling sound, Robert turns to see TWO

BLACK ORDERLIES in grey uniforms wrangling a large top-heavy

wheelbarrow, covered with filthy canvas. One orderly pushes

while the other keeps the barrow from tipping over.

Robert notices, in the barrow's wake, a trail of blood. He

gets out of the buggy and follows as the orderlies turn a

corner of the building.

Behind the building, where the ground is bare, pitted with

puddles of water, Robert watches as the orderlies reach the

edge of a shallow pit. One orderly pulls the canvas back,

revealing severed legs, arms, hands, rotten, burnt, shattered

by bullet or bomb.

Robert watches as they toss the remains into the pit.

Quicklime is shoveled atop the limbs.

Robert walks away, unsteady.

Around the corner, he fumbles through his pockets for rolling

paper and tobacco. He locates these and tries to focus on

rolling a cigarette, his hands shaking. He tries harder to

control his hands, his feelings, but he can't. He has a panic

attack, crying, hiccupy shallow breathing, face flushed.

Frustrated, he throws down the cigarette and tries to hold

back tears.

**LINCOLN (O.C.)**

What's the matter, Bob?

Robert looks up, mortified, to see Lincoln watching him with

concern. He wipes his eyes, his mouth.

**ROBERT**

I have to do this! And I will do it

and I don't need your permission to

enlist.

**LINCOLN**

That same speech has been made by

how many sons to how many fathers

since the war began? "I don't need

your damn permission, you miserable

old goat, I'm gonna enlist anyhow!"

And what wouldn't those numberless

fathers have given to be able to

say to their sons - as I now say to

mine - "I'm commander-in-chief, so

in point of fact, without my

permission, you ain't enlisting in

nothing, nowhere, young man."

**84.**

**ROBERT**

It's mama you're scared of, not me

getting killed.

Lincoln slaps Robert in the face. It shocks them both.

Lincoln tries to embrace Robert, but Robert shoulders past

him and walks back toward the front of he building. He turns.

**ROBERT (CONT'D)**

I have to do this! And I will! Or I

will feel ashamed of myself for the

rest of my life. Whether or not you

fought is what's gonna matter. And

not just to other people, but to

myself.

I won't be you, pa. I can't do

that. But I don't want to be

nothing.

He hurries away.

**LINCOLN**

We can't lose you.

**INT. MARY'S BOUDOIR, SECOND FLOOR OF THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT**

Outside, driving rain and wind. Lincoln sits by the window,

in his coat, vest and tie, hair combed neatly.

**LINCOLN**

He'll be fine, Molly. City Point's

far from the front lines, from the

fighting, he'll be an adjutant

running messages for General Grant.

Mary sits at her vanity in a beautiful evening dress, pale

with rage.

**MARY**

The war will take our son! A

sniper, or a shrapnel shell! Or

typhus, same as took Willie, it

takes hundreds of boys a day! He'll

die, uselessly, and how will I ever

forgive you? Most men, their

firstborn is their favorite, but

you, you've always blamed Robert

for being born, for trapping you in

a marriage that's only ever given

you grief and caused you regret!

**85.**

**LINCOLN**

That's not true -

**MARY**

And if the slaughter of Cold Harbor

is on your hands same as Grant, God

help us! We'll pay for the oceans

of spilled blood you've sanctioned,

the uncountable corpses we'll be

made to pay with our son's dear

**BLOOD -**

Lincoln rises from the window seat, angry.

**LINCOLN**

Just, just this once, Mrs. Lincoln,

I demand of you to try and take the

liberal and not the selfish point

of view! You imagine Robert will

forgive us if we continue to stifle

his very natural ambition?!

**MARY**

(with a mocking smile:)

And if I refuse to take the high

road, if I won't take up the rough

old cross, will you threaten me

again with the madhouse, as you did

when I couldn't stop crying over

Willie, when I showed you what

heartbreak, real heartbreak looked

like, and you hadn't the courage to

countenance it, to help me -

**LINCOLN MARY**

That's right. When you I was in the room with

refused so much as to comfort Willie, I was holding him in

Tad - my arms as he died!

**LINCOLN MARY**

- the child who was not only How dare you!

sick, dangerously sick, but

beside himself with grief?

**LINCOLN MARY**

Oh but your grief, your How dare you throw that at

grief, your inexhaustible me?!

grief!

**86.**

**LINCOLN MARY**

And his mother won't let him I couldn't let Tad in! I

near her, `cause she's couldn't risk him seeing how

screaming from morning to angry I was!

night pacing the corridors,

howling at shadows and

furniture and ghosts! I ought

to have done it, I ought have

done for Tad's sake, for

everybody's goddamned sake, I

should have clapped you in

the madhouse!

**MARY (CONT'D)**

THEN DO IT! Do it! Don't you

threaten me, you do it this time!

Lock me away! You'll have to, I

swear, if Robert is killed!

Silence. Then:

**LINCOLN**

I couldn't tolerate you grieving so

for Willie because I couldn't

permit it in myself, though I

wanted to, Mary. I wanted to crawl

under the earth, into the vault

with his coffin. I still do. Every

day I do.

Don't... talk to me about grief.

**(BEAT:)**

I must make my decisions, Bob must

make his, you yours. And bear what

we must, hold and carry what we

must. What I carry within me - you

must allow me to do it, alone as I

must. And you alone, Mary, you

alone may lighten this burden, or

render it intolerable. As you

choose.

She opens her mouth to make an angry reply, then stops, and

watches as he leaves the room.

**INT. ODD FELLOWS' HALL, WASHINGTON - NIGHT**

Onstage, Gounod's Faust, Act Three, scene eight, the garden

outside Marguerite's cottage, a gorgeously romantic night.

MARGUERITE and FAUST are alone singing. The Lincolns, in

their box, watch quietly. Elizabeth Keckley sits next to

Mary.

**87.**

Mary turns to Lincoln. They speak in whispers. Mrs. Keckley

tries not to listen but she can't help hearing what they say.

**MARY**

You think I'm ignorant of what

you're up to because you haven't

discussed this scheme with me as

you ought to have done. When have I

ever been so easily bamboozled?

**(BEAT)**

I believe you when you insist that

amending the constitution and

abolishing slavery will end this

war. And since you are sending my

son into the war, woe unto you if

you fail to pass the amendment.

**LINCOLN**

Seward doesn't want me leaving big

muddy footprints all over town.

**MARY**

No one ever lived who knows better

than you the proper placement of

footfalls on treacherous paths.

Seward can't do it. You must.

Because if you fail to secure the

necessary votes, woe unto you, sir.

You will answer to me.

**EXT. THE PORTICO OF THE WHITE HOUSE - A SHORT WHILE LATER**

The carriage has pulled up and Mary is entering the White

House. Lincoln helps Mrs. Keckley down from the carriage.

She hesitates before proceeding in. Then she faces Lincoln.

**ELIZABETH KECKLEY**

I know the vote is only four days

away; I know you're concerned.

Thank you for your concern over

this, and I want you to know:

They'll approve it. God will see

to it.

**LINCOLN**

I don't envy him his task. He may

wish He'd chosen an instrument for

His purpose more wieldy than the

House of Representatives.

**ELIZABETH KECKLEY**

Then you'll see to it.

**88.**

Lincoln looks at her, considering. Then:

**LINCOLN**

Are you afraid of what lies ahead?

For your people? If we succeed?

**ELIZABETH KECKLEY**

White people don't want us here.

**LINCOLN**

Many don't.

**ELIZABETH KECKLEY**

What about you?

**LINCOLN**

I...I don't know you, Mrs. Keckley.

Any of you. You're ...familiar to

me, as all people are.

Unaccommodated, poor, bare, forked

creatures such as we all are. You

have a right to expect what I

expect, and likely our expectations

are not incomprehensible to each

other. I assume I'll get used to

you. But what you are to the

nation, what'll become of you once

slavery's day is done, I don't

know.

**ELIZABETH KECKLEY**

What my people are to be, I can't

say. Negroes have been fighting and

dying for freedom since the first

of us was a slave. I never heard

any ask what freedom will bring.

Freedom's first. As for me: My son

died, fighting for the Union,

wearing the Union blue. For freedom

he died. I'm his mother. That's

what I am to the nation, Mr.

Lincoln. What else must I be?

**INT. A BEDROOM IN THE ST. CHARLES HOTEL - LATE NIGHT**

The room is far filthier and more cluttered than before.

Bilbo and Latham are playing cards. Schell is asleep in bed.

**W.N. BILBO**

My whole hand's gonna be proud in

about five seconds, let's see how

proud you gonna be.

**89.**

**ROBERT LATHAM**

Oh, it is? What you got goin'?

There's a quick knock on the door.

**W.N. BILBO**

Yeah?

**ROBERT LATHAM**

Go away!

**(TO BILBO)**

That watch fob, is that gold?

**W.N. BILBO**

You keep your eyes off my fob!

Seward enters, displeased, as they show their cards,

laughing.

**ROBERT LATHAM**

Nines paired!

**W.N. BILBO**

Oh my God damn!

**SEWARD**

Gentlemen. You have a visitor.

Latham jovially collects his winnings. He stops short when

Lincoln steps into the room, cloak and stovepipe, very tall.

**W.N. BILBO**

Well, I'll be fucked.

**LINCOLN**

I wouldn't bet against it, Mr...?

Schell startles awake as Bilbo puts down his cigar and wipes

his hand on his vest.

**W.N. BILBO**

W.N. Bilbo.

**LINCOLN**

Mr. Bilbo. Gentlemen.

**ROBERT LATHAM**

Sir...

**W.N. BILBO**

Why are you here? No offense, but

Mr. Seward's banished the very

mention of your name, he won't even

**90.**

let us use fifty-cent pieces `cause

they got your face on `em.

**LINCOLN**

The Secretary of State here tells

me that, uh, you got eleven

Democrats in the bag. That's

encouraging.

**ROBERT LATHAM**

Oh, you've got no cause to be

encouraged. Sir. Uh...

**RICHARD SCHELL**

Are we being...fired?

Lincoln sits at the card table.

**LINCOLN**

"We have heard the chimes of

midnight, Master Shallow." I'm here

to alert you boys that the great

day of reckoning is nigh upon us.

**RICHARD SCHELL**

The Democrats we've yet to bag,

sir. The patronage jobs simply

won't bag `em. They require

more...convincing, Mr. President.

Lincoln nods. He turns to Bilbo.

**LINCOLN**

Mm-hmm. Do me a favor, willya?

**W.N. BILBO**

Sure.

**LINCOLN**

Snagged my eye in the paper this

morning. Governor Curtin is set to

declare a winner in the disputed

Congressional election for the -

**W.N. BILBO**

Pennsylvania 16th District.

**LINCOLN**

What a joy to be comprehended. Hop

on a train to Philadell, call on

the Governor -

**91.**

**SEWARD**

(looking askance at

**BILBO'S APPEARANCE:)**

Send Latham. Or Schell.

**LINCOLN**

**(TO BILBO:)**

No, he'll do fine, just polish

yourself up first.

Bilbo, cigar back in mouth, laughs.

**ROBERT LATHAM**

The incumbent is claiming he won

it. Name of, uh...

**W.N. BILBO**

Coffroth.

**LINCOLN**

That's him.

**RICHARD SCHELL**

Coffroth. He is a Democrat.

**LINCOLN W.N. BILBO**

I understand he is. Silly name.

Let Governor Curtin know it'd

be much appreciated if he'd

invite the House of

Representatives to decide who

won. He's entitled to do

that. He'll agree to it.

**(TO SCHELL:)**

Then advise Coffroth, if he

hopes to retain his seat,

that he'd better pay a visit

to Thaddeus Stevens.

**SEWARD**

Pity poor Coffroth.

**INT. THADDEUS STEVENS'S OFFICE, THE CAPITOL - NIGHT**

Stevens is at his desk, paperwork piled high. There's a knock

at the door.

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

It opens!

A nervous man enters hesitantly: Alexander Coffroth.

**92.**

Stevens glares at him with what looks like horror. Coffroth's

frightened smile transforms into a rictus of pain. Then:

**THADDEUS STEVENS (CONT'D)**

You are Canfrey?

**ALEXANDER COFFROTH**

Coffroth, Mr. Stevens, Alexander

Coffroth, I'm, I'm -

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

**(SKEPTICAL)**

Are we representatives of the same

state?

**ALEXANDER COFFROTH**

Y-yes sir! We sit only three desks

**APART -**

Stevens waves him into a chair.

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

I haven't noticed you. I'm a

Republican, and you, Coughdrop, are

a Democrat?

**ALEXANDER COFFROTH**

Well, I... Um, that is to say... I -

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

The modern travesty of Thomas

Jefferson's political organization

to which you have attached yourself

like a barnacle has the effrontery

to call itself The Democratic

Party. You are a Dem-o-crat.

What's the matter with you? Are you

wicked?

**ALEXANDER COFFROTH**

Well, I felt, um, formerly, I -

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

Never mind, Coffsnot. You were

ignominiously trounced at the

hustings in November's election by

your worthy challenger, a

**REPUBLICAN -**

**ALEXANDER COFFROTH**

No, sir, I was not, um, trounced!

Uh, he wants to steal my seat! I

didn't lose the election -

**93.**

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

What difference does it make if you

lost or not?! The governor of our

state, is...? A Democrat?

**ALEXANDER COFFROTH**

No, he's a...

(baffled, terrified:)

A, um, a Ruh...

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

Re.

**ALEXANDER COFFROTH**

Re.

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

**(NODS)**

Pub.

**ALEXANDER COFFROTH**

Pub.

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

Li.

**ALEXANDER COFFROTH**

Li.

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

Can.

**ALEXANDER COFFROTH**

Can.

Republican.

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

I know what he is. This is a

rhetorical exercise. And Congress

is controlled by what party? Yours?

Coffroth doesn't know whether to answer. He shakes his head.

**THADDEUS STEVENS (CONT'D)**

Your party was beaten, your

challenger's party now controls the

House, and hence the House

Committee on Elections, so you have

been beaten. You shall shortly be

sent home in disgrace. Unless.

**94.**

**ALEXANDER COFFROTH**

I know what I must do, sir! I will

immediately become a Republican and

vote yes for -

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

NO! Coffroth will vote yes but

Coffroth will remain a Democrat

until after he does so.

**ALEXANDER COFFROTH**

Why wait to switch? I'm happy to

**SWITCH -**

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

We want to show the amendment has

bipartisan support, you idiot.

Early in the next Congress, when I

tell you to do so, you will switch

parties. Now congratulations on

your victory, and get out.

**INT. A BEDROOM IN THE ST. CHARLES HOTEL - LATE NIGHT**

Continue with Lincoln and his operatives around the card

table.

**LINCOLN**

Now give me the names of whoever

else you been hunting.

Schell, Latham and Bilbo exchange looks, then:

**ROBERT LATHAM**

George Yeaman.

**RICHARD SCHELL**

Yes. Yeaman.

**W.N. BILBO**

Among others. But Yeaman: That'd

count.

**ROBERT LATHAM**

**(HELPFULLY)**

**Y-E-A-M-A-N**

Lincoln looks up from his notepad, smiling.

**LINCOLN**

I got it.

**95.**

**ROBERT LATHAM**

Kentucky.

**INT. SEWARD'S OFFICE, STATE DEPARTMENT - DAY**

Seward sits at his grand desk, looking on with an anxious

scowl. Lincoln sits on the edge of Seward's desk. Yeaman sits

in a chair facing him.

**GEORGE YEAMAN**

I can't vote for the amendment, Mr.

Lincoln.

**LINCOLN**

I saw a barge once, Mr. Yeaman,

filled with colored men in chains,

heading down the Mississippi to the

New Orleans slave markets. It

sickened me, `n more than that, it

brought a shadow down, a pall

around my eyes.

**(BEAT)**

Slavery troubled me, as long as I

can remember, in a way it never

troubled my father, though he hated

it. In his own fashion. He knew no

smallholding dirt farmer could

compete with slave plantations. He

took us out from Kentucky to get

away from `em. He wanted Indiana

kept free. He wasn't a kind man,

but there was a rough moral urge

for fairness, for freedom in him. I

learnt that from him, I suppose, if

little else from him. We didn't

care for one another, Mr. Yeaman.

**GEORGE YEAMAN**

**(EMBARRASSED)**

I... Well, I'm sorry to hear that -

**LINCOLN**

Lovingkindness, that most ordinary

thing, came to me from other

sources. I'm grateful for that.

**GEORGE YEAMAN**

I hate it, too, sir, slavery, but -

but we're entirely unready for

emancipation. There's too many

**QUESTIONS -**

**96.**

**LINCOLN**

**(LAUGHS)**

We're unready for peace too, ain't

we? When it comes, it'll present us

with conundrums and dangers greater

than any we've faced during the

war, bloody as it's been. We'll

have to extemporize and experiment

with what it is when it is.

Lincoln moves from the desk to take the seat beside Yeaman,

no longer towering over him. He leans forward and rests a

hand on Yeaman's knee.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

I read your speech, George. Negroes

and the vote, that's a puzzle.

**GEORGE YEAMAN**

No, no, but, but, but - But Negroes

can't, um, vote, Mr. Lincoln.

You're not suggesting that we

enfranchise colored people.

**LINCOLN**

I'm asking only that you

disenthrall yourself from the slave

powers. I'll let you know when

there's an offer on my desk for

surrender.

There's none before us now. What's

before us now, that's the vote on

the Thirteenth Amendment. It's

going to be so very close.

You see what you can do.

Lincoln leaves Yeaman, considering.

**EXT. A WORKING CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD IN WASHINGTON - NIGHT**

Lincoln stands in front of William Hutton's row house,

talking to Hutton. The funeral wreath still hangs on the door

behind them, displaying the marks of time passing: faded,

weatherbeaten, dusty.

**WILLIAM HUTTON**

I can't make sense of it, what he

died for. Mr. Lincoln, I hate them

all, I do, all black people. I am a

prejudiced man.

The door opens slightly behind Hutton. His wife looks out.

Hutton exchanges a glance with her, and the door shuts again.

**97.**

**LINCOLN**

I'd change that in you if I could,

but that's not why I come. I might

be wrong, Mr. Hutton, but I

expect... Colored people will most

likely be free, and when that's so,

it's simple truth that your

brother's bravery, and his death,

helped make it so. Only you can

decide whether that's sense enough

for you, or not.

Hutton walks slowly back to his house.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

My deepest sympathies to your

family.

Lincoln goes back to his buggy. Hutton pauses at his door to

watch Lincoln's buggy drive away.

**INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE - NIGHT**

Lincoln is seated at the head of the cabinet table along with

Seward. Ashley, Preston and Montgomery Blair. Hay and Nicolay

sit in their usual chairs.

**PRESTON BLAIR**

**(ANGRY:)**

We've managed our members to a fare-

thee-well, you've had no defections

from the Republican right to

trouble you, whereas as to what you

promised - Where the hell are the

commissioners?!

**JAMES ASHLEY**

Oh God...

**(TO LINCOLN:)**

It's true! You, you...lied to me,

Mr. Lincoln! You evaded my requests

for a denial that, that there is a

Confederate peace offer because,

because there is one! We are

absolutely guaranteed to lose the

whole thing -

**98.**

**JAMES ASHLEY (CONT'D) MONTGOMERY BLAIR**

- and we'll be discredited, We don't need a goddamned

the amendment itself will be abolition amendment! Leave

tainted. What if, what if the Constitution alone! State

these peace commissioners by state you can extirpate -

appear today? Or worse, on

the morning -

**LINCOLN**

I can't listen to this anymore! I

can't accomplish a goddamned thing

of any human meaning or worth until

we cure ourselves of slavery and

end this pestilential war, and

whether any of you or anyone else

knows it, I know I need this! This

amendment is that cure! We're

stepped out upon the world's stage

now, now, with the fate of human

dignity in our hands! Blood's been

spilt to afford us this moment!

He points around the table at Ashley, Monty, Preston.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

Now now now! And you grousle and

heckle and dodge about like

pettifogging Tammany Hall

hucksters! See what is before you!

See the here and now! That's the

hardest thing, the only thing that

accounts! Abolishing slavery by

constitutional provision settles

the fate, for all coming time, not

only of the millions now in bondage

but of unborn millions to come. Two

votes stand in its way, and these

votes must be procured.

**SEWARD**

We need two yeses, three

abstentions, or four yeses and one

more abstention and the amendment

will pass -

**LINCOLN**

You got a night and a day and a

night and several perfectly good

hours! Now get the hell out of here

and get `em!

**JAMES ASHLEY**

Yes but how?

**99.**

**LINCOLN**

Buzzards' guts, man.

Lincoln rises, and keeps rising, till he seems eight feet

tall.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

I am the President of the United

States of America, clothed in

immense power! You will procure me

these votes.

**INT. THE HOUSE CHAMBER - DAWN**

The chamber is quiet and dark. Pages and clerks prepare the

desks, laying out pens and paper, filling inkwells.

**TITLE: THE MORNING OF THE VOTE**

**JANUARY 31, 1865**

A CLERK is draping red-white-and-blue bunting on the desks of

representatives from seceded states. These will of course

remain unoccupied during the vote.

The first Congressman to arrive, Thaddeus Stevens clumps in.

He goes to his desk and sits. He looks around the empty

chamber, ready and waiting.

**INT. THE HOUSE CHAMBER - MORNING, SEVERAL HOURS LATER**

Thaddeus Stevens is at his desk. The House is in session, the

floor full of congressmen caucusing and arguing.

The balcony's packed. Mary and Keckley sit at the front,

Nicolay and Hay behind them. The Blairs are among other

officials, rich people, foreign dignitaries.

There's a sudden quiet, then murmuring. Ashley, Stevens and

everyone on the floor look up, Ellis, Hollister, Hutton and

Hawkins among these.

In the balcony, twenty WELL-TO-DO BLACK PEOPLE, mostly men,

are escorted by several Senators, including Sumner and Wade,

to a reserved section of the balcony. The black people glance

at their surroundings but are rigidly composed.

Asa Vintner Litton sees them enter. He looks about, at the

representatives caucusing, or staring up at the visitors.

Something powerful strikes him. In a voice coarse with

emotion, he calls up to the black visitors:

**100.**

**ASA VINTNER LITTON**

We welcome you, ladies and

gentlemen, first in the history of

this people's chamber, to your

House!

There's tense applause. Some of the black guests bow; most

aren't sure how to respond.

Yeaman watches this, deeply moved.

Bilbo catches Hawkins's eye and waves. Hawkins looks

anxiously around, blushing.

Everyone is seated, and the place is packed.

Schuyler Colfax is in his high seat atop the rostrum, the

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS to his right. Colfax gavels the House into

session. Ashley is at the podium.

**SCHUYLER COLFAX**

Mr. Ashley, the floor is yours.

**JAMES ASHLEY**

On the matter of the joint

resolution before us, presenting a

Thirteenth Amendment to our

national Constitution, which was

passed last year by the Senate, and

which has been debated now by this

estimable body for the past several

weeks. Today we will vote...

Cheers, boos, applause.

**JAMES ASHLEY (CONT'D)**

By mutual agreement we shall hear

brief final statements -

General cheering for this, laughing.

**JAMES ASHLEY (CONT'D)**

- beginning with the honorable

George Pendleton of Ohio.

Applause, boos. Pendleton, taking the podium, is handed

several letters by Wood. He holds them over his head. The

chamber's quiet.

**GEORGE PENDLETON**

I've just received confirmation of

what previously has been merely

rumored! Affidavits from loyal

citizens recently returned from

**101.**

Richmond. They testify that

Commissioners have indeed come

north and ought to have arrived by

now in Washington City! Bearing an

offer of immediate cessation of our

civil war!

The chamber explodes. Through the ensuing ruckus:

**FERNANDO WOOD**

(to Ashley, fake shock:)

Are there Confederate commissioners

in the Capitol?

**JAMES ASHLEY**

I don't... I have no idea where

they are or if they've arrived or -

**FERNANDO WOOD**

If they've arrived?!

**GEORGE PENDLETON**

I appeal to my fellow Democrats, to

all Republican representatives who

give a fig for peace! Postpone this

vote until we have answers from the

President himself!

In the balcony, Hay and Nicolay exchange worried glances.

**FERNANDO WOOD**

Postpone the vote!

Ashley turns to Stevens: "DO SOMETHING!" as Pendleton's

Democrats begin to chant "POSTPONE THE VOTE!"

Mary, worried, looks from Mrs. Keckley to Preston Blair, who

is focused on the leader of the conservative Republican

representatives, AARON HADDAM (R, KY). Haddam looks up at

Preston, awaiting instructions.

Democrats and Republicans rush to the Speaker to support or

protest the motion.

In the balcony, Preston slowly stands, saddened and angry.

**FERNANDO WOOD (CONT'D)**

I have made a motion! Does anyone

here care to second -

Preston nods at Haddam: "Go ahead." Haddam rises.

**102.**

**AARON HADDAM**

(in a powerful voice:)

Gentlemen.

The conservative faction of border

and western Republicans cannot

approve this amendment, about which

we harbor grave doubts, if a peace

offer is being held hostage to its

success. Joining with our

Democratic colleagues, I second the

motion to postpone.

The debate swells again as, in the balcony, Schell scribbles

in a notebook while Latham whispers furiously in his ear.

Latham rips the page out before Schell's finished; Bilbo

snatches it from him.

**ROBERT LATHAM**

Quick, man! Quick!

Bilbo pushes his way out of the balcony. Nicolay, then Hay,

follow on his heels. Mary sees this; she's concerned.

**EXT. OUTSIDE THE CAPITOL - AFTERNOON**

Hay and Nicolay emerge. They see Bilbo running, far ahead.

Hay immediately sprints after him and trips. Nicolay

continues running.

**INT/EXT. WHITE HOUSE PORTICO, FOYER, STAIRS - AFTERNOON**

Bilbo puffs his way across the portico, through the door, and

up the stairs. Hay gains on him. It's become a race!

In the second floor hallway, Bilbo gets winded, and Hay

dashes past him. Hay reaches the doors to Lincoln's office

and flings them open.

**INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, THE WHITE HOUSE - AFTERNOON**

Lincoln is at his desk, working, when Hay bursts in. Bilbo

appears in the doorway, beet-red and gasping for air.

Hay's too winded to speak. Bilbo holds out the note, limp

with sweat, and brings it to Lincoln. Lincoln reads it.

**LINCOLN**

This is precisely what Mr. Wood

wishes me to respond to?

**103.**

Tad runs into the room, excited by the commotion. He wraps

his arm around his father's neck, then tears wildly out of

the room.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

Word for word? This is precisely

the assurance that he demands of

me?

**W.N. BILBO**

Yes sir.

As Nicolay heaves into the room in last place, wheezing

terribly, Lincoln deliberates for a moment, then writes a

note. He blots, folds and hands it to Hay, who immediately

reads it, Nicolay looking on.

**LINCOLN**

Give this to Mr. Ashley.

Hay looks at Nicolay, who can't speak; he waves at Hay to

speak for him.

**JOHN HAY**

I feel, um, I have to say, Mr.

Lincoln, that this -

(annoyed, impatient, to

**BILBO:)**

Could you please just step

outside?!

**W.N. BILBO**

You gonna have a chat now, with

with the whole of the House of

Representatives waiting on that?

Nicolay continues gasping, trying to speak. He can't.

**JOHN HAY**

**(TO LINCOLN:)**

Making false representation to

Congress is, it's, um -

**JOHN NICOLAY**

It's, it's -

**LINCOLN**

Impeachable. I've made no false

representation.

**JOHN HAY**

But there are -

**(WHISPERING:)**

**104.**

There is a delegation from

Richmond.

**LINCOLN**

Give me the note, Johnnie.

Hay gives Lincoln the note. Lincoln takes it, holding on to

Hay's hand; with his free hand, Lincoln passes the note to

Bilbo.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

**(TO BILBO:)**

Please deliver that to Mr. Ashley.

**INT. THE HOUSE CHAMBER AND BALCONY - AFTERNOON**

Bilbo, pushing past the pages, runs in, holding the note,

Ashley snatches it, reading as he makes his way to the

podium. All eyes are on Ashley.

**JAMES ASHLEY**

From the President:

The chamber falls silent.

**JAMES ASHLEY (CONT'D)**

"So far as I know, there are no

peace commissioners in the city

nor are there likely to be."

Applause, booing, furious discussion.

**GEORGE PENDLETON**

"So far as I know-"?! That means

nothing! Are there commissioners

from the South or aren't there?!

In the balcony, Mary looks to Mrs. Keckley.

**JAMES ASHLEY**

The President has answered you,

sir! Your peace offer is a fiction!

**GEORGE PENDLETON**

That is not a denial, it is a

lawyer's dodge!

**JAMES ASHLEY**

Mr. Haddam? Is your faction

satisfied?

**105.**

Preston, in the balcony, hesitates. He looks at his daughter,

who gives him a questioning look: "Do you want this on your

head?"

Preston doesn't. He indicates to Haddam with a small shake of

his venerable head: "Drop it."

**AARON HADDAM**

The conservative Republican

faction's satisfied, and we thank

Mr. Lincoln. I move to table Mr.

Wood's motion.

**SCHUYLER COLFAX**

Tabled!

There's an angry response, but Wood and Pendleton sit,

thwarted.

**JAMES ASHLEY**

Speaker Colfax, I order the main

question.

**SCHUYLER COLFAX**

A motion has been made to bring the

bill for the Thirteenth Amendment

to a vote. Do I hear a second?

**ASA VINTNER LITTON**

I second the motion.

**SCHUYLER COLFAX**

So moved, so ordered. The Clerk

will now -

(a rap of the gavel)

Quiet please.

The noise of the chamber and balcony reduce to a rumble.

**SCHUYLER COLFAX (CONT'D)**

The clerk will now call the roll

for voting.

Thaddeus Stevens sits silently, tired, concentrated: the

moment has come.

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

We begin with Connecticut. Mr.

Augustus Benjamin, on the matter of

this amendment, how say you?

The chamber is completely silent for the first time.

**106.**

**AUGUSTUS BENJAMIN**

Nay!

The clerk records his vote.

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

Mr. Arthur Bentleigh.

**ARTHUR BENTLEIGH**

Nay!

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

Mr. John Ellis, how say you?

**JOHN ELLIS**

Aye!

Angry shouts from Ellis's fellow Democrats, forcing Colfax to

gavel for order.

**DEMOCRATIC SENATOR**

What?! Shameful!

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

Missouri next. Mr. Walter Appleton.

**WALTER APPLETON**

I vote no!

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

Mr. Josiah Burton.

JOSIAH BURTON rises to his feet. He is very, very tall and

thin.

**JOSIAH BURTON**

Beanpole Burton is pleased to vote

yea!

Mary watches from the balcony, pleased, but anxious.

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

The State of New Jersey. Mr.

Nehemiah Cleary.

**NEHEMIAH CLEARY**

No.

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

Mr. James Martinson.

**107.**

**JAMES ASHLEY**

Mr. Martinson has delegated me to

say he is indisposed and he

abstains.

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

Mr. Austin J. Roberts.

**JAMES ASHLEY**

Also indisposed, also abstaining.

Shocked anger from the Democrats. Pendleton starts

calculating votes on a sheet of paper. Wood grabs it and

begins to calculate more rapidly.

In the balcony, Mary keeps track on her own list. She writes

carefully next to Roberts's name: "15 TO WIN"

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

Illinois concluded. Mr. Harold

Hollister, how say you?

Hollister glowers next to Hutton, who's silently praying.

**HAROLD HOLLISTER**

No.

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

Mr. Hutton? Mr. William Hutton,

cast your vote.

Hutton looks up from his prayer.

**WILLIAM HUTTON**

William Hutton, remembering at this

moment his beloved brother,

Fredrick, votes against the

amendment.

**INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, THE WHITE HOUSE - AFTERNOON**

Lincoln watches Tad stacking books to make a fort for his

lead toy soldiers.

**INT/EXT. ROTUNDA AND FRONT DOOR OF THE CAPITOL - AFTERNOON**

A field telegraph has been set up near the steps, at the

front of the enormous crowd that's assembled before the

Capitol. Poles are held up in the crowd by soldiers along

which the telegraph wire is stretched.

**108.**

A soldier stationed at the door of the Capitol relays the

vote to another soldier manning the cipher key:

**SOLDIER**

Webster Allen votes no.

The cipher operator instantly transmits.

**INT. GRANT'S TELEGRAPH ROOM AT CITY POINT - AFTERNOON**

OFFICERS are crowded in the small room, watching a SERGEANT

transcribe as his cipher key clicks.

**SERGEANT**

Webster Allen, Illinois, Democrat,

votes...no.

The cipher key clicks again.

**SERGEANT (CONT'D)**

Halberd Law, Indiana, Democrat,

votes...no.

Grant observes this from the balcony above. Robert, in a

captain's uniform, stands near him. Like his mother, Robert

has a scorecard, and he's keeping track.

Grant turns his back on the proceedings to light a cigar.

He's concerned at how close the vote is. Behind him the count

**CONTINUES:**

**SERGEANT (CONT'D)**

Archibald Moran...yes.

Robert has been looking at Grant; he returns to his score

keeping.

**SERGEANT (CONT'D)**

Ambrose Bailer...yes.

**INT. THE HOUSE CHAMBER AND BALCONY - AFTERNOON**

The Clerk continues.

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

Mr. Walter H. Washburn.

**WALTER H. WASHBURN**

Votes no.

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

And Mr. George Yeaman, how say you?

**109.**

Yeaman doesn't respond. The silence this causes lengthens,

till representatives begin to look to see what's happened.

Yeaman sits, staring ahead, not responding. Thaddeus Stevens,

sensing something's happening, looks in Yeaman's direction.

Yeaman, still staring ahead, mumbles something, but it's

inaudible.

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE (CONT'D)**

Sorry Mr. Yeaman, I didn't hear you

**VOTE -**

**GEORGE YEAMAN**

(rising to his feet)

I said aye, Mr. McPherson.

**AYE!!!**

Great surprise, loud cheers and angry shouts.

**FERNANDO WOOD**

**TRAITOR! TRAITOR!**

Yeaman looks ready to faint. To the consternation of the

Democrats, a mob of gleeful Republicans rushes across the

aisle that separates the two parties; they surround Yeaman,

shaking his hand, slapping him on the back. Colfax bangs the

gavel.

**SCHUYLER COLFAX**

Order!

Pendleton is speechless. Litton turns to Ashley, both

astonished; Ashley turns to Stevens, who watches, sharp,

observant, giving nothing away.

Mary updates her tally: "8 TO WIN"

**SCHUYLER COLFAX (CONT'D)**

Order in the chamber!

Yeaman collapses back into his seat. The room quiets.

**SCHUYLER COLFAX (CONT'D)**

Mr. MacPherson, you may proceed.

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

Mr. Clay R. Hawkins of Ohio.

Hawkins seems to have been startled out of a reverie. Sick

with fear, he looks up at the sound of his name. He can't

speak. Wood and Pendleton watch this, deeply alarmed. Hawkins

snaps out of it.

**CLAY HAWKINS**

Goddamn it, I'm voting yes.

**110.**

A huge reaction to this. LeClerk gapes at Hawkins.

**CLAY HAWKINS (CONT'D)**

(right at Pendleton and

Wood!)

I don't care, shoot me dead! You

shoot me dead I, I am voting yes!

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

Mr. Edwin F. LeClerk.

LeClerk, seated next to Hawkins and transfixed by his

courage, turns dazedly to McPherson.

**EDWIN LECLERK**

No.

(then, standing abruptly:)

Oh to hell with it, shoot me dead

too. Yes!

The noise gets wilder. Pendleton fixes LeClerk and Hawkins

with a murderous look.

**EDWIN LECLERK (CONT'D)**

I mean, abstention. Abstention.

Disgust briefly flashing across his face, McPherson crosses

out and changes LeClerk's vote to an abstention. The cheering

and booing degenerates to intense argument about what this

means for the vote count.

In the balcony, Bilbo looks at Hawkins, well-pleased.

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

Mr. Alexander Coffroth.

Coffroth looks towards Stevens, who doesn't look at him.

**ALEXANDER COFFROTH**

(proud of himself and

happy about the reward

**HE'LL GET:)**

I. Vote. Yes.

Applause. Stevens still doesn't look at Coffroth, but,

tickled, he grins and nods.

**INT. GRANT'S TELEGRAPH ROOM AT CITY POINT - AFTERNOON**

Grant stands with Robert at the balcony rail, waiting.

**SERGEANT**

James Brooks...nay.

**111.**

On a nearby board, a large map has been tacked backwards; on

its reverse side, the count is being scrawled by an officer,

who marks off the votes in quintiles in columns marked YEA

and NAY.

**SERGEANT AT ARMS**

Josiah Grinnell...yea. Meyer

Straus...

**INT. THE HOUSE CHAMBER AND BALCONY - AFTERNOON**

STRAUS rises.

**MEYER STRAUS**

Nay.

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

Mr. Joseph Marstern?

**JOSEPH MARSTERN**

Nay.

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

Mr. Chilton A. Elliot?

**CHILTON A. ELLIOT**

No!

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

Mr. Daniel G. Stuart?

**DANIEL G. STUART**

I vote yes.

Then, in a sequence of rapid cuts:

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

Mr. Howard Guilefoyle.

**HOWARD GUILEFOYLE**

Yea.

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

John F. McKenzie.

**JOHN F. MCKENZIE**

Yea.

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

Andrew E. Fink.

**ANDREW E. FINK**

Nay.

**112.**

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

Mr. John A. Kassim.

**JOHN A. KASSIM**

Yea.

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

Mr. Hanready.

**AVON HANREADY**

Nay.

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

And Mr. Rufus Warren?

**RUFUS WARREN**

Yea.

**INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, THE WHITE HOUSE - AFTERNOON**

Tad is on Lincoln's lap. They're examining a book, the pages

of which feature illustrations comparing the varieties of

species of insects, zebras, finches.

**INT. THE HOUSE CHAMBER AND BALCONY - AFTERNOON**

The room is quiet and tense.

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

The roll call concludes, voting is

completed, now -

**SCHUYLER COLFAX**

Mr. Clerk, please call my name, I

want to cast a vote.

**GEORGE PENDLETON**

I object! The Speaker doesn't vote!

**SCHUYLER COLFAX**

The Speaker may vote if he so

chooses.

**GEORGE PENDLETON**

It is highly unusual, sir -

**SCHUYLER COLFAX**

This isn't usual, Mr. Pendleton,

this is history.

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

How does Mr. Schuyler Colfax vote?

**113.**

**SCHUYLER COLFAX**

(a look of surprise that

this needs to be asked,

then, stating the

**OBVIOUS:)**

Aye, of course.

Laughter in the chamber. The Clerk tallies the vote, then

passes the recorded vote to the Speaker. There's absolute

silence.

In the balcony, Mary checks her own tally, not quite

believing it.

**SCHUYLER COLFAX (CONT'D)**

The final vote: eight absent or not

voting, fifty six votes against,

one hundred nineteen votes for.

With a margin of two votes -

**INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE, THE WHITE HOUSE - AFTERNOON**

Lincoln stands, waiting. The only sound is the ticking of

the clock. And then the ticking is slowly drowned out as

bells begin to peal throughout the city. Lincoln raises the

window as Tad rushes to him. The bells are joined by a

cannonade. The sound of jubilation fills his office.

Lincoln turns from the window to Tad, who stares out eagerly,

seeking out the source of the noise. Lincoln puts his hand on

Tad's head. He looks down at his son, silent.

**INT. THE HOUSE CHAMBER, THE CAPITOL - LATE AFTERNOON**

Representatives throw papers in the air, embrace, weep,

shout, dance, climb on desks. In the balcony, Mary stands

slowly, beyond tears or joy; Mrs. Keckley stands with her,

smiling, crying. Preston Blair applauds vigorously. The black

visitors join the general exultation, overwhelmed, some

praying, others embracing and weeping.

Latham's, Schell's and Bilbo's seats are empty; they've gone.

Ashley, grinning from ear to ear, tears streaming down his

face, is hoisted up on shoulders and marched around the room,

as on the floor and in the balcony, people start singing "The

Battle Cry of Freedom."

Pendleton, with the face of someone who's seen his world

collapse into ruin, walks straight at Yeaman, who's listening

to the singing, deeply moved, his face full of wonder.

Pendleton turns, without a word, and leaves the House.

**114.**

Yeaman laughs, and loudly joins in singing.

Stevens clumps over to the Clerk of the House, who is placing

his tallies and the official copy of the amendment bill in a

folio. He looks up.

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

Congratulations, Mr. Chairman.

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

The bill, Mr. McPherson, may I...?

The Clerk hands the bill to Stevens, who folds it and pockets

it.

**THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE**

That's...That's the official bill.

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

I'll return it in the morning.

Creased, but unharmed.

**EXT. A STREET, WASHINGTON - DUSK**

Celebrating crowds move towards the Mall, singing, carrying

placards proclaiming the passage of the amendment.

Thaddeus Stevens is hobbling in the opposite direction,

making difficult headway against the crowd, pushed and

shoved, unrecognized; he shoves back, his ferocious scowl

utterly at odds with the prevailing festive mood.

He reaches a modest house, unlocks the door and steps inside.

**INT. THADDEUS STEVENS'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Stevens is met at the door by LYDIA SMITH, a black woman in

her fifties. As she helps him off with his coat, he takes a

piece of paper from his pocket.

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

A gift for you.

She takes it.

**THADDEUS STEVENS (CONT'D)**

The greatest measure of the

Nineteenth Century. Passed by

corruption, aided and abetted by

the purest man in America.

**115.**

**INT. THE BEDROOM IN THADDEUS STEVENS'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

Stevens, in his nightgown, takes off his wig. He's bald.

He lies down in bed. Mrs. Smith is in bed already beside

him. She's holding the paper he gave her.

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

I wish you'd been present.

**LYDIA SMITH**

I wish I'd been.

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

It was a spectacle.

**LYDIA SMITH**

You can't bring your housekeeper to

the House. I won't give them

gossip.

**(THE PAPER)**

This is enough. This is... It's

more than enough for now.

They kiss. He lies back. He grabs her hand.

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

Read it to me again, my love.

**LYDIA SMITH**

**"PROPOSED -"**

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

And adopted.

**LYDIA SMITH**

Adopted. "An Amendment to the

Constitution of the United States.

Section One: Neither slavery nor

involuntary servitude, except as a

punishment for crime whereof the

party shall have been duly

convicted, shall exist within the

United States, or any place subject

to their jurisdiction."

**THADDEUS STEVENS**

**SECTION TWO:**

**LYDIA SMITH**

"Congress shall have power to

enforce this amendment by

appropriate legislation."

**116.**

Thaddeus Stevens grins, nods, thinking, eyes sparkling.

**INT./EXT. THE DOCK AT FORTRESS MONROE, HAMPTON ROADS,**

**VIRGINIA - LATE AFTERNOON**

Sailors cheer Lincoln's arrival. Lincoln walks across the

gangway. Seward greets him amidst the cheers.

**INT. THE SALOON ON BOARD THE RIVER QUEEN, HAMPTON ROADS,**

**VIRGINIA - DAY**

Lincoln, Seward and the commissioners are seated. Seward

looks concerned at Lincoln's fatigue.

**ALEXANDER STEPHENS**

Let me be blunt. Will the southern

states resume their former position

in the Union speedily enough to

enable us to block ratification of

the Thirteenth Amendment?

**LINCOLN**

I'd like peace immediately.

**ALEXANDER STEPHENS**

Yes, and...?

**LINCOLN**

I'd like your states restored to

their practical relations to the

Union immediately.

Silence.

**ALEXANDER STEPHENS**

If this could be given me in

writing, as Vice President of the

Confederacy, I'd bring that

document with celerity to Jefferson

Davis.

**SEWARD**

Surrender and we can discuss

reconstruction.

**ALEXANDER STEPHENS**

Surrender won't be thought of

unless you've assured us, in

writing, that we'll be readmitted

in time to block this amendment.

**117.**

**R.M.T. HUNTER**

This is the arrogant demand of a

conqueror for a humiliating,

**ABJECT -**

**SEWARD**

You'll not be conquered people, Mr.

Hunter. You will be citizens,

returned to the laws and the

guarantees of rights of the

Constitution.

**ALEXANDER STEPHENS**

Which now extinguishes slavery. And

with it our economy. All our laws

will be determined by a Congress of

vengeful Yankees, all our rights'll

be subject to a Supreme Court

benched by Black Republican

radicals. All our traditions will

be obliterated. We won't know

ourselves anymore.

**LINCOLN**

(a nod, then:)

We ain't here to discuss

reconstruction, we have no legal

basis for that discussion. But I

don't want to deal falsely. The

Northern states'll ratify, most of

`em. As I figure, it remains for

two of the Southern states to do

the same, even after all are

readmitted. And I been working on

that.

**ALEXANDER STEPHENS**

Tennessee and Louisiana.

**LINCOLN**

Arkansas too, most likely. It'll be

ratified. Slavery, sir, it's done.

Hunter storms out of the cabin.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

If we submit ourselves to law,

Alex, even submit to losing

freedoms - the freedom to oppress,

for instance - we may discover

other freedoms previously unknown

to us. Had you kept faith with

democratic process, as frustrating

as that can be -

**118.**

**JOHN A. CAMPBELL**

Come sir, spare us at least these

pieties. Did you defeat us with

ballots?

**ALEXANDER STEPHENS**

How've you held your Union

together? Through democracy? How

many hundreds of thousands have

died during your administration?

Your Union, sir, is bonded in

cannonfire and death.

**LINCOLN**

It may be you're right. But say all

we done is show the world that

democracy isn't chaos, that there

is a great invisible strength in a

people's union? Say we've shown

that a people can endure awful

sacrifice and yet cohere? Mightn't

that save at least the idea of

democracy, to aspire to?

Eventually, to become worthy of? At

all rates, whatever may be proven

by blood and sacrifice must've been

proved by now. Shall we stop this

bleeding?

**EXT. A CITY ON A SOUTHERN RIVER - NIGHT**

Like a vision of apocalypse, a city on the banks of a broad

river is being consumed in a hellish fire, as artillery

shells rend the dark sky asunder, raining down destruction.

**EXT. SIEGE LINES BEFORE PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA - MORNING**

The morning is grey, and a dense fog covers a vast field.

Lincoln, his stovepipe hat atop his head, is mounted on a

horse on a rise at one end of the field. Behind him, several

UNION OFFICERS are also mounted. It's chilly; the breath of

the men and the horses is visible.

**TITLE: OUTSIDE PETERSBURG, VIRGINIA**

**APRIL 3**

Lincoln flicks the reins of his horse, which starts down the

slope. The officers follow behind him. No one speaks.

**119.**

Lincoln rides slowly, his focus on the ground before him.

Debris is scattered all around him, along with the bodies of

fallen soldiers.

He looks up and across the battlefield; a terrible battle has

concluded a couple of hours ago.

Looking down, as he rides, he sees soldiers killed by

artillery fire, whose bodies lie twisted, burned, headless,

limbless, torn in two, blown out of their clothing or charred

too badly to tell. He sees soldiers killed by rifle and

bayonet, whose corpses are intact.

At the beginning of his ride, all the dead and wounded are in

Union blue, the casualties of Confederate cannon fire, felled

as the Union army, about six hours earlier, began its final,

successful drive to break through Confederate lines.

As Lincoln and his escorts move across the battlefield, grey

and blue uniformed corpses and badly wounded men intermingle.

He reaches the other side of the field, passing a Confederate

flag to enter the now-ruined town of Petersburg.

**EXT. THE THOMAS WALLACE HOUSE, GRANT'S TEMPORARY**

**HEADQUARTERS, ON MARKET STREET, PETERSBURG - MORNING**

Grant, smoking his cigar, his uniform dusty and rumpled, is

sitting on the small porch. He stares piercingly at Lincoln,

in a rocker next to him, watching his troops pass by as they

move in to secure the conquered town. Lincoln closes his

eyes.

He has grown older, the skin around his eyes is cobwebbed

with fine creases, and his hair's thinner, softer, suffused

with grey. His brow has grown smoother.

**LINCOLN**

Once he surrenders, send his boys

back to their homes, their farms,

their shops.

**GRANT**

Yes sir, as we discussed.

**LINCOLN**

Liberality all around. No

punishment. I don't want that. And

the leaders - Jeff and the rest of

`em - if they escape, leave the

country while my back's turned,

that wouldn't upset me none.

**120.**

When peace comes it mustn't just be

hangings.

**GRANT**

By outward appearance, you're ten

years older than you were a year

ago.

**LINCOLN**

Some weariness has bit at my bones.

**(BEAT)**

I never seen the like of it before.

What I seen today. Never seen the

like of it before.

**GRANT**

You always knew that, what this was

going to be. Intimate, and ugly.

You must've needed to see it close

when you decided to come down here.

**LINCOLN**

We've made it possible for one

another to do terrible things.

**GRANT**

And we've won the war. Now you have

to lead us out of it.

**EXT. THE MCLEAN HOUSE, APPOMATTOX COURT HOUSE, VIRGINIA -**

**AFTERNOON**

OFFICERS OF THE CONFEDERATE AND UNION ARMY stand around in

the afternoon sun. Everyone's solemn, even stunned by what's

just happened. No one is speaking.

**TITLE: APPOMATTOX COURTHOUSE, VIRGINIA**

**APRIL 9, 1865**

ROBERT E. LEE comes down the steps of the McLean house, as a

CONFEDERATE OFFICER brings his horse to him. His face is

blank. Lee mounts his waiting horse.

Lee should leave, having just surrendered to Grant inside;

but he's immobile. Some of the officers of both sides look at

Lee, some can't bear it. Lee tries out various expressions:

pride, defiance, blankness.

Grant stomps onto the porch of the house, followed by his

staff. Among them is Robert Lincoln.

**121.**

Grant, lost in thought, stops, taken aback, realizing that

Lee's still there, astride his horse. Everyone looks at the

two men who look awkwardly at one another.

Then Grant removes his famous slouch hat. Everyone freezes

for a moment, and then one by one, the officers of the Union

Army remove their hats.

Lee is visibly moved by this gesture of respect. He raises

his hat, briefly, only an inch from his head. Then, pulling

slightly on his horse's reins, he rides away.

**EXT. A BUGGY RIDE THROUGH WASHINGTON - AFTERNOON**

A beautiful spring afternoon. Lincoln and Mary are riding in

the buggy, driven by the old soldier.

**MARY**

You've an itch to travel?

**LINCOLN**

I'd like that. To the West by rail.

**MARY**

(shaking her head no:)

Overseas.

**LINCOLN**

The Holy Land.

**MARY**

(a laugh, then:)

Awfully pious for a man who takes

his wife out buggy-riding on Good

Friday.

**LINCOLN**

Jerusalem. Where David and Solomon

walked. I dream of walking in that

ancient city.

She seems sadder. They ride in silence.

**MARY**

All anyone will remember of me is I

was crazy and I ruined your

happiness.

**LINCOLN**

Anyone thinks that doesn't

understand, Molly.

She nods; then, tenderly:

**122.**

**MARY**

When they look at you, at what it

cost to live at the heart of this,

they'll wonder at it. They'll

wonder at you. They should. But

they should also look at the

wretched woman by your side, if

they want to understand what this

was truly like. For an ordinary

person. For anyone other than you.

Lincoln laughs, takes her hand. She leans against him.

**LINCOLN**

We must try to be happier. We

must. Both of us. We've been so

miserable for so long.

**INT. LINCOLN'S OFFICE - EVENING**

Lincoln's in the shirtsleeves and vest of his formal evening

wear, his hair brushed down and plastered in place. William

Slade is working the tie and gloves. James Ashley and

Schuyler Colfax stand with him, holding glasses of scotch

whiskey. Slade waits with Lincoln's coat, clothes brush, the

stovepipe hat and gloves on the table.

John Hay tears down several of the military maps, heavily

marked, from the bookcases where they're tacked. He drops

these on the floor. As they watch Hay:

**LINCOLN**

I did say some colored men, the

intelligent, the educated, and

veterans, I qualified it.

**JAMES ASHLEY**

Mr. Stevens is furious, he wants to

know why you qualified it -

**SCHUYLER COLFAX**

No one heard the intelligent or the

educated part. All they heard was

the first time any president has

ever made mention of Negro voting.

**LINCOLN**

Still, I wish I'd mentioned it in a

better speech.

**JAMES ASHLEY**

Mr. Stevens also wants to know why

you didn't make a better speech.

**123.**

They laugh. There's a knock on the door; Nicolay enters.

**JOHN NICOLAY**

**(TO LINCOLN:)**

Mrs. Lincoln's waiting in the

carriage. She wants me to remind

you of the hour, and that you'll

have to pick up Miss Harris and

Major Rathbone.

Lincoln nods. Slade enters with Lincoln's hat, coat, and

gloves. Lincoln begins to dress hurriedly.

**LINCOLN**

Am I in trouble?

**WILLIAM SLADE**

No, sir.

**LINCOLN**

Thank you, Mr. Slade.

Slade hands Lincoln his gloves as Colfax and Ashley drain

their drinks and rise.

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

I suppose it's time to go, though I

would rather stay.

He leaves the room.

**INT. AN EMPTY CORRIDOR, SECOND FLOOR OF THE WHITE HOUSE -**

**CONTINUOUS**

On the way out, Lincoln tosses the gloves on a side table.

Slade grabs them, considers chasing after Lincoln, then

thinks better of it. He walks back towards the office. Then

some strange feeling stops him, and he turns around again.

Lincoln is walking away, past the petitioners' chairs, down

the empty hallway.

Slade watches till Lincoln turns the corner, and he's gone.

**INT. A THEATER - NIGHT**

The theater is adorned with patriotic bunting.

Onstage, a Caliph's palace. A YOUNG MAN duels with scimitars

against a huge, hideous AFRIT. A YOUNG WOMAN in chains cowers

in distress. The young man gymnastically avoids being killed,

then plunges his scimitar into the afrit's heart. The demon

screams and topples to the ground. The audience gasps as a

**124.**

flame-colored, bejewelled bird rises up from the dead afrit's

heart.

The audience applauds. In the center box, Tad Lincoln is

joining in, as is his companion for the evening, Tom Pendel.

Onstage, the bird flies off, the young man is freeing the

young woman, when the scene is halted by the red curtain

lowering, surprising actors and audience. The music dies,

the gas lights in the house are being raised as the owner of

the theater, LEONARD GROVER, steps out before the curtain and

walks to the center of the stage, pale and badly shaken.

In the box, Tom Pendel glances quickly at Tad, who's fixed on

the stage, eyes open, alarmed.

The audience knows something's wrong. Their rising murmur of

concern dies immediately when Grover raises his hands.

**LEONARD GROVER**

**(VOICE SHAKING:)**

The President has been shot.

There are screams of horror from the audience; people leap

from their seats.

**LEONARD GROVER (CONT'D)**

The President has been shot at

Ford's Theater!

The theater is a scene of complete pandemonium. People cry,

jam the aisles, call to each other across rows of seats,

shout questions at Grover, who's calling for calm, inaudible

in the uproar.

Tom Pendel is frozen in shock, then turns to draw Tad close

to him. Tad pulls away and begins shrieking, clinging to the

railing so tightly that Pendel can't pry him loose. Tad can't

stop screaming, his eyes wide open, seeing nothing.

**INT. THE BEDROOM IN PETERSON'S BOARDING HOUSE - MORNING**

Mary is gently escorted into a tiny room. A small, hissing

gas jet in the wall bathes the scene with green light.

Stanton, Speed, GENERAL HENRY HALLECK and a MINISTER, are

standing. Welles sits by the head of the bed. DR. CHARLES

LEALE, a young army surgeon, and DR. ROBERT STONE, the

Lincoln family's doctor, stand uselessly by the foot of the

bed, while DR. JOSEPH BARNES, the Surgeon General, listens to

Lincoln's faint breathing.

**125.**

Robert, in uniform, red-eyed, pale as a ghost, sits at the

bedside and stares at his father, barely breathing.

Lincoln lies in a crooked diagonal, his knees bent, on a bed

he's too tall to fit properly, clad only in a nightshirt.

Barnes moves his head closer, then closer. The room is

utterly still. Barnes takes out his watch, looks at the time,

softly clears his throat.

**DR. BARNES**

It's 7:22 in the morning, Saturday

the 15th of April. It's all over.

The President is no more.

No one talks, or moves.

Stanton looks at Lincoln's body.

**STANTON**

Now he belongs to the ages.

Robert begins to weep.

**LINCOLN (V.O.)**

Fondly do we hope, fervently do we

pray, that this mighty scourge of

war may speedily pass away.

**EXT. THE EAST PORTICO OF THE CAPITOL - NOON**

Lincoln, wearing spectacles, stands at a podium before the

Capitol Dome, still under scaffolding, under cloudy skies. He

reads from the two pages.

**LINCOLN**

Yet, if God wills that it continue

until all the wealth piled by the

bondman's two hundred and fifty

years of unrequited toil shall be

sunk, and until every drop of blood

drawn with the lash shall be paid

by another drawn with the sword, as

was said three thousand years ago,

so still it must be said "the

judgments of the Lord are true and

righteous altogether."

He glances at his audience: 40,000 people from all over the

country, wounded soldiers, civilians in black. And for the

first time, in the crowd, not at its edges, hundreds of

African Americans, civilians and soldiers.

**126.**

**LINCOLN (CONT'D)**

With malice toward none, with

charity for all, with firmness in

the right as God gives us to see

the right, let us strive on to

finish the work we are in, to bind

up the nation's wounds, to care for

him who shall have borne the

battle, and for his widow and his

orphan, to do all which may achieve

and cherish a just and a lasting

peace among ourselves and with all

nations.

**FADE TO BLACK.**

**THE END**