

America: Red, White & Badass

by

Ryan Lear & Jeff Wachsmuth

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FADE IN:

EXT. ANDERSON FARM - DAY

Three middle-aged farmers are toiling in a field under the blazing afternoon sun.

SUPER: "Virginia, 1781"

PA, a lean, stern-looking forty-something, pauses and wipes the sweat from his leathery brow.

He looks around, then turns to MA, a haggard, motherly woman whose appearance tells of a lifetime of labor.

PA
Where in tarnation is Benjamin?

Ma shrugs, but doesn't stop working.

The third farmer, UNCLE SAM, fifty, looks identical to his namesake except in farm clothes. He stops, leaning on a hoe.

UNCLE SAM
I reckon he went to get the plow.

PA
Plow my ass! We sent him to do that three hours ago. Ma, go find that boy and put him to work.

EXT. ANDERSON BARN - CONTINUOUS

Ma approaches the barn.

MA
Benjamin! Benjamin Anderson where in the heck is you?

She sighs as she steps over a plow and enters the barn.

INT. ANDERSON BARN - CONTINUOUS

BEN, a stout young man in his twenties, is sprawled out on a stack of hay, masturbating. A few lit candles are dangerously resting on the hay around him.

Ma pokes her head in.

MA
Benjamin, your Pa wants --

Ma screams and covers her eyes. Ben frantically tries to cover himself with handfuls of hay. One candle falls over.

BEN

It's not what it looks like!

Suddenly flames erupt under Ben. He jumps up, naked, and stomps them out while still hiding his genitals.

MA

Oh! For God's sake! I have told you a thousand times not to light candles in here, but do you listen? No, you lay here abusin' yourself while we slave away, workin' the --

EXT. ANDERSON FARM

Ben is slowly plowing the field. Ma follows, still yelling.

MA

... We give you a roof to sleep under, and hay to sleep on. We even feed you, and all we ask is fifteen hours of back-breakin' labor a day! You oughta be ashamed of --

INT. ANDERSON HOUSE DINING ROOM

The family is eating around a table.

MA

... And to think I wasted twelve hours in labor birthin' your lazy --

BEN

I'm sorry Ma, I --

MA

I don't want to hear it, you ingrate! Your Pa has already had heat stroke twice today, but you don't see him takin' breaks!

Ben nods meekly and grabs the last bread roll, not seeing Pa reach for it. As Ben takes a bite, Pa throws his hands up.

PA

(sarcastically)
Oh, sorry! Still hungry? I would've presumed that five rolls would be sufficient! It's not like I've been up since four in the morning, breaking my back in the fields.

Ben pauses, looking unsure whether to continue chewing.

PA
When the heck is you gonna finish
plowin' them fields anyway?

BEN
I was thinking after lunch.

PA
(sarcastically)
Oh, after lunch? After you finished
eating all the damn bread? Well
that's great news!

UNCLE SAM
Alright, go easy on the boy.

PA
It's war time, dammit! We're
supposed to ration our food, not
eat whole fields of wheat daily!

BEN
(mouth full)
War time?

PA
The revolutionary war?

Ben looks at him questioningly.

PA
It's been going for seven years!

Pa points out the window to soldiers shooting at each other.

PA
Your cousin Jethro's fought with
the Patriots the whole war!

He points back out the window to Jethro, standing among the
soldiers. As Jethro waves to Pa cheerily, a shot strikes his
chest and he falls. No one at the table notices.

PA
He's fighting so your lazy ass can
do the only thing it's good for,
which is farming, and it's not even
any damn good for that!

MA
Ben, stop it! You're giving Pa heat
stroke again.

UNCLE SAM

Look, I'll take care of the fields.
Ben, why don't you deliver those
tomatoes to the Jeffries for me?

Uncle Sam winks at Ben, whose eyes light up excitedly.

PA

So help me God, boy, if you dawdle
with that Jeffries girl, I'll whoop
the bread rolls right out of ya!

EXT. ANDERSON BARN

Uncle Sam hands a basket of tomatoes up to Ben, who's sitting
on a horse. Uncle Sam smiles and leans in conspiratorially.

UNCLE SAM

So when's the big day?

BEN

Tomorrow. She doesn't suspect a
thing.

EXT. JEFFRIES FARM

ABIGAIL, twenty, hammers a fence post while simultaneously
churning a barrel of butter with her free hand. She looks
beautiful even dripping with sweat and covered in mud.

Behind her a young boy, JAMES, aims a musket bigger than
himself at a bullseye on a bale of hay. GENERAL JEFFRIES, a
scowling old curmudgeon with a cane, stands over him.

GENERAL JEFFRIES

Elbow bent! Arms straight! Steady!
Stay perfectly calm! ... Calmer!

Abigail surveys the completed fence with a satisfied nod.
James fires, missing his target wildly: one of the fence
posts explodes into shards and the whole fence collapses.

Abigail sighs. She walks over to James with a patient smile.

ABIGAIL

James, try holding the butt into
your shoulder to keep it steady.

GENERAL JEFFRIES

Abigail, quit confusing the boy!
Don't listen to your sister James,
she's just a woman.

ABIGAIL
 Sorry father.

James fires again, using Abigail's tip. This time he hits the bullseye dead on. The General is visibly irritated.

JAMES
 Hey, I got it!

GENERAL JEFFRIES
 Go play with your friends, boy!

James runs off. Abigail looks at the General nervously.

ABIGAIL
 Father, I mended your old uniform
 and fixed your display case as you
 asked ... So I thought maybe I
 could sell my quilts in town
 tomorrow? Ben said he'd take me.

GENERAL JEFFRIES
 Absolutely not! Tomorrow you need
 to, uh ... clean the chimney again.
 And fix that damn fence already!

Abigail nods sadly.

EXT. JEFFRIES FARM

Ben rides along with the basket of tomatoes. As he nears the house, he sees a KID lying on the ground, clutching his leg.

BEN
 What's wrong? Are you okay?

KID
 Ow! My leg really hurts mister!

BEN
 Alright, just stay calm.

As Ben starts to dismount, James, now brandishing a wooden sword and a makeshift tricorne hat, jumps out from a bush.

JAMES
 Attack!

Another boy charges out and hurls a squash up at Ben's face, knocking him off the horse and spilling the tomatoes.

As the boys race towards him, Ben desperately fumbles for a tomato. He throws it weakly at James but misses by many feet.

The three kids are upon Ben, smacking and kicking him as he feebly swats back. He curls up into the fetal position.

Abigail runs out of the house covered in soot.

ABIGAIL

James, leave him alone!

James picks up a tomato and hurls it at Abigail. She catches it without flinching, then throws it back, beaming him.

As the boys flee and Ben gets up, Abigail runs over. She fixes her hair and brushes soot off her dress.

ABIGAIL

Sorry I'm such a mess. I've been cleaning the chimney.

BEN

No ... you're beautiful. Absolutely beautiful.

Abigail blushes. Ben fumbles around in his pocket and pulls out a squished blue pansy.

ABIGAIL

Pansies, my favorite Oh Ben.

She puts the flower in her hair. Ben inches closer nervously, and they close their eyes, moving in to kiss. Just then the General bursts out of the house, scowling. Ben jumps back.

BEN

Hi there, sir. How are you today?

Ben awkwardly salutes the General.

GENERAL JEFFRIES

Put your hand down, blubber-bag!
You're no soldier.

Ben quickly lowers his hand and sighs, glancing at Abigail.

GENERAL JEFFRIES

Abigail! Supper won't skin,
marinate, and cook itself!

ABIGAIL

Coming, father.

BEN

Sorry about the tomatoes. I hope
the General won't be mad.

ABIGAIL
Oh he'll be fine. I'll find other ingredients for the tomato sauce.

BEN
Will I still see you tomorrow?

ABIGAIL
(whispering)
I'll see if I can slip away.

Ben beams and mounts his horse. As he rides off, Abigail takes the flower from her hair and smiles as she twirls it.

INT. ANDERSON BARN - NIGHT

Ben is tossing and turning on his bed of hay. Finally he gets up and lights a candle.

He grabs some cue cards and paces about, mumbling to himself.

After a moment he turns to two outfits hanging on the wall: both are dirty farm rags. He examines them carefully, then takes the slightly less decrepit of the two and sighs.

EXT. SECLUDED MEADOW - DAY

Ben sets a stone on the ground and stands back, admiring his work: hundreds of stones form a heart around a flowerbed of pansies spelling "I LOVE YOU ABIGAIL. WILL YOU MARRY ME?"

Uncle Sam enters the meadow, looking impressed at Ben's work.

UNCLE SAM
Today's the big day! It looks wonderful. She's going to love it.

BEN
I sure hope so ...

UNCLE SAM
She will. I just came by to wish you luck, and give you this.

Uncle Sam holds out a red bowtie. He smiles.

BEN
Your lucky tie? Thanks Uncle Sam, that really means a lot.

UNCLE SAM
Ben, I want you ... to know how proud I am of ... you.

Uncle Sam starts to tie the bowtie around Ben's neck.

BEN
I'm really nervous.

UNCLE SAM
Don't worry! You have a ring, ...

Ben holds up a rusty nail bent into a near perfect circle.

UNCLE SAM
... This beautiful proposal, ...
(tightening the bowtie)
... Her father's blessing, and --

BEN
Wait, what? Father's blessing?

UNCLE SAM
Yes. You got his permission, right?

BEN
... He threw his cane at me once.

UNCLE SAM
I don't think that counts. No
bother, just go ask him right now.

Ben sighs, shaking his head hopelessly at the ring.

UNCLE SAM
It's only a formality. Just be
assertive: look him right in the
eye, point, and say: "I want you
... to let me marry your daughter."

Uncle Sam pats him encouragingly.

INT. JEFFRIES HOUSE - STUDY

The General is at his desk writing when Ben enters. He grimaces as Ben knocks a tricorn hat off a display case.

BEN
Mr. Jeffries ...

Jeffries hurls his cane at Ben.

GENERAL JEFFRIES
It's General, you boob!

BEN
Sorry. General Jeffries, I have
something to ask of you.

Ben takes a deep breath.

BEN
I want you ... to ... well, I was
hoping that maybe ... It's just --

GENERAL JEFFRIES
Out with it, you degenerate!

BEN
I want to marry Abigail. I was
hoping to get your blessing.

The General's eyes widen. He reaches for his sword.

BEN
S-Sir? Did -- did you hear me?

GENERAL JEFFRIES
Of course I heard you, you
troglodyte! The answer is no.

BEN
No?

GENERAL JEFFRIES
That's right. No.

BEN
But ... why?

GENERAL JEFFRIES
Actually, I have a list of reasons.
(looking around)
Where's that scroll? Here it is.

The General unrolls a massive scroll and begins reading.

GENERAL JEFFRIES
You're lazy, unpleasant looking,
husky, offensive smelling ...

Ben smells himself.

BEN
How long is that scroll?

GENERAL JEFFRIES

Ten yards. Double sided. Written as tightly as Abigail could manage.

BEN

You made her write all this?

GENERAL JEFFRIES

Let's see ... you've never accomplished anything, you have no direction in your life, and if your sperm is at all like you, you'll be incapable of fertilizing any woman.

BEN

So, you're saying no?

The General pushes himself up.

GENERAL JEFFRIES

I'm saying you're a useless sack of skin! You're not even capable of feeding her or putting a roof over her head, let alone protecting her.

Ben stares at Jeffries, speechless.

GENERAL JEFFRIES

You're not good enough for her and that'll never change. She'll marry a strapping soldier, not some cowardly farmer who's been standing on my hat this whole conversation.

Ben looks down to see the tricorn hat beneath his muddy boots. He backs out of the room, defeated.

INT. JEFFRIES HOUSE - ABIGAIL'S ROOM

Abigail is busy working at a loom with impressive skill. Ben enters with his hands in his pockets, looking somber.

ABIGAIL

Ben darling, is something wrong?

Ben fishes around in his pocket.

BEN

I've got something to tell you.

He fumbles and drops the bent nail engagement ring. As he kneels and picks it up, Abigail shrieks happily, jumping up.

ABIGAIL

Oh, I've waited years for this.
Yes! Yes! The answer is yes!

Abigail snatches the ring from Ben, who looks utterly confused. She puts it on her finger and admires it.

BEN

Um ...

ABIGAIL

Oh, Ben it's beautiful!
(grabbing her finger)
Ow! It's still a little sharp. No
bother, we'll file it down a touch.

BEN

Listen, you're getting the wrong --

ABIGAIL

(tearing up)
I'm just so happy. I need to start
making food for the wedding and --

BEN

Abigail! I ... I wasn't proposing.

ABIGAIL

W-what?

BEN

I wanted to. Your father said no.

Abigail slumps back into her seat.

ABIGAIL

But, why? ... He didn't read from
one of those scrolls did he?

BEN

There's more than one?!

ABIGAIL

Never mind that. He just doesn't
know you like I do.

BEN

I love you Abigail, but maybe he's
right. You deserve someone better.

ABIGAIL

Don't say such things. You just
need to get on his good side.

BEN

Good side?

ABIGAIL

Well since he retired he mainly enjoys other people doing chores. Maybe you could help around here.

BEN

You think that would work? Alright I'll do it. Anything for you!

She jumps onto Ben, hugging him tight.

MONTAGE - BEN TRIES TO HELP AROUND THE JEFFRIES FARM

-- Ben is up on the roof of the barn nailing down the last of a new set of shingles. He stands and admires his work.

On the ground, Abigail tugs her father's arm, pointing at Ben. Just then, the shingles give way and Ben slides off the roof, dragging all the shingles with him. He lands on a cow.

-- Ben and Abigail are collecting eggs from a chicken coop. Ben playfully pushes Abigail and she throws an egg at him. He laughs and throws one back, but Abigail ducks.

The General turns angrily, his head covered in egg. Ben drops a basket of eggs, breaking them, then flees.

-- Abigail sees Ben milking a cow. She smiles and fetches the General. When they return, Ben is pinned down by James, who is shooting milk in his face. The General laughs heartily.

-- Ben is sweeping in the study. He stops by a display case and picks up a portrait of Jeffries with George Washington, admiring it. When he puts it back the display case collapses.

END MONTAGE

INT. JEFFRIES HOUSE - STUDY - DAY

Abigail is helping her father fix the destroyed display case. He picks up a sword that is badly bent and shakes his head.

GENERAL JEFFRIES

How did that boy even? ... I've driven this sword through a dozen men's skulls without a single dent!

ABIGAIL

Father please, Ben's really trying. I wish you'd cut him some slack.

GENERAL JEFFRIES
 (shaking the bent sword)
 Good thinking! I will cut his sack.

ABIGAIL
 No, I said ... Never mind.

Abigail remains silent as Jeffries grumbles to himself.
 Finally she stops cleaning and takes a deep breath.

ABIGAIL
 I love him, father. And he loves
 me. If you care about me, you'll
 give him your blessing. Please!

GENERAL JEFFRIES
 Never! You'll marry a soldier and
 have his children ... and raise
 them to be soldiers.

She stares at her father, fighting back tears.

GENERAL JEFFRIES
 Stop all this insubordination! This
 has always been the plan.

ABIGAIL
 It's always been your plan, father,
 but it's my life!

Abigail turns and runs out of the room crying.

EXT. JEFFRIES GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Ben is on a ladder with his head buried in an apple tree. He
 drops apples into a basket below with little to no accuracy.

Abigail storms out of the house, wiping her eyes on the way.
 She stops below the tree and catches one of the apples.

ABIGAIL
 Ben, get down here and impregnate
 me!

Ben falls out of the tree. He shakes his head, dazed.

BEN
 What?! But your father ... babies --

ABIGAIL
 If I'm pregnant, we'll have to get
 married! He'll have no choice.
 (MORE)

ABIGAIL (cont'd)
Now get up and ... do whatever it
is you have to do to make me
pregnant.

She closes her eyes and puts her arms out expectantly. Ben gets up and remains silent for a moment, conflicted.

BEN
Look, I train for this daily. No
one wants it more than me, but not
just to get back at your father.
Let's wait till you're ready.

She smiles and hands him the apple.

ABIGAIL
No, Ben, I am ready. I love you.

BEN
I've always loved you, Abigail.

He looks deep into her eyes and they share a passionate kiss.

ABIGAIL
(taking Ben's hand)
Let's go to my room.

BEN
This is going to be so amazing.

INT. JEFFRIES HOUSE - ABIGAIL'S ROOM

Abigail and Ben are both naked, standing facing each other.

ABIGAIL
I heard it helps conception if we
face north and I'm upside down. And
you need to stand on one foot. Then
push my stomach with the other one.

They struggle to contort themselves into the bizarre position Abigail described. It looks ridiculously uncomfortable.

BEN
Can't we -- no ... Ow, ow!

They lose their balance and fall over.

ABIGAIL
Well, perhaps we should try it the
normal way. I think you're on top.

They get on the bed and assume the basic missionary position.

BEN
 ... What's going on? I'm not in?
 I'm really pushing!

ABIGAIL
 I think it's positioned wrong ...
 No, it's still -- that's my bum.

BEN
 Are you sure?

ABIGAIL
 Am I sure it's my bum?!

BEN
 Right, sorry.

ABIGAIL
 Maybe if you just ...

She reaches down with her hand and makes a small movement, and at once they both sigh in pleasure.

Literally one second later the door bursts open and General Jeffries strides in, holding a musket and an old rag.

GENERAL JEFFRIES
 Have you seen my musket polish?

They freeze in terror. A vein swells out in the General's forehead, and he shakes in rage. He aims his musket at Ben.

GENERAL JEFFRIES
 This is the last straw, you cretin!

BEN
 Sir, it's not what it looks like!

Jeffries fires the musket and it narrowly misses Ben's ass.

Ben yells and jumps up, frantically looking for an escape. The General is blocking the only doorway.

He charges Jeffries, who steps aside and strikes him in the back of the head with the butt of the musket.

Ben falls to the ground unconscious.

EXT. JEFFRIES FARM - DAY

Ben groggily wakes up to see two blurry figures over him.

A young Patriot soldier, MESSENGER AL, stands at attention before Jeffries.

GENERAL JEFFRIES
 When you get to the Patriot camp,
 give this letter and this ...
 (pointing to Ben)
 Spongy meat-sack to my friend
 General George Washington.

The soldier nods and takes a letter from the General.

MESSENGER AL
 Does he have any clothes? Or a rag
 I could use to cover his genitals?
 He's awfully naked.

Ben looks down to see himself naked and in the back of a wagon. His hands are bound.

Abigail runs to the General, sobbing. She grabs his arm.

ABIGAIL
 Father, please! If you send him to
 the army he'll surely be killed.

GENERAL JEFFRIES
 That's the idea.

MESSENGER AL
 ... So that's a no on the clothes?

BEN
 Wait. I think I'm tied to a wagon.

Al climbs onto the wagon and it slowly leaves with Ben. Abigail runs after it but Jeffries grabs her.

ABIGAIL
 Unhand me, father! I love you, Ben!

She holds her hand in the air, showing the engagement ring on her finger. Jeffries grabs her hand and pulls it off.

GENERAL JEFFRIES
 Get that ridiculous thing off.

He throws it away and it happens to land by Ben on the wagon, which is getting further and further away.

BEN
 (in the distance)
 Oh no, I think the wagon is moving!

The General turns to Abigail, who is still staring after the wagon, her anguish now replaced with silent anger.

GENERAL JEFFRIES

One day you'll thank me for this.

INT. PATRIOT TRAINING CAMP - SPARRING ROOM - NIGHT

Three men wrestle in a circle of cheering soldiers. Two of them, huge and muscular, engage the third, GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Washington, a devilishly handsome man in his thirties, smiles calmly. Though not ripped like his opponents, he drips with confidence, charisma, and virility.

Messenger Al enters with Ben, now wearing a burlap sack.

George grabs the larger of his opponents, flips him and pile-drivers him onto the mat. The man shouts in pain.

Al pushes his way into the circle.

MESSENGER AL

General Washington, I have a letter
from General Jeffries.

Washington releases the wrestler and responds casually.

GEORGE WASHINGTON

Great. Just give me a sec.

The second behemoth of a soldier swings at Washington, who ducks, flips the man over, then roundhouse kicks his face.

Ben winces as the man falls to the mat.

George brushes himself off and smiles at the two fallen men.

GEORGE WASHINGTON

Great job, you're really improving.

Washington steps out of the circle and two gorgeous young women bring him an American flag cape, which he puts on.

GEORGE WASHINGTON

Thank you, ladies.

(to Al)

Now, let's see this letter.

Al hands him the letter and motions to Ben.

MESSENGER AL

He also sent this ... naked man.

GEORGE WASHINGTON
 Hilarious! Alright, we gotta send
 him something. We'll send him a
 cow, but we'll dress it up like a --

MESSENGER AL
 Sir, maybe you should read the
 letter first.

BEN
 Look, my name is Ben, and I th--

Washington puts a finger to his lips and reads the letter.

GENERAL JEFFRIES (V.O.)
 Greetings, old friend. Word of your
 victories against the British warms
 my heart, but I write regarding a
 grave matter: I caught this vagrant
 fornicating with my daughter.

Washington smiles broadly at Ben.

GEORGE WASHINGTON
 My goodness, you are a rascal!

Ben laughs nervously.

GENERAL JEFFRIES (V.O.)
 ... I would be in your debt if you
 enlist him and see to it that he is
 killed in action in a slow, painful
 manner. Good luck on your campaign.
 Regards, General Jeffries.

Washington smiles as he shakes his head and folds the letter.

GEORGE WASHINGTON
 Wow. The world turns round, doesn't
 it? How's the old general enjoying
 retirement?

MESSENGER AL
 He seemed irate and bitter, sir.

GEORGE WASHINGTON
 Good! Some things never change ...
 So Ben, is it?

Ben is transfixed with two wrestling soldiers. He jumps when
 one, a giant of a man, snaps his opponent's back on his knee.

Washington looks over at the combatants. He claps lightly.

GEORGE WASHINGTON
 Good job, Lightning! Drag that guy
 out, and two more get in there.

Washington smiles as he turns back to Ben.

GEORGE WASHINGTON
 Welcome to the Patriot army.

BEN
 I don't think this is right for me.
 I didn't even sign anything. This
 is a big misunderstanding.

GEORGE WASHINGTON
 I totally understand where you're
 coming from, but there's nothing I
 can do. Jeffries is an old friend,
 and he did an excellent job forging
 your enlistment papers.

Again Ben is watching wide-eyed as two combatants spar. One
 is straddling the other, pounding his face repeatedly.

BEN
 (pointing to fighters)
 Look at this! I'm just a farmer,
 and I'm not even good at that.
 There's got to be a way out.

GEORGE WASHINGTON
 I'm afraid the only way out is by
 completing your service and being
 honorably discharged, or getting
 killed and sent home in a casket.

BEN
 (turning pale)
 ... I need to sit down.

GEORGE WASHINGTON
 Oh, and I guess technically you can
 be sent home if an injury leaves
 you horribly maimed.

Two other gorgeous ladies come and tug Washington's sleeve.
 He puts his arms around them.

GEORGE WASHINGTON
 Listen Ben, I should bounce -- I've
 got to go make my own "honorable
 discharge" if you know what I mean.
 (MORE)

GEORGE WASHINGTON (cont'd)
 Get settled in your bunk and rest
 up. Real training starts tomorrow.

He strolls off with the women. Behind him a combatant screams in agony as his opponent breaks a wooden chair over his back.

INT. PATRIOT TRAINING CAMP - SOLDIERS QUARTERS

Ben passes dozens of bunks and slumps down on an empty one.

In the next bunk lies TOM LEE, a slim African American in his twenties. He sits up and shakes Ben's hand.

TOM
 Nice to meet you. I'm Tom Lee.

BEN
 I'm Ben. Your name is Tomly? You mean like Beverly?

TOM
 No, "Tom -- pause -- Lee" ... just call me Tom. So Ben, how did you get involved in all of this?

BEN
 I don't know! I just woke up naked and tied to a wagon.

TOM
 Oh. Well, I'm not really sure how to respond to that, but --

Tom's bunk-mate JIM, a rotund white man with an extravagant wig, pokes his head down. He speaks with a southern drawl.

JIM
 Tom, switch mattresses with me. Mine's all lumpy 'n moist.
 (noticing Ben)
 Oh, howdy! The name's Jim. Short fer Jimothy. Well, Doctor Jimothy.

BEN
 Doctor? You must be pretty smart.

JIM
 I reckon so.

TOM
 It was his genius idea to enlist us in the army to meet women.

Tom throws his arms up in exasperation.

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