

THE FIRST AMERICAN SITCOM  
"I Hate You (Pilot)" S1 E1

1.

COLD OPEN

A faux intro, very serious, like a standard, dramatic biopic.

1 EXT. BRAINTREE & WEYMOUTH - DAY - EST. SHOT 1

We see Braintree: rolling trees and farms surrounding dirt and cobblestone roads, people milling about, a few on horses. Cliffs hang over the shore of the Atlantic Ocean, blue and vast minus a few small docks and a ship or two. The downtown hugs these docks.

The title and credits roll as we explore the countryside, and we hear children chanting:

CHILDREN'S CHANT

There is a dreadful fiery hell,  
Where the wicked ones must always  
    dwell;  
There is a heaven full of joy,  
Where goodly ones must always stay;  
To one of these my soul must fly,  
As in a moment, when I die.

FADE TO BLACK.

2 EXT. GRIDLEY'S OFFICE - DAY 2

John stands outside the door, a few papers in his arms. He closes his eyes and takes a deep breath.

3 INT. GRIDLEY'S OFFICE - DAY 3

Gridley sits at his desk, scribbling on some parchment paper with a quill pen. John enters the room. He waits, rocking back and forth.

GRIDLEY

You're the kid I'm sponsoring for  
the B.A.R.?

John straightens.

JOHN

John Adams.

He extends a hand to Gridley. Instead of shaking, Gridley stands from his desk and walks to his bookshelf.

GRIDLEY

How old are you?

(CONTINUED)

3

CONTINUED:

3

JOHN

Twenty-four.

Gridley takes a thick volume from the bookshelf and walks back to his desk. He plops back into the chair.

GRIDLEY

Let me give you an old man's  
advice:

Gridley searches for the correct page in the book.

JOHN

I would--

GRIDLEY

Don't interrupt me.

John lowers his head. Gridley writes again.

GRIDLEY (CONT'D)

Law's demanding, so, 1. Don't do it  
for political gain; 2. Don't have a  
social life; 3. Don't get married  
early. You got that?

CARD: TWO YEARS LATER

4

INT. ADAMS COTTAGE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

4

John stares up at the ceiling of the room. He lies on his back on a double bed, a thin blanket is as high up as it can go, but we see the bare skin on the top of his shoulders.

Abigail lies to his right. She's asleep, curled up on his arm, shoulders bare as well. She wiggles closer to John in her sleep.

Richard walks in on the couple in bed together.

FREEZE FRAME

Arrows pop up in the following order with an accompanying ding sound effect. Half a second between each arrow:

Arrow at John, a label that reads: Politician

Arrow at Abigail, a label that reads: Young Fiancée

Arrow at Richard, a label that reads: Best Friend

(CONTINUED)

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3.

4

CONTINUED:

4

END OF FREEZE FRAME

Richard leaves immediately. John doesn't notice him.

JOHN

Welp, failed at that one.

END OF COLD OPEN

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4.

OPENING CREDITS

A poorly drawn "Draw My Life" always accompanies Richard's recap monologues.

RICHARD

This is John Adams. He's a lawyer.  
He does a lot of things. And this  
is Abigail Smith. She marries him.  
And also does a lot of things. This  
is Braintree. It's the home of John  
Adams. This is Weymouth. It's the  
home of Abigail Smith. This is  
Boston, where John went to college.  
These places are where John and  
Abigail do things. Mary, Betsy,  
Richard, Phoebe, Peter, Elihu, Mama  
and Papa Adams, Mama and Papa  
Smith. They help John and Abigail  
do things. These are these things:

CARD:

THE FIRST AMERICAN SITCOM  
"I Hate You"  
Braintree & Weymouth, MA  
1758 - Fall, 1761

END OF OPENING CREDITS

ACT ONE

5 EXT. SMITH HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY 5

Phoebe walks through the front door with a basket.

6 INT. SMITH HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER 6

Abigail stands at a table, carrots and potatoes piled next to her.

She holds a carrot in place with her elbow, supposedly peeling it with a knife, but most of its flesh has been scraped away. Her other hand holds the book that commands her attention.

Phoebe stops in the doorway. She walks behind Abigail and plucks the book from her hand.

ABIGAIL

I'm peeling the vegetables!

Phoebe glances at the carrot.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

I feel you judging me.

Phoebe takes the groceries out of the basket.

PHOEBE

You have chores, Miss Abigail.

ABIGAIL

Chores sucks up all my time. It's Mother's sole mission in life to make me too busy to read.

Phoebe hands the book back to Abigail.

PHOEBE

Be good.

Abigail goes into the hallway with her book in hand.

7 INT. SMITH HOUSE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER 7

She reopens the book, reading as she walks. She glances up and sees something in the parlor. She freezes.

8

INT. SMITH HOUSE - PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

8

Mary and Richard sit by the fire, making out.

A few buttons are undone at the top of Mary's dress. Richard's jacket is crumpled on the floor a few inches away from him, and his waistcoat is unbuttoned.

Mary pulls Richard's waistcoat off of him.

THUD! The book falls out of Abigail's hand.

Mary and Richard's lips part. Richard's waistcoat's sleeves hang in the crook of his elbows.

They jump apart, but Richard's shirt catches on one of Mary's buttons. They struggle to free it; Richard's waistcoat further constricts his range of motion. The button falls to the floor, freeing Richard.

Richard and Mary flash Abigail nervous smiles. Richard pulls his waistcoat to its proper position on his shoulders.

ABIGAIL

Uhh...

Richard walks up to Abigail and pokes her a few times. She never moves an inch.

RICHARD

Er... Richard Cranch.  
(to Mary)  
Mary...?

MARY

She doesn't do well with strangers.

He grabs the book from the floor but has no place to put it. Instead, he glances at the cover.

RICHARD

Don Quixote. Translated. Nice. You know this might be the first novel ever written?

MARY

Richard's a "self-taught scholar," knows a million things like that.

ABIGAIL

Really...? Think he could tutor me?

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

MARY

I don't think Mother would like that.

ABIGAIL

Mother also wouldn't like where Richard's hands were just now.

MARY

Okay! Okay! Okay!

She turns to Richard, thumbing through the book. She clears her throat and gives him a death glare.

MARY (CONT'D)

Okay...?!

RICHARD

Okay!

9 EXT. ADAMS HOUSE - FARM - DAY

9

John and Hannah sit under a tree, talking. Hannah lounges in a flirtatious position next to John. She barely pays attention as he speaks, trying instead to distract him with her body language.

JOHN

And then Gridley--

HANNAH

John! Not that I don't love talking about law, but, actually, no, I do hate it. Can we change the subject?

She bats her eyes and grabs his hand. In doing so, she leans a little closer to him.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Please?

John stares at her hand. She waits with a seductive smile plastered on her face.

JOHN

You... you can't spend this much time with me and... uh, not let me talk about my job.

HANNAH

No, but, it's all you talk about. And, what kind of husband would a workaholic make?

(CONTINUED)

9

CONTINUED:

9

JOHN  
H-- husband?

She flashes him a faux embarrassed smile.

HANNAH  
Hypothetically. If, say, your wife interrupted you at work, right when you got the perfect idea, how would you react?

JOHN  
How could I get mad at you for a mistake?

HANNAH  
You?

John pulls his hand away.

JOHN  
Her! Her.

10

EXT. BRAINTREE - CREEK - AFTERNOON

10

JOHN  
How?! How does she do that?!

John and Richard stand by the creek. Richard takes an apple out of the satchel at his feet.

RICHARD  
That's Hannah Quincy for you, too hot for her own good. Don't know why she'd settle for a guy like you.

Richard throws the apple to John. He fumbles with it but catches it before it hits the ground. He takes a triumphant bite.

JOHN  
I thought you had a girlfriend?

RICHARD  
Yeah, and Mary's the same mold. Must run in the family.

JOHN  
Huh?

RICHARD  
They're cousins.

(CONTINUED)



10 CONTINUED:

JOHN

Oh.

He takes another bite of the apple.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Mary Smith? The Reverend's  
daughter?

Richard nods and picks up a flat stone. He throws it. The  
stone skids across the water; the water ripples below it.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I actually got some work with her  
father. Can you give me some tips?

Richard bends down to grab another stone.

RICHARD

Don't you know how to negotiate by  
now?

JOHN

Yeah... but...

RICHARD

What?

JOHN

I kinda sorta maybe hate him a  
little bit...?

RICHARD

How can you hate a man you met a  
week ago?

JOHN

You underestimate my power to hate.

END OF ACT ONE