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RULE, RHODE ISLAND!

by

Kimber Wheelock

and

Joel A. Cohen

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- CAST OF CHARACTERS -

Town Crier

Benjamin Lindsay

Mr. Hall, a lawyer-politician

Mr. Butler, a merchant-politician

Captain Ballard

Mr. Peckham, a farmer-politician

Mr. Howard

Mr. Sanderson

Rachael, the Barmaid

Samuel Ward

Stephen Hopkins

John Temple

Dr. Ezekieal Gardner, a doctor-politician

Daniel Vaughan

Captain Richard Smith

Lieutenant Jenkins

Sarah Goddard

John Brown

Samuel Thurston

Freelove Staples

Joseph Wanton

Justice Horsmanden

Justice Smythe

Court Clerk

Timothy Potter

Ruth Wanton

Wanton's Servant

TIME: 1762-1776

PLACE: RHODE ISLAND & PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

Town Crier:

Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

(The cast comes on stage to the calls of the crier.)

T'was in the year 1663

That our gracious sovereign heard the plea
Of the Narragansett Planters across the sea.
A charter they wanted; a charter they needed,
A charter to insure -- their liberty.

The old one was good, but now it was sour,
Granted by men no longer in power.

The King he listened, the King he heeded, --
And granted the charter Rhode Islanders needed.

Colony agents proclaimed it by night and by day,
Luring liberty lovers to Narragansett Bay.

(A colony agent, quoting the charter, makes a sales pitch.)

Agent:

"I, Charles the II, by the Grace of God, King of England,
Scotland, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etcetera,
etcetera, Do proclaim in Rhode Island, in New England, in
America, a bodie corporate and politique in fact, that said
colony shall hold forth a livelie experiment in civil
government with a full libertie in religious concernments."

(Snotty and aloof put-downs from crowd.)

Crowd:

Puritans! Quakers! Anabaptists! Mugglestonians! Diggers!
Ranters! Papists!

- Agent: "... and for the better ordering and managing of the affaires and business of the said Company, I do hereby establish that each year a Governor be elected and chosen out of the freemen."
- Crowd: Presbytery! Congregationalists! What about the crown? Who's the King's bloody officer? Roger Williams for Pope!
- Agent: "And that forever hereafter all the freemen, or their Deputies, shall have the right to assemble, to consult, advise and determine the Colony's business."
- Crowd: Anarchists! Idiots! Imbiciles! No-nothings! Scum! Bloody out-casts! The blind leading the blind!
- Agent: "... that the Assembly of freemen appoint all military officers for leading, conducting and training the citizenry in martiall affairs for the sayd Plantation's defense and safeguard."
- Crowd: Looting! Rioting! Pillaging! Mutiny! Ravaging! Arm the Indians!
- Agent: "That the colony has the right to ship and transport all manner of goods, chattels and merchandise necessary for its survival."
- Crowd: Smuggling! Slaves! Molasses! Rum!!
- Agent: "That the people are to have the same privileges, liberties and rights as other Englishmen and can make all lawes and ordinances which be not contrary and repugnant unto this our realme of England."

- Crowd: (Vocal build-up of boos and hisses through previous speech.)
- Agent: "However, (Crowd falls silent) above all let it be known that said Colonials are to behave themselves peaceable and quietlie and are not to use this litertie to profaneness and lycentiousness."
- Crowd: (In unison) LICENTIOUSNESS! (Shocked at the notion)
LICENTIOUSNESS! (Having second thoughts)
LICENTIOUSNESS! (hearty approval)
- (The crowd begins to chant "Licentiousness" with strong affirmation as they join the colony, become colonialists, and set up for the next scene. Through the chanting we hear the following:)
- Get your fresh smuggled molasses here! Duty-free molasses! Fresh smuggled molasses.
- Politicians bought and sold! Bloc votes, single votes! Buy or sell your vote here!
- Slaves for sale! Buy a black! New and used Slaves for sale here! Buy a black!
- Justice for sale here! Buy a judge; buy a jury! Deaf and blind witnesses for sale. Get your justice here.
- (Lindsay breaks off the celebration with an arm motion. The tavern scene forms and freezes.)
- Benjamin Lindsay: It is said in the colonies that a Rhode Islander will make compromise with no man but himself, and only then with great reluctance for fear of infringement upon his "liberties." There is some truth to that. But that was the main cause of my liking the place so well.

That's what our story is all about -- Rhode Island and me in it. M' name's Benjamin Lindsay. I was not from Rhode Island originally. Never had much of a home anywhere. You see, I was pressed as a lad of fifteen in His Majesty's service -- not a service I had much likin' for. Oh, I liked workin' ships well enough, but there is a limit to how long a man can be expected to endure bad food and worse wages, though I learned enough for all that. So deserting was not foreign to my thoughts. It took a full seven years to find both courage and opportunity for doin' it. Rum provided both. We was comin' into Newport Harbor one nasty night and some of us had taken on an extra dram or two for protection 'gainst the weather. Well, I got tangled in a line and fell overboard. I surfaced sober, sputterin' and splashin' goin' nowhere while my ship slipped away in the dark leavin' me astern. So you might ask, "Who deserted who" Anyway, it all happened just off the bow of an anchored schooner, the Rhoda. After the watch stopped his laughin', he threw me a line, hauled me aboard, and I been sailin' with the Rhoda and Captain Ballard ever since.. That's him, right over there sittin' at that table. He's about to conduct his 1767 election business.

(A tavern in Newport, the White Horse, with two tables. Seated at one is Captain Ballard. Two merchant-politicians, Mr. Hall and Mr. Butler enter and approach the Captain's table.)

Hall: Captain Ballard. Welcome home, sir, welcome home.

Ballard: Mr. Hall, Mr. Butler.

Hall: Can we buy you a drink, sir?

Ballard: Aye, as you will.

Hall: What's your pleasure?

Ballard: Rum.

Butler: We heard of your arrival. This afternoon, wasn't it?

Ballard: Just after dark.

Hall: And a profitable arrival, too. The Rhoda sits low in the water, Captain.

Ballard: Profitable enough weather. We're in ten days early.

Hall: But not due to a light cargo. (Knowing smiles and chuckles.)

Ballard: Some light on Negroes. They brought some damned African fever on board with 'em that proceeded to kill half of them off and a few of my crew to boot.

Butler: It didn't infect the molasses, did it?

Ballard: No, I think the molasses be immune.

Hall: I'll drink to that! (They do.)

Butler: Pity it's not immune from Parliament's grevous duties.

Ballard: Aye.

Hall: (Signals for drinks.) Well, Captain, you're arrived home just in time to catch our own Rhode Island fever. Will you vote next week?

Ballard: I suppose I might.

Hall: Mr. Ward will be grateful for your prox.

Ballard: As would Mr. Hopkins.

Hall: Surely you're not thinking of casting your vote to Providence.

Ballard: It's all one.

Hall: But, sir, you live here in Newport, your ships berth here, and Newport is a friendlier port when Mr. Ward is governor.

Ballard: I fare as well with Mr. Ward or Mr. Hopkins or any other man as governor. I make my profits from my ships and cargoes on the sea where the government is of my making.

Hall: Aye, but your profits depend upon those cargoes coming home to market. Between your ship and the marketplace, there's a gangplank, and walkin' up it tomorrow mornin' will be a customs official not of your makin'.

Ballard: There are ways to deal with customs. Mr. Robinson is a reasonable man.

Hall: Of course he is Captain. Mr. Robinson has a reasonable way with mathematics. He sees 400 barrels of molasses in your hold but he can count only to 200. Then when he must report the 200 to London he suddenly can count only to 100. You profit, he profits, and England is not totally ignored. Very reasonable. I do not fault Mr. Robinson, sir.

Ballard: And how could Mr. Ward improve on Mr. Robinson's faultless performance?

Hall: Not Mr. Ward directly, Captain. But there are certain parties in Newport interested in Mr. Ward's election and willing to encourage votes on his behalf.

Ballard: Mmm? And what encouragement do they offer?

Hall: I need molasses and you have a ship full of it. I cannot make rum profitably if I must pay 6 pence duty per gallon over and above the 12 pence market value. Therefore I am prepared to buy half of your molasses at your price, not Parliament's, remove it from your ship and sail it up the bay never to be heard of again. I will buy tonight, sir... now, sir. And with sterling, not inflated Hopkins dollars. (He produces the coin.) and finally, sir, if Mr. Ward is elected, we will name sheriffs, deputies and judges to office who are so friendly to our trade as to guarantee its protection for one full year.

Ballard: And if Hopkins is re-elected?

Hall: I will still need molasses, Captain, but I will not be able to offer the same guarantees ...

Butler: But Hopkins will not be elected. His victory by trickery last year has angered even the northern freemen. Add to that the drought of last summer, the severe winter just passed, and the colony's wretched finances. The winds of change are gusting.

Ballard: (Pauses and nods.) Come along-side the Rhoda just before dawn. Bring a boat large enough to take off 300 barrels.

Butler: 300! Is that half your cargo?

Ballard: I like a full hold at election time.

Hall: To you, sir, to your prox for Mr. Ward, and to full holds the year long!

(They drink, hand shakes, farewells, Butler and Hall move along to another table. The Captain sits down and beckons his mate who has been drinking at the bar.)

Lindsay: Aye, sir.

Ballard: 300 barrels go to them just before dawn. Be sure that the Hopkins people are loaded and gone by 2 bells.

Lindsay: Aye, Captain.

(Focus moves to another table where we find Hall and Butler seated with a friendly farmer from Portsmouth.)

Hall: Now, Mr. Peckham, what news from Portsmouth.

Peckham: I have 40, maybe 45 hard votes for Ward if back taxes are forgotten and certain sums of money are immediately forthcoming.

Butler: Money! That was not apart of things a week ago!

Peckham: Aye, but it is now, sir... and it's a pity, a pity that it is. Damn Hopkins for making it so! These men have been through hard times, terrible times, catastrophic times, Mr. Butler. What livestock didn't perish of thirst last summer froze this winter. And the Hopkins people have been visiting with fat pocketbooks. Now, these men are all loyal to Mr. Ward. They are as loyal to Mr. Ward as they are to their respective makers. They do not want to cast their prox for Mr. Hopkins. They hate and despise Mr. Hopkins, him representing Providence and not having the interests of the south at heart. No, no, sir, there is no love lost for Mr. Hopkins among these men. On four of these farms the very word "Hopkins" is treated as a sinful curse. Children and slaves are whipped for uttering it. One man has a pig named Hopkins... a most slovenly creature. Nonetheless, sir, Hopkins people have been making visits and offering certain sums.

Now this is a filthy trick, with filthy money ...
filthy Hopkins money with which no Portsmouth man
feels comfortable. And it makes these freemen despise
Hopkins when he shows his filthy money in front of
starving families, half naked children, and mothers who
can hardly nurse for want of proper nourishment.
But these are desperate men, sirs, and money is in such
prodigious short supply, and they are tempted, as mortal
flesh would be. But in the midst of their temptation
they despise Hopkins all the more for taking advantage,
so that this filthy money will never buy a Hopkins vote
in Portsmouth ... Never! (Pause) But, I have heard talk
of no-vote, gentlemen, of proxies turned in blank, of
Hopkins money doing himself no good except it does harm
to Mr. Ward. (Pause) Well, matching sums will turn the
tide, sirs. Not a penny more! No, this is no auction,
for these are men loyal to Mr. Ward! This is simply a
matter of matching sums to allow these desperate men to
be free from Hopkins' filthy bribes, free from temptation,
free to vote their consciences, free to vote for Mr. Ward!

Butler:

And how much be these "matching sums?"

Peckham:

Five dollars a man, sir, is the filthy figure the Hopkins
faction tempts them with.

Hall:

Offer them each ten shillings.

Peckham:

Now that will turn the trick, sir! Yes, indeed ...
sterling! That will turn the trick. It is a masterful
way to represent Mr. Ward. Now Mr. Ward becomes disassoc-
iated with the inflated dollar which Mr. Hopkins prints

for his filthy amusement. Now Mr. Ward represents solid sterling, and that will undercut the Hopkins faction ... it will leave them helpless as they wander through the country-side dragging their printing presses behind them, waving handfuls of worthless paper ... Oh, it is a masterful, marvelous stroke, sir, but I think two pounds is needed.

Hall: Fifteen shillings.

Peckham: Mr. Hall, let us not default to the Hopkins faction for the sake of a few shillings. And mind, sir, the money will be well invested. It puts seed in the ground, live-stock in the pastures, food in our larders...

Butler: And run in your stomachs. Remind your colleagues that we will forgive back taxes.

Peckham: And grateful they are for that, Mr. Butler. Though it be not cash in hand, they are grateful -- as grateful as they are for this democracy that gives them the precious liberty to vote their consciences like truly free and independent men and elect a governor of their choice exactly one week from today.

Hall: You have a way of finding the right words when you need them, Mr. Peckham. One pound then.

Peckham: And you have a way of finding the right money when you need it, Mr. Hall. Fear nothing now, sir, nothing. You have freed these men from Mr. Hopkins' filthy coercion! Now free conscience will have its way and Mr. Ward will win the day.

- Hall: Good evening to you Mr. Peckham. Your good work in Portsmouth is appreciated, but you might well avoid the poetical until after the election.
- Butler: At least.
- Peckham: Never fear, sir. I only wax poetic in the company of such educated men as yourselves.
- Butler: Most politic of you.
- Peckham: And of you, sir. And sirs, you will not forget my good works when sheriff's deputies are to be appointed.
- Hall: We'll not. Good evening.
(They leave, heading for another table.)
- Butler: To be a captive audience in Mr. Peckham's jail would be harsh punishment indeed
- Hall: Cruel and unusual.
(They approach the bar.)
- Hall: (To the bar maid) Rachael, a drink for every man here.
(To the tavern) Gentlemen, I propose a toast. To better times in America, in New England, and in the Colony of Rhode Island! (A generally enthusiastic response.)
- Voice: You overlooked Providence Plantations, Mr. Hall. (General laughter and remarks.)
- Hall: As I hope you will, sir, when you cast your prox next week. To Newport! (Approving and supportive replies.)
(Mr. Howard, standing nearby at the bar, does not join in the toasts, a gesture immediately noticed by Butler).
- Butler: You are not drinking tonight, Mr. Howard.

- Howard: I am indeed, Mr. Butler, at my own time and reason.
- Butler: And is not a toast to our own fair town of Newport a reasonable time?
- Howard: It might be, but the toast was not to our own fair Newport; it was to our own "fair" Mr. Ward because he comes from Newport.
- Butler: And the fault in that?
- Howard: The governor's duty is not local, so neither should be the governor's capacity, and fitness for the governor's office is not confined to this or that town or place.
- Butler: Well said, Mr. Howard, but is it not in the peoples' interests to favor the candidate who will best represent them?
- Howard: Aye, but what interests, sir, what interests? Behold the people in this room and their "interests" -- some want promise of office for which they are unfit; others who have disputes with their neighbors want their causes assured whether they be right or wrong; others will cast their vote for business interests. And you, sirs, leading men in the community, meet in your cabals, then bring your "party" here, night after night, to satisfy these interests. By such scandalous practices elections are carried and officers appointed.
- Hall: (Having joined them during the last speech). Sir, the practices you describe do sometimes exist but we do condemn them. We are forced into them when the Hopkins faction initiates and perpetuates these vile schemes. If we did not counter, we would surely lose the election and the benefit

of a good man in the governor's chair.

Howard: (During this speech, things begin to go public.) Good God, Mr. Hall! The governor, in this manner made, whether otherwise a good man or not, makes little difference. Once put in by a party, he must do what it orders. He has made too many compromises to be his own man. The unhappy malady runs through the whole system. We must have done with them that accept office as a benefit rather than a burden! We must have done with them that take office to serve themselves and not the commonwealth!

1st Voice: We must have done with this rapsody of words!
(Laughter and agreement.)

Howard: You may have done with my words, sir, just as you shall have done with the cherished words of our charter when you have so abused them that they are taken away!

Sanderson: Go to England, Tory!
(Somewhat less laughter and agreement.)

Howard: Tory, sir? I am a citizen of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, as are you all. And I will defend England and Rhode Island to the death, sir, without I import French molasses while I do it! And you will not banish me from this colony when I exercise my right of free speech in condemning a system so befouled that its stench pervades all New England! Is your nose so full of faction that you cannot smell it?

Sanderson: My nose is full of snuff! (Sneeze.) I smell good, now, sir.

Howard: I doubt it. A bath is needed for that. Nor do you smell well!

2nd Voice: And what is needed for that, sir?

Howard: To give your suffrage with candor for him you think best qualified; to give your vote only according to your conscience. Then, and only then, will you know the sweet smell of liberty! Mr. Butler, my time and reason has come! (He raises his glass and drinks.)

(A shrill female voice cuts through the tavern: Mr. Saaaaaandersonooooooooon!!!!)

Sanderson: I think my time and reason has come, too, but I do not smell sweet liberty. (To her.) Woman! Are you mad? Are you drunk? What brings you in here screaning my name like some crazed seagull?

Mrs. Sanderson: You will not insult me, Sanderson, for I am neither drunk nor crazed. I am at my wits end, that is what I am! It is you, Sanderson, that is drunk and crazed -- drunk on malt, crazed with politics, and stupified with snuff. (To crowd.) My husband is a great politician, gentlemen, a great reader of newspapers and periodicals of the day from which he has imbibed a passionate fondness for faction and party and ale-houses, and an utter aversion for his work. In the morning he does not take his boat to fish...

Sanderson: It is too wet to fish.

Mrs. Sanderson: ...he steps out for his pint to the White Horse Tavern without ever considering whether my children and I have

bit of breakfast.

- Mr. Sanderson: (Drunk) Time to fish when Mr. Ward is elected.
- Mrs. Sanderson: Lord! What is it to us whether Ward or Hopkins is elected? Will the lobsters walk ashore for either of 'em? Which one of 'em will make the cod dance on their tails down Thames Street?
- Mr. Sanderson: Haw! You see, sirs, how the adled-brained wench has no respect for the weighty affairs of government!
- Mrs. Sanderson: I wish you had some respect for the welfare of your family, 'twould become you better by half. There's Jacky has not a stitch of shoes to his feet. Tommy has broke out with the itch. And I have got my death of cold for want of my under petticoat! (Laughter from the crowd.) And there's not a morsel in the house!!
- Mr. Sanderson: There shall be morsel enough tomorrow, Mrs., never fear about that. (He begins handing her coin with great bravado) And Jacky shall have his shoes. (Another coin.) And here's for salve for Tommy's itch. (Another coin.) And tonight, woman, I will be under your petticoat and cure your cold with my own itcn! (Roars of approval from crowd. He starts to take her out amid toasts and cheers.)
- Mrs. Sanderson: (Snatching the rest of his money and shoving him away.) Let your party scratch it! (She storms out.)

(All say their goodnights and disperse. Snatches of "Let your party scratch it" are heard as the stage empties.)

(Hopkins and Ward appear on opposite sides of the stage, Hopkins at the Governor's desk, Ward standing addressing audience.)

Ward: (Blasting Hopkins.) He uses every art to gain for himself and his family posts of profit. His two sons enjoyed lucrative jobs during the French & Indian war. He demanded and got fifty to sixty pounds for commissioning privateers when Governor Greene had been content with only five pounds! Who then are the best friends to their country? Those who have maintained themselves and their families out of publick money, or those who have generously served the colony without in any way consulting or promoting their own private interests? It is only natural to believe that Mr. Hopkins is influenced by other motives than love of God and Country!!!

(The crowd cheers Ward's speech)

Crier: Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Election 1762!

(He has with him a large compass which he spins. The dial points to Ward indicating him the winner of the 1762 election. Crowd cheers. Ward and Hopkins change places on stage.)

Lindsay: Influenced by other motives than love of God and Country... and so it went, every single April. And every single April Captain Ballard made a point to get into port ten days early so as to "weigh" the issues.

Crier: Election 1763!

(Captain Ballard appears between Hopkins and Ward, hands held out. Ward puts a bag of money in Ballard's hand. His hand goes down a bit under the weight of the money. Hopkins then puts a bag of money in Ballard's other hand. That hand goes down much further under the weight of the money. Ballard nods and smiles at Hopkins indicating him the winner. The Crowd cheers. Hopkins returns to the Governor's chair, Ward exits.)

Lindsay:

Who won didn't matter much in those days. The molasses market held good, as did Captain Ballard's fair and just shares. For the first time in my life I was able to earn more than my needs -- I got to feelin' like a full and franchized citizen. That I couldn't vote didn't bother me none so long as them that could kept doin' it. Then Rhode Island got a cold blast from the nor'east. Mr. Hopkins was just back in the governor's chair and we had just put Brenton Reef astern when the news came to Newport--

Crier:

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

It's seventeen hundred and sixty three

And Parliament's acting vigorously

To enforce the Molasses Act -- (Crowd boos and jeers)

Thirty years after the fact! (Crowd agrees)

The Act was passed in '33

And no one took it seriously -- (Crowd agrees.)

But now the Royal Navy's ships

Are authorized by Parliament's lips

To seize all vessels smuggling molasses (Crowd protests, boos)

For violating the laws of asses! (Crowd roars laughter)

First into town to enforce the law

Is Mr. John Temple, (Crowd boos) a bloody bore! (Crowd cheers)

Temple:

(Making a no-nonsense call on Governor Hopkins)

Governor Hopkins, my credentials, sir. I am John Temple.

Surveyor-General of the Northern District, arrived today

from Boston, to see that the Molasses Act shall be en-

forced with utmost rigor in this port. I assume your

complete cooperation, sir.

Hopkins: By all means, Mr. Temple.

Temple: Good. First I wish to administer new oaths to all customs officials.

Hopkins: As you wish, sir, but I am certain that these men, loyal King's agents as they are, already take their oaths seriously and are most dedicated in the execution.

Temple: That may be so, Governor, but I intend to re-dedicate them. And you, sir, as Governor of this colony, shall administer fresh oaths to all your government, aye, sheriffs and judges as well, to uphold the law and see it enforced.

Hopkins: Mr. Temple, every freeman who serves this government has taken his oath of office with due solemnity to uphold the laws of this colony as an honorable subject of the King. To ask any man to swear again accuses him of equivocation or worse.

Temple: To swear to uphold the laws of this colony, and to swear allegiance to King George is only two-thirds an oath. You and your government shall swear to uphold the laws of Parliament!

Hopkins: But, sir, Parliament has naught to do with us. We have our own law-making body here, our own General Assembly... (He indicates them to assemble, FAST)

Temple: And you will administer to every one of them fresh oaths!!

(Focus moves to General Assembly in session)

Speaker: Gentlemen, the question has been called. The Clerk will read the motion.

Clerk: That the Honorable Governor Hopkins is hereby forbidden by this Assembly to administer any oaths other than those prescribed in the charter of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, in New England, in America, and then only at prescribed times.

Speaker: All in favor signify by saying "Aye."

All: AYE!

Speaker: All opposed signify by saying "Nay."

(Focus moves back to Temple and Hopkins)

Temple: NAY!! NAYYY!! I care not for your Assembly. I will lock up all the ports in this colony so that not a vessel shall come or go!

(Temple storms out)

Hopkins: (Moving off through the Assembly, still as if speaking to Temple)
Ah, that I had the power to do your will, sir. But I am a mere humble servant of the government -- an administrative instrument to serve the people as they voice themselves through their chosen representatives... (they go out)

(Temple and a naval officer storm on)

Temple: What's that ships name?

Officer: The Rhoda, sir.

Temple: Seize her!

Officer: Aye, sir.

(They storm out. Ballard and Lindsay sidle in)

- Ballard:** The Rhoda is in long need of repair. Take ten good men and get her to Jamestown tonight. There unload her. Then get her to Wickford. Leave instructions that her name be changed, her hull scraped, and she be completely re-painted. Let you and your men return to Newport from different directions.
- Lindsay:** Aye, sir.
- (They sidle out. Temple and Hopkins storm in.)
- Temple:** GONE?! GONE??!!!! Governor Hopkins, WHERE DID SHE GO???
- It seems that during the night, sir, she got under sail and was carried off by persons unknown. We are alerting all sheriffs, and we shall surely apprehend the pirates that have absconded with her. The Rhoda will be returned to Newport within the fortnight, sir.
- Temple:** I cannot rely on your sheriffs' political loyalties. But I am told that money is a great shaper of loyalties in your honorable government, sir, and men put their mouths where their money is. Well then, it was silly of me to expect law enforcement through fresh oaths -- I shall offer fresh money! A fifty pound reward for the return of the Rhoda! Now that I understand the workings of your "democracy," Governor, I think I shall have the Rhoda back in less than a fortnight! (He exits.)
- Lindsay:** My first command was not in auspicious one. Oh, I was proud enough that Captain Ballard would entrust me with his ship and full cargo. But he didn't have much choice, and I had enough wit to know that if we was caught, old Captain Ballard could easily disavow the whole business.

He had everything to gain, while I, fugitive that I was, had everything to lose. But fugitive or not, I had command! We slipped out of Newport just before midnight. I took her seaward around Beaver Tail so as to get Jamestown between me and the Royal Navy as quick as possible. Once done, I took her up the Bay and into Potter's Cove, unloaded in good time, and was running north close in to the Jamestown coast by six bells. I kept her that way for an hour and then I made my run across open water for Wickford. It was still dark when we made the wharf, and as I eased her dock-side some ten men awaited our arrival, quickly identified themselves as friends, clambered aboard and helped to secure her. These men then became our hosts, providing us with rum and breakfast while we supplied them with news from Newport. As for myself, I was in prestigious company. My host was none other than Doctor Ezekiel Gardner, Deputy from North Kingstown, who awakened me the next day in time for supper.

(The two at a table)

Gardner:

Are you fit, Mr. Lindsay?

Lindsay:

Aye, sir. My bed was most comfortable. I slept like a baby.

Gardner:

Indeed you did, sir, and with a babe's innocence.

Lindsay:

Sir?

Gardner:

News reached us just after forenoon that Mr. Temple has offered a 50 pound reward for information leading to the return of the Rhoda.

- Lindsay: 50 pounds! A handsome amount.
- Gardner: Handsome it is. I'd warrant it's more than you yourself earn in a year. T'would make a man think twice about his loyalties.
- Lindsay: T'would make some men not think at all. God, if one pound will buy a man's vote, then 50 pounds ... Mr. Gardner, I do not wish to sound ungrateful, but can all of last night's men be trusted?
- Gardner: (Chuckles) Three of them have been by to ask the same of you. Mister, we must not let our infamous "Rhode Islandism" cloud our vision. Our politics has taught us the art of suspicion more than it has bred in us the act of faith. But times change. The most harmful weapon that England can hurl against us is not her guns or ships or Mr. Temples; it is to feed the flames of our own faction to use to her advantage. This 50 pound reward is just the beginning. But I will wager you 500 pounds, Mr. Lindsay, that this reward will render Wickford mouths as tight as quahogs!
- Lindsay: I surely hope you are correct in that, sir. I do not look forward to hanging from one of His Majesty's yardarms.
- Gardner: Clearly there are no guarantees in this life for anything, sir, but may I pass along to you this notion... We must hang together or we will hang alone.
- Lindsay: Aye, sir. There is some comfort in that... and sense, too. I only hope others will know that sense and remember it with 50 pounds starin' 'em in the face.

Gardner:

There's hope well founded, sir. You have a head on your shoulders that is undervalued by Mr. Temple's reward upon it. If you are in no hurry to be back in Newport, accompany me tomorrow to the special session of the General Assembly in South Kingstown. There Mr. Hopkins will propose to us a remonstrance to the King, protesting these recent monstrous acts. It will be the first of its kind sent home from the colonies. The process may interest you, the Assembly's determination may surprise you, and you are better off on this side of the Bay in any event.

(Gardner exits, Lindsay comes forward)

Lindsay:

So I accompanied Deputy Gardner to Kingston and sat right by his side while they debated that Remonstrance. I tell you, I felt proud to the point of wanting to bust! In three years I had come quite a journey -- from a common unknown deserter to a celebrated pirate with a reward on his head, sitting as a guest of the General Assembly, privy to the business of the Rhode Island Government. I was still a fugitive, no doubt about that, but my style had certainly improved. Although Captain Ballard had some comment to make about that when I returned to Newport.

(Ballard enters)

Ballard:

You did well, Mister Lindsay, you did damned well.

Lindsay:

Thank you, sir, but not a difficult voyage as voyages go.

Ballard:

It had its share of risks, and I'm grateful to you. Here's for your trouble.

Lindsay: Twenty pounds, sir!

Ballard: Not as much as Mr. Temple is offering for ya', but I can't compete with His Majesty's Exchequer.

Lindsay: Sir, it's generous -- too generous. I shouldn't take it, you having treated me as well as you have the past few years.

Ballard: Christ, son, the one thing bothers me about you is your bloody gratitude. Stop actin' like some slave that's just been spared a whippin'. You saved my ship and its cargo. Any idea what that's worth?

Lindsay: Near 4,000 pounds, I'd say.

Ballard: You'd say about right. Remember it next time the thought of twenty pounds overwhelms ya'.

Lindsay: Aye, sir.

Ballard: Besides, you'll need it to tide ya' over. I'll not be sailin' again 'till April.

Lindsay: (Disappointed) Oh.

Ballard: Three months'll eat a hell of a hole in that. (Indicates the twenty pounds.)

Lindsay: Aye, sir.

Ballard: Well, not to worry. I can get you some work if you want it.

Lindsay: What would it be?

Ballard: Dangerous and prestigious.

Lindsay: What is it?

Ballard: Smugglin'. That's the dangerous part. But you'll be workin' for Mr. John Brown, wealthiest merchant in Providence. That's the prestigious part. It's a good opportunity for

ya', Benjamin.

Lindsay: Working for Mr. Brown would be an honor. But the
smugglin'...

Ballard: Some risks. You take off molasses from motier ships ten,
twelve miles out. Then it's up the bay to Providence by
night. But your shares are ten percent and Mr. Brown pays
your fine is you're seized.

Lindsay: And if I'm discovered?

Ballard: Now by Christ you're thinkin'! High time we fixed that.
A new set of papers are in order for ya'. I'll give ya'
the address of a Mrs. Sarah Goddard in Providence, and a
letter of introduction. She runs a hot press, but not the
kind ya' need fear, Benjamin. Her's is a newspaper. She'll
make a new man outa ya'.

Lindsay: I'll take it.

Ballard: Which, the job or the widow Goddard?

Lindsay: (Embarrassed) The job.

Ballard: Both of 'em 'll be good experience for ya'.

Lindsay: (Pause) I want to thank you, Captain Ballard.

Ballard: I'm sure you do. Oh... one other thing. I'd be obliged
if once a week you'd stop by Wickford and oversee the work
on the ex-Rhoda.

Lindsay: Aye, sir. What new name do you want on her?

Ballard: You name 'er.

Lindsay: Me, sir!

Ballard: Why not? I've used up my mother, my two sisters, and my
three wives. I got no names left. You name 'er.

Lindsay: Aye, sir. (Pause)

Ballard: Well, what'll it be?

Lindsay: ... the Hannah, sir?

Ballard: Good Christian name. Who is she?

Lindsay: (Again embarrassed) ...oh...nobody, really... a girl I knew once...

Ballard; The Hannah she is then.

Lindsay: Aye, sir. And thank you again, Captain Ballard.

Ballard: Thank you, Captain Lindsay.

Lindsay: Captain Lindsay. I hadn't even gotten used to Master Lindsay, and now it was Captain. She was a 24-footer with one mast and one crewman. Still, she was all mine and I liked workin' for Mr. Brown - good pay. It was all night-work in the fog and rain and I got to know Narragansett Bay like the back of my hand. I got to know the widow Goddard, too. But the Royal Navy was sendin' more and more ships to Newport seizin' and pressin' anything that moved on land or sea. So I was content enough when April came. I gave up my command of that fishin' smack, brought the Hannah down from Wickford, and set sail again with Captain Ballard while Rhode Island and Great Britain began takin' aim at each other.

Crier: In the Sugar Act of '64
Parliament taxes us some more
And the more they tax, the more we struggle
Smuggle, smuggle, smuggle, smuggle. (Crowd cheers and applauds)

John Temple's replaced by Captain Smith
Who wants all smuggling stopped forthwith. (Crowd boos.)

But Smith or Temple -- What's in a name?

To us all redcoats look the same! (Crowd cheers.)

Now Captain Smith commands the Squirrel.

Of course, he does so at his peril.

When he and his Squirrel do nothing but plunder,

Then we react with Goat Island thunder! (Crowd cheers.)

(Vaughan and Sanderson, on one side of stage, mime the firing of a cannon. Hopkins seated in the Governor's chair, is surrounded by a group of politicians center stage. They watch the flight of the imaginary cannon ball as it arches over their heads. Smith and Jenkins are standing on the other side of the stage. The cannon ball's trajectory ends at the feet of Jenkins as he drops a croquet-size ball into a small bucket of water. Splash.)

Vaughan:

BOOM!

Sanderson:

Another excellent shot, Daniel! A masterful shot!! It scared the piss out of 'em. This time blow the bastards out of the water!

Vaughan:

(Carefully and calmly lining up his next shot) Wouldn't I like to, Jonathan, wouldn't I like to!

(Another shot and another cannon ball arches toward the Squirrel, again landing in the bucket of water. Another splash. Smith gives Jenkins the order to return the fire. Jenkins mimes a cannon shot. Hopkins and company watch the return shot and as it passes over their heads...)

Sanderson:

Christ!! They're firin' back!!!

(Sanderson, Vaughan, and all the politicians vacate the stage rapidly. Hopkins continues to watch the imaginary cannon ball complete its flight, landing where Sanderson and Vaughan had been. Jenkins exits as Smith moves into Hopkins' office.)

Smith: Governor, you talk about this incident as if it were some harmless idle prank.

Hopkins: But there was no damage done, Captain.

Smith: No matter that there was no damage done, Governor Hopkins. Cannons were fired at my ship. Only the incompetence of your gunner saved us from serious damage. I am only sorry the coward ceased his firing before we had convinced them of their error.

Hopkins: Had you been able to do so, do you really think Newport would have realized that "error" and then "behaved" itself?

Smith: Put quite simply, Governor, I am here to make Newport "behave" itself.

Hopkins: Then you might set a better example for it, Capt. Smith. Your crew roams about Newport as if they themselves owned the town. They take what they want when they will. There is hardly a pig or chicken left on the island that has not been fed to the Squirrel. You steal the town's very sustenance, and you expect no resentment nor retaliation?

Smith: Are you jealous of the competition, Governor?

Hopkins: Sir?

Smith: I am told that when you are in power, you and your party leech away Newport's very life blood and transfuse it to Providence. Do you also begrudge my crew its lawful rations?

Hopkins: Your men are common thieves, and I begrudge them their unlawful raids on Newport property. As for myself, I will walk the streets of this or any other Rhode Island town with no fear of being shot at. Your freedom of movement seems to be narrowing, Captain Smith.

Smith: Which is your duty to guarantee.

Hopkins: I do not guarantee the freedom of thieves.

Smith: Nor do I guarantee the freedom of insurgents. I know the rabble responsible for firing upon my ship. I want them arrested and sent to Halifax for trial. And if you won't do it, then I will.

Hopkins: The "rabble" responsible? Is that "rabble" the "incompetent coward" who fired the cannons, or the men who authorized the order to do so?

Smith: Ahhhh. The plot thickens. So we have a hierarchy of rabble, in which a higher authority issued the order.

Hopkins: I am afraid that that is the rather sensitive situation in which we find ourselves.

Smith: Sensitive be damned. Who issued the order to fire upon my ship?

Hopkins: Members of my own council, Captain. It was by their very own signed authority.

Smith: Then they will answer for it.

Hopkins: I'm sure they will, sir. When they think it necessary.

Smith: When they think it necessary! When they think it necessary!! Then it is a set of very ignorant council! They will answer for it when the Crown thinks it necessary, which shall be soon, at which time it is my dearest hope this incident be the means of a new charter for this licentious republic!

(Smith leaves)

(Gardner and Hallwhisk Vaughan in)

Gardner: So you fired fifteen shots at the Squirrel.

Vaughan: Aye, sir.

Gardner: And you missed her fifteen times.

Vaughan: Aye, sir.

Gardner: And what sort of gunnary is that, Mr. Vaughan?

Vaughan: Sir?

Hall: Why did you miss fifteen consecutive times?

Vaughan: Sir...I came as close as I dared.

Gardner: Oh, I see. Your intention was to miss her.

Vaughan: Ah...Aye, sir... of course, sir.

Hall: Why?

Vaughan: I did not think it the intent of my orders to hit her, sir. I worried my orders would not support me in so violent an act, so I threw my shot accordingly.

Hopkins: And you missed the Squirrel not from any act of cowardice.

Vaughan: NAY, sir!!

Hopkins: Nor from any lack of competence.

Vaughan: NAY, sir!!

Hopkins: Thank you, Mr. Vaughan. Next time hit her.

Vaughan: AYE, SIR!!

Smith: (Back again, loaded for bear) It is now necessary, Governor Hopkins, now! You are ordered by His Majesty to return to him with all possible dispatch an exact and punctual account of the whole proceeding, authenticated in the best manner;

(During Smith's speech, election '65 occurs. The compass spins and reveals Ward the winner. Ward and Hopkins changes places in the Governor's chair. As Smith climaxes his triumphant speech, he turns to slap the document on Hopkins, only to find Ward in his place.)

together with the names and descriptions of the offenders; and

what means were used at the time of the tumult by the government of the colony for the suppression thereof, and for the protection of His Majesty's vessels and crews; particularly what was done, if anything, by the government of the said colony when the populace possessed themselves of the battery upon Goat Island; and what measures have been taken since to discover and bring to justice the offenders!

Ward:

(Accepts the document with the utmost grace. Reads a bit of it.) "...requiring the Governor and Company of the colony to return to His Majesty an exact and punctual account of the whole proceeding...etc." Well, well. Yes, indeed,... yes, indeed. (To the astounded Smith) And in obedience I shall comply to the letter, Captain...ehh...Smith, is it? I shall collect as soon as possible the best account of the matter. But as I was not in the administration last year, and was out of town when the affair happened, it will require more time for me to acquaint myself with, and prepare a statement of the case properly authenticated, then if I had been present at the time of the incident. (They exit.)

Lindsay:

We were out of town, too, but unlike Governor Ward, Captain Ballard never came back. He died at sea. You know that no man'll live forever, but even so, there are some men you never think of as dyin'. Captain Ballard was a man like that. Oh, I could see him goin' down with his ship, or bein' felled by a privateer's musket, but a fever? In three days he was dead. We buried him at sea. It happened just as fast as I'm tellin' it. So I was a Captain again, but I didn't have cause to celebrate that fact. My prospects

were bleak and they got hellish worse when we reached Newport. I'll never forget the day -- the 4th of June, 1765 -- the King's birthday.

Crier:

(During the crier's speech there is a low disgruntled muttering from the crowd that complements what the crier says and builds with him.)

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

The British Line is a pig
Whose appetite is far too big,
Seized ships, raided farms
Impressed seaman cause great alarms
It's gone beyond taxation now
And Newport's kicking up a row
Captain Smith is a royal provoker
So now we play Rhode Island poker!

(We are back in the tavern. Rachael is sobbing softly behind the bar. Depression hangs over the place.)

Hall:

It's not your fault, Benjamin. He's running the hottest Goddamned press we've ever known. Christ, they're even pressing men off wood boats!

Rachael:

And the fishermen are afraid to go out -- we've had not fresh fish for a fortnight!

Hall:

Nor molasses.

Rachael:

Seaman's wages are up \$1.50 a month if you can find anybody that'll sail at all.

Lindsay:

Aye. That was the word all the way home. Coasters the whole way were shunnin' the place for fear of losin' their crews. I thought they were exaggeratin'. Christ, I should

have known better! But with the Captain dead, I figured I had to get her home.

Hall: 'Course you did. And that was the proper thing to do. You musn't blame yourself, Benjamin. Fear nothing. It's a blessing in disguise. We'll get your crew back and make a weighty point doing it.

(Dr. Gardner rushes in.)

Hall: News?

Gardner: Aye. The mob is exceeding our expectations. There's 300 of 'em now and its growing fast. Mad as hornets they are, with no need of words from us. They've hauled the Squirrel's longboat to the upper edge of town and are this moment setting it afire. Vaughan and Sanderson are bringing Lt. Jenkins here — they're right behind me. The mob wanted to set the longboat afire with Jenkins in it!

Hall: Thank God they were prevented. We'd look some foolish tradin' with a pile of ashes.

Gardner: Aye. But he's well bruised.

Hall: As long as he's alive. What of the Governor?

Gardner: He'll come when needed but wished to stay out of sight 'till then.

Hall: Aye.

(The door bursts open and Lt. Jenkins is hurled into the room. His hands are tied, he is quite bloody and battered. Close behind are Vaughan and Sanderson, both with a snoot full.)

Sanderson: Here's the stinkin' pimp, sirs, the stinkin' pressman of Rhode Island seamen! Lemme introduce ya to 'im — Lt. Arse

Hole Jenkins from H.M.S. Skunk!

(He delivers a vicious kick to Jenkin's gut.)

Vaughan: (To the inert Jenkins.) It's rude to lay there like a dead lobster when you're supposed to be shakin' hands with gentlemen! (Another brutal kick.)

(Jenkins makes a series of high-pitched, short animal whines in agony.)

Gardner: Easy, Mr. Vaughan. We don't want to spoil his value.

Vaughan: Easy, sir? EASY!!!? I got mates on the Hannah who should be here this minute drinkin' their rum and greetin' their friends and family. But where are they -- they're clapped in the Squirrel's bowels not knowin' if they'll ever see Newport again,...Rachael's own husband and brother among 'em. And you want I should be easy!?

Hall: We need him in one piece for our negotiations, Mr. Vaughan.

Sanderson: Aaaagh. What makes ya think Captain Smith is gonna trade 9 able-bodied men for the likes o' him? He never knew 'is arse from 'is elbow to begin with and it don't look to me like he's improved none.

Hall: We'll see. You've done well, Mr. Sanderson, and you, Mr. Vaughan. Get yourselves a drink, yet keep your wits about you.

(Sanderson and Vaughan mumble thanks and retire to the bar.)

Hall: (To Brownell) Was Captain Smith notified?

Gardner: Aye, and some cool heads were provided for his safe conduct. But with the mob on the other side of town, his journey here will be safe enough.

Hall: Aye. Daniel, drink up, time we fetched the Governor.

Vaughan: Aye. (He polishes off his drink and heads out the back way.)

Gardner: Sanderson, cut him loose...easy.

Sanderson: I'd rather cut his throat. (He does as he's bid.)

Gardner: Now, Lt. Jenkins, are you fit?

Jenkins: I'm not sure, sir.

Gardner: Anything broken?

Jenkins: I think not, sir.

Gardner: Good. Slow and easy, now... (Helping him) ... Let's ease you up and get some rum in you. (Signals Rachael.)

Jenkins: Aye, sir. (It hurts all the way.)

Gardner: (Looks to Rachael who hasn't moved.) Come, come, Rachael, a dram. (He begins wiping the blood away and examining the damage.)

Rachael: I'll not serve the kidnapper of my own husband and brother. I'd sooner help Mr. Sanderson cut his throat.

Gardner: (Walks over and gets the rum himself.) Rachael, I understand... we all do. But pray, you understand, the kidnapper is now the kidnapped.

Hall: Better use other terms, Mr. Gardner.

Gardner: Ah, Mr. Hall, always the solicitor. Quite right. Lt. Jenkins is our guest. Battered and beaten we found him, we rescued him from the mob and like good Samaritans brought him here to bind and heal him. (He hands Jenkins a drink.)

Hall: Well said, sir. You might want to edit the word "bind."

(To Jenkins.) We did rescue you from the mob, did we not,

Lt. Jenkins?

Jenkins: (Realizing what side his bread is buttered on) ... Aye.

(In the door walk Vaughan, Governor Ward, and Captain Smith.)

Ward: Gentlemen, good evening. I answered your mysterious summons as soon as I could and by fortunate coincidence I met Captain Smith en route. I welcomed the encounter in the hope that he could inform me of the purpose of this meeting. He tells me that an unruly mob has stolen a longboat and kidnapped Lt. Jenkins, yet I see Lt. Jenkins safely here before my eyes.

Hall: The mob did grab him up, Governor, and it did abuse him until some sensible citizens could rescue him and bring him here for his protection. Doctor Gardner has been seeing to his bruises. We thought it best to notify you both as soon as possible.

Captain Smith: And what of the longboat they pirated?

Hall: Burned, sir.

Smith: Governor Ward, again your citizens have turned into an unruly mob, beaten His Majesty's Officer, and burned His Majesty's property. Your government has become ineffectual, sir. You cannot control the mob, or you will not for fear they will turn you out of office. In either case His Majesty's men and ships are no longer guaranteed their lawful protection in this colony, and I intend to inform the Lords of Trade accordingly.

Ward: Captain, this affair has just come to my attention and it gives me great uneasiness, I do assure you. Upon proper application I shall use my utmost endeavors to prevent any

such violent and scandalous acts from taking place in the future, and to bring all those who have behaved in that illegal manner to punishment. However, upon proper investigation, I am certain that we shall find no respectable citizens of Newport associated with that mob; I cannot help but think it was the dregs of the town -- some boys and some unruly Negroes. (To Hall) What caused them to act thus?

Hall: The impressment of the Hannah's crew.

Smith: Seizure of illegal cargo!

Ward: Captain Lindsay?

Lindsay: My crew was snatched before we'd even secured her. Mr. Robinson had not the opportunity to come aboard.

Ward: Lord, oh Lord. What a confusion of misunderstandings we have here, Captain Smith, and all on the King's birthday, the very day upon which you have always laid so great a stress. Captain, let us act in the spirit of this day and see the Hannah's crew safe to their homes and Lt. Jenkins safe to his quarters.

Smith: I know nothing of the Hannah's crew. None of them are aboard the Squirrel!

Ward: May I send aboard the town sheriff that he may verify that good news with his own eyes? Then can we more effectively console the loved ones and so disperse the mob.

Smith: You can disperse your mob at any time, Governor, it is after all your mob. You may not search my ship. While she is afloat, the civil authority of this colony does not extend

to, and cannot operate within her.

Hall: You are not afloat here, Captain, where civil authority surely does operate.

Smith: Your mob contradicts you, Mr. Hall.

Hall: One might conceive of the mob as supporting evidence.

Smith: Do you threaten me with that mob?

Gardner: Banish the thought, Captain. For myself, I only wish to give sound medical advice. Lt. Jenkins is greatly diseased. Careful measures must be taken that you and your other officers be not so afflicted. It could have a crippling affect upon your ship, not to mention yourselves.

(Pause)

Smith: (Cornered and he knows it) Damn your eyes! Goddamn you all!!...all right...all right. I shall do what I can to discover your seamen and have them safely put down on shore. (To Gardner) Any change in Lt. Jenkins' condition, Doctor!

Gardner: A miracle. He walks.

Smith: No miracle, Doctor, the mob. The mob giveth and the mob taketh away. Such is the government in this licentious republic, and I await the day when you become its victims. (They leave.)

Ward: To the King, God bless him!

Lindsay: To the Governor, God bless him!

Sanderson: To the Goddamned mob!

(The tavern empties, the Crier enters)

Crier:

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Lindsay got his crew returned

But the Crown it seems will never learn.

And now its August of '65,

Parliament's greed is still alive,

The Stamp Act is our new malaise;

Stamped paper sails across the waves

In piles, in packs, in rolls, in stacks,

But we won't pay that British tax, (Crowd cheers.)

To us it is most woeful --

Dreadful, dolorous, dollar-less, dismal, dreary, and
doleful!

But Lindsay's fortunes are rising again

John Brown brought the Hannah and made him Captain

Now Lindsay sails out of Providence,

Not up to Newport's prominence,

But Providence has at least one attraction

That drives poor Lindsay to distraction! (Crowd makes
"shame-shame" noises.)

(Lindsay walks into Sarah Goddard's Office)

Sarah:

Well, well. The dashing Captain Lindsay.

Lindsay:

Madam! (He bows)

Sarah:

In town six hours, and just now he makes his grand
appearance.

Lindsay:

And how do you know the time of my arrival?

Sarah:

It is my business to know. I would be a poor printer of
the news if I didn't.

- Lindsay: Ohhh. And what is newsworthy in the fact that Captain Lindsay is in Providence six hours before he arrives at the door of Mrs. Sarah Goddard?
- Sarah: Perhaps nothing. But as a printer I must investigate all possibilities.
- Lindsay: And as a woman?
- Sarah: I am more curious.
- (Pause)
- Where have you been?
- Lindsay: Off-loading.
- Sarah: You've no mate?
- Lindsay: Sarah, it is my first voyage as Captain. I had to see her secured. Besides, I do not see you pacin' your widow's walk in fretful desparation. You seem to be fillin' your time well enough with your own work.
- Sarah: You force me to my work, sir. I do not dare set foot upon my widow's walk for fear I would leap to my death out of a mad longing and desire for my handsome Captain Lindsay, who cruelly keeps me waiting for six hours while he philanders through the streets of Providence, only to arrive at my door to find my faithful broken body lying there, a tragic testimony to my pure abused devotion and to his callous wretched ways.
- Lindsay: Oh, no. The much put upon Captain Lindsay never arrives at Sarah Goddard's front door.
- Sarah: Quite right. He probably sneaks in the back door and misses the whole tragic scene.

Lindsay: No, no, no. Upon arriving dock-side he looks for the fair Sarah Goddard to greet him and give him a warm "welcome home." She is not there. She is cavorting about the town with men of great wealth and power and age. He is desolate -- unconsolable. He climbs the rigging and plunges to his death, takin' half the foredeck with 'em, a tragic tribute to his abused devotion and to her callous wretched ways.

(They laugh, embrace, he kisses her on the cheek)

Lindsay: Have you been well?

Sarah: Yes. And you?

Lindsay: Never better.

(Pause)

What keeps you working, so late in the evening?

Sarah: Colonel Barré's speech in Parliament opposing the Stamp Tax. It is a fiery speech, Benjamin, strong stuff. I want it in this week's edition.

Lindsay: Who's Colonel Barré?

Sarah: An Irisman, a member of Parliament, and a friend to the colonies.

Lindsay: Friends to the colonies in Parliament are few enough. I'll overlook the fact he's Irish.

Sarah: But you can't overlook this, Benjamin. He's coined a phrase that'll be a rallying cry in the colonies for years to come. He called us "Sons of Liberty!"

Lindsay: The Irish always did have a way with words.

Sarah: Listen to this...just listen to this.

- Lindsay: Do I have to?
(She gives him a look)
I have to.
- Sarah: To justify the Stamp Duties, Americans were humiliated on the floor of Parliament. We were called "children" planted by British care, nourished by British indulgence, and protected by British arms...and do you know what that Irishman said to that?
- Lindsay: Hard tellin'.
- Sarah: He said British oppression planted us here. He said we grew up by British neglect of us. And he called us "Sons of Liberty," Benjamin, "Sons of Liberty!"
- Lindsay: Mighty eloquent, Sarah, eloquent. Good speech. But no one is goin' to pay those Stamp Duties anyway, so what's the fuss?
- Sarah: It's the principle, Benjamin. Americans need to know there is support for our cause in Parliament.
- Lindsay: But not enough to make any difference.
- Sarah: Not there. But it could make a difference here. We've got to start thinking as Americans...as a unified people. Colonel Barre's rhetoric is just what we need to encourage that unity.
- Lindsay: Aha, unity -- I'm all for that ... (He makes a pass at her.)
- Sarah: Beast.
- Lindsay: Mortal flesh.
- Sarah: Then put it to work and help me set this last paragraph. Stop worrying about the sunrise. Ten minutes will see this finished.
- Lindsay: Amen!
(He goes to work.) (Vaughan enters with news)

Vaughan: Sarah! Sarah!! They're riotin' in Newport!

Sarah: What is it this time?

Vaughan: Augustus Johnston accepted the post of Stamp Master!!

Sarah: I don't believe it.

Vaughan: It's true. I was there! And he's not resigning as Attorney General! He means to have both jobs!!

Sarah: He'll have nothin'! That Tory bastard will have nothin'!

Vaughan: He's already in trouble, and that's a fact. A mob went after him and only by the Grace of God did he escape to take refuge aboard the Squirrel. They looted his house and hung 'im in effigy.

Sarah: They'll kill him if he ever steps ashore.

Lindsay: What ever possessed the man?

Vaughan: No one seems to know. When he announced his intentions, we was stunned. After all, we had gathered to hear him say he'd reject the job. I mean we was prepared to cheer him, have a pint or two, and celebrate the vacant Stamp Master's post. Then he announced he'd take it. A few in the crowd giggled...they thought it was a joke. Then they realized nobody else was laughin'.

Sarah: Augustus Johnston was never known for his humorous remarks. The man has no wit at all.

Lindsay: But even for the witless, this is strange behavior. Maybe he thought he was popular enough.

Vaughan: God himself ain't got popularity enough to take the Stamp Master post in this colony.

Sarah: A fat purse is all he thought about, the fool. He thinks a King's appointment will comfort his old age. Now the trick will be to simply get there. You say there's riots?

Vaughan: Aye. When I rode out the mobs were millin'. There's other Tories were chased out with 'im. Moffat and Howard.

Sarah: I'm much obliged. If you hear anything else, keep me posted.

Vaughan: Aye.
(He goes.)

Sarah: Foolish man. Foolish, foolish man.

Lindsay: Well, never a dull moment. (Pause) C'mon, Sarah, let's put Colonel Barré to bed, then follow his example.

Sarah: That can wait. I want to rough out an editorial.

Lindsay: Now?! Sarah, its eleven o'clock at night. Why not wait 'till morning?

Sarah: Because I don't want to wait 'till morning. I want to get some ideas down now while they're fresh. It won't take long.

Lindsay: Long enough. (Pause) I thought you weren't supposed to write keen objective criticism in the heat of passion.

Sarah: Fear not, brave Captain, I'll save some for you.

Lindsay: I'll put it on my eggs.

Sarah: You'll have it long before your eggs. Now...how does this sound? "If the Stamp Act should be enforced in these colonies, adieu liberty, and every privilege..."

Lindsay: Why "adieu?" Why not "good-bye" or "farewell?"

Sarah: Because its not the same.

Lindsay: Why?

Sarah: It just is not. "Adieu" conjures up a vague reference to God... in the second syllable... "diu". You see, literally translated adieu means...

Lindsay: I do see, Sarah. Quite correct. "Adieu" is the word you want.. Has a fine ring to it, "adieu." "Adieu Liberty!"

Couldn't be better, "adieu." I agree. What comes next?

Sarah:

An "adieu" of your own if you keep it up.

Lindsay:

I'll not keep it up, Sarah. I can't, and that's the long and short of it.

Sarah:

(She has a change of heart and begins to seduce him)
"laudible zeal hath burst into flame from Newport. The spirit of their fathers rests upon them and they preserve in their impassioned breasts the noble sensations of ... sensations of... sensations of..."

Lindsay:

Sarah, have you ever been raped?

Sarah:

No, Benjamin, have you?

Crier:

Hear ye! Hear ye!

The riots were loud, the riots were vicious,
The message to Parliament far from propitious.
But Parliament heard and although annoyed,
In less than a year the Stamp Act was void!

It's seventeen hundred and sixty-seven

And Parliament is still endeavorin'

To rob us of our livlihoods

This time the tax is on British goods.

The Townsend duties is the name,

DON'T PAY!! Same old game! (Crowd cheers.)

Without British goods life will be trying

But the tax is worse, so we're not buying.

John Brown is caught twixt principle and purse

But heaves to principle - profits get worse.

And all the colonies boycott British

We stand united! (Crowd cheers) But Newport's skittish!

Brown: DAMN NEWPORT! GODDAMN THAT NEWPORT!!!!

Gov. Hopkins: A noble sentiment, John. What motivated it?

Brown: Newport's merchants are not honoring the boycott and I'm made to pay for it! Tell 'em, Benjamin.

Lindsay: In Boston they said they'll not deal with us further until we join the compact. The same in South Carolina -- it was declared that soon our commerce would be discontinued. In New York I could not unload at all. They declared their trade with us snut off completely.

Brown: I'm not shippin' British goods! Providence isn't buyin' British goods! But Newport is!! They all associate us with Newport!

Goddard: Then we'll disassociate with Newport. I'll put an anonymous open "Letter to the Colonies" in my next edition. We'll disavow Newport's conduct and make clear that Providence ships and her people have honored the boycott.

Gov. Hopkins: Aye, Sarah. And I will write to all twelve Governors advising them likewise.

Brown: Meanwhile I've got eight ships up and down this coast being turned out of port while Newport gets rich!

Gov. Hopkins: They'll not get rich, John. If your cargoes are being turned away, then so are Newport's. She cuts off her nose to spite her face.

Brown: And mine!

Gov. Hopkins: But with none of her ships welcome in American ports, Newport will soon have to bend to the boycott... Which indicates that the boycott has some teeth in it. This is good news after all.

Brown: Enough to make a man rejoice and whistle. Stephen, I invested about \$2,500 in your last election and all you're able to do is write twelve letters to twelve Governors? You plan to deliver 'em in person?

Gov. Hopkins: What more may I do, John?

Brown: How in hell do I know! You're the Governor!

Goddard: Calm down, John. The Governor's quite correct. Pressure from the other colonies is the most effective method of forcing Newport into line. Our concern is to keep her there.

Brown: Smell anything, Benjamin?

Lindsay: No, sir.

Brown: Then sharpen your nostrils. These three are cooking up a Rhode Island specialty- simmering faction a la Providence - and I'm to pay the bill.

Gardner: Not quite, John. A cool draught of coalition is more what we have in mind.

Brown: I'll still wager it will be expensive. Let's see the menu.

Gardner: The idea, John, is to end the factionalism within this colony and put the government under our control for a number of years to come.

Brown: How?

Gardner: We start this spring. We concede the election to Mr. Ward's Newport faction.

Brown: Excellent idea, Mr. Gardner. Is this before or after we give the colony back to the Indians?

Gov. Hopkins: John, Samuel Ward has sent another compromise offer. We think that this time it might be worth considering.

Gardner: It is only a matter of time, John, before the freemen will

reject political faction. Coalition is in the wind. If we take timely action now we can eventually control any coalition and utterly crush the Newport influence.

Brown: By giving Newport the election next spring. Certainly. Now, Dr. Gardner, being as precise as you can I'd like you to tell me just where it was in your head that your horse kicked you.

Hopkins: (Chuckling) It's not as daft as it sounds when you hear us out, John. The coalition candidate Mr. Ward has suggested is Josias Lyndon.

(Short Pause.)

Brown: Who?

Gardner: He is a Baptist from Newport ...clerk of the lower house.

Brown: Well I am most happy you told me that, Dr. Gardner. Now there's a set of credentials for ya'.

Goddard: He has one other credential that suits our purposes completely, John. ...he's a perfect horse's arse.

Brown: Sarah, you know I like a good bet on occasion, but I do not usually lay my money on that end of the animal.

Hopkins: (Again chuckling) John, Mr. Ward wants coalition and Josias Lyndon is his man. Fine, Now suppose we agree. If no better man comes forward to run against him, and God knows that 99% of the freemen in the colony would qualify, then we know that coalition is first and foremost in the people's minds.

Brown: And if a better man does step forward?

Goddard: We can elect Lyndon anyway. With our support he will take

Providence and Newport, and who knows what else. However, once elected, we shall do everything a free press is allowed to prove Mr. Lyndon a fool, while all the time fully endorsing the principle of coalition.

- Gardner: Our turn will come the following year. That's part of the bargain. Then we name the coalition candidate. Our man will be Joseph Wanton.
- Brown: Can we control him? I think he takes his oath to the Crown too seriously.
- Hopkins: True, John, quite true. He is much more his own man. But add that fact to his previous experience as Deputy Governor and we have a man who stands head and shoulders above Josias Lyndon.
- Brown: Hm. And your hope is Wanton's superiority then becomes so obvious that the colony will insist upon his re-election.
- Hopkins: That's the idea
- Brown: And what of you Stephen?
- Hopkins: A bit of quietude, John. It is a gruelling business, this yearly combat for the Governorship. I would prefer to retire to the Assembly, where my continued election is virtually guaranteed, and devote my remaining energies to my first love--- the law.
- Brown: And the party?
- Hopkins: Fear not. I will assume the posture of the old watch dog who sleeps with one ear cocked and one eye open.
- Brown: Well, to simply elect Mr. Wanton year after next seems to pose little problem. But how do we so weaken the Newport faction in the process that it can never again offer any serious challenge to us?

Gardner: A number of factors are working to Newport's disadvantage. Her economy is slipping, ours is on the rise. Her prestige is tarnished -- witness her latest refusal to join the boycott on British goods. She's infected with Toryism, we bear no such disease. Increasingly the colony looks to Providence for leadership.

Hopkins: And here is the coup de grace, John: the Assembly is debating the founding of a college in the Colony. The town that has it will enjoy great influence. The assumption is to place it in Newport. But, there is no reason that Providence should not have it if a proper site and endowment be provided, and we set our minds and money to put it here. That would deal Newport an irrevocable humiliation.

Sarah: And it is equally possible that a generous benefactor shall have his name upon it.

(Brown smiles as he reflects on that)

Brown: Yes...Yes...well, there seems to be some method in your madness after all. Provided Mr. Wanton is made to understand that his first responsibilities are to this Colony, not to the Crown, then your strategy and my college have my endorsement. Let us all go drink rum, talk sums, and toast Newport's demise.

(Gov. Hopkins, Gardner, Sarah and Brown leave. Lindsay hangs behind.)

Lindsay: And Newport's demise it was. By 1770 factionalism was dead, so were the Townsend Duties, and Mr. John Brown got

his college. So then we had about two years of clear sailin'.

But it all got spoilt in March of 1772 when HMS Gaspee, a schooner commanded by Lieutenant William Dudingston, sailed into Rhode Island waters.

Crier:

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

(Sung as ballad)

'Twas in the reign of George the Third,
Our public peace was much disturbed.
Seventeen hundred and seventy-two
In Newport harbor lay a crew,
That played the part of pirates there,
The sons of freedom could not bear.
No honest coaster could pass by
But the Gaspee would let some shot fly;
And did provoke to high degree,
Those true born sons of liberty.
But 'twas not long 'fore it fell out
Here, on the ninth day of June,
Betwixt the hours of twelve and one,
The Gaspee chased the ship, called Hannah,
Of which, one Lindsay was commander.

Lindsay:

He ordered me to stop and be searched. Damned if I would. It meant half my cargo looted and the Devil knew what else. I decided to make a run for Providence. I knew the Gaspee was fast, but she drew more water than me, so I relied on the Hannah to out-manuever her. I ordered full sail. The Gaspee was slow to respond so we got a

good jump on 'er up the West Bay. But the wind was from the South. Runnin' before the wind the Gaspee closed the distance and was gaining steady as we came up on Namquit Point. It was clear that she'd catch us before we reached Providence unless I did somethin' drastic.

(During the above and what follows, actors mime crewmen aboard the Hannah as the stage chase develops.)

Mate: (With glass) She's within gun range, sir. I think we'll get a broadside when we show our starboard to 'er.

Lindsay: Aye. Steady as she goes.

(Ships maneuver)

Mate: Shall I take some sail off, sir? Might want solid sheet to hoist after her first salvo.

Lindsay: Not yet, mister. Come North-Nor'east by North.

Mate: Aye, aye, sir. North-Nor'east by North.

Helm: North-Nor'east by North.

Mate: We've only two fathoms under us, sir.

Lindsay: Aye. Let her slide to North-Nor'east.

Mate: North-Nor'east!

Helm: North-Nor'east!

(Short pause)

Mate: We're runnin' out o' water, Captain.

Lindsay: Aye. We'll use nerve to make up for it. Get some hands on top-sheet lines. I want to luff 'em if we go aground.

Mate: We're goin' over the bar, sir?

Lindsay: I sincerely hope so, mister.

Mate: Man the top-sheet lines!

(Echoed down the ship)

Lindsay: How far astern is she?

Mate: 200 yards and bearin' down hard.

Lindsay: The harder the better, mister.

Mate: Aye, sir. (He's not at all sure)

Lindsay: Let her slide a little more to starboard.

Mate: Aye, sir. North-Nor'east by East!

Helm: North-Nor'east by East!

Lindsay: Hold your breath, mister, we're goin' over.

Mate: Aye, sir.

(There is a scrape and slight jolt.)

(The scrape continues, then gradually tapers off as the Hannah just does make it over the sand bar)

Lindsay: We're over!

She's comin' right after us. C'mon Dudingston, you stinkin' piss ant, c'mon ... c'mon... THERE!! SHE'S AGROUND!!

(Shouts go up)

Crier: They dogged the Hannah up Providence Sound,

And there the Gaspee got aground.

The news of it flew that very day,

That she on Nanquit point did lay

And in Sabin's Tavern there gathered men

To plan she'd never sail again.

Brown: (and others) Nanquit Point, you say?

Lindsay: Aye, sir.

Brown: And the tide goin' out?
Lindsay: Aye, sir. She'll lay there 'till early morning.
Brown: And many mornings to come Benjamin! We burn her tonight!
Lindsay: Aye, sir.
Crier: That night, 'bout half after ten
Some Narragansett Indian men,
Being sixty-four, if I remember,
Made the stout coxcomb surrender;
And what was best of all their tricks,
They in his breech a ball did fix;

(Dudginston gets shot in the crotch)

Then set the men upon the land,
And burnt her up, we understand;

(The Gaspee explodes and burns)

Which thing provoked the King so high
He said those men shall surely die!
So he sent a Court here to inquire,
Who set the Gaspee all on fire.
The court convened without much tact,
Which you shall see in the second act.

APPENDIX TO ACT I

- THE GASPEE BALLAD -

MUSIC BY CHARLES COFONE

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GASPEE BALLAD - 1

HEAR YE! HEAR YE!



'T WAS IN THE REIGN OF GEORGE THE THIRD, OUR



PU-BLIC PEACE WAS MUCH DIS-TURBED IN SEV-EN-TEEN HUN-DRED AND



SEV-EN-TY-TWO IN NEW-PORT HAR-BOR THERE LAY A CREW THAT PLAYED THE



PART OF PI-RATES THERE, THE SONS OF FREE-DOm COULD NOT BEAR. NO



HON-EST COAST-ER COULD PASS BY BUT THE GAS-FEE WOULD LET SOME SHOT



FLY; AND DID PRO-VOKE TO HIGH DE-GREE, THOSE TRUE-BORN SONS OF



LIB-ER-TY. AND 'T WAS NOT LONG AF-TER ON THE NINTH DAY OF JUNE, BE-



TWIXT THE HOURS OF TWELVE AND ONE, THE GAS-PEE CHASED THE SHIP CALLED



"HANNAH," OF WHICH ONE LINDSAY WAS COM-MANDER.



GASPEE BALLAD - 2

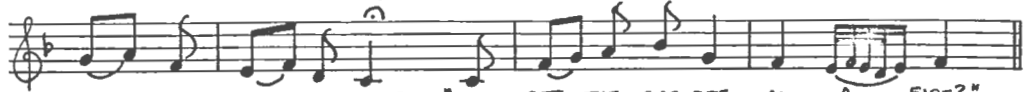
THEY DOG-GED THE HAN-NAH UP PROV-1-DENCE SOUND, AND THERE THE
 GAS-PEE WENT A-GROUND. THE NEWS OF IT FLEW THAT VE-RY DAY, THAT
 SHE ON NAM-QUIT POINT DID LAY. AND IN SAB-INS TRV-ERN THERE
 GATH-ERED MEN TO PLAN SHE'D NEV-ER SAIL A-GAIN.

THAT NIGHT A-BOUT HALF AFT-ER TEN, SOME WAR-RA-GAN-SETT IN-DIAN
 MEN, BE-ING SIX-TY-FOUR IF I RE-MEM-BER, THEY MADE THE STOUT COX-
 COMB SUR-REND-ER; AND WHAT WAS BEST OF ALL THEIR TRICKS, THEY
 IN HIS BREECH A BALL DID FIX; THEN SET THE MEN UP - ON THE LAND, AND
 BURNT HER UP, WE UN-DER-STAND. WHICH THING PRO-VOKED THE

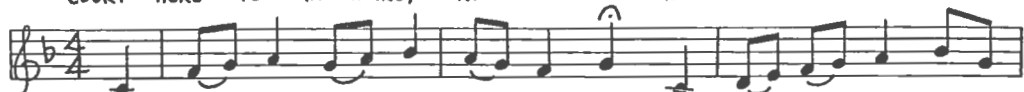
GASPEE BALLAD - 3



KING SO HIGH. HE SAID, "THOSE MEN SHALL SURE-LY DIE!" SO HE SENT A



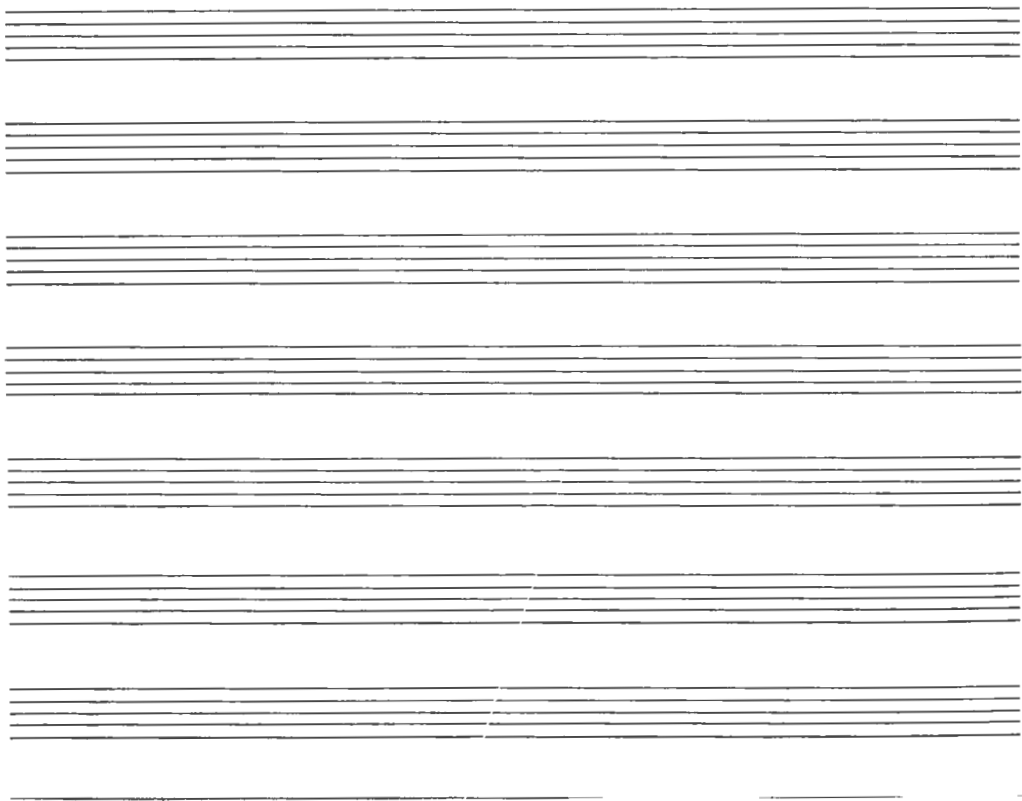
COURT HERE TO IN-QUIRE, "WHO SET THE GAS-PEE ALL A FIRE?"



THE COURT CON-VENED WITH-OUT MUCH TACT, WHICH YOU SHALL SEE IN THE



SEC - OND ACT.



ACT II/1

Crier:

Now that there's been a brief intermission;
We open this act with the King's Commission.
To aid the court in finding out,
King George has offered very stout;
Five hundred pounds to find the one
That wounded William Dudingston.
Five hundred more, there doth remain
For to find out the leader's name;
Likewise, five hundred pounds per man
For any one of all the clan.
But let him try his utmost skill,
I'm apt to think he never will
Find out any of those hearts of gold,
Though he should offer fifty fold.
The King has appointed Governor Wanton
to head the commission and light truth's lantern.
But Governor Wanton is more concerned
to see that lamp is never burned.
Ex-Governor Hopkins is now Chief Justice.
He'll question each and every witness.
to light up the past depends on him
But he'll keep history very dim!

(Stephen Hopkins talking to Samuel Thurston, Freeloove Staples, and Daniel Vaughan in a hearing room within the Newport State House. Timothy Potter is seated apart on the other side of the room. Sarah Goddard and Benjamin Lindsay enter the room. Hopkins beckons them to join him.)

ACT II/2

- Hopkins: Ah, Sarah and Benjamin. I want you to meet Mr. Samuel Thurston of Prudence Island. Mr. Thurston, this is Mrs. Sarah Goddard, owner of The Providence Gazette, and Mr. Benjamin Lindsay, captain of The Hannah.
- Thurston: I'm honored, Madam. (To Lindsay) On Prudence Island it is said you must have created Narragansett Bay, you navigate it so well.
- Hopkins: Sarah, Benjamin, you know Daniel Vaughan, and this is Freelove Staples, servant to Mr. Thurston. (Greetings, etc.) Now, I want you all to remember that this is not a trial; it is merely a commission of inquiry.
- Sarah: And damned illegal.
- Hopkins: Be that as it may, we must contend with it.
- Sarah: That would be best accomplished by ignoring it.
- Hopkins: We are using some of that strategy, Sarah, but since the Gaspee's ashes have sullied so many good names in the colony it is necessary we polish these reputations. Our charter is threatened enough without we have men of position impugned as traitors. But, as I have said, no one here is on trial.
- Sarah: It might as well be a trial, Stephen, and you know it. This commission is empowered to send anyone suspected of having taken part back to England for trial and hanging.
- Hopkins: No one will be removed from this colony without proper evidence of involvement, and we shall do all in our power to make that evidence as elusive as the Holy Grail. When I ask you a question, answer according to our preparations.

Give that answer only -- volunteer no added information.

Freelove:

Oh, my God, I hope I remember my words!

Hopkins:

Easy, Freelove, I will be your prompter.

Vaughan:

What of the judges' questions?

Hopkins:

You need fear nothing from Governor Wanton. He might ask some few questions, but only for the sake of appearance. He does not want the identity of the perpetrators known any more than we do.

Vaughan:

I trust Governor Wanton well enough, but what of that crotchety New Yorker, Horsmanden?

Hopkins:

Justice Horsmanden makes no secret of his passionate hate for this colony, and his raving prejudice jeopardizes his capacity for probing the truth. It is Justice Smythe that deserves our close attention. He is fair and objective and takes his responsibilities seriously. Don't let his questions lead you off course. Stay with your prepared testimony.

Freelove:

I just know I'll forget my words.

Hopkins:

Steady, Freelove. We're about to begin.

(The three judges enter and are seated.)

Horsmanden:

I will sit here today, Justice Smythe. I cannot bear the draught on that side of the room one more day. It's inflamed my rheumatism and shut off my hearing on this side.

Smythe:

Certainly, Justice Horsmanden. I hope you can still hear the proceedings.

Horsmanden:

No matter. It's one lie after another and I've heard my fill already.

Wanton: I'm sorry our court room causes you discomfort, sir.

Horsmanden: Courtroom be damned. This whole colony causes me discomfort. The weather is terrible, lodgings are meager, and the populace is backward. Damnable place. Can't wait to be rid of it.

Wanton: Then I had best call the proceedings to order that you may sooner be back to your New York and Justice Smythe to his New Jersey.

Smythe: I shall be happy enough to return home, Governor Wanton, but I find no fault with Rhode Island hospitality in the meanwhile.

Wanton: Thank you for that, sir. I hope you find our loyalty to the Crown as faultless. These proceedings will come to order. Justice Hopkins, are you ready to question the first witness?

Hopkins: Ready.

Wanton: The clerk will call the first witness.

Clerk: Captain Benjamin Lindsay.

(He takes his seat)

Hopkins: Captain Lindsay, would you enlighten the commission as to your activities on the afternoon and evening of June 9, 1772.

Lindsay: Well sir, I was headin' up the bay for Providence when the Gaspee ordered me to heave to. Knowin' Lt. Dudingston's habit of lootin' honest cargoes, I ignored the signal and headed home.

Smythe: Was your cargoe honest indeed?

Lindsay: Aye, sir.

Horsmanden: Honest cargo! There's no such thing in these waters.

Wanton: Justice Smythe, we have depositions from His Majesty's customs officials in Providence that declare Captain Lindsay's cargo legal.

Smythe: I see.

Hopkins: Captain, do you know how the Gaspee ran aground on Namquit Point?

Lindsay: Can't rightly say, sir, but I'd guess that Lt. Dudingston put her there.

Smythe: On purpose?

Lindsay: Not likely. Perhaps Lt. Dudingston didn't know his charts.

Hopkins: What did you do when you got to port?

Lindsay: Reported immediately to my employer, Mr. John Brown.

Hopkins: And then?

Lindsay: I went to visit Mrs. Sarah Goddard.

Smythe: Why?

Lindsay: To pass on some news items.

Hopkins: And where did you go from there?

Lindsay: Mrs. Goddard and me went to Sabin's Tavern for our dinner and we were joined by Mr. Brown and others.

Smythe: What others?

Lindsay: Mr. Ezekiel Gardner, Mr. John Andrews, Mr. Arthur Fenner, Mr. Daniel Hitchcock, and some few others whose names I can't recall.

Horsmanden: Or won't!

Lindsay: The night in question was eleven months ago.

Horsmanden: Were they all apart of the plot?

Lindsay: What plot?

Horsmanden: The plot to burn the Gaspee!

Lindsay: I know nothing of any plot.

Hopkins: Then you were not aware of any conspiracy against the Gaspee hatching in Sabin's Tavern that evening.

Lindsay: No, sir.

Hopkins: Were you aware of any unusual behavior outside the Tavern?

Lindsay: We heard a noisy crowd pass by and speculated as to its purpose, but dismissed it as some youths affected by too much drink.

Hopkins: What time did you leave the Tavern?

Lindsay: T'was well after midnight.

Smythe: And then?

Lindsay: I retired to my bed.

Smythe: What about the others?

Lindsay: We all left the Tavern about the same time when Mr. Sabin closed up.

Smythe: Justice Hopkins, have you summoned the others allegedly in Sabin's Tavern that evening?

Hopkins: I have, sir.

Smythe: Very well. I have no further questions.

(The others concur)

Wanton: Next witness.

Clerk: Mrs. Sarah Goddard.

Hopkins: You have heard Captain Lindsay's account of his activities on the day in question.

Sarah: Yes, sir.

Hopkins: Did Captain Lindsay appear at your office on the afternoon

of June 9, 1772?

- Sarah: He did.
- Hopkins: What was the purpose in his visit?
- Sarah: He came to deliver certain news items and to invite me to dinner.
- Smythe: Was the Gaspee incident one of those items?
- Sarah: Yes, sir.
- Smythe: I'll wager it was. Probably the talk of the town for the remainder of the evening, was it not?
- Sarah: It was mentioned in passing. I wasn't planning to give it much space. Not much interest in some inept Englishman putting his ship aground.
- Smythe: But your front page devoted generous space to the incidents, is that not true?
- Sarah: I changed my mind after she caught fire. She was much more interesting then.
- Hopkins: So, you accompanied Captain Lindsay to dinner?
- Sarah: Yes. We went to Sabin's Tavern and were joined there by Mr. John Brown and others.
- Smythe: Do you recall the "others"?
- Sarah: The Captain's recollection is better than my own. I can add nothing to it.
- Horsmanden: No one in this accursed colony can add anything to anything!! It is a case of collective amnesia!
- Sarah: It's no wonder.
- Hopkins: (Under his breath) Sarah!
- Smythe: What do you mean, Mrs. Goddard?
- Sarah: This commission and Your Honors are vested with most exor-

bitant and unconstitutional powers. You are directed to summon witnesses and then to deliver suspected persons to England for trial. These proceedings are more horrid than the inquisition of Spain!

Horsmanden: The powers are extraordinary to suit the crime!

Sarah: To be tried by one's peers is the greatest privilege a subject can wish for. And so excellent is our charter that no subject shall be tried any other way...

Horsmanden: Madam...

Sarah: The tools of despotism and arbitrary power have long wished that this important bulwark might be destroyed, and now Americans who are suspected of guilt are ordered to England in open violation of the Magna Charta!

Hopkins: Enough, Sarah.

Sarah: No, it is not enough! This commission attempts to rob us of our birthright, it treats us with every mark of indignity, insult, and contempt. Do you wonder that you are treated with detestation and scorn?

Wanton: Mrs. Goddard, Your Honors, this philosophic debate distracts us from our appointed duties. Madam, do you have any information regarding those persons responsible for burning the Gaspee?

Sarah: No!

Wanton: Then, I see no reason to pursue this further.

(Consent from Horsmanden and Smythe.)

Wanton: Next witness.

Clerk: Mr. John Andrews.

Hopkins: With the commission's consent, I have a number of sworn depositions from gentlemen who claim to have been at Sabin's Tavern on the evening of June 9, 1772. For various reasons they cannot be here today, therefore they...

Smythe: What prevents them from attending these hearings?

Hopkins: Their reasons vary, sir.

Smythe: May we know them?

Hopkins: Of course, Justice Smythe. The first deposition is from Mr. John Andrews. He says: "Gentlemen, I should have waited on your Honors, but as the Court of Common Pleas is sitting in the County of Kent, and being concerned in several cases pending there, I cannot possibly be in Newport as summoned." Mr. Gardner goes on to say, "I was in Sabin's Tavern the night in question. Sometime after being there I heard a drum beat. I asked the reason for it. I was answered by someone of the company that there was a number of boys met together, supposedly to divert themselves. I, knowing it to be no uncommon thing, thought no more about it, and do solemnly declare that I have no knowledge directly or indirectly of any plot being laid or persons concerned in perpetrating so vile a crime..." etc., etc.

A second witness, a Mr. Daniel Hitchcock is also an attorney who says: "My engagement at Kent County Court absolutely forbid my attendance on Your Honors this day. Everything I know touching the matter is as follows: The night the Gaspee was burned I happened to be in Sabin's Tavern. About eight o'clock I noticed a number of people in the street

but paid no attention to them as that place was a place of public resort. Sometime after nine o'clock I heard a drum beat and questioned it. Somebody said that it was beat by some boys which quieted all further inquiry by me. This, may it please Your Honors, is all I know..." etc. etc.

Horsmanden: Well it doesn't please me. I'll wager it was the boys who were in the Tavern and those damned lawyers out beating on drums!

Smythe: Perhaps, Justice Hopkins, we should move these proceeding to Kent County Court.

Horsmanden: I'm not leaving this room!

Hopkins: Not necessary, sir. Dr. Ezekiel Gardner pleads illness, "I should have cheerfully obeyed the commission's summons had my health permitted; but I have been confined for a week past with a swelling in my hand which hath rendered me unable to stir out of doors...

Horsmanden: And I'm getting a swelling in my arse from listening to this nonsense!

Hopkins: Dr. Gardner continues, "I was in Providence in company with a number of gentlemen the evening before the mischief was done. I heard a disturbance in the street and inquired into the cause and was answered that a group of boys were gathered for their frolic. I heard nothing further that evening and retired to my bed..." etc. etc.

Horsmanden: For all we're hearing, we all might better be abed.

Hopkins: The next is a Mr. Arthur Fenner who pleads advanced age. Mr. Fenner is 74 and infirmed at this time. His sight and hearing are of little service to him, and he swears to this

- commission that on the night in question he saw or heard nothing. That ends our depositions, Your Honors.
- Smythe: Justice Hopkins, Mr. John Brown's name is often spoken as one associated with this business. Have you not called him to give his account?
- Hopkins: With all the testimony we have heard, need we bother a leading freeman of the colony when his whereabouts that evening have already been established?
- Horsmanden: Leading freeman be damned! Let him have the courage to perjure himself rather than have everybody else do it for him. Summon him.
- Hopkins: Upon his return, we shall do so. Business matters have taken Mr. Brown out of the colony.
- Smythe: Is there anyone left in the colony who is available to us?
- Horsmanden: I want to hear from that servant fellow who says he was there.
- Hopkins: And indeed you shall, Justice Horsmanden.
- Clerk: Timothy Potter.
- Hopkins: You are an indentured servant to Mr. Samuel Thurston of Prudence Island?
- Potter: Yes, your honor.
- Hopkins: And what information do you have for this commission.
- Potter: I was rowin' home from Bristol after doin' some errands for my master when I came across nine men in a rowin' boat armed with clubs, guns and pistols. They said the Gaspee schooner was stuck on shore and they was goin' to pay her a visit. They ordered me to go with 'em. They was mighty fearsome, so I did what I was bid. Pretty soon we could

make out the Gaspee...she sure looked funny sittin' so high on the water and I wondered how she come to get that way...

- Horsmanden: We know how she got that way. Get on with your story.
- Potter: Beg pardon, your honor...uh...for a while we just waited in the dark 'till we was joined by eight other boats from Providence...uh...well...then they did it.
- Horsmanden: Did what!
- Potter: Them men attacked and beat the piss out of the crew, shot the Captain, and burned the bugger to the water line.
- Smythe: Did you know any of the men who did this?
- Potter: Not personal'. But...
- Smythe: Yes?
- Potter: Well...
- Horsmanden: Get on with it man, tell us!
- Potter: Yes, sir. I learnt that the leaders were principal men in this colony. Some I had seen before.
- Horsmanden: Their names!
- Potter: Sir, about that reward, it is £ 500?
- Horsmanden: Yes- Yes. The names!
- Potter: I was told even a servant could get the reward.
- Smythe: That is correct if your story is true. Now, the names.
- Potter: Well, I only knowed a couple of 'em...seen 'em around Providence. One was Captain Lindsay, and there was...
(to Wanton) Governor, are they tellin' the truth about that reward?
- Wanton: The reward is for anyone, Timothy, but the evidence must be honest and not made up.

Timothy: Yes, sir.

Horsmanden: The other men, boy.

Timothy: A Dr. Gardner, a Mr. Hitchcock, and Mr. John Brown.

Horsmanden: Ah ha!

Timothy: Can I have my money now, sir?

Hopkins: At the appropriate time, Timothy.

Smythe: Are there any more names that you can remember?

Timothy: No, sir...no, sir. I've told you all I know.

Smythe: Did you see who shot Lt. Dudingston?

Timothy: No, sir.

Wanton: Any further questions, gentlemen?

(They have none)

Wanton: You may step down Timothy.

Horsmanden: I want the immediate arrest of those men.

Hopkins: Gov. Wanton, before we put the entire colony in jail, it would be judicious to hear the remaining witnesses.

Wanton: By all means. Proceed Justice Hopkins:

Clerk: Miss Freelove Staples.

Hopkins: You are Freelove Staples, an indentured servant to Mr. Thurston.

Freelove: Yes, sir.

Hopkins: Then you and Timothy Potter serve the same master.

Freelove: Yes, sir.

Hopkins: You have just heard his testimony?

Freelove: Yes, sir, and he ain't tellin' the truth.

Smythe: How do you know that?

Freelove: 'Cause he was on Prudence Island when them men attached the schooner.

Smythe: Can you prove that?

Freelove: Kind of. You see, on the night the ship was burnt, Timothy and me was together.

Hopkins: Why?

Freelove: Well, Your Honors, we always spend our evenins' off together. Ya see, Timothy's indenture is about done but mine's a year away ... and ... well... we wanna get married.

Horsmanden: What's that got to do with anything?

Freelove: We don't want to wait a year. Timothy wants to pay off my indenture to Mr. Thurston so we can marry now.

Hopkins: In other words, the £500 reward could help him do that?

Freelove: Yes, sir.

Hopkins: So you contend that Timothy Potter was with you on the night in question.

Freelove: Yes, sir.

Hopkins: And could not have taken part in the Gaspee incident!

Freelove: Yes, sir.

Horsmanden: Who's to say that she is not lying.

Hopkins: I think their master might help to resolve the problem.

Wanton: Then let us hear from him.

Clerk: Mr. Samuel Thurston.

Hopkins: Are these two people your servants?

Thurston: They are.

Hopkins: Where were they on the night in question?

Thurston: Not rightly sure, but I know they didn't leave the island.

Hopkins: How so?

Thurston: My rowing boat was broken and didn't get repaired 'till several days after the Gaspee's sinking.

Smythe: Couldn't Potter have borrowed another boat?

Thurston: Could have, but I doubt it. When work was done them two would be allowed some time together. I knew they wanted to get married and so I let them have one evening a week for themselves. The night the Gaspee was attacked was their night. They'd not give it up.

Smythe: I see.

Thurston: Something peculiar, too.

Smythe: What?

Thurston: Well, Timothy left the island to do some errands for me a week later and I haven't seen him until today.

Wanton: Where was he?

Thurston: I'm not sure, sir.

Hopkins: Governor Wanton, I have a witness who can answer that question.

Horsmanden: Who cares? It's a foolish question. You've collected enough liars already to impeach Potter's testimony. Must you insult me with more.

Hopkins: The insult has been to this colony, and if these hearings are, in any way, to resemble a search for the truth, then with all do respect I insist we hear more.

Wanton: By all means, Justice Hopkins.

Clerk: Mr. Daniel Vaughan.

Hopkins: What do you know of Potter's whereabouts over the past several months?

Vaughan: Some time a few months ago, being in a smack, I was takin' out some old iron from the wreck of the Gaspee. While

heading back to Newport, His Majesty's ship, the Beaver, signaled me to come along side, in order to take out some documents and letters for delivery to the customs office in Newport. In going aboard the Beaver, I saw that fellow (points to Potter) under the fo'c's'le in irons. He'd just been whipped.

- Smythe: How do you know that?
- Vaughan: His shirt was off and his back a mess of bloody welts.
- Smythe: Continue.
- Vaughan: I inquired of his crime and was informed that he was one of the rogues that burned the Gaspee, and they was whippin' the names of the leaders out of 'im.
- Smythe: What names?
- Vaughan: (Vaughan looks to Hopkins and gets a nod.) Names mentioned were Benjamin Lindsay, Ezekiel Gardner, John Brown and some others I have forgotten.
- Horsmanden: Naturally.
- Wanton: Justice Hopkins, I wish to furhter examine Timothy Potter.
- Hopkins: Yes, sir.
- (Potter comes forward)
- Wanton: Timothy, remove your shirt.
- Potter: Sir?
- Wanton: Remove it.
- (Potter hesitatingly does so and reveals large whip scars across his back.)
- Thurston: The bastards.
- Freelove: Oh, my God!
- Wanton: (To Thurston) Have you ever beat him?
- Thurston: No, sir. Never any need. Those welts were British made!
- Wanton: Timothy, what happened, and this time, the truth.
- Potter: They made me. They took me in my boat. They made me...

- Wanton: Who?
- Potter: Them British officers. They said I done it... I burnt the Gaspee. They whipped me...said they'd hang me. I didn't wanna hang I never done it...I was afraid of hangin'.
- Wanton: Timothy, easy, easy. There'll be no hanging here. Just tell us what happened.
- Potter: Then they said I wouldn't have to hang if I came here and gave some names.
- Wanton: What names?
- Potter: The names they told me. They made me learn a list. Then they said I could have £500 ...I could be rich...we could get married.
- Wanton: So they took you, whipped you, threatened you with the rope until you were desperate; then they offered you a princely redemption to come here and lie.
- Hopkins: Gov. Wanton, we must inform the Admiralty of the Beaver's unlawful activities.
- Horsmanden: Who is on trial here? It is this colony, not the Crown! I will not tolerate these villinous accusations against the King's officers!
- Hopkins: The villany is written in blood on that man's back! I do not know how truth is discovered in New York, but in Rhode Island we do not beat men to lie!
- Horsmanden: No, you bribe them to it! This courtroom is a bastion of lies built to protect smuggled goods and treacherous intentions! The ringleaders' names are well known, but no one will come forward to identify them. Someone in this colony burned the Gaspee, and I want to know who!
- Sarah: No one burned the Gaspee! British tyranny and despotism burned the Gaspee! Put that on trial in England and return

to us a verdict of Liberty!

(The crowd turns unruly. Shouts of "Liberty" and clenched fists are hurled at Horsemenden. The proceedings go into hurried recess.)

Lindsay:

Mrs. Goddard had a habit of talkin' too loud. Yes, sir, she was quite forceful when she put her mind to it. Then again, she was quite forceful when she didn't put her mind to it. But that was the way of things then. Forceful. It was happenin' to everybody. Everywhere. You take Governor Wanton, for example. Now you saw the way he conducted the Gaspee inquiry. Effective, no doubt about that. Not a single shred of evidence was forthcomin' to tie any of us to anythin'. But Governor Wanton went about that business in a mild-mannered, gentlemanly way...a way some thought was too timid... too tolerant of the Crown's activities here. So over the next few years, people began grumblin' about him. In the election of 1775 he was charged with Toryism and had himself some opposition for the first time in five years. Now you couldn't call a man a worse name than that. Them suspected of being loyalists were beaten- showered with manure, tarred and feathered, relieved of their property, and humiliated in every way possible. The 'dignity of man' somehow did not apply to Tories. But you could see why. We had had our Gaspee court, then Boston had her Tea Party and then she was occupied by the British Army. The damned British had turned the colonies into a powder-keg and was shovin' the fuse right up Massachusetts Bay. Well, she blew on April 19, 1775, Rhode Island election day.

Crier:

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

On the nineteenth of April, in Seventy-five.

Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous year and day
Where the Minute Men brought the British to bay.
By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,
There once the embattled farmers stood,
And fired the shot heard round the world.
While in Rhode Island we held an election
To determine our annual political direction:
(The Wanton home)

Ruth: When will you know?

Joseph: In a few hours. By ten.

Ruth: Mmm. Are you bothered?

Joseph: Nay. Not in the least. I only promised Mr. Hopkins to head
the prox one last time. I did not promise I would win.

Ruth: It is unfair. You do not deserve to lose.

Joseph: What's this? Is this the same Ruth Wanton that did not want
me to run at all?

Ruth: The same. And make no mistake about it, Joseph. I would be
overjoyed to have you lose and finally done with these
horrid politics, except that to lose now gives weight to
these accusations that you a a Tory.

Joseph: And winning might give more weight to it.

Ruth: How so?

Joseph: Rebellion fever is everywhere. As it increases, reason will
be replaced by passion, and passion will demand that a man
be counted as patriot or Tory with no room between, least
of all for the Governor of the Colony.

Ruth: It is disgraceful that you must defend yourself with every

breath. When we drank tea, we were "Tories." Very well, we abstained from tea. When we entertained our British friends, we were "Tories," so we shut our doors to our British friends. That we are Anglican is suspect... do we abstain from worship?

- Joseph: And the choices shall become increasingly difficult.
- Ruth: Then better you lose.
- Joseph: Such political heresy has gone through my mind.
- Servant: Justice Hopkins and Dr. Gardner are here, sir.
- Joseph: Show them in. (To Ruth) Crusaders come to punish the blasphemer.
- (They enter)
- Hopkins: Ruth, good evening.
- Ruth: Good evening, Stephen -- Dr. Gardner.
- Gardner: Evening, madam.
- Joseph: Some wine, gentlemen?
- Hopkins: Thank you, Governor. Make it your best and with it we shall toast your election.
- Joseph: The votes are counted, then?
- Gardner: Not all, but your lead is so substantial that victory is assured.
- Joseph: Oh.
- Hopkins: Come, come, Joseph. You have been elected too often if that is all the enthusiasm you can muster. (Drinks are passed about) (Toast) To our seventh year in Government.
- Ruth: To our final year in government.
- Hopkins: This is no time to tire of government, Ruth. If anything we will need a new dedication. I have other news.
- Joseph: What?

Hopkins: The long feared confrontation has occurred. British and American blood is spilled in Massachusetts.

Ruth: Oh, God.

Joseph: What happened?

Gardner: British troops were sent from Boston to Concord to destroy arms and ammunition stored there. Before reaching Concord they were challenged by some Lexington militia men on the town green. Shots were exchanged and eight Americans were killed, ten were wounded.

Ruth: Ohh.

Joseph: Who fired first?

Gardner: No one seems to know. Each side is blaming the other. The British then marched on to Concord. The news traveled ahead of 'em. The citizens of Concord removed most of the arms and hid 'em. The British destroyed the rest and started back to Boston. Then all hell broke loose. Hundreds of minutemen flocked to Concord--they came from everywhere. From behind trees, barns, and stone walls, they attacked the British column and turned the march into a bloody route. The only thing that saved the lobsterheads was reinforcements from Boston.

Joseph: Good God, how many killed?

Gardner: Word has it that 75 British died, 200 wounded. 50 Americans killed, 50 wounded.

Joseph: What is the situation now?

Hopkins: Boston's beseiged. Militia from all New England are converging round the city.

Joseph: Then this is no incident. It's a war.

Gardner: That is exactly what it is.

(Pause)

Joseph: What is the situation here?

Hopkins: The colony's enraged. Men are already leaving to aid the Massachusetts militia. The Assembly's called to an emergency session for three days hence. They will resolve to raise an army of observation.

(Pause)

Joseph: And is that all this army is intended to do -- observe?

Gardner: Until it is needed in a more active role.

Joseph: Then we are raising an army to fight the Crown. We are legislating civil war.

Hopkins: That's putting it harshly, Joseph. We have no aggressive intentions.

Joseph: An army is an army, Stephen. The Crown will see it no other way.

Gardner: Let the crown see it any way it will. Blood has been spilled; the lines are drawn. You have said it yourself, Governor. It is war -- civil war!

Joseph: A rebellion in Massachusetts, perhaps. But there is no war here, Dr. Gardner, nor anywhere else in the colonies.

Gardner: Not yet.

Joseph: Raise an army and you declare it.

Gardner: And do we ignore Massachusetts? Do we do nothing to support her cause? If Britain is led to believe for one

moment that Boston is abandoned, then I tremble for the future of these colonies. We must react to Lexington and Concord as though they were our very own!

Joseph: I see no advantages in the horrors and calamities of a civil war. Must we talk only of shooting each other. Cannot the Massachusetts troubles be remedied through negotiations? Is no one of the opinion that reconciliation is possible...

Gardner: None!

Joseph: Or desirable?

Gardner: (Short pause) No.

Joseph: So there is the crux of the matter.

Gardner: How long are we expected to send over peaceful petitions and requests to London? She ignores 'em or insults 'em. Oh, no. It is time to send our final resolution home — a resolve which says "Enough," "No more," and we must punctuate it with loaded muskets. If that means civil war and separation, then so be it.

Joseph: And once separated, where shall we find another Britain to supply our loss? Torn from the body to which we are united by blood, religion, liberty, laws and commerce, we must bleed at every vein.

Gardner: Tell that to them that died today in Massachusetts.

Hopkins: Joseph, I tend to agree with you -- there will be little benefit to us in a war with England. I would much prefer to improve our situation through calm deliberation with Parliament. But feelings against England at this moment run too strong. To raise an army of observation is, after

all, only a gesture to pacify those feelings.

Joseph: It is an act of war. In doing so we surely forfeit our charter and violate our oaths of allegiance to His Majesty.

Gardner: I will drink to that.

Joseph: I am not prepared to do so.

Gardner: Fortunately, sir, the Governor of this colony is elected by the people, and he is directed in all matters by the Peoples's representatives -- the General Assembly -- and we shall have our army.

Joseph: I need no reminder from you, nor from any man, what my duties are as governor of this colony. But let me remind you, sir, that our charter directs the governor to sign the commissions of officers in the militia. Without officers you will not have an army.

(Pause)

Hopkins: Joseph, you will not sign the commissions?

Joseph: No, Stephen, I will not.

(Pause)

Gardner: I did not believe the Tory charges hurled against you in this last election, sir. And in spite of your position tonight, I still will not believe them. They are contradicted by your many years of good service to this colony. At this moment I am not sure what you are. You are certainly a stronger man than I had thought, though I fear you are a thoroughly deluded one. A dangerous combination. Good night, sir. Mrs. Wanton.

(Pause)

Hopkins: You know what this will mean?

Joseph: (Nods) I'm not looking forward to it.

Hopkins: For the love of God, Joseph, sign the commissions.

Joseph: I cannot.

Hopkins: They will brand you a Tory. You jeopardize your reputation, your property, your very life!

Joseph: And my conscience, Stephen? What of conscience? It is said up and down this colony that I have been "your man" these past six years. I've had no quarrel with that. In some respects it's true. But you knew when you named me to head the coalition that I had a mind of my own. I am only sorry that I have to assert it now. I do not wish to embarrass you.

Hopkins: Joseph, Joseph, my dear friend. Political embarrassment runs off my back like water off a duck. I am concerned about you. You will be crucified!

Joseph: I cannot believe that. Perhaps I am naive, but I cannot believe it. If liberty has any meaning at all, then the worst I shall suffer is unpopularity, which will begin in my own house. My dear wife wanted me to resign from politics, but she also wanted a respected retirement for our old age.

Hopkins: They you will resign from office?

Joseph: No! It is important my position be known. When men cry "war" with one impassioned voice, they will drown out all other views. As governor, my voice will be heard.

Hopkins: And how long do you think you can stay in office while in complete opposition to the colony's will?

Joseph: Long enough to make my arguments known.

Hopkins: To what avail? To be chased off the Island and hung in effigy by a mob? You will lose everything.

Joseph: Not my self-respect.

(Pause)

Hopkins: Well, Joseph, I have tried my best. Shall I admire your strength or chastise you as stubborn? I really don't know. Either way, this is certain -- you may call on me any time you have need.

Joseph: Thank you, Stephen, I shall.

Hopkins: Good night, Joseph. Good night, Ruth.

Ruth: Good night, Stephen, and thank you.

(Pause)

Joseph: You are not pleased with my position.

Ruth: No I am not. Stephen is quite right. Your efforts will be futile. You have everything to lose, virtually nothing to gain. Is it worth it?

Joseph: How do you assess the "worth" of principle?

(Pause)

Ruth: Ironic.

Joseph: What?

Ruth: You stand your ground and we lose our property.

Joseph: It may not come to that.

Ruth: But it could.

Joseph: Yes.

(Pause)

Ruth: I do not wish to lose our estate.

Joseph: I don't think it will come to that.

Ruth: You miss my point. I do not want to invite the possibility.

Joseph: The possibility cannot be avoided.

Ruth: Yes, it can. Resign now...tonight. You have won the election — the stain of Toryism is removed. You can now resign claiming age and declining health — suggest a younger person is needed in these times. This entire quagmire is easily avoided.

Joseph: And what of the trust the electorate has bestowed upon me?

Ruth: Would they have done so had they known you would block their army? One could easily argue that the electorate have been deceived.

Joseph: Including yourself?

Ruth: I do not vote.

Joseph: I will count you, nonetheless. Do you feel I have deceived you?

Ruth: No. I know you well enough to have foreseen this. I did not know when or how, but I have feared this moment, oh God, how I have feared it. Please, Joseph! I do not want to live out my remaining years hated, scorned and penniless. Do I deserve that as the sum of my life?

Joseph: Of course not.

Ruth: Then resign now! Make compromise and let us live in peace!!

- Joseph: But resignation will give me no peace.
- Ruth: And your stubbornness gives me none! (She begins to sob.)
- Joseph: There, there, Ruth. I know, I know. Be calm. (He calms her down.) Well, it seems we must seek a compromise that rests easy with both of us. Mmm, then perhaps I shall become ill after all.
- Ruth: And resign?
- Joseph: We shall declare my illness to the entire world. Oh, I shall be quite ill...too ill to appear to sign the commission, and too ill to appear to take the oath of office. Yes.. that will give me the precious time I need. I shall communicate my arguments from my sickbed--oratory was never my forte, anyway. I need never say that I will not sign the commissions -- I shall simply argue the merits of not raising an army...and stay abed.
- Ruth: But, Joseph, the assembly will eventually see through your delay.
- Joseph: Of course they will...eventually. But how long will that take? Meanwhile the army will wait and my arguments will be heard. The Governor's arguments will be heard before they realize that I am not the governor! (Pause. He looks at her to see if she will buy it. She begins to see the irony in it and smiles.)
- Ruth: So they cannot hound you from an office you never held.
- Joseph: Quite right. I shall be Governor only as long as they call me such, which shall be just long enough!
- Ruth: Will it save us from being hounded from our home?
- Wanton: I think so. It will thoroughly confuse the issues, and,

after all, I have gained a certain skill in obfuscation these past years.

Ruth: My God, I shall testify to that! (Imitating a member of the Assembly) "He has not taken his oath and therefore is not the Governor."

Joseph: (Picking it up) "But he was duly elected by the freemen."

Ruth: "But he has not taken the oath."

Joseph: "His old oath is still in force."

Ruth: "It cannot be. The new election makes that old oath void! He is not the governor!"

(Joseph applauds that.)

Joseph: Then let us drink to the election of the non-governor, which is to say the non-election of the non-governor; or the resignation of the non-governor, which is to say the non-resignation of the non-govern....

(They go off laughing.)

Lindsay: It worked. Of course, the army of observation was raised within a matter of weeks but it took the Assembly six months before they could decide that the office of governor was vacant, and meantime non-Governor Wanton got his opinions known. Well, legislatin' an army was one thing, fillin' it with men was another. It was not the first choice of most men of this colony for a number of reasons. Food and wages were bad, equipment and livin' conditions terrible. Then too, Rhode Islanders preferred the sea and there was good money to be made aboard a privateer. So the army didn't get men easily, and them it did get deserted one after another so as to get home or aboard a ship. The Hannah

attracted a few. John Brown had her outfitted as a privateer during the winter of '75 and '76, so by April we was just about ready to go out and raise hell with the British for love of country, fun, and profit, not particularly in that order. I was inspectin' her guns one day when I got surprised by one other than...

(Vaughan pops up onto a packing case.)

Lindsay: Daniel Vaughan!

Vaughan: Captain Lindsay, can you take me on, sir?

Lindsay: Well, I need a good gunner well enough. But I thought you was in the army somewhere.

Vaughan: Aye, Captain. Was, is it. I want no part in no army. Never did. The bastards got me drunk one night, signed me up, and next mornin' I was marchin' north. To hell with that. Can I sail with ya?

Lindsay: Then you're a deserter.

Vaughan: Aye.

Lindsay: And if I take you aboard, I'm harborin' a deserter.

Vaughan: Aye.

(Pause)

Lindsay: And gettin' a damned good gunner.

Vaughan: Aye!

(Pause)

Lindsay: Right. You're on. But you'd better know this: we're nothing but a ferry boat, our first time out.

Vaughan: Troops?

Lindsay: Nay. Cows, sheep, pigs and people. We got to get a load of livestock and Sons of Liberty off Block Island. They're all too vulnerable to the British.

Vaughan: Then we sail off to more profitable booty?

Lindsay: Aye. And as master gunner you'll get a handsome share.

Vaughan: Master gunner! Aye, sir. I'll ride your ferry boat one time for that. When do we sail?

Lindsay: In a week. You can live on board and see to the proper installation of those guns.

Vaughan: Aye, sir, and thank you, sir.

(Lindsay comes to audience.)

Lindsay: I couldn't very well refuse him, could I? It was just a matter of one deserter helpin' another. Well, the Hannah was ready in a week, but the weather weren't. So we waited a few days and the weather didn't improve much. Neither did General Washington's disposition. He kept writin' to Governor Cooke about the importance of the livestock on Block Island. There was a lot of it and the British could take it off any time they got the notion. So we couldn't wait for the weather. We sailed for Block Island on May 3rd in the midst of drivin' wind and rain. We got there in good time and started loadin' just after dark. I never saw such a madhouse. People wanted to take their entire farms to the mainland -- mules, horses, goats, chickens, men,

women and children. I felt like Noah, except I had at least twenty of everything producing enough manure to tend forty acres for a lifetime. The Bible never tells ya that part of it. So just after dawn, loaded to the gunnels with every kind of domestic life imaginable, we floated our arc out of the harbor to make the twelve-mile run through thunder and rain to Point Judith. That same day, May 4, 1776, the General Assembly was about to float Rhode Island on a new course, makin' its own thunder in the process.

(The office of Sarah Goddard. She is sitting at her desk, writing, in a very depressed mood. The door bursts open and in rush John Brown, Ezekiel Gardner, and other members of the Assembly.)

- Brown: It's done, Sarah! We've passed the damned thing and its is done!
- Sarah: (Rather matter-of-fact.) The vote?
- Brown: 65 to 6!
- Sarah: What's resolved?
- Gardner: Not as much as we wanted, but strong, nonetheless. First, we repealed the act of allegiance with Great Britian. We told the King to go to hell!!
- Sarah: In more judicial language, I hope.
- 1st. Deputy: In this language! "...whereas, George the Third, King of Great Britian, forgetting his dignity...and entirely departing from the duties of a good King, instead of protecting, is endeavoring to destroy the good people of this

colony, and of all the United Colonies, by sending fleets and armies to America, to confiscate our property, and spread fire, sword and desolation throughout our country..."

Sarah: The "whereas" sounds stronger than the "therefore".

Brown: The act is a statement of virtual independence.

Gardner: It is independence. All documents, all oaths, shall be written and sworn in the name of "the Governor and English Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations". —
No King!

Sarah: But we are still "English".

Gardner: The Continental Congress will soon put an end to that!!
It is a matter of weeks! But we are the first! We have declared ourselves free from George's detestable tyranny first!!

Brown: Where's that rum? We shall drink to that!

(The rum bottles appear, drinks are poured, Sarah is stone faced.)

Brown: Sarah, what's wrong? It's as powerful as we hoped.

Sarah: Yes, John, it is powerful. And so's this. Benjamin Lindsay is dead.

Brown: What?

Gardner: How?

Sarah: Lightning' hit the top mast. It crashed down and killed 'im.

Gardner: Christ. Jesus Christ!

Sarah: The mate was maimed. Benjamin killed. The Hannah foundered

on the rocks off Point Judith. Daniel Vaughan pulled him ashore.

Gardner: He came to my house. Fourteen years ago he came to my house.

Brown: Aye, Ezekiel, we took him in. And now he's left us.

Sarah: I wish he'd said goodbye. (She sobs softly.)

Brown: Easy does it, Sarah, easy. Was there others dead?

Sarah: (Nods) 'Bout 10 or 12. Daniel wasn't sure. Most of the livestock got ashore.

Gardner: By Christ, he was a good man. I hope Washington appreciates his goddamned cows!

Brown: He was a great man, Ezekiel. And we'll let Washington know it. He was a great, brave man who has made the supreme sacrifice...The Supreme Sacrifice in the fight against British tyranny!

Sarah: If he's listening in, John, he'll hardly recognize himself.

Brown: No, Sarah, Benjamin was a hero. He ran the Gaspee aground. Make no mistake about it. He was a hero and died a hero's death. And you must print his obituary just that way.

Sarah: No, John, I'll not print it that way. The Gaspee ran herself aground and four years later Benjamin Lindsay died in a freak accident, his blood drippin' onto a deck of dung and piss while the stench stung in his nostrils. That's how Benjamin Lindsay died, and that's how most of 'em will die. For every one killed by a British musket, 20 will die of starvation, disease, exposure, accident, or bloody stupidity. And if we win, then you will govern Rhode Island

but know the price, John, know the price. It isn't comin'
cheap nor easy, and glorifying Benjamin Lindsay won't
change that. I'll tell the truth about Benjamin Lindsay.
(She smiles a bit.) He fell overboard, we pulled him
out and dried him off. He liked the place and stayed awhile.
Now he's gone... Goodbye, Benjamin... Benjamin. (She turns
to the group.) Gentlemen, to Independence
(They drink with very mixed emotions.)