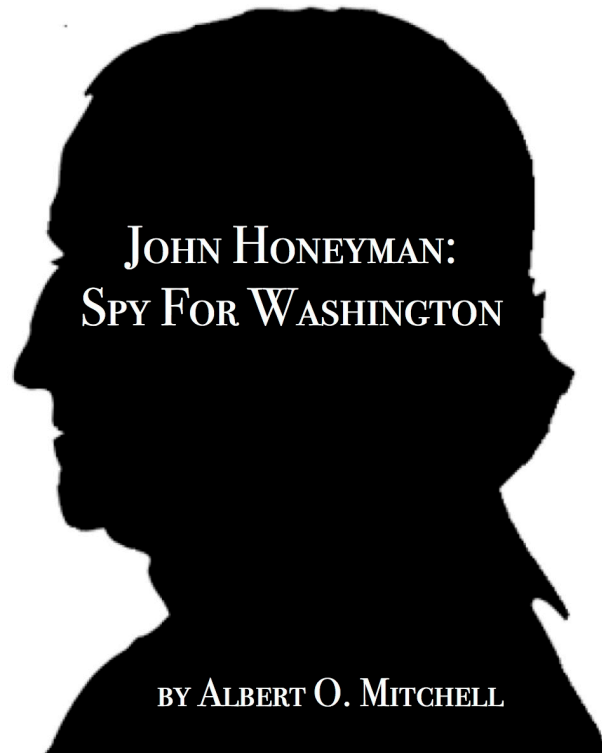


PERUSAL SCRIPT



Newport, Maine

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JOHN HONEYMAN: SPY FOR WASHINGTON

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The winter of 1776 was a bitter one for the Rebel Army. In December, their commander had written his brother that "The game is pretty near up."

Yet the day after Christmas, the commander, his army and the patriots of the new country took a new lease on life and hope. What happened in that week before Christmas?

This play, based on little-known but authentic data, tells of the part one unsung patriot played, an important and dangerous part, in making possible the successful crossing of the Delaware. When the Rebels marched on to Trenton, their watchword, "Victory or Death," one man's part was forgotten in their victory ... It is fitting that the youth of the land he served learn and honor the name of that modest but brave man. John Honeyman.

If you go to the spot where Washington landed after he crossed the river that bleak night, you'll find a small fountain and a stone memorial.

Dedicated to the memory of JOHN HONEYMAN
who served Washington and the Continental Army as a spy
Drink of the fountain of Liberty
Let Posterity Inherit Freedom

CAST OF CHARACTERS (9M 4W 2TB 1TG 1G)

JOHN Honeyman -- the spy and hero, former Scot, but now an American.

MARY Honeyman -- his wife

JOHNNY Honeyman -- their son, fourteen

JANE Honeyman -- his sister, twelve

HAGAR -- neighbor and friend

NICK Nolan -- Johnny's friend, thirteen-fifteen

REBECCA -- close friend to Nick, friend to Johnny

LOT Baird -- a Rebel (Brother to Joel Baird)

JEM -- a young Rebel

George Washington (G.W.) -- General of the Rebel Army

Major Geoffrey (JEFF) -- Washington's Aide

Lieutenant GRANT -- of the Rebel Army

Lieutenant PAYNE -- of the Rebel Army

MOLLY -- a nurse

Jesse WALL -- Tory sympathizer and double spy.

Colonel Johann Gottlieb von RAHL -- Hessian Commander

Kraus (SENTRY) -- Hessian Soldier

JENNIE -- daughter of the Mayor of Trent's Towne, secretly engaged to Joel Baird

Original production presented at Brigham Young University during the 1961-62 season.

JOHN HONEYMAN: SPY FOR WASHINGTON

SCENE ONE: *The Honeyman home, near Griggstowne, New Jersey, December, 1776. -- The living room indicates a family of modest circumstances, neat thrifty, industrious, The curtained window in the back wall reveals a woman's gentle presence. The fireplace, right of it across a corner, hung and flanked with copper, brass and cast iron ware shows where the family cooking is done. A musket decorates the space above the hearth. Chairs flanking the hearth suggest where the men find their comfort from the cold. A door, right, leads to the back room one across from it goes to the bedroom; while the door left of the window, in a slanting jog, gives onto the front porch. Table center, with benches. As the scene is revealed, JOHNNY stands near the fire in vivid talk with NICK, another boy.*

JOHNNY: One o' Washington's Raiders.

NICK: Yeh?

JOHNNY: They ride into a British nest, clean 'em out and gallop off before the lobster-backs know what's hit 'em.

NICK: Bet you wisht you was a raider!

JOHNNY: Yeah. That's what I aim to be -- when I join up -- a raider, like Joel Baird.

(He snatches imaginary pistols and fires fiercely at his foes, including NICK who ducks frantically behind a bench.)

NICK: Take care!

JOHNNY: What you scared of?

NICK: Think I want to git my head blowed off?

(JOHNNY jumps onto a stool and takes down the musket.)

JOHNNY: If I was over the Delaware with Washington's Army -- and if those man-eatin' Hessians crossed over, a-slashin' up women 'n' children, I'd blow 'em to kingdom come!

NICK: Hessians got long rifles!

JOHNNY: *(on trigger)* Pow!

NICK: 'N' bayonets a-bristlin'--

JOHNNY: I'd blast 'em--

NICK: 'N' canons!

JOHNNY: Pow!

(NICK falls over as if dead. MARY calls from the other room)

MARY: *(off)* Johnny?

(JOHNNY hustles gun back on hook.)

Johnny?

JOHNNY: Here, mama!

MARY: *(off)* You'd better finish before Papa comes.

JOHNNY: I will.

NICK: How'd you like to be a spy?

JOHNNY: What for?

NICK: Ever see one?

JOHNNY: (*doubtfully*) Reckon--

NICK: They's spies all around you.

JOHNNY: Yeh?

NICK: Master Wall says -- might be your own father, or--

JOHNNY: My father's no spy, Nick!

NICK: D' you think he could tell you, if he was?!

JOHNNY: Why not?

NICK: Because -- why, then, they'd clap 'im in jail, or hang 'im.

JOHNNY: Hush up!

NICK: I jist said he could be.

JOHNNY: Don't even say it!

NICK: I jist said-

JOHNNY: Don't you dare -- why, if a rumor like that--

NICK: I only meant -- well, your Pa's gone a lot. 'n'...

JOHNNY: (*narrowing*) What you a-gettin' at?

NICK: He don't let you go with 'im no more.

JOHNNY: Of course not!

NICK: Why?

JOHNNY: Because--

NICK: If yore Pa's so patriotic, why ain't he in the Rebel Army?

JOHNNY: Because -- well, he was in the war with the French 'n' Indians, 'n' he--

NICK: (*Sneering*) 'N' 'e got a medal fer bravery!

(*JOHNNY nods.*)

I wouldn't brag none about that.

JOHNNY: Why not?

NICK: Nor about his 'honorable discharge from the King's Army,' nuther.

JOHNNY: Why not? We were all British, then.

NICK: That's right, yore Pa come from England, didn't he?

JOHNNY: From Scotland.

NICK: Like lots o' Tories.

JOHNNY: My Pa's no more a Tory than your Pa!

NICK: Don't you call my Pa a Tory!

JOHNNY: Then don't you call--

NICK: My Pa's in the Rebel Army!

JOHNNY: Well?

NICK: Why ain't yor'n?

JOHNNY: None of your business, Nick Nolan!

(*They confront each other fiercely; but MARY's voice comes between them.*)

MARY: (*off*) Johnny?

(*They glare at each other. Then NICK, snarling, starts for the door.*)

NICK: Tory!

JOHNNY: Watch out!

(NICK spits at JOHNNY, JOHNNY jumps after him and NICK disappears out the door as MARY enters.)

MARY: What's wrong?

(He nods)

JOHNNY: Nothing.

(He goes to window)

MARY: Well, if you'll tend to the weavin', I'll get on with supper.

(Looking out window.)

Hasn't Jane come, yet?

(JOHNNY shakes his head.)

She shouldn't be out in this weather. Stir the coals a mite, Laddie-Boy.

(HAGAR passes the window. Johnny goes to the fireplace. MARY starts toward the door, right. A knock at the front door, MARY hands JOHNNY a kettle, then calls:)

Come in!

(HAGAR enters. Looks around.)

HAGAR: Good morrow, neighbor.

MARY: *(nodding)* Hagar.

HAGAR: *(handing a bag)* You wouldn't hev a mite o' maple sugar you could borrow me?

MARY: *(shutting door)* Why, I'll see, Hagar--

HAGAR: *(See's JOHNNY)* Hello, boy.

(He nods.)

That young'n's a-growin' plumb out'n his clouts.

MARY: Don't encourage him; he thinks he's big enough for a soldier.

(Silencing JOHNNY's retort)

HAGAR: I'm much obliged to you, Mary. I know I never brung back the last; but with British 'n' Hessians lootin' the country -- to say nothin' of our starvin' Rebels--

MARY: Don't mention it, Hagar.

(She goes.)

HAGAR: *(to JOHNNY)* So yer itchin' to join up, huh, boy?

JOHNNY: I'd go today, if Papa'd let me.

HAGAR: *(insinuating)* I reckon you'd like it if yore Pa was a soldier, like Nick's Pa?

JOHNNY: Wait'il I'm fifteen.

HAGAR: If the war lasts that long.

JOHNNY: You think the British'll give up?

HAGAR: I wasn't thinkin' o' the British.

JOHNNY: We'll never give up!

HAGAR: You seen our ragged Rebels?

JOHNNY: I saw Joel.

HAGAR: Joel's an officer.

JOHNNY: When the Army crossed over to the Pennsylvania side--

HAGAR: You seen them fat Hessians a-follerin' 'em, too?

(He nods.)

JOHNNY: We'll show 'em.

HAGAR: *(as MARY enters with sugar, HAGAR takes it.)* Has yer man got home yet?

MARY: I'm expectin' him.

HAGAR: I'd like to send with him, next trip, some woolens 'n' a mite o' bacon 'n' meal for Jonathan.

MARY: I'll tell him.

HAGAR: Lot Baird's got some stuff to send to Joel, too.

MARY: *(to JOHNNY)* Laddie, the blankets must be done, too, so Papa can take them.

HAGAR: *(as JOHNNY goes)* John takin' stuff now?

MARY: Deliverin' some stuff for Jesse Wall.

HAGAR: To the Rebels?

MARY: *(nodding)* Why?

HAGAR: *(cautious)* Well -- you know how jumpy folks is gettin', what with the King's lobster-backs a-breathin' fire at us 'n' the Hessians hoverin' over us -- you have to hide yer cows in the day light 'n' pasture 'em by starlight 'n' milk 'em in the dark! -- Well, folks imagine they's Tories ever'where.

(MARY stares at her.)

Course we know yore man ain't no Tory, but--

MARY: Tory?

HAGAR: *(quickly, watching MARY's face)* Well, it's jest a rumor--

MARY: You don't repeat rumors like that, Hagar!

HAGAR: I only jest thought I'd ought to warn you.

MARY: My husband is a patriot, and I'll--

HAGAR: I know he is -- as patriotic as Jesse Wall! Course he hasn't joined up like my brother Jonathan--

MARY: He's doing his part!

(A noise on the porch outside stops HAGAR.)

HAGAR: I'll say no more.

(She backs to the door.)

Got yer Gazette yet?

MARY: Our lass has gone to fetch it.

HAGAR: Terrible how the war's a-goin' . . . Folks is switchin' over to King's men.

(Confidential)

They say Jennie's pa has went Tory, an' him the mayor of Trent's towne. What d' you reckon Jennie'll do, an' her so sweet on a Rebel like Joel?

JANE: *(bursting in.)* Mama--

HAGAR: Janie.

(JANE bows.)

Us Rebels has got to hang together, as your man says, or we'll hang alone!

MARY: Mr. Franklin said it.

(HAGAR shrugs and goes.)

JANE: Papa's coming.

(She runs toward back door.)

MARY: Janie...

(JANE stops)

...Shut the door.

JANE: *(Obeying)* Br-r-r!

MARY: Stand up to the fire, dear.

(Throwing back her hood, Jane runs to greet her father, as he enters from right.)

JANE: Papa!

(She throws her arms around him.)

JOHN: *(petting her)* There now! How fares my bonnie wee lass?

JANE: Oh, Papa!

(She takes his hat and, as he removes his coat, she removes her own and takes them into the bedroom, left. MARY pulls up a chair, concerned over her man, as JANE returns.)

MARY: Pull up the stool for Papa.

(JANE does so, but JOHN stands warming his hands and his back, as MARY starts out.)

Fetch Papa his Gazette.

(JANE gasps.)

Didn't you fetch it?

JANE: Well, Nick -- he pushed Rebecca over in the snow and--

JOHN: Nick?

JANE: And I dropped the Gazette and --

MARY: Then go and find it.

(She goes. JOHN sits and JANE squats by him.)

JANE: Papa--

JOHN: Aye, Lass?

JANE: Are we "sunshine patriots?"

(As JOHN's brow wrinkles)

In the town, some children called me that.

JOHN: A "sunshine patriot?"

(She nods)

Just in fun?

JOHN: Lass -- folk are -- nervous these days.

(JANE puzzles)

With Hessians in Trent's Towne, and' Red Coats Threatnin', folk are not sure which side they're on.

JANE: You mean -- like turn-coats?

JOHN: They're tryin' to wind up on the winnin' side.

JANE: Are we?

JOHN: What?

JANE: Goin' to wind up on the winning side?

JOHN: *(chuckling, but troubled)* We hope so. lass.

JANE: *(relieved)* I'm glad!

(She runs out as JOHNNY enters. R.)

Aren't you, Johnny?

(JOHNNY looks after her, then goes to father, eager but troubled.)

JOHN: Laddie-boy,

JOHNNY: Did you see Joel?

JOHN: No, Joel's still off with the Raiders.

JOHNNY: Papa --

JOHN: Something' troublin' you, boy?

JOHNNY: We're still Rebels, aren't we?

JOHN: *(puzzling)* What is it?

JOHNNY: Only something Nick said.

JOHN: Nick?

JOHNNY: Nick's papa is in the Army, and --

JOHN: Well?

(No reply)

And your papa isn't?

JANE: *(coming closer)* Nick called me a "Tory Brat."

JOHN: Now, my bairns -- you must no' become confused because other folk do.

JANE: Why did he call me that?

JOHN: I wouldn't worry--

(She tries to object)

Now, run and look for my Gazette.

(JANE starts to obey, but a knock summons her to the door. She opens to REBECCA, who holds out a paper.)

JANE: Rebecca!

REBECCA: I found your Gazette.

JOHN: I'm much obliged to you, lass.

(REBECCA bows.)

Won't you stop in?

REBECCA: My mama will be worried.

JOHN: Aye!

(She bows and goes, JANE watches her out, then shuts the door and takes paper to JOHN.)

JANE: Papa, are Hessians people?

JOHN: Aye?

JANE: Nick told us they eat children!

JOHNNY: Goose!

(When she is gone, JOHN turns back to his son.)

JOHN: And the lads -- what else do they say?

JOHNNY: *(hesitates)* Why don't you take me with you anymore?

JOHN: Is that what they ask?

(JOHNNY nods)

JOHN: But there's the weavin' and the chores--

(JOHNNY gestures impatience)

As Master Franklin says, we help with the plow share as well as with the sword.

(JOHNNY frowns)

JOHNNY: General Washington's calling for new volunteers.

JOHN: And, if everybody joins up, who'll feed 'em?

JOHNNY: *(with difficulty)* I'll stick, Papa.

(Smiling as he rises)

JOHN: *(rising)* A good lad.

(As JOHN goes to window, JOHNNY picks up the Gazette. Suddenly he focuses and reads. Looks toward JOHN. Reads again. Stands stunned. JOHN turns. JOHNNY stares at him; then, as JOHN is about to speak, he goes out, Right, brushing past MARY as she enters. They look after him, then at each other.)

MARY: What's the matter?

(JOHN shrugs.)

JOHN: Something --

(He picks up the paper and finds what JOHNNY saw)

MARY: What is it?

(He hands her the paper, concerned. When she has read it, she looks bewildered.)

What does it mean?

JOHN: Is there any other "weaver living near Griggstown?"

MARY: Has something happened?

JOHN: Nothing. Only today--

(Pointing to paper)

-- the way people looked at me -- patriots --

MARY: You delivered supplies, to our army?

(Nods)

For Master Wall?

JOHN: Like before.

MARY: *(reading)* "Blankets identified as coming from the looms of a weaver living near Griggstown ...

JOHN: *(taking paper)* My blankets captured from the British?

MARY: Who could have put this--

(JOHN strides abruptly to coat rack. MARY scans paper. When he returns, fastening coat, she says)

They're accusin' you of trading with the enemy!

(JOHN strides to door.)

Where are you goin'?

JOHN: To find Jesse Wall.

MARY: Why?

JOHN: To inquire why he didn't deliver those goods himself.

MARY: But -- Jesse Wall?

JOHN: He must be tradin' with the enemy!

MARY: He's a patriot.

JOHN: The British pay in cash, not continentals.

(She questions. He points to paper.)

Somebody is pointing at me, to keep me from pointing at him!

MARY: Hagar!

JOHN: What?

MARY: *(pointing to paper)* This is what she meant.

JOHN: *(comprehending)* And the bairns--

MARY: What's happening?

(For answer, JOHN strides to the door. When he opens it, a tall man confronts him, an officer wearing the uniform of the continental Army. JOHN steps back. Another officer appears.)

GRANT: John Honeyman?

JOHN: Aye?

GRANT: Weaver?

JOHN: What's wanted?

(As the officer produces a paper, JOHNNY's head shows in the door opposite. JOHN scans paper.)

What for?

GRANT: You'll have to ask at Headquarters.

JOHN: Across the River?

(Nod)

Now?

(Nod)

MARY: What is it, John?

(JOHN shows her the warrant.)

But who -- ?

JOHN: Signed by General Washington.

MARY: But surely... There's some mistake -- ?

GRANT: If he's John Honeyman, Ma'am--

JOHN: *(as she searches him)* Looks official.

(He returns the document and prepares to go. But MARY turns to officer.)

MARY: He's a patriot.

GRANT: *(shrugging)* They'll know.

MARY: General Washington?

(GRANT nods. She turns to JOHN.)

Surely, he'll remember you!

(to GRANT)

My husband hauled supplies at Hackensack.

GRANT: *(going)* He can tell 'em at Headquarters, Ma'am.

MARY: He's not even had his supper!

GRANT: He'll find soldiers in the same fix.

JOHNNY: (*approaching*) Papa -- ?

JOHN: Laddie-Boy -- you'll need faith, now, in your papa.

JOHNNY: (*to officer*) Sir -- What'll happen to him?

GRANT: Depends on what he's done.

JOHN: (*as Johnny begs*) "These are the times that try men's souls", as Tom Paine says.

(*As JOHNNY tries to speak*)

Take care of your mama, boy.

(*JANE comes in, falters on threshold.*)

And Janie.

(*He goes out. JOHNNY tries to speak. The door shuts. He turns to his mother.*)

JOHNNY: Mama -- ?

JANE: What'll they do to Papa?

MARY: I-I don't know-

(*JANE tries to read their faces; baffled, she runs to the window.*)

LIGHTS FADE OUT

SCENE TWO: HEADQUARTERS, CONTINENTAL ARMY -- Winter, 1776 -- Major Geoffrey (JEFF), aid to G.W., stands near the window. He moves over by the General's desk. Discovering a crumpled letter in waste basket, he reads it. Sighs. Hearing someone coming, he drops letter into waste basket. A NURSE comes in carrying a bundle, stamping snow from her feet.

JEFF: Molly.

MOLLY: The General's not in?

JEFF: Out among the men.

MOLLY: Don't he ever sleep?

JEFF: (*as he shrugs*) He can't feed an army on promises,

(*She puts her bundle on the desk*)

MOLLY: And I can't save the sick without medical supplies.

JEFF: He knows.

MOLLY: Jeff, the War's about over, ain't it?

(*For answer, JEFF hands her the letter. She glances at it, then at him; then reads aloud:*)

"I fear the game is pretty near up. No man ... ever had a greater choice of difficulties and less means to extricate himself.

JEFF: To his brother.

MOLLY: What's he goin' to do?

JEFF: (*shaking head*) Some desperate scheme-

MOLLY: What?

JEFF: I don't know, but--

(*A noise at the entrance*)

There's a farmer waiting to see him now.

(G.W.'s entrance prompts him to pocket the letter while MOLLY picks up her bundle. G.W. removes his hat.)

G.W. You still up, Jeff?

(Seeing nurse)

Oh, Molly-

MOLLY: Evenin', air.

G.W. You need supplies.

MOLLY: There's a score of new cases of the fever, and we're most out of medicine

G.W. You'll find a little at the Dispensary.

MOLLY: No, Sir, it's all gone--

G.W. A small supply -- just smuggled across by the patriots near Griggstown.

MOLLY: Oh! I'll hustle over and fetch it, sir.

(At the door)

Thank you.

G.W. *(smiling)* Some sick men will thank you.

(When she has gone, G.W. picks up the Gazette.)

G.W. What do you make of this weaver?

JEFF: Tory and spy -- they say.

G.W. And you?

JEFF: Well -- he did move into Tory territory at a suspicious time. But many did. So did Wall.

G.W. *(tapping Gazette)* Could there be someone behind these accusations?

JEFF: Someone with an ax to grind?

(As G.W. nods)

Mr. Wall is waiting to see you.

(Hands G.W. a letter.)

Offers "a valuable service"--

G.W. *(alert)* What have we on Wall!

(JEFF has already been bringing a file. G.W. scans it.)

H'm! Thinks he has important news for us and can offer "valuable services".

(Refers to paper in JEFF's hand)

What does Abe Hunt say?

JEFF: *(consulting paper)* Master Wall was seen again coming out of Hessian Headquarters.

G.W. He has business there?

JEFF: A courier service.

G.W. *(sighing)* Let's talk with him.

(As JEFF picks up papers and goes to inner door, G.W. rises and moves to window. WALL enters.

Clears throat. G.W. turns.)

Mister Wall!

JESSE WALL: *(nodding)* General Washin'ton.

G.W. May I come straight to the point, sir?

JESSE WALL: No use beatin' it about the bush.

(Referring to letter.)

You bring information?

JESSE WALL: Well, Sir--

(Cautiously he produces his copy of the Gazette, G.W. reads.)

G.W. "...a farmer and weaver living near Griggstown..."

JESSE WALL: That's the man--

G.W. What do you know of this man?

JESSE WALL: Plenty.

G.W. Yes?

JESSE WALL: Come from Scotland, served the British in the war with the French 'n' Indians. Brags loud about 'is medals 'n' 'is honorable discharge.

(G.W. nods.)

Since the British come closer, he's moved in among the Tories, but he pretends to be a patriot.

G.W. Why did he move among the Tories, then?

JESSE WALL: *(slyly)* Wanted to be near Trent's Towne -- he said. Sell his weavin'. Buyin' a farm off me.

G.W. Is he paying for the farm?

JESSE WALL: By sellin' the produce to the enemy!

G.W. Oh?

JESSE WALL: Here's one of his labels.

G.W. *(looking at label)* John Honeyman?

JESSE WALL: Our Rebels ripped it off the stuff they captured from the Tories.

G.W. I see.

JESSE WALL: Trades with Rebels, too.

(G.W. lifts brows.)

Brings stuff off my farm right here to your commissary!

(G.W. feigns surprise.)

And while he's here, his eyes don't miss nothin' the British might be interested in.

G.W. *(nodding)* And the "service" you offer?

(He refers to WALL's letter.)

JESSE WALL: I have a trade, sir -- courier service -- out of Trent's Towne.

G.W. And you propose--

JESSE WALL: Gets me in with the British 'n' Hessians!

G.W. Excellent!

JESSE WALL: *(slyly)* My agents, too -- while we're deliverin', the enemy can't stop us from seein' the sights!

G.W. *(nodding)* Any "sights" that might interest us?

JESSE WALL: Would you be interested to know them Hessians thinks you're all a batch o' bumpkins -- "Der Fuchs Yager" Colonel Rahl calls you -- the Fox Hunter!

(G.W. smiles)

...and he don't even bother to dig trenches in Trent's Towne!

G.W. And the British?

JESSE WALL: Oh, Lord Howe is playin' king in New York. An' Cornwallis ... he's goin' home for Christmas!

G.W. Any signs they might be preparing to cross?

JESSE WALL: Attack?

(G.W. nods)

Thunder, no! They're jist waitin' fer frost and famine to finish the war fer 'em!

G.W. (carefully) Any other way in which we might use your connections?

JESSE WALL: (cautiously) Well -- what comes one way can always go t'other.

G.W. (nodding) Then I would be much obliged if you would convey to the Hessians the impression that we are well fortified here?

JESSE WALL: (perceiving discrepancy) I take you!

G.W. That our men are strong and in good spirits--

(WALL nods)

-- well fed, clothed, sheltered--

(WALL nods eagerly)

-- that we have plenty of cannon, muskets, powder and lead.

(Nod)

That we are expecting reinforcements shortly.

JESSE WALL: (shrewdly) General Lee's -- seven thousand --

G.W. And then, new enlistments January 1.

(G.W. stands and JEFF moves toward the door.)

JESSE WALL: Just leave it to me!

(Moves toward exit.)

G.W. I can depend on you?

JESSE WALL: I belong to the "Sons o' Liberty!"

G.W. Patriotism will be rewarded.

JESSE WALL: My agents like their rewards in coin--

(G.W. questions as WALL almost holds out hand)

British money. They work among the enemy.

G.W. Of course!

(He takes pouch from drawer and hands to WALL.)

JESSE WALL: Much obliged.

G.W. When you have more news for us--

JESSE WALL: (slyly) You can depend on my courier service!

(WALL goes. JEFF turns a skeptical gaze on G.W.)

G.W. What do you make of Patriot Wall?

JEFF: I think he has "an ax to grind."

G.W. Have him watched.

JEFF: (noting) Yes, air.

G.W. (slapping papers on desk) And he was recommended for the Trent's Towne project!

JEFF: By the mayor of Griggstowne.

G.W. We must take care that some such person does not undertake the task in order to betray us!

JEFF: (*chuckling*) He'll go and scare the Hessians!

G.W. He wasn't deceived!

JEFF: No?

G.W. Master Wall told us three truths so we'd believe one lie -- a dangerous lie -- so I told him a couple of lies so he'd deceive the Hessians by telling one truth.

JEFF: If we're sure he's spying for the enemy, why don't we nab him?

G.W. And ruin a good stool pigeon?

JEFF: (*amazed*) Why do you want Colonel Rahl to know how weak we are?

G.W. (*sailing*) Have you not heard my reputation for telling the truth?

JEFF: Is that why we're throwing up defenses -- you want to tempt the Hessians over?

G.W. Colonel Rahl will want to know that?

JEFF: Sorry, Sir -- I shouldn't have asked.

G.W. Forgive me, Jeff -- a losing leader has to have some jokes.

JEFF: I didn't mean--

G.W. It's a poor joke, I know.

(*He walks to window.*)

Here we are, a straggling army, starved, frozen, Sick, deserting.

(*JEFF lifts head*)

I know-some of our backwoods soldiers slip off home only to fetch in a few fagots or furnish the family fresh bear meat. But the time they signed up for ends in two weeks.

(*Sighs*)

Then, a whole new army to recruit -- from where? Only Colonel Rahl's towering Teutonic contempt for "Der Fuchs Yager" and his barbarian backwoodsmen saves us from his dashing across the Delaware and hunting us like foxes to our holes.

JEFF: His contempt, plus the Delaware itself and his lack of boats!

G.W. Jeff, if we could show this country one single victory, no matter how piddling; if we could strike one spark to light their way, they'd rally back to their cause.

(*JEFF nods*)

Jeff, find me a man for Trent's Towne.

(*JEFF stirs*)

We must know what's going on across the river.

(*A noise outside draws JEFF to the entrance. There he converses briefly with an officer.*)

JEFF: Lieutenant Grant reporting, Sir.

G.W. (*interested*) Bring him in.

(*He strides to window. GRANT brings in JOHN. G.W. turns to face them.*)

You found the right man, Lieutenant?

GRANT: (*nodding*) Won't talk.

G.W. (*coldly to John*) John Honeyman?

JOHN: Aye.

G.W. Weaver?

(*JOHN nods*)

Living among the Tories, posing as a patriot.

(JOHN's lips tighten.)

You have been known as a patriot?

JOHN: I am a patriot!

G.W. Then how do your blankets find their way to the enemy?

(Exhibits blanket label.)

Is this not your trade mark?

(JOHN nods. G.W. indicates GRANT is to leave. Grant salutes and goes. G.W. scribbles a note and hands to JEFF. As JEFF is leaving, G.W. turns to JOHN.)

How do I know who you are?

(He shuts door behind JEFF.)

JOHN: I don't know -- how do you?

G.W. *(grabbing his hand)* By your Scottish accent, John Honeyman, and your honest Scotch-Irish face!

(JOHN stares at him, blowing out his breath.)

Did you think I'd forgot your help at Philadelphia and your supplies at Hackensack!

JOHN: *(sighing relief)* You had me guessing, sir.

G.W. John, the time has come.

JOHN: Aye?

G.W. That I spoke of in Hackensack.

JOHN: *(remembering)* Aye.

(G.W. pulls out a chair and JOHN sits.)

G.W. John, you know our candle is almost out.

(JOHN nods, concerned)

Our men in rags

JOHN: But, the Congress--

G.W. Not a victory in months. Congressmen begin to feel King George's rope around their necks.

JOHN: The people... ?

G.W.: The patriots plundered, too, by rebel as well as enemy troops. They're confused.

JOHN: I know.

G.W.: What this country needs -- the Congress, the soldiers, the people-is a Christmas present!

JOHN: *(sitting up)* A what?

G.W.: John, -- can you help me find a man to undertake an important mission? Difficult and dangerous.

JOHN: *(taking breath)* What qualifications?

G.W.: Do you know a man -- who is a staunch patriot ...

(Pause)

...but is suspected of being a Tory?

(Pause)

...and has some excuse -- business preferably -- in Trent's Towne?

(Pause)

Who has a strong record of military experience, honesty; an honorable discharge from the King's Army and a medal of honor? Who has an open countenance, open eyes, and closed Scottish lips?

(JOHN brings out the medal and the discharge papers.)

JOHN: *(grinning)* What made you think of me?

G.W.: "Qualifications."

(Indicating the Gazette.)

This made it perfect!

JOHN: *(patting paper)* You are behind this?

G.W.: No. But whoever is gave me the notion-

JOHN: You had me arrested?

(G.W. nods)

But why -- ?

G.W.: It was the quickest way to make a Tory of you!

JOHN: *(realizing)* So, now, I am a Tory, whether or no?

G.W.: Forgive me, John. We are desperate. Any day Cornwallis may pounce across from Penny Towne or the Hessians push across from Trent's.

JOHN: What are your orders, sir?

(G.W. breathes out. Speaks with quiet feeling.)

G.W.: I was not mistaken in You!

(JOHN shrugs.)

You know the situation in Trent's Towne?

JOHN: *(nodding)* Colonel Rahl is not building fortifications.

G.W.: I said you had open eyes!

JOHN: Open ears.

G.W.: And they have heard?

JOHN: That Rahl scorns Cornwallis' advice to entrench.

G.W. Good!

(He sits.)

Now, we must know his strength -- in troops, cavalry, artillery, muskets, munitions--

(JOHN reaches for a pen, but G.W. stops him)

Don't make the mistake of Nathan Hale!

(JOHN questions)

The enemy can't read what's written only on your mind.

JOHN: Oh!

G.W. We must know Rahl's positions, and fortifications.

(JOHN nods.)

If there is any sign of plans to cross the River -- this is crucial -- any boats, a building, being brought in. Lumber? Horses?

JOHN: No sane commander would try to cross that ice flow!

G.W. And Colonel Rahl is a "sane" commander?

JOHN: Proceeds "by the manual", I hear, always.

G.W. But, when the flood freezes over--

JOHN: No boats required to cross a bridge -- according to the manual!

(G.W. smiles, then becomes deadly serious.)

G.W. But we can't be sure Cornwallis will wait for a bridge of ice or for Christmas. We're lucky our men sank all the boats -- where only we can find them.

(JOHN nods)

But we must catch any breath of a crossing.

(Picks up the Gazette again.)

Any notion who could be back of this?

JOHN: Well--

G.W. Anyone who might profit if your property were taken from you?

(JOHN puzzles.)

The Rebel courts are confiscating the homes and property of traitors.

JOHN: But I'm not --

(Then he realizes his own position.)

G.W. Anyone who might conceal his own turned-coat by hanging it on you?

JOHN: *(thinking)* You mean--

G.W. *(nodding, patting paper)* Watch out!

(As JOHN nods and turns to go)

What will you take to Colonel Rahl?

JOHN: What? Oh, for exchange!

G.W. The Colonel is "canny", I hear.

JOHN: Blankets?

G.W. *(shaking head)* British factories supply them cheaper.

JOHN: Corn for his horses--

G.W. *(referring to notes on Honeyman)* Had you not once another trade?

JOHN: Farming?

(G.W. shakes head.)

Butchering?

G.W. That's it! Rahl's breadbasket is bulging; but fetch him fresh "fleisch" (beef) and you'll be welcome!

JOHN: *(starting out)* "Canny!"

G.W. Where will you get the beef?

(JOHN considers and is about to answer when G.W. hands him a purse.)

You keep your milk cow -- for the children.

(JOHN marvels at the money)

Solid crowns, Spanish.

JOHN: Spanish?

G.W. Tories won't take continentals.

(JOHN questions)

Buy your beef from the Tories.

JOHN: Aye, I'll no' waste Yankee beef on Hessians!

G.W. Besides, Tories will accept you as one of them if you carry their coin.

(Grinning broadly, JOHN pockets the money.)

JOHN: “Canny!”

G.W. What else can you offer the Hessian?

(JOHN stops)

No use making the trip half loaded.

(JOHN waits.)

If he doesn’t stop you from collecting facts about his camp

JOHN: *(catching on)* Aye, the least I can do is take him “facts” I’ve collected about ours!

G.W. *(smiling)* Now, when Rahl asks you--

JOHN: *(suddenly)* But that will make me a --

G.W. *(nodding)* A spy, and a counterspy.

(JOHN gulps.)

So, when Rahl asks how fare the farmers across the Delaware, you tell him the truth.

JOHN: I’m a spy -- and I tell the truth?

G.W. Well, you have heard of George Washington’s reputation for telling the truth?

JOHN: Aye; and I’ve heard that “a liar canna be believed, even when he tells the truth,” as Master Aesop says; but I have no’ heard that George Washington canna be believed, even when he tells a lie!

G.W. The Colonel will be deceived, never fear -- even though you tell him the truth.

(JOHN scratches his head.)

Paint our sorry picture.

JOHN: T’will no’ be difficult.

G.W. Don’t volunteer the intelligence -- just suggest it’s secret, and let him pry it out of you.

JOHN: *(catching)* Aye!

G.W. *(G.W. picks up the copy of Gazette. John questions)* Your Passport!

(JOHN reaches for it, G.W. withholds it.)

Colonel Rahl will have this already.

(JOHN stares)

I’ve sent him a copy -- by one of his own spies. Canny?

JOHN: Canny!

(He starts to go; but G.W. questions:)

G.W. How can you escape?

JOHN: From Rahl?

G.W. From me!

JOHN: Aye? -- Oh!

G.W. No one must know you are a spy -- no one

JOHN: *(realizing)* And a counterspy.

(G.W. produces a large key.)

G.W. I am going to order you locked up.

(JOHN nods.)

You can’t escape by the window -- too small and high -- but they’ll believe you did! Listen for the sentry.

When it’s safe let yourself out, lock the door from the outside, put the key under the step, break the window and run.

JOHN: Run?

G.W. Run for your life!

JOHN: Aye.

G.W. Sentry will hear the window break but it's dark enough--

JOHN: Aye.

G.W. (*twinkling*) I regret that you will not be present when the surprised sentry hurries here to report your escape!

JOHN: Huh?

G.W. You may be sure the Continental Commander will be properly indignant!

(G.W. goes to door and beckons)

G.W. Now and very important -- our leading patriots in Trent's Towne must entertain the Hessian officers on Christmas night.

(Produces a ring and a key and hands them to JOHN. JOHN stares at them, then at G.W.)

Drop those in at the Post.

JOHN: (*amazed*) Abe Hunt?

G.W. (*nodding*) Just be sure you go to Colonel Rahl, in person, with the beef.

(JOHN agrees)

Don't, under any conditions, risk being seen with the Postmaster.

(JOHN questions.)

Abe will send someone to find you.

JOHN: Aye.

G.W. The Hessians must be led to hint for the invitations, you understand? They might become suspicious.

JOHN: Christmas Eve, you meant?

G.W. Christmas night!

JOHN: (*Curious*) Christmas night!

G.W. Abe will furnish you facts about the enemy--

JOHN: And when I have some facts for you?

G.W. After tonight, you'll be a marked man. You'll have to figure out a way to get back to me -- in person, alive.

JOHN: What about mobs -- fanatic patriots?

G.W. You've heard about Abraham Patten then?

(JOHN nods)

It's one of the desperate hazards of your mission, John. You have no power -- whether in jeopardy from friend or foe -- to assert your innocence, because that would get abroad and destroy the confidence the enemy puts in you.

JOHN: For myself, sir, I don't mind--

G.W. If the price be too high -- I know what I'm asking--

JOHN: I've been a soldier, sir; but my family -- you said, "No one." Does that include Mary?

(G.W. nods. JOHN swallows. G.W. cautions.)

G.W. "If you would keep a secret from your enemy -- "

JOHN: "Tell it not to a friend."

G.W. Ben Franklin.

(G.W. hands JOHN a letter. JOHN peruses it.)

For your family

JOHN: *(having read letter, refers to it)* I'm grateful Mary will have your protection.

G.W. But only if absolutely necessary.

JOHN: *(reading)* "This furnishes no protection to Honeyman himself."

(He looks at G.W.)

G.W. You understand why?

(JOHN nods and starts to pocket the letter. G.W. points to John's boot. JOHN hides the letter there.)

Leave it home before someone searches you.

(As JOHN straightens up they hear someone coming. G.W. moves away from JOHN and reassumes the severe attitude, as JEFF appears followed by GRANT.)

Leftenant! Lock this man in the guard house.

(to JEFF)

JEFF: *(reaching for pen)* Yes, air.

(G.W. speaks confidentially to GRANT, so that JOHN can hear.)

G.W. This man is a spy.

(GRANT and JEFF both face JOHN. G.W. winks at JOHN.)

He will try to escape.

GRANT: Yes air.

G.W. You know your duty!

(THE LIGHTS DIM OUT AS G.W. TURNS BACK TO HIS DESK.)

40 more pages of script to the end