

EXT. WALLER STREET THEATER - DAY

WASHINGTON

(To Dinwiddie and his escort)
Stop him! You must stop him!

DINWIDDIE

Colonel Washington! Or should I say, ex-Colonel?
I do believe that you no longer hold the authority to command
my men, and that you have given it up by your own volition!

WASHINGTON

This man was a prisoner of His Majesty, having been
discovered engaged in the act of spying--

DINWIDDIE

I am keenly aware of the man's
identity and the crimes he is accused of.

WASHINGTON

Then why, sir, is he at large?

DINWIDDIE

Because I - your superior - have
granted him liberty. Ensign Drouillon has been given parole.
Must we not exercise mercy, if we are to receive it?

WASHINGTON

What of my men, Major Stobo and Captain Van Braam,
who were offered to the French in exchange?

DINWIDDIE

I assure you, everything that can
be done is being done.

Drouillon bows before Sally Fairfax, kissing her hand. George William looks on, wide-eyed.

Dinwiddie steps in close to Sally.

DINWIDDIE

(TO SALLY)

Ye bring dishonor to the Fairfax
name with your idle babbling, madam, and scandal, I would
add, with the manifest absence of children at Belvoir.

Governor Dinwiddie and his Royal Guards march to their carriage.

CUSTIS DINING ROOM - SUNSET - The Virginia Elite and William Hunter have now settled around a feast at the Custis's grand table.

LORD FAIRFAX (raises glass)
I wish to propose a toast:
to the health of the Honorable Governor Dinwiddie
and his lovely wife, Rebecca. ALL Here, here!

DINWIDDIE
Thank you, Mr. Custis. 'Tis an
honor to dine with you this 'eve.

WILLIAM FAIRFAX
Governor, what say ye? For the Gazette?

DINWIDDIE
There, there - 'tis no trifle at all, really.
The French have refused to heed
our warnings, and their invasion into
the Ohio Valley has given me a continual uneasiness.

COLONEL FAIRFAX
'Tis disheartening news with regard to British efforts in the
valley, is it not?

DINWIDDIE
Indeed. Even now, King George
considers sending a British
detachment to our aid - it seems
that the war with France is inevitable.

WILLIAM HUNTER
So would it be safe to say we are at war, gentlemen?

COLONEL FAIRFAX
NO, Mr. Hunter. We are not at war.

DINWIDDIE
The Ohio Valley is in good hands.
Washington will see to it that we stay in control.

There is another awkward silence. Lord Fairfax, sipping a glass of wine, breaks the silence with a CHUCKLE.

LORD FAIRFAX
Well. Her concerns for dear
Washington is not unfounded, are they, Governor?

DINWIDDIE

Nay, I suppose not. If we are on the brink of war, and 'tis Washington who is stationed on the front lines.

MARTHA CUSTIS

Governor, I do not mean to pry but, he is only a boy. Do ye not have more qualified, experienced officers than he to be placed in such a critical-

DANIEL CUSTIS

My dear, I am quite sure the Governor knows the best course of action to take

DINWIDDIE

'Tis not a matter of experience, but a matter of practicality. The Ohio Country is prime land for colonization, but rife with savages. Washington simply has a keen knack for peaceful dealings with them.

LORD FAIRFAX

Indeed. An alliance with the savages native to the Ohio Valley would prove most useful, should war break out. What matters is that the land be held at any cost.

COLONEL FAIRFAX

I disagree. No land is worth the lives of our young men.

DINWIDDIE

I tend to side with Lord Thomas. Were the land to be taken by the French, the Ohio Company would be out of business for trade - and thus, England would be out of business. If war is on the horizon, gentlemen, and if we are to maintain our presence in the colonies, 'tis our duty as citizens of the Crown, and for the advancement of our nation, that the King's interests - and our interests - be held at any cost. Nay - at every cost.