

FOUNDING FATHER

Written by

Ryan Rusin

EXT. MILITARY CAMP - NIGHT

A LIGHT DRIZZLE of RAIN falls from the sky.

MUD SLOSHES under the CLOPPING hooves of HORSES and THUDDING steps of SOLDIERS.

In the distance, CANONS burst artillery, causing a chain of indiscernible HOLLERING and SHOUTING to follow like an echo -- reverberating into the surrounding countryside

We pass by some DRUNKEN SQUALOR, a WOUNDED SOLDIER groaning in pain, a FLUTE playing a solemn tune, then finally through some TENT FLAPS into --

INT. MILITARY TENT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

THOMAS NELSON JR. (41), enters. He speaks with a booming, stern English accent.

THOMAS NELSON JR.
General...I believe it's been a while.

A weathered, yet distinguished voice responds: GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON (pushing 50).

GENERAL WASHINGTON
By Lord, Thomas Nelson? I didn't know you were still alive. How in hell have you been?

THOMAS NELSON JR.
Well, we've both seen better times I think. But we're ever close--

Thomas coughs, unable to finish the sentence. He pounds on to his chest, in attempt to stop it.

GENERAL WASHINGTON
Yes, please sit. I'm glad you're here, old friend.
(beat; pouring a couple glasses of whiskey)
How about your family?

THOMAS NELSON JR.
Safe as they'll ever be. Barricaded in the tavern with some of the other hands.

Thomas gulps the whiskey down. He coughs again.

THOMAS NELSON JR. (CONT'D)
 (chuckling)
 And hopefully around a better swill
 than this.

GENERAL WASHINGTON
 (gulping down his drink)
 I'll have my doubts.

They both laugh. Sitting there for a moment, letting the muffled sounds of war from outside fill in. Then, a break of the ice--

GENERAL WASHINGTON (CONT'D)
 You know Cornwallis--

THOMAS NELSON JR.
 (interrupting)
 Yes.
 (beat)
 You had to know, in my current state, I weren't here to re-enlist. It's my home, George. But it's only a house. I have my family. I have my brothers. And if you end this -- I'll be more than happy to rebuild.
 (beat; reflective)
 Hell, we have plenty of that to do anyway. I just have one request.

GENERAL WASHINGTON
 Anything.

THOMAS NELSON JR.
 Let me march with you.

GENERAL WASHINGTON
 (with a smile)
 Welcome back, General.

DRUM BEAT fading in, growing, taking us into--

EXT. ARTILLERY LINE - DAYBREAK

The DRUM BEAT front-and-center, beat to a steady rhythm by a SOLDIER. He is flanked by dozens of MARCHING BOOTS and a couple HORSES WHINNYING close behind.

After a moment--

THOMAS NELSON JR.
 That's it.

GENERAL WASHINGTON

Hold!

(beat)

You're sure about this?

Thomas takes a deep breath through his nose, then--

THOMAS NELSON JR.

I'll give five Guineas to the man
who hits it first.

GENERAL WASHINGTON

You heard the gent...

(beat)

Ready.

POWDER DOWN THE BARREL, followed by the pulling back of
HAMMERS. Then--

Silence.

GENERAL WASHINGTON (CONT'D)

Aim.

Down the SIGHTS OF THE RIFLE.

THOMAS NELSON JR.

Wake the bloody bastard up already!

GENERAL WASHINGTON

Fire!

A VOLLEY of MUSKETS.