

# The American Kingdom

Pilot -- Episode #101

"Liberty Day"

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The First Five  
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**EXT. NEW WINDSOR CAMP - DAWN.**

A series of three aerials. Each brings us closer to a revolutionary war army encampment of nearly 7,000 soldiers. More than seven hundred log huts and several thousand tents cover the over 16,000 acres along a frozen Hudson river.

SUPER:

*March 10th, 1783*

SUPER:

*New Windsor, New York*

**EXT. ARMY ENCAMPMENT - DAWN.**

We pan across the sleepy army encampment. A recent storm has broken leaving fresh snow on the ground. Although undoubtedly cold, it would be a respite from the bitter winds, freezing rain, and mountains of snow from previous weeks.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It's been nearly seventeen months since The Siege of Yorktown, the final battle of the Revolutionary War.

We move through the camp witnessing it's poor state - small hastily built huts, faded and ill kept tents, dwindling rations. We see a broken siege cannon on it's side.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

A beleaguered Continental Army led by General George Washington restlessly await an end to negotiations in Paris.

Three sleepy soldiers, only one with a complete uniform, all with worn shoes, dirtied shirts, and patched coats, warm themselves by a small fire in the early morning light.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

With the threat of war still looming Washington struggles to keep his army from falling apart.

We see a pen of horses. A keeper fights to calm a bucking stallion.

**INT. CAPTAIN ARMSTRONG'S QUARTERS - DAWN.**

CAPTAIN JOHN ARMSTRONG JR (Having joined the Pennsylvania militia at 17, now 25 - he's a seasoned soldier who seems far older than 25, and has rightly earned his rank as Captain) hurriedly copies an already written letter by candlelight.

There are stacks of copies on his desk. A fire roars in the fireplace.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Under the charge of General Horatio Gates, Washington's staunchest critic and Second in Command, Captain John Armstrong Jr. pens an inflammatory indictment entitled, "*An Address to the Officers*". In it he stirs a call to action against Washington and Congress, insinuating a possible coup, if their demands are not met.

MAJOR CHRISTOPHER RICHMOND (39) enters.

CAPTAIN JOHN ARMSTRONG JR.

Major.

MAJOR CHRISTOPHER RICHMOND

Will we have enough Brutus?

CAPTAIN JOHN ARMSTRONG JR.

I don't delight in this, as you seemingly do sir.

The Major feeling rebuffed, turns to inspect the stack of copies.

MAJOR CHRISTOPHER RICHMOND

I'll go and have others made in the time remaining.

CAPTAIN JOHN ARMSTRONG JR.

Then take this one as well.

John hands another finished copy to the Major.

MAJOR CHRISTOPHER RICHMOND

The General aims to have the petition posted at the adjutant's office before general orders this morning, he'll want these circulating afterward. That leaves you a few more hours.

CAPTAIN JOHN ARMSTRONG JR.  
I'll continue until that time then.

The Major turns to leave, but then pauses.

MAJOR CHRISTOPHER RICHMOND  
Captain Armstrong?

CAPTAIN JOHN ARMSTRONG JR.  
Yes Major?

MAJOR CHRISTOPHER RICHMOND  
This act is just, and history will  
prove it so.

The Captain looks to Major Richmond, hoping he's right.

**EXT. ADJUTANT'S OFFICE - DAWN.**

A soldier lofts his bugle, plays the morning's REVEILLE. We see Major Christopher Richmond stalking with petition in hand toward the Adjutant's Office.

**INT. ADJUTANT'S OFFICE - MORNING.**

Officers crowd around the just posted petition.

**EXT. ARMY ENCAMPMENT - MORNING.**

Various soldiers are seen reading Armstrong's letter. A group looks to a soldier who reads aloud.

READING SOLDIER  
Gentlemen, a fellow soldier whose  
interest and affections bind him  
strongly to you. Whose past  
sufferings have been as great and  
whose future fortune may be as  
desperate as yours would beg leave to  
address you...

The men listen, intrigued...

**EXT. WASHINGTON'S QUARTERS - DAY.**

SUPER:

*Newburgh, New York*

Soldiers stand guard outside the Hasbrouck family's Dutch style farmhouse in Newburgh, New York. The site of George Washington's headquarters.

SUPER:

*George Washington's Headquarters***INT. WASHINGTON'S QUARTERS - DAY.**

JONATHAN TRUMBULL JR (42, Washington's secretary) in his hand we see a letter. Washington, seated at his desk, faces away from us, looking out the near window.

JONATHAN TRUMBULL JR  
 ...how patiently you have suffered,  
 how little you have asked and how  
 much of that little has been  
 denied...

Washington nods, completely understanding the sentiment, even if he disagrees with the method.

JONATHAN TRUMBULL JR (cont'd)  
 Tell them that though you were the  
 first, and would wish to be the last  
 to encounter danger, though despair  
 itself can never drive you into  
 dishonor, it may drive you from the  
 field. That the wound *often*  
*irritated*, and *never healed*, may at  
 length become incurable, and that the  
 slightest mark of indignity from  
 Congress now must operate *like the*  
*grave* and part you forever that in  
 any political event, the army has its  
 alternative....

Trumbull shakes his head in disgust.

GEORGE WASHINGTON  
 Go on...

JONATHAN TRUMBULL JR  
If peace, that nothing shall separate  
you from your arms but death, if war,  
that courting the auspices and  
inviting the directions of your  
illustrious leader, you will retire  
to some unsettled country, smile in  
your turn and mock when their fear  
cometh on...

GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON (51, usually inspiring, stout and  
noble, he's now ill and tired. The winter, and of course the  
war having taken it's toll) turns to us.

GEORGE WASHINGTON  
This was discovered after the  
petition?

Trumbull nods.

JONATHAN TRUMBULL JR  
Would you like to hear more?

GEORGE WASHINGTON  
Who-

George coughs hard into the sleeve of his coat, it sounds  
bad.

GEORGE WASHINGTON (cont'd)  
Is there a name?

JONATHAN TRUMBULL JR  
Unsigned sir...

GEORGE WASHINGTON  
I think we all know who is  
responsible.

JONATHAN TRUMBULL JR  
Gates. Or some co-conspirator,  
Armstrong, or Major Richmond  
perhaps...

GEORGE WASHINGTON  
I'm not certain they have the gall to  
have written this of their own  
accord, maybe by their hand, but I  
don't believe by their heart. Horatio  
has been sowing this for some time  
and now he aims to reap.

George coughs again.