

THE FIRST AMERICAN SITCOM
"Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Peace" S1 E07

COLD OPEN

1 INT. ROYAL PALACE - HALLWAY - DAY 1

A grand hall with high ceilings, decorated with the finest art, candleholders, and other decorations money can buy. Lord Grenville, Prime Minister of Great Britain, hurries through the halls with a stack of parchment in his hands.

A subtitle appears at the bottom of the screen:
Royal Palace, London, England
April 1764

A servant meets Lord Grenville at the end of the hallway. He gestures down a hall to their left.

SERVANT
Right this way, Lord Grenville.

They turn the corner.

2 INT. ROYAL PALACE - MEETING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER 2

Lord Grenville walks in. He bows.

LORD GRENVILLE
Your majesty.

We see the young King George III for the first time. He's handsome, well-dressed, and pleasant.

KING GEORGE III
Prime Minister. I see you came prepared.

LORD GRENVILLE
As always, sire.

King George III gestures to a couch. Lord Grenville sits. King George settles into an armchair next to him.

KING GEORGE III
So, let's get started. What's on the agenda today?

LORD GRENVILLE
Parliament believes we've come up with a solution to our current economic crisis, your majesty. The Sugar Act--I wrote it myself.

He straightens the parchment and shows it to King George III.

(CONTINUED)

LORD GRENVILLE (CONT'D)

We can expect an additional ten thousand pounds a year.

King George III takes the parchment from Lord Grenville and reads.

KING GEORGE III

This is a tax on New England.

LORD GRENVILLE

We incurred our debts defending them from the French, it's only fair that they should pay.

KING GEORGE III

What will the response be? Raising taxes is never popular.

LORD GRENVILLE

We're lowering the tax, sire, but enforcing it.

KING GEORGE III

That should make the smugglers happy.

Lord Grenville chuckles politely.

KING GEORGE III (CONT'D)

So, Parliament expects there to be little response from the colonists?

LORD GRENVILLE

Absolutely, your majesty.

King George III stands, prompting Lord Grenville to stand as well.

KING GEORGE III

Well, if this works, you'll be a hero, Lord Grenville, the man who saved England from bankruptcy with a stroke of his quill.

LORD GRENVILLE

You don't sound very confident, sire.

KING GEORGE III

Economics is rarely this simple. But, it's worth a shot.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

2

"Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Peace" S1 E07
CONTINUED:

2

KING GEORGE III (CONT'D)

If it passes the House of Lords,
I'll sign it into law. You have my
support.

LORD GRENVILLE

Thank you, your majesty.

KING GEORGE III

Prime Minister.

Lord Grenville bows.

LORD GRENVILLE

Your majesty.

END OF COLD OPEN

OPENING CREDITS

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

RICHARD (O.C.)

Our first look at jolly old
England. Well, that's not ominous
at all. But, on to happier news.
After three years of love, drama,
and fornication, John and Abigail
are finally getting married. That's
it.

4

"Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Peace" S1 E07
CONTINUED:

4

5

EXT. SAM ADAMS'S OFFICE - DAY

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6

INT. SAM ADAMS'S OFFICE - DAY

6

Samuel "Sam" Sam Adams sits at his desk, writing correspondence.

An arrow with a ding effect (see: S1 E1 C.O.) that reads: Samuel "Sam" Adams.

A knock at the door. Sam Adams stands. He's happy to see whoever it is, but his happiness is weighed down with seriousness.

John enters. He's happy and without conflict. He meets Sam Adams at his desk. The two men shake hands.

SAM ADAMS

It's been a long time, John.

JOHN

You could say that.

SAM ADAMS

I hear congratulations are in order. Who's the lucky girl?

JOHN

Her name's Abigail Smith. One of the Quincy's, her grandmother owns that big house at the top of the hill? From when we were kids?

SAM ADAMS

Lucky you. You must be rich.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

One day, I can hope. So, what's
this urgent business of yours, Sam?

Sam Adams motions for John to sit on a chair on the other
side of the desk. He does so. Sam Adams leans back in his
chair.

SAM ADAMS

There's news from England.

JOHN

Isn't there always?

SAM ADAMS

Prime Minister Grenville passed his
new bill through Parliament.

JOHN

(laughing)

And? That's the job of Parliament,
isn't it?

SAM ADAMS

Why are you laughing, John?

JOHN

Nothing, nothing, you just sound so
grim.

SAM ADAMS

I don't understand why you aren't
taking this more seriously.

JOHN

I don't even know what this bill is
yet! Stop with the... dramatics,
please.

Sam Adams thrusts a newspaper beside him forward in the most
overblown way possible.

The newspaper reads: THE SUGAR ACT! DUH DUH! *GASP*

SAM ADAMS (O.C.)

The Sugar Act!

DUH DUH! (music)

CROWD GASPS

John looks curiously at the paper.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

The Sugar Act?

DUH DUH! (music)

CROWD GASPS

SAM ADAMS

The Sugar Act.

DUH DUH! (music)

CROWD GASPS

JOHN

(to O.C.)

Oh, knock it off!

SAM ADAMS

The English have already taken measures to enforce it, and it doesn't go into effect until September! Three pence per gallon tax on a food staple, and no one bothered to tell us until the deed was done!

John throws the paper back on the desk.

JOHN

It's called "virtual representation," Sam, it's a well-established concept of constitutional law.

Sam Adams takes the opportunity to go into a "riveting" speech (Or so he thinks).

SAM ADAMS

It's an outrage, that's what it is! Luxuries are one thing, but the working people can't survive without molasses, and now it's too expensive for most to buy!

In his excitement, he leaps from his chair.

JOHN

(trying to reign him in)

I'm not disagreeing with you, I'm just saying that the thing has precedent. They're well within their right to tax us.

(CONTINUED)

"Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Peace" S1 E07
CONTINUED:

6

6 Sam Adams makes a dramatic turn. He slowly walks towards John as he speaks, complete with a lawyer's point.

SAM ADAMS

But, is it right? Not a word, John, not one word before they force a host of farmers to starve!

JOHN

(sarcastic)

I'll write his Majesty your opinions on the matter. I'm sure he'd love to hear from his favorite country lawyer.

SAM ADAMS

That's the spirit!

JOHN

I was obviously being sarcastic.

SAM ADAMS

And I'm being motivational, shush shush.

JOHN

(muttering)

Now I know what it's like.

Motivational, patriotic music plays.

SAM ADAMS

I'm putting together an assembly to organize the protests and the boycott! Together, we can eliminate this Sugar Act before it ever comes to fruition!

JOHN

Fruition. Big word.

Sam Adams extends his hand.

SAM ADAMS

Will you join me?

RECORD SCRATCHES

JOHN

Wait, what?

SAM ADAMS

Will you help to lead my assembly?

(CONTINUED)

"Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Peace" S1 E07
CONTINUED:

6

6

Sam Adams hops off his chair and slams his hands on the desk.

SAM ADAMS (CONT'D)

Come on, John! How many times have you said you wanted to be great, to do something important? You'll never get a greater calling!

John hesitates. His eyes are hungry, he wants it, but something's holding him back.

JOHN

I'll put a target on my back if I lead these protests. I have a woman to think about now.

SAM ADAMS

And what kind of husband would a proud New Englander want? One who cowers in the corner? Or one who stands up for what's just and good?

CLOSE UP OF SAM ADAMS'S FACE

CLOSE UP OF JOHN'S FACE

DUH DUH! (music)

CROWD GASPS

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE