

THE SEPARATIST

By Paul Maxwell Jay

THE SEPARATIST

A screenplay for a biopic about Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island and inventor of modern secular democracy.

Note: since the characters are all historical figures with extensive coverage in historical accounts, I have refrained from describing their personalities, which are hopefully reflected in the dialogue. Since the story is epic, ranging the life time of the protagonist, there are many characters, and unlike fiction, I can't condense them or have things happen that misrepresent the known chronologies. This creates too many characters to describe individually, it would clog up the text, but they could be each characterized in an addendum. This would include portraits, but no portrait was ever done of Roger Williams, so we don't know what he looked like.

SCENE

EXT. BANKS OF THE PAUTUCKET RIVER – NIGHT

ROGER WILLIAMS at 72, grizzled but noble in a cape standing on the shore of a river yelling across to a band of Wampanoag. The Indians are armed with tomahawks, muskets and bows, full war bonnets, torches. Many are dressed in the clothes of Englishmen. Queen Weetamoo, on a horse, leads a large band of warriors. Behind ROGER the hamlet of Providence is in flames.

WILLIAMS

(yelling across the river in Wampanoag dialect)

Why do you make war on us who are your friends? Have we not lived in peace for all these years?

WAMPANAOG CHIEF

On land we gave to you, and now your cows eat our corn and we cannot eat. You try to take our weapons, you tell to do this and that, who are you? You English are a disease!

WILLIAMS

We have helped each other as brothers and I am sorry. But you make war! I am a man of peace.

WAMPANAOG CHIEF

You wear the sword. You make sadness and hunger among our people!

QUEEN WEETAMOO

Winslow murdered my husband, with poison. He is evil. You are all evil.

WILLIAMS

Not me! Can we be brothers again? In memory of your great father!

WAMPAMAOG CHIEF

In memory of my great father, I will not kill you today, but maybe tomorrow.

The Indians disappear into the woods.

SCENE

EXT. LONDON STREET 17TH CENTURY – WINTER- NIGHT

Fire consumes a martyred puritan preacher, Bartholomew Legate, tied to the stake. 10
y.o. ROGER WILLIAMS, desolate, shivers in the cold. He is not dressed nearly warm
enough but refuses to be warmed by the fire, as others are, and stands apart.

NARRATOR

This story, which ends here with the bloody tragedy of King Philip's War, begins in King James' England at the beginning of the seventeenth century. A young boy watches his teachers go up in flames. This was not a good place or a time to be an independent thinker, for on the throne sat the head of the church. You could say something aloud, the merest utterance, and find yourself on trial for heresy and betraying the English crown, which were the same thing, and which this poor fellow was convicted of.. There were many like him, who did not think that the king should be their spiritual leader, and they formed sects and movements and hid their religious gatherings for fear of meeting the same fate, and there were just many spies for the king and church, and crypto-catholics, hiding their faith, lurking at the highest levels of government.

(Contemporary illustrations of Quakers and Diggers and so on.)

'But one of these English sects particularly hated Catholics, these were the Puritans, who thought that the Church of England was much TOO Catholic. They were not tolerant at all, but loved their epistles and thought the pope in Rome was Satan himself. King James didn't mind Catholics, as long as they kept their religion to themselves. He wanted peace with the catholic countries because war was expensive. This created distrust, and puritans had to be repressed since they did not conform to the king's policy of priests wearing lacy gowns like the catholic priests. The puritans didn't like lacy gowns. They didn't like icons, like the naked Christ on the cross, they didn't like elaborate rituals, like weddings and funerals, or anything else that reminded them of catholicism.. these were uber protestants, holier than you or I could hope to be..

(Cont..) A leader of the anti-catholic movement in Parliament was SIR EDWARD COKE, who had to encode his correspondence so that it couldn't be used against him. He needed young secretaries who could learn the secret codes and write them in dictation, which took extreme levels of mental skill.

SCENE

INT. CHARTERHOUSE SCHOOL.- CLASSROOM

ROGER WILLIAMS waits sitting at a desk. SIR EDWARD COKE enters the room and sits down.

COKE

Mister Williams, the tell me that you are in possession of language skills and a pious nature.

YOUNG ROGER WILLIAMS

Sir, I don't possess my nature. It possesses me.

COKE

Ha! That's a quick mind you have boy. I've got a job for you, pack your things.

YOUNG ROGER WILLIAMS

I have no things, sir. What is my job?

COKE

Your job, my laddy, is to confound the spies, the lickspittles who look for evidence of non-conformity in my legal correspondence. You have skills in languages, which coding basically is. I think you will do capitally. What is your interest?

YOUNG ROGER WILLIAMS

To serve the Lord my Christ how he needs me.

COKE

He needs you now. Come, my carriage awaits.

SCENE

INT. EDWARD COKE'S STUDY ON A GRAND ESTATE.

ROGER WILLIAMS, older, is taking dictation, writing code in a fast hand, begging him to slow down.

NARRATION

Sir Edward's adversary was the DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM, the KING's favorite, the king's Chamberlain and the most handsome man in England, his hold on the king also made him the most powerful .. He would have the same hold over King James' son Charles, who had the same fractious relationship with parliament as his father..

SCENE

EXT. ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE

On horseback COKE and ROGER WILLIAMS, now in his mid teens, leave the inner court and head for the country, to the KING's palace. They are led to a garden where old KING JAMES of Britain, Ireland and Scotland, is lounging around with the Duke of Buckingham, GEORGE VILLIERS. They are very close and very drunk.

KING

(to Sir Edward)

Edward, give me the money, I'll pay back Parliament with the dowery when my son Charley marries the Infanta.

COKE

Parliament can't do that, your majesty, we don't have the money. Your wars have cost us dear.

KING

I'm going to have to just disband parliament, then. Poof! Who is that with you.

COKE

My secretary, master Roger Williams.

KING

You dress like a seminary student, are you a religious boy?

ROGER WILLIAMS

,If it please you, yr majesty.

KING

Ha! George, did you hear that? He'll be religious if it please me! I wish the whole country was like that. Do you have the Book of Common Prayer, by any chance?

ROGER WILLIAMS

No your majesty.

KING

What's that book then?

ROGER WILLIAMS

The epistles of St Paul, your majesty.

KING

It looks like Greek to me.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Yes it is, sir. They were written in Greek, your majesty.

KING

(coldly)

Thank you for that information. It is admirable that you can read the ancient tongue, but I went to great trouble to put it all into English. That doesn't suit you?

ROGER WILLIAMS is confused and doesn't know how to answer.

COKE

(handing him the book of common prayer)

He has a copy which I borrowed, it is right here. Thank you for the loan, Master Williams. I felt the need for prayer before this meeting and borrowed Master Williams' copy, I ought to have returned it in case he needed it for a..... similar reason.

The KING frowns as his glass is being filled with wine. ROGER WILLIAMS stands in an alienated state, trying to gather his thoughts. As he starts to reply to the king, COKE grabs him by the shoulder and turns to the KING

COKE

I think the boy might be excused, your majesty, while we discuss our affairs.

KING nods his disheveled head and COKE pushes ROGER WILLIAMS out of the royal salon and shuts the garden gate. ROGER hovers, trying to hear the conversation, but is chased off by a guard.

ROGER WILLIAMS

(to himself)

This man is the head of the Anglican Church?

He shakes his head and sits on a bench.

COKE

(to the KING)

I have a proposal for your majesty..

BUCKINGHAM leans in.

SCENE

INT. STAR CHAMBER – BRITISH PARLIAMENT

ROGER WILLIAMS observing total chaos from the secretaries' balcony in the Court of Wards, taking dictation in code. JOHN WINTHROP is the trial judge.

WINTHROP

I am terminating this trial, since the KING has just disbanded parliament. He marches IN and disbands Parliament. Well, what else can we do, the rule of law does not apply. You are all dismissed.

WINTHROP throws his gavel over his shoulder and leaves. WILLIAMS catches up to him, and they walk together talking, out of earshot.

SCENE

INT. STUDY OF A GRAND ESTATE OUTSIDE LONDON

COKE is busy at his desk, yawns, then dismisses teenage ROGER WILLIAMS from secretarial duties for the day.

SCENE

EXT. GARDENS OF GRAND ESTATE.

The young man takes the opportunity to wander the gardens of COKE's estate. Throwing away his hot jacket, he suddenly feels as free as he ever has. Coming to a chapel in the garden, he peeks in and sees a beautiful young lady kneeling in prayer. He walks in and kneels beside her.

ROGER WILLIAMS

What are you praying for?

LADY BEATRICE

I can't remember, you startled me.

WILLIAMS

It couldn't have been very important then.

LADY BEATRICE

It seemed important.. oh yes, I have bad news for you. I can't marry you.

ROGER WILLIAMS

(genuinely dismayed)

Why not? My heart is set on you!

LADY BEATRICE

I've been sold, or given away, I'm not sure which.

ROGER WILLIAMS

(slowly)

Given to whom?

LADY BEATRICE

Larry Villiers, a lout who happens to be brother to the Duke of Buckingham, the king's Chamberlain.

ROGER WILLIAMS

I know him. And who did this giving or selling.. who has ruined my life?

LADY BEATRICE

Surely you can guess it was my father.

WILLIAMS

How could he? How could he not tell me, and let me fight for you. I will learn fencing and shooting, I will win you!

LADY BEATRICE

There's nothing you can do. Anyway, I can't live very well on a deacon's salary, so maybe it's for the best.

ROGER WILLIAMS

This is the deal he made to keep parliament open! I see now. You were the card up his sleeve, and not a whimper from you!

LADY BEATRICE

Believe me Roger, I whimpered.

ROGER WILLIAMS stands, totally flustered, bows his head and marches out of the chapel. She calls after him..

LADY BEATRICE

I whimpered for days! You didn't see me!

WILLIAMS is devastated, wanders around in tears, eventually finds his jacket, climbs the back stairs to an upstairs room packs his books into a satchel and heads off down the road, on foot.

The girl looks down from her tower and watches him go, in a melancholy pout.

SCENE

EXT. CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY

Roger entering Cambridge University in normal dark clothes, emerging in the black frock of a cleric and a beard.

SCENE

EXT. COUNTRY ESTATE

On foot he enters the estate of the LORD MASHAM, a fellow puritan, who greets him at the gate with pleasure.

LORD MASHAM

The Lord Chamberlain tried to send me a papist, can you imagine, crosses everywhere, incense.. I'm so glad I managed to retain you for our small congregation. My mother needs daily religious counseling, her eyes are bad and she can't read the Bible, even in ENGLISH.

LORD MASHAM points to a young lady on a horse:

LORD MASHAM

This is my niece, she will be at Sunday chapel, won't you my dear?

She gallops away.

SCENE

INT. CHAPEL OF MASHAM'S ESTATE

On the pulpit. ROGER WILLIAMS preaches, awkwardly. The entire estate has dutifully attended.

ROGER WILLIAMS

The prayers have already been written. In their original languages they are more beautiful than anything written by our greatest writers today. I am not going to advise you to disobey the orders of the Archbishop, which are the orders of the king, who demands that you read all prayers from this little book. To disobey the king, that would be treason. I have seen men burned at the stake for less. You have their book of

prayers, now your book, since most of you don't read Greek or Hebrew, which are the languages of the bible and New Testament, but still it should be your choice, not the king's choice. In a perfect world the government would stay out of church affairs.

Cardinal Richelieu across the channel wears the cassock and the sword, church and state in one person. Joan of Arc, with her halo for a war bonnet! The papal armies, the crusaders, even the prophet Mohamed, they were simultaneously military and church leaders. The blood shed because of this would fill the ocean. If you let people follow their own religion, like the Hebrews, their own way to worship God, and leave them in peace, you have a peaceful world, more like the world Christ imagined. War is a betrayal of Christ, and religious war is a double betrayal.

In the front pew is LADY LATHAM, looking more and more shocked.

SCENE

INT. LADY HARRINGTON'S BEDROOM

LADY HARRINGTON, the elderly mother of LORD MASHAM, lying in bed, candles all around. ROGER WILLIAMS, who has a bible open on his knees, has been doing religious counseling.

LADY HARRINGTON

Your counsel on these matters is most valuable, you are a treasure.. Tell me if there is anything you need from me..'

ROGER WILLIAMS

Your niece Lady Latham would be a nice gift, your Ladyship!

LADY HARRINGTON

My niece? Anne? Have you lost your mind?

ROGER WILLIAMS

My dear lady, I am in love with her and she with me and I would like to be wed to her.

LADY HARRINGTON

To a scruff like you, barely off the streets, your nose in your books, not a penny in your pocket! Knowledge is no substitute for wealth and power, I'm afraid.. otherwise the world would be run by scholars and God help us all. You are a bookworm, not a man of property who can take care of this girl and protect her. Petition denied!

Again Roger is devastated. His attempt to climb socially had again met with defeat, and he takes to bed with a fever. He is nursed by MARY BARNARD, the pretty maid of Lady Latham. He watches her always busying herself, learning skills, and so he eventually leaves the bed, corners her and plants a kiss.

MARY BARNARD

Master Roger, please behave. You are a minister and have no intent to wed a lowly maid as I.

ROGER WILLIAMS

On that point, Mary Barnard, you are wrong. I have every intent of marrying you and tying our fates together, whatever may come. You will not be a maid for long, God willing.

MARY

In that case, I admit I have been sneaking looks at you now and then. I look forward to knowing you better, my handsome cleric.

SCENE

EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD IN LINCOLNSHIRE – MUDDY AND UN PAVED- SUMMER.

Trotting along in one horse gig are reverends ROGER WILLIAMS, JOHN COTTON and JOHN HOOKER.. The poor horse is sweaty and tormented by flies. COTTON is rotund and red-cheeked, with a constant smile hiding his thoughts. HOOKER is intense and bearded, gaunt, looking straight ahead. ROGER WILLIAMS is antsy, in his mid-twenties, cannot stay silent, jumps up to walk beside the horse, starts talking to the horse since HOOKER and COTTON have long given up trying to have a normal conversation with him.

COTTON pulls out his epistles and reads, ignoring ROGER WILLIAMS. HOOKER stares straight ahead.

ROGER WILLIAMS

(to the horse)

Every flower is a prayer, praising almighty God by being a flower in all its glory. You are a prayer, that pulls our carriage, this mosquito is a prayer.

COTTON swats a mosquito.

They come to a grand entrance and are ushered into the estate of the Earl of Lincoln. The wheels of the gig crunch pleasantly on the neat elm-lined gravel drive as the horse smells other horses and fresh hay and water.

Standing by the drawbridge is the bailiff of Lincolnshire, flanked by a guard with an arquebus on one side, and a young girl holding his hand on the other.

HOOKER

Who is that?

COTTON

Thomas Dudley, the Earl's sheriff, the Bailiff of Lincolnshire. And that is I believe his daughter Ann, much grown since I last saw her. The Earl is in Holland fighting the Spaniards and it was actually the Lady Brigitte who called this meeting.

HOOKER

I was contacted by her son-in-law Sir Isaac Johnson.. I think he called the meeting. I think he owns this castle, also. He's quite well off.

ROGER WILLIAMS

I was called here by Winthrop himself. It was our new governor who called the meeting.

COTTON

At any rate, by God's blessing here we are! And I don't think the Archbishop has an inkling what is going on under his nose.

They disembark and exchange pleasantries with Dudley, Cotton pats little Ann on the head.

COTTON

How are you my dear? I promised you a book of poems and here it is! By chance I did not forget it.

He hands little Ann a packet, which she eagerly receives. The three clerics take their satchels and follow the guard into the castle and up to the top floor guest chambers.

SCENE

INT. TATTERSHALL CASTLE

They emerge from their toilet in fresh robes and climb down the spiral staircase in the tower to the second floor hall, a vast space with a long dining table down the middle and medieval armaments on the walls. The curtains are drawn against the piercing sunlight. As their eyes adjust to the dim light they make out a gathering at the other end of the hall. There is the LADY BRIGETTE in black silken hues, seated at the head of a table. Around her are the nobles, the EARL OF WARWICK, LORD FIENNES, SIR ISAAC JOHNSON, the LADY ARBELLA. At the other end are prominent puritan clerics chatting among each other. The three newcomers head straight for the sideboard laden with roast quail and venison and flagons of beer, bringing their full plates to the table to sit with the clergy.

The great doors of the room open and backlit against the afternoon sun is a strange and imposing figure. His pointed beard and ruffled collar are soiled with mud, which is only evident as he approaches the table. The clergy stand to greet JOHN WITHROP, the leader of the adventure that brought them to the hall, but the aristocrats do not stand for the middle class and remain seated. Winthrop approaches LADY BRIGETTE and bows deeply, removing his hat.

JOHN WINTHROP

A thousand pardons, my lady, for being late.. I and my poor horse wound up in a ditch. I don't have time to change so please forgive any unpleasant odors.'

LADY BRIGETTE

Not at all Mister Winthrop, not at all. Welcome to Tattershall. I'm sure your soul is cleaner that your exterior, otherwise you would not have come. We are all grateful that you have taken charge of this enterprise.'

JOHN WINTHROP

As to that, I am hardly prepared to assume the duties of Governor. I'm sure there are better candidates in this very room.

THOMASD DUDLEY stifles a sneer.

LADY BRIGETTE

My friends here won't back the expedition unless you lead it.. is that correct, gentlemen?

LORD FIENNES

Quite so.

EARL OF WARWICK

The floor is yours Governor Winthrop. What plans do you have for us?

ISAAC JOHNSON

And our money!

LADY BRIGETTE taps her fork to a wineglass, moves her chair out of the way and the meeting is called to order.

WINTHROP stands at the head of the table and carefully lays his satchel down.

JOHN WITHROP

Thank you for coming. Your invitations were for a religious retreat, and as far as anyone is concerned outside this room, that's what it is. Now, we have decided on a general migration, we have ruled out Scotland or Ireland and the idea is to cross the ocean, straight across, by boat, since we cannot fly or swim, and we will take with us such congregations as can be convinced to come. Three ships are being chartered, one, The Lady Arbella, is being built in Dover.

To general applause, LADY ARBELLA blushes. JOHN WINTHROP opens the valise and pulls out a map of the east coast of North America, the map has the elaborate signature of Captain John Smith. Winthrop points to the area north of The Bay.

JOHN WINTHROP

The stalwart Captain Endicott is struggling to keep his settlers alive in this town they have named Salem, and we will be landing there and supplying them as well as our own. Half have perished, but on the bright side, half have survived, by the grace of God! There is where we will first land, and when a suitable site is found we will raise anchors and make our way there. It will be a winter crossing, and we will rely much on our prayers to survive the voyage and the initial period of settlement.'

He pauses as they all stand to look closely at the map.

THOMAS DUDLEY

And who's laws so we follow, once we arrive?

WINTHROP

The word of God as much as we can.

DUDLEY

You mean the Ten Commandments?

WINTHROP

Well, yes. And, if that doesn't suffice, we have the Charter for the Massachusetts Bay Company, being drawn up this very day in London. It is by chance a corporate charter, though it will be signed by our king and members of the Privy Council. If you read it very carefully, with yr reading glass, you'll find it describes a self-sufficient government. We have a Governor, myself, for now, and a deputy Governor, which we are hoping Thomas Dudley will accept, and a board of Assistants. They will comprise the General Court, which, once we are settled in the New World, will meet as necessary in the meeting house, which it will share with the congregation. Not at the same time obviously. We will be writing our own laws, which the magistrates will vote to enact, much like here.

THOMAS DUDLEY

And where is the headquarters of this corporation?

JOHN WINTHROP

That's the trick, sir. We left that part blank!

DUDLEY

And yet they will still approve it?'

ROGER WILLIAMS

The better to get rid of us. Be sure to take the charter with you, if you can, otherwise they will rewrite it at will.

As the youngest person in the room, it took a preacher's nerve to speak up in august company.

LADY BRIGETTE

What a capital idea! One that should not be advertised!

WINTHROP

I suppose that is a motion before the board. All in favor of absconding with the charter say 'Aye'.

A general, loud 'AYE!'

JOHN WINTHROP

(turning to the nobility)

Lord's and ladies, we are so grateful for your support, and hope you will enjoy with us the bounties of a foreign shore. Unfortunately, I cannot guarantee you the privileges that you enjoy here. We will all be equal under the law in the New Jerusalem.

EARL OF WARWICK

Good Lord!

ROGER WILLIAMS

What about the native Americans? Will they be equal to us?

JOHN WINTHROP

If they see the light of Christ, with our help, they will be accepted and baptized, I suppose.

ROGER WILLIAMS

, (jumping to his feet)

That should not be a condition of equality, conversion to our faith!

LORD FIENNES

(jumping to his feet)

Certainly not, they're savages.

ROGER WILLIAMS

As are we in the eyes of God. We are all equally savage.

LORD FIENNES

Not sure I agree..

ROGER WILLIAMS

Whether they know it or not, they are children of God, like us... how could it be otherwise?

LORD FIENNES

That's heretical. I'm not buying into heresies. Who are you anyway, sir?

JOHN WINTHROP

Your Lordship may I present Roger Williams. I guarantee you won't best him in this kind of discussion. As assistant to Sir Edward Coke, he has spent more time in Star Chamber than I have. I hope you'll be coming with us, Mister Williams.

ROGER WILLIAMS

I am contracted to Lord Marsham as Chaplain for another year, but my heart, prayers and soon my wife Mary and myself will be with you.

LORD FIENNES

That's it, I'm not going. Virginia sounds more suitable, and warmer. Maybe an island in the Caribbean!

THOMAS DUDLEY

Once we have established a colony the king is going to want to control it. We must have a plan in place.

SIR ISAAC JOHNSON

(pulling out diagrams)

Oh we do. I am donating quite an arsenal. Twenty pieces, eight and nine foot cannon, and enough ammunition to hold off an armada. The king and his corrupt ministers will have a fight if they get greedy. Meanwhile we tell them the guns are to fight off the French or Spanish. There's a greater chance we have to fight off the English. Anyhow, the guns make great ballast for the ships. Also thirty muskets are packed and ready to go, with more to follow.

JOHN WINTHROP

I'm certain everyone who comes with us will be grateful for that, my lord, though I'm less certain if arming to the teeth is consistent with the teachings of Christ our King and His disciples.

THOMAS DUDLEY

It's like having a roof over our heads.. necessary protection. Captain John Underhill, whom I know from the Spanish wars in Holland, has signed on and will be training the militia.

ROGER WILLIAMS

'This militia, will it also police the citizens? I hope not, since that is the primary reason for this migration, to get away from that.'

WINTHROP

Why would people need policing? They are living saints, in the light of Christ.

JOHN COTTON

Some of them, perhaps. Some of us here might be living saints, but surely not all of us.

JOHN WINTHROP

Point taken.. though this seems a very cynical approach. I'm not sure we can afford police, people will just have to behave. Reverend Cotton, I'm sure you can persuade your Boston congregation to fall into line.

JOHN COTTON

You can lead a Congregant to water, but you can't make him drink.

THOMAS DUDLEY

Why not? He'd rather wine?

ROGER WILLIAMS

May I answer that? The human spirit, in God Almighty's vision....

LORD FIENNES

(gathering his things)

Can somebody quiet this man? I doubt it. Thank you all, I'll be rolling along.

He staggers to his feet

JOHN WINTHROP

It might interest you to know that the charter states that there will be no taxation for ten years.

LORD FIENNES

(sitting down)

Is that so? Ten years? Hmmm.

JOHN WINTHROP

(quoting from the charter)

We "shall have and enjoy all liberties and immunities of free and natural subjects within all the dominions."

ROGER WILLIAMS

Does that mean we can worship as we please?

JOHN WINTHROP

That's a tricky question. It depends on how things are viewed on this side. I would caution that we don't provoke an argument, that in all appearance we are following g

the mother church. Individual incentives should bow to the greater good. We don't want to fight England, in spite of our arsenal.

JOHN COTTON

There are many religious groups meeting in caves and barns and whatnot. They may be tempted to follow us, I would suggest we discourage that. We don't want Quakers running around naked on our streets.

THOMAS DUDLEY

Quite so.

JOHN WINTHROP

Perhaps they can go elsewhere. We can send them to the Dutch in the Manhattans, or to our friends in Plymouth Colony. Keep in mind, we will be as a city on a hill, with the world looking on. Any failure will be very public and embarrassing, not to mention tragic. But God is with us, the signs from heaven are favorable, and to have the almighty as an ally means we cannot fail. I am going to close the meeting at this time. You are all free to spend a few days, the gardens are lovely, I hear.'

LADY BRIGETTE

Oh yes, do stay. But not too long, it might arouse suspicion. It's a strange thought that I will never see you again.

EARL OF WARWICK

Brigette, you're seeing us next Tuesday, for the hunt.

The meeting breaks up into chatting groups and general catching up. JOHN WINTHROP heads for the sideboard as he hasn't eaten yet.

SCENE

EXT. BOSTON HARBOR

The rough pier in very young Boston; the Lyon sits at anchor in the harbor with icicles dripping from the bowsprit and spars.. ROGER WILLIAMS and MARY, haggard, frozen and sea sick from the long voyage, disembark with their scant luggage from the ship's launch crowded with migrants and are greeted by Gov. John Winthrop.

JOHN WINTHROP

It's a great blessing that you are here, at last. You and Mary are staying with me of course until Margarite and my son John arrive after the summer. Dudley has built his own town up the river, we had bit of a flap about that, but for the time being the General Court meetings are held here in that barn structure. To please Cotton we've named the place Boston, since that is where his congregation hails from. At any rate, we've already named Charlestown after the king, so here we are. Watch your step, the

pigs shit everywhere. You aren't going to be too impressed by the town, we had to get the fields cleared and planted before we could even begin building houses. We're just climbing out of our holes, onto proper floors. We've lost Sir Isaac and Lady Arbella, and my son Henry drowned the day we arrived.

ROGER WILLIAMS

So sorry. Didn't know them at all. Sir Isaac put most of his fortune into this enterprise, too bad he didn't live to see it. I see the New Jerusalem is a paradise of misery, where hard work leads to survival and joy and freedom. I'm quite overwhelmed.

There are the sounds of construction everywhere as crews saw trees into planks and bang dowels into framing. The militia, in their filthy farming clothes, are being trained by CAPTAIN UNDERHILL. Who is dressed in court finery and a feathered hat.

JOHN WINTHROP

I've summoned Cotton, we can meet this evening over dinner. You've got the guest cabin, which is attached to the main house. We've just put in a fireplace. Underhill as you can see is training the militia. Every able-bodied man has to muster and keep a weapon in firing condition.'

ROGER WILLIAMS

Does that include me?

JOHN WINTHROP

No, it does not apply to clerics. You have only your tongues and fierce judgments to destroy your enemies.

SCENE

INT. BOSTON – JOHN WINTHROP'S DINING ROOM

There are servants setting the dinner on the table of a sparsely furnished room. Some furniture has made it across the ocean, and as the Governor, Winthrop could command carpenters. His house is a two-story post and beam structure with attached smaller buildings.

JOHN COTTON

Delighted to see you again, you must be exhausted from the voyage. What we want to do is offer you the ministry of this little town. What do you say to that?!

ROGER WILLIAMS smiles, frowns, thinks about it:

ROGER WILLIAMS

That is a very great honor, Cotton. But I warn you we won't be using the Book of Common Prayer. You may not approve of my sermons.

JOHN WINTHROP

Thou art young, dear Roger. Separatism is a young man's disease, don't let it ruin you.

ROGER WILLIAMS

The mighty Church of England, that has you both so intimidated, is corrupt, it is basically Papism without the pope, and I would like, as we all would, to praise the Almighty in a pure way. Would you let me do that? How long before I am accused of heresy? I am here to do something new. I'm sorry Cotton it's an honor to be asked but I have to turn you down.

JOHN COTTON does a double-take with his wine spraying into his face. Winthrop's face sharpens imperceptibly.

ROGER WILLIAMS

The church is tainted.. we have to start anew. Christ and Saint Paul will show us.. the Hebrew prophets will show us. The Anglican Church shows us nothing but rot.

JOHN WINTHROP

(putting his fingers together)

If a whiff of your sentiments drifted back to Whitehall, the Foreign Council would send a military expedition to bring us into line, which we would have to fight off. We prefer to let things like that go unsaid.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Then I'm sorry to bring it up.

JOHN WINTHROP

Can I say, also, and I think Cotton will agree, that something corrupt has some good from when it wasn't corrupt. I think that would apply to the Anglican Church.

ROGER WILLIAMS

I disagree, but am too tired to argue. We will retire, with your kind permission. Come, Mary.

He and Mary make their way to the guest cottage.

JOHN COTTON and JOHN WINTHROP look at each other.

SCENE

EXT. FOREST TRAIL.

ROGER WILLIAMS and a pregnant MARY walking the trail towards Salem, carrying their meager possessions and pulling a calf given to them by John Winthrop. An Indian ferries them across a river in a dugout canoe. ROGER WILLIAMS tries to speak with him, starts picking up a few words. They arrive in Salem, greeted by CAPT. JOHN ENDICOTT and the REV. SKELTON.

ENDICOTT

(to SKELTON)

Any hint of separatism and that's the end of this experiment.

SKELTON

I like separatists.'

ENDICOTT

You are a separatist.. and if I could prove it I would report you to the court.

SKELTON

(pointing to ROGER WILLIAMS, who is unpacking his cow.)

Oh, they don't care about an old man like me. I'm not a threat. But perhaps he is.

Roger and Mary are given a two-story house and a field to plant. On Sunday morning he goes to the rough, unadorned church and prepares a sermon. The townspeople and reluctant servants and even some Indians come to hear the service, since it is mandatory.

SCENE

INT. SALEM CHURCH

ROGER WILLIAMS is giving a sermon.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Religion is full of commands, but which of these commands come from God Almighty?

Only 10 of them. And who enforces a religious command? Usually soldiers! If you question the king on religious matters, they call you a traitor and strap you to a pole and set you on fire! By whose word do they do that? Certainly not the word of God, which is only revealed in the ancient books. This cruel persecution of martyrs is done by the word of man, the word of the government, and the government has no place, standing between the soul and the Almighty. The government should remove itself as the conduit to God. Your relation to the Almighty is a special garden where love grows and awaits the coming of the savior.

ENDICOTT coughs, indicating that Williams is drifting towards separatism. The congregation is riveted to the words of the young firebrand.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Why are you here? Some of you may be asking that question at this moment, or maybe the moment before you were roused out of a warm feather bed because you had to come to mass. If you don't come, there are fines and judgments and punishments, but these are not the work of God. These punishments are the work of man.. this man right here, who must punish and fine or lose his job as the head of this community.

ENDICOTT winces. A spy leaves the church and reports back to the magistrates in Boston. They are frightened by this threat to the church/state partnership on which the communities thrive.

SCENE

EXT. PLYMOUTH HARBOR

ROGER WILLIAMS and MARY and their small daughter, also called Mary, arrive on board a fishing boat. They are greeted by townsfolk, GOVERNOR BRADFORD, WILLIAM BREWSTER and MILES STANDISH.. Plymouth is the oldest town on the coast, founded 13 years before by English Pilgrims from Leyden, Holland, and BREWSTER's library, where they meet, is cozy and hospitable, wall-to-wall books.

SCENE

INT. BREWSTER'S LIBRARY

At tea with ROGER WILLIAMS, BRADFORD, SAMOSET and BREWSTER

BRADFORD

The good news is that we have found the lost tribe of Israel. We are living among them, the people of the forest, they're called Wampanoag and their language sounds much like Hebrew. Their chief is the great Massasoit. You will meet him soon. Since we have made peace with Massasoit, half the town has left to start ranches on the surrounding lands, so there is a house for you and Mary, and you've been introduced to Brewster and his library. You will have 5 acres for cattle raising and crops, but you have to till the soil yourself. There's just time to plant corn for the fall harvest. Way to the west are the Narragansetts, who have often warred on the Wampanoag, but we have a truce in place, Captain Miles Standish is responsible for that. So, I hear you are quite the radical. You might want to discuss your separatist ideas with Rev. Brewster, he might talk you out of them.'

ROGER WILLIAMS sips his tea and smiles politely.

BREWSTER

We were separatists originally, we decided that one couldn't hold office in the government and the church simultaneously, it was one or the other. That is how we

maintain personal freedom in Christ. Our motto is 'stand fast in liberty, Christ has set you free!

ROGER WILLIAMS

Yes, I totally agree with that, separating church things from state things. I also agree that political power is a corruption. Politicians should not make moral judgments because they are corrupt. Christ was not a politician nor a policeman, no, he has set me free, free from politicians and policemen.

BRADFORD

By banishing you from Boston? Roger, remember I am the governor here and I make moral decisions all the time.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Perhaps you should refrain, leave that to the clergy.

BRADFORD

Don't assume I am corrupt, and also don't assume that the clergy can't be corrupt. And also, separating church and state, which is I think what you are proposing, would lead to general chaos, it's not viable.

ROGER WILLIAMS

It is the only viable way, but I begin to think I am the only person on Earth who thinks that.

MARY

I think it too, my dear. I think separating church and state is a wonderful idea. So you are not the only one.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Thank you Love. That's two of us. To change the subject, I have some cattle coming from John Winthrop, who has offered me help in getting established, also by letter to me he sends his greetings and thanks you for your visit to Boston, and I believe he wants to return the visit. He didn't say when.

BRADFORD

I hope it's not tomorrow. I'm expecting Massasoit tomorrow and he could tarry for days.

SCENE

EXT. PLYMOUTH TOWN SQUARE - DAY

MASSASOIT marches into town, preceded by a guard of noble warriors. He is an imposing figure, and as the town square fills with his entourage. The town militia, under MILES STANDISH, stands at attention, their musket butts on the ground.

BRADFORD and MASSASOIT meet as friends, old SAMOSET interpreting.

MASSASOIT

English chief, we have come with gifts to sell you, and to make peace.

BRADFORD

Welcome Great Massasoit. If you have beaver skins, we will pay you well for them. Do you want cod fish? We have blankets also.

MASSASOIT

(sitting down on a leather rug)

No blankets! Let us make council.

BRADFORD

Alright. What's on your mind?'

ROGER WILLIAMS has been listening intently to the conversation and the interpretations and is scribbling linguistic notes in a notebook.

MASSASOIT

(through SAMOSET)

Canonicus demands tribute. You tell Massasoit no more tribute to Canonicus. Look, he sends me war arrow.

BRADFORD

He sent me one too. Canonicus is a great and powerful chief, and the Narragansett are a large tribe. Why should he do what I say?

MASSASOIT

(through SAMOSET)

You send back arrow, put bullets and powder with arrow, wrapped in the skin of the snake. Then Canonicus be quiet. He respect strength.

BRADFORD

Do you think that's a good idea?

MASSASOIT stands up and orders his guard to bring forward a pile of beaver skins.

MASSASOIT

This is my tribute to you. I can not tribute both you and Canonicus.

BRADFORD

Alright then, consider it done. Captain Standish, bring some powder and shot, we're sending a message to Canonicus. Does anybody have a snake skin handy?

ROGER WILLIAMS approaches SAMOSET

ROGER WILLIAMS

Hello, I am Roger Williams, I am the new minister. Are you a Christian? Could you teach me the language of the Wampanoag?

SCENE

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - DAY

JOHN WINTHROP, followed by CAPTAIN UNDERHILL and two guards, is walking the still-wild coastal trail between the Bay and Plymouth. In the evening light they approach the town, with candles in the paper windows giving off a warm welcoming glow and BRADFORD, STANDISH and WILLIAMS and a guard of militia welcoming the Governor of Massachusetts.

SCENE

INT. LIBRARY OF WILLIAM BREWSTER,

they all settle down.

BREWSTER

Normally Samoset is teaching Roger the Indian dialects, Roger is teaching the governor Hebrew and the governor is teaching Roger Dutch. My library has become a linguistic college.

WINTHROP

(to Williams)

Why are you learning Dutch?

ROGER WILLIAMS

For the same reason I'm studying the Indian language. They are our neighbors, one might want to talk to them.

WINTHROP

Don't get involved with the Dutch, I have had nothing but trouble with them. They would love for the tribes to rise up and annihilate us.

ROGER WILLIAMS

The better reason to speak to them. It could help us avoid misunderstanding and mayhem. There is lots to learn in the Manhattans.'

JOHN WITHROP

No doubt, but I would suggest you be the teacher, not the learner. You want to convert the heathen, don't you? Point your canoe west, Roger, to the land of the Narragansett Harbor, which I hear is lovely.

ROGER WILLIAMS

To the Narragansett? Will they happily convert, do you think? From what? I wonder what they call their God.

BREWSTER

Gods, lots of them everywhere. And yet some of the Wampanoag are happy to come and worship with us, and those that do are no trouble.

ROGER WILLIAMS

They are happy to have the choice. That's the crux of my argument, I'm with Martin Luther on this. Forced worship is a stench in the nostrils of Almighty God. We are here to try another way.

WINTHROP

The bond between the church and the state is our only control over the population, which would otherwise behave more selfishly and sinfully. I promise you, people have to be reminded every day that they are part of a community. I can see you've never tried to govern a colony.

WINTHROP and BRADFORD share a chuckle.

BRADFORD

We do discourage ministers from governing, and governors from ministering. That system works quite well.

WINTHROP

I've had to remove the clergy from meetings of the civil court. They were quite upset about that. They didn't think it proper and sued me. They said it was arbitrary government!

ROGER WILLIAMS

I imagine they would think that. How is old Cotton? (pause) And yet neither of you abide by heretics and religious cults. You throw heretics out on their ears, if you haven't cut them off. But how can you define a heresy? Why should heresy be an issue of government? Another issue, if you don't mind, is the stealing of land, which the charters promote and encourage. The king's charters are invalid and any land must be bought from the tribes to be legally ours.

JOHN WINTHROP

'Then why did God almighty clear these lands for our use? There were no Indians where we settled.

ROGER WILLIAMS

We brought diseases that cleared the land for us. But this is the lost tribe of Israel and we must respect the land they still own.

JOHN WINTHROP

All right, Roger, settle down. The diseases have taken our lives also. Tomorrow is the Sabbath, you have a sermon to deliver, a sermon that I have come a long way, on foot, to hear. I am drained, going to bed. Good night all.'

Everybody in the room stands.

BREWSTER

(to ROGER WILLIAMS)

At your age I thought the same thing, that church and state should not infringe one upon the other, but I grew out of it and so will you.

ROGER WILLIAMS smiles wanly.

SCENE

INT. PLYMOUTH CHURCH – BRIGHT MORNING

ROGER WILLIAMS is giving the sermon.

ROGER WILLIAMS

What is a good man? Who determines a soul's worth? Let me help you with a hint.. it's not the money changer. It's not the captain of the guards nor the governor, nor even the jolly clergyman in his church. It is God who alone can judge. He sorts out the good from the bad on judgment day. So it is simple, the government is not in the business of judging character, of determining who is a good man and who is a heretic. How can government say what is holy and pure and what is blasphemy? A bunch of overpaid bureaucrats? With us today is a very good man, the governor of the Bay colony, the Honorable John Winthrop. Perhaps our great friend can tell us what or who makes a good man.'

JOHN WINTHROP

Well, I'm not sure in every case. It comes from the expression 'all good men and true', which is how juries are called in old England.. I don't have a problem with that. As a judge back home, all day long I judged people.

ROGER WILLIAMS

According to the law you judged them, but you should not be judging their character, since, pardon me for saying, you have proven yourself quite unable to judge a man's character, on more than one occasion, in both your personal and public life. I don't think God the Father has that difficulty.'

JOHN WINTHROP

Fair enough.

ROGER WILLIAMS

You admit to occasional lapses in judgment have left you cheated and wronged, and yet you judge and expel heretics from Boston! I know, I was so expelled! Given the boot by the magistrates, and their leader, sitting here among us.

He looks at the congregation, pointing at JOHN WINTHROP.

JOHN WINTHROP

Were you not expelled from Salem too, but recently? So how long before Bradford sends you packing? Anyway Roger, you know I had nothing to do with those expulsions, those were the Assistants, the magistrates. I'm just the captain of the ship, keeping it afloat by whatever means lie within the laws of church and state, as you would if you were governor. I can't even influence their vote. Meanwhile, trying to drive a stake between partners, church and state, that is a very unpopular stance. You aren't going to get anywhere with that.'

ROGER WILLIAMS

(agitated)

So have you, you've done the same thing by telling the church to stay out of state business, you are separating church and state..

WINTHROP

(laughing)

I'll be thinking about that all the way back home.

ROGER WILLIAMS

They are two sides of the same coin! You're protecting your state from the church, I'm protecting the church from the state!

JOHN WINTHROP is leaving, BRADFORD lends him a horse, CAPTAIN UNDERHILL and his guards on foot.

ROGER WILLIAMS and MARY head out to the pastures to do farm labor and tend their cow. BRADFORD gazes after WILLIAMS and WINTHROP and ponders.

SCENE

EXT. WAMPANAOG VILLAGE – DAY

MASSASOIT and WILLIAMS are bonding, talking in fluent Algonquin in the Wampanoag village.. Children are playing elaborate games, women are weaving and gossiping, warriors are sharpening their javelins and making arrows and tomahawks. ROGER WILLIAMS occasionally writes in a notebook.

MASSASOIT gives WILLIAMS a dugout canoe. WILLIAMS visits different tribes, writing extensive notes.

MASSASOIT

Go make peace with Canonicus. Bring him sugar, he likes sugar.'

SCENE

INT. BREWSTERS LIBRARY – PLYMOUTH

ROGER WILLIAMS with BRADFORD and BREWSTER, turning the notes into a book.

ROGER WILLIAMS

(to BREWSTER)

I've changed my mind about converting them.. they have their way to praise the Lord, they have different names for the almighty and different myths and rituals, but why would that make any difference to an omnipotent God? They have great dignity and a spiritual connection to the earth. And a spiritual connection the sky, for that matter. Do you know that their word for Ursa Major means 'bear'!?

BRADFORD

I'm glad you can communicate with them. Now that you've learned their language I am naming you as the chief negotiator between our tribe and theirs. You will be spending your time on the forest trails.. I will have a man help Mary with your cow and the corn you planted which was eaten by the cow. But be back here on the Sabbath with a good sermon!

SCENE

EXT. PLYMOUTH IN THE SNOW – DAY

On Christmas morning kids are out in the snow playing baseball. BRADFORD is studying Hebrew and the noise bothers him. He steps outside and admonishes the children for taking lightly the Lord's Day. The children immediately become glum and testy.

BRADFORD

There will be no frivolity on the Sabbath.

ROGER WILLIAMS emerges from a trailhead and approaches BRADFORD

ROGER WILLIAMS

That's a perfect example of a governor trying to be a minister. You are making a moral judgment on these children, which is the province of the church.

BRADFORD

You are as annoying as these children. How dare you question my authority in front of them? Keeping Satan out of Plymouth Plantations is a full time job. Perhaps you should spend more time fighting the devil instead of embracing him, then I could concentrate on my job.

SCENE

INT. RUSTIC CABIN – PLYMOUTH – DAY

ROGER WILLIAMS gets a letter from SKELTON in Salem.

SKELTON

Roger, Old Skelton is passing. Salem will soon be short a minister. Sorry to inconvenience and unsettle your life, but they remember your sermons here, they ask for you. Your servant, Rev. Skelton.

ROGER WILLIAMS shows the letter to MARY, she rolls her eyes and starts packing up the kids' things.

SCENE

EXT. FOREST TRAIL

ROGER WILLIAMS and MARY, children and cow in tow, crossing streams, getting help from natives,

SCENE

Interiors and exteriors Salem. ROGER WILLIAMS is in constant motion, yelling from the pulpit, negotiating treaties with the Indians, paddling like mad upriver, down river, into the Narragansett territories to negotiate treaties, desperately tilling and hoeing a meagre patch to feed his growing family. He is nearing exhaustion, but still burns with zeal.

SCENE

EXT. FOREST TRAIL

ROGER WILLIAMS is walking down a wooded path on some mission to stop a war, and in a glade he sees OLD INDIAN sitting on a blanket. OLD INDIAN raises his hand, telling him to stop, which ROGER WILLIAMS does.

OLD INDIAN

(in English)

Trade?

ROGER WILLIAMS

(in Algonquin)

Oh, I have nothing to trade, old man. What do you have?

OLD INDIAN shows a pair of snow shoes.

ROGER WILLIAMS

It's the middle of summer. Tell you what, I'll give you some sugar for them.

He pulls a little bag of sugar out of his pocket.

OLD INDIAN tastes the sugar. His face lights up. He nods and gives WILLIAMS the snow shoes.

OLD INDIAN

(in Algonquin) What are you doing in these woods?'

ROGER WILLIAMS

I am making peace, between the tribes of Canonicus and the tribes of Uncas the Mohegan.

OLD INDIAN

Uncas is a rat, don't trust him.

WILLIAMS

Do you know him?

OLD INDIAN

And I know Canonicus, him I trust.

WILLIAMS

I am glad you trust someone. Who are you, old man?

OLD INDIAN

I am the man I trust. The man all women love. Who are you?

ROGER WILLIAMS

Well I'm not sure I trust you, but I'll tell you my name. It is Roger Williams.

OLD INDIAN

Roger Williams! I have been waiting for you. Massasoit speaks well of you.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Wow, you know everybody. So long! Oh, I forgot, that was a present for Canonicus!
He turns around but OLD INDIAN has disappeared. ROGER WILLIAMS, carrying the snow shoes, continues on his mission.

SCENE

INT. SALEM CHURCH – DAY

ROGER WILLIAMS, on the pulpit, cutting the cross from the British flag:

ROGER WILLIAMS

The cross on the flag is a papist symbol, let us not idolize symbols. We are beyond that,
here in the wilderness.

ENDICOTT looks on, not knowing what to make of this.

ROGER WILLIAMS gives MARY a veil.

ROGER WILLIAMS

St. Paul insisted women wear veils.

Mary worries that he is going crazy, but puts on the veil.

SCENE

INT. BOSTON COURTHOUSE

DUDLEY sitting in the highest chair, JOHN WINTHROP in the chair with the magistrates.

DUDLEY

You are deceived in the man if you think he will condescend to learn from any of you.
But I have summoned him to appear before us and explain his behavior.

ROGER WILLIAMS appears before the General Court.

DUDLEY

The court agrees with Calvin, that the duty of government is to buttress the church, through coercion if necessary. Your preachings are all contrary to that, and if taken to an extreme, would ultimately lead to separating church and state, which would open the door wide for the devil himself, towards chaos and a sinful society.

COTTON

He is a haberdasher of small questions against the state, and the church as well.

ROGER WILLIAMS

(standing to defend himself)

What right have you lawyers to rule on church matters? That is tyranny and arbitrary government.

DUDLEY

Anyone preaching that is corrupt and should be removed. You must take an oath not to spread your corruption from any pulpit in New England.

WILLIAMS

You cannot administer an oath to a corrupt man. It is meaningless.

DUDLEY

No, it has meaning. It makes the man less corrupt. Though perhaps not in your case. Any further attempt to incite rebellion and separatism in the Salem congregation will be the nail in your coffin, be assured you will be sent back to England where the Archbishop will know of your views and will doubtless confine and execute you. You have two months, Roger Williams!

ROGER WILLIAMS looks at JOHN WINTHROP, sitting among the magistrates, who shrugs his shoulders, as if to say 'Nothing I can do'.

SCENE

EXT. FOREST TRAIL

ROGER WILLIAMS, pale and sick, returns to Salem.

SCENE

INT. BOSTON COURTHOUSE

DUDLEY

(reading from a document)

Whereas Roger Williams, one of the elders of the church of Salem, hath broached and divulged divers views & dangerous opinions, against the authority of the magistrates, as

also writ letters of defamation, both of the magistrates and churches here, and that before any conviction, and yet maintaineth the same without retraction, it is therefore ordered that the said Roger Williams shall depart out of this jurisdiction within six weeks now next ensuing..

SCENE

EXT. WINTER TRAIL

CAPT. UNDERHILL and a troop of guards marches through the high snow. Clutching an order from the court, CAPT UNDERHILL bangs on the door of a house. MARY lets him and his men inside.

SCENE

INT. WILLIAMS' HOUSE, SALEM

UNDERHILL quickly sees that except for the children, the house is empty. He is relieved, beckons his men into the house and they warm by the fire. MARY feeds them hot cider and bread. LITTLE MARY is clutching her skirt, thumb in mouth.

SCENE

EXT. WINTER WOODS

There is no trail. ROGER WILLIAMS and two friends are fighting their way through a blizzard, wearing snow shoes which WILLIAMS bought from the OLD INDIAN. He is wrapped tightly in a bearskin coat and carrying a sack of supplies, staggering against the cold, knocking on doors when he comes to a settlement, heading out into the cold again in the morning. Eventually his friends abandon him and he is alone, looking for signs to get to MASSASOIT.

SCENE

EXT. WINTER WOODS -DAY

TWO WAMPANAOGS are hunting and they find ROGER WILLIAMS frozen in a tree trunk. They carry him back to their village to thaw him out.

SCENE

INT. WAMPANAOG LONGHOUSE

ROGER WILLIAMS, stretched out in a bed of furs, hovers between life and death.
MEDICINE MAN is stirring herbs into a pot. As the aroma fills the room, ROGER WILLIAMS suddenly wakes up from his coma. MASSASOIT is there.

ROGER WILLIAMS

What ho, Netop?

MASSASOIT

What cheer, friend!

ROGER WILLIAMS

(in Algonquin)

How long have I been out?

MASSASOIT

Two moons, little brother. The flowers have come, the winter almost past. You are very lucky, your God must be powerful.

WILLIAMS

Of course he is powerful, all-powerful in fact. I'm glad to be alive.

MASSASOIT

Me too. Tell me why you were in the forest at this time of year? I know you were not lost.

WILLIAMS

I was taking a walk.

MASSASOIT

(laughing)

You have friends that have been waiting for you.'

The friends wave.

SCENE May 1636

EXT. PATCH OF GROUND ALONG A RIVER – SPRING – DAY

MASSASOIT is showing Roger and his friends a plot of land, they shake hands on the deal. The settlers start to clear a field and plant corn.. When they are more settled and their number has grown, into the new settlement rides MILES STANDISH and a troop of guards.

STANDISH

You can't settle here.

WILLIAMS

Why can't we settle here?

STANDISH

It is Wampanoag territory, therefore by treaty it is Plymouth territory, and therefore under my jurisdiction. Therefore the answer to your question is two-part. Part one, you have no right to the land. Part two, I am telling you to leave.

WILLIAMS

Captain, I respect both parts one and two. However, my plea is three part. Part one, we've just planted, part two, we have bought the land from Massasoit, part three, really the most important part, I'm sure we can come to an arrangement.

STANDISH says nothing but puts his hand on his sword. Having made his point, he leaves, trotting into the woods, as the dismayed settlers prepare to pack up.

MASSASOIT shows up with two canoes and eight paddles and other supplies.

MASSASOIT

Go to Canonicus. Tell him our alliance is strong.

He points towards Narragansett Bay and north towards the Taunton River.

ROGER WILLIAMS addressed the settlers.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Collect the seeds you have just planted, our roots are being pulled from the earth once again.

MASSASOIT

Leave that, Canonicus will give you corn to seed.

Wearily, the settlers load and board the canoes and head down river to the bay.

SCENE

EXT. NARRAGANSETT BAY.

They cross a large bay and for a while they are out of sight of land. They are engulfed in a fog, following the sounds of seagulls and surf. There is a heavy swell which sometimes sends their canoes planing down the waves. Eventually the fog clears and they come to a rocky outcropping. On top of the rocks a troop of Narragansett warriors are whooping and shouting. One canoe stops but ROGER WILLIAMS paddles forward. He looks up at the warriors with their arrows and lances threatening to shoot them like floating ducks.

A CHIEF shouts down

CHIEF

What cheer, Netop?

ROGER WILLIAMS

What ho, Netop?

CHIEF

Tunna Cowan Tuckoteshana? (Where are you coming from)

ROGER WILLIAMS

Otanic noteshem Matapoissett (from the east)

They land on a beach and the braves gather around, laughing at the threadbare clothes of the settlers, but impressed by the iron tools.

WILLIAMS

Tuckiu Sachem? (Where is Canonicus?)

CHIEF

Peyau. (he is come)

They pull the canoes up onto the river bank and unload, lighting a fire, and wait for CANONICUS.

SCENE

EXT. BEACH ON THE RIVER – MORNING

A great canoe appears, with thirty men paddling and a sail set, with four smaller canoes guarding on either side. Seated in the stern is CANONICUS himself, wearing a modest beaded robe and surrounded by family. They land with great ceremony.

WILLIAMS recognizes the old Indian by the side of the trail, and laughs.

Stepping ashore with CANONICUS is a giant chief. CANONICUS greets the settlers and smiles when he sees ROGER WILLIAMS and his ragged bunch.

CANONICUS

Good to see Roger Williams!

ROGER WILLIAMS

Good to see you, old man. We want to stay here.

CANONICUS

(pointing to the giant)

This is Miatonomi. He is grand sachem of my tribe.

ROGER WILLIAMS

We have met. Miatonomi.. do we celebrate?

MIATONOMI stands with his arms crossed and no expression.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Maybe not yet. Canonicus, dear friend, we have so much to talk about.

CANONICUS

We have council. With food. Council with food.

MIATONOMI nods.

ROGER WILLIAMS

(in English)

Splendid idea.

One group of hunters runs into the woods, another along the shore to collect food for a banquet. A group of women marches into the woods to collect berries, another group go fishing. An Indian brings a deer out of the forest, an arrow through its heart, which goes directly on the fire. They all eat hungrily.

SCENE

EXT. HILLS ABOVE THE RIVER

As the sun sets ROGER WILLIAMS and CANONICUS walk among the hills deep in conversation.

ROGER WILLIAMS

land must be bought from those who use it now, it cannot be taken by force.

CANONICUS

Yes!

ROGER WILLIAMS

And people should not be forced to bow to the God of someone else.. but to their own God as they believe.

CANONICUS

Oh yes!

ROGER WILLIAMS

We will buy from you land for our needs, right here. From the river to the hills there.

CANONICUS

The land is for you, to be a neighbor and friend to Canonicus.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Well that is good. However I have payment for you.

ROGER WILLIAMS pulls out a bag of sugar and hands it to CANONICUS, who looks at it, sticks a finger in and licks it.. a great smile comes to his face, it is his great weakness. He takes the sugar and quickly hides it under his coat so the women don't see it.

ROGER WILLIAMS

We are no longer in the land of our king, we are in the land of Canonicus, and we will pay tribute as you desire.

CANONICUS

Come, we will make a paper. And we will be friends and our children will be friends after us.

SCENE

EXT. HAMLET OF PROVIDENCE

The town is under construction. Roger Williams is on the rough town pier, welcoming a boatload of Jews.

ROGER WILLIAMS

(in Hebrew)

Welcome to Providence.

RABBI

This is the first time we have been welcomed anywhere. How do you speak Hebrew?

ROGER WILLIAMS

My lord and savior was Jewish, as were all his apostles.

RABBI

And so are we! Can we build a synagogue?

ROGER WILLIAMS

There is no law to prevent you.

RABBI

And so it should be. Shalom, my friend.

SCENE

INT. WINTHROP'S HOUSE – BOSTON - DAY

WINTHROP is looking out his window at the house across the street. People of the town, mostly women, go in and out for meetings. Inside the house across the street is Anne Hutchinson, delivering a sermon to true believers.

SCENE

INT. HUTCHINSON HOUSE - BOSTON

A collection of women, some men are listening to ANNE HUTCHINSON, who is pacing up and down, talking.

ANNE HUTCHINSON

'They have you under a spell, they want to control you, telling you that the only path to the heavenly gates is by being good. By 'good', they mean behaving in a way that profits them. They tell you that you have to do things so that the Almighty notices you, and so they don't notice you, so that you don't stand out. This is what Cotton was saying in his sermon, he is teaching a covenant of works. He wants to prevent the wrath of God from destroying Boston. But let me tell you, God is in each of you, telling you what to do. Listen to your God, not to Cotton. You are, we are, each in a covenant of grace with our Lord God. If He tells you to turn around three times, then turn around three times!'

Her followers start turning around three times, in a trance.

WINTHROP looks down from his window in disapproval.

SCENE

INT. BOSTON COURTHOUSE

HENRY VANE, a 23 yo British aristocrat and admirer of ANNE HUTCHINSON, is governor. WINTHROP, VANE, COTTON and DUDLEY are talking in the seats.

COTTON

At first she would discuss my sermons with her friends, that's all it was. She followed me here, hung on every word I uttered. What can I do about that? Now she pulls the rug out from everything anybody says, and my congregation is now her congregation.

WINTHROP

There's nothing we can do about that, Cotton.

DUDLEY

Banishment is always a possibility. It has worked in the past.

WINTHROP

With Roger Williams?

DUDLEY

Roger Williams? Your friend! He built a town on a hillside, near the mouth of the Seekonk River. It is perhaps the ugliest place on earth. A malodorous collection of mean hovels, they tell me, but they worship as they like. And people come, because they don't like being told to go to church, with no choice in the matter, or others because they believe differently from the state church, they are a community of heretics, one step above vermin, a mob unhinged from the Congregational religion of the state. You have Quakers, Jews, Anabaptists, I'm sure there are Diggers and Levelers and Papists, and Africans as well.

WINTHROP

How long can a settlement of anarchists and heretics last? They will all murder each other, and after they have all murdered each other, perhaps we can send some of our people there.'

DUDLEY

If we refuse to arm them, but give guns to the Mohegan and Pequot tribes, these free thinkers will soon disappear. They'll be run off the land.

WINTHROP

That's what the Hollanders want to do to us, have the savages fight their war for them. They're always inciting the tribes to war on us. You suggest we do that to our own countrymen? A little harsh, don't you think?

DUDLEY

It might be a little harsh. Nevertheless, it will be against the law to sell arms to the Providence Plantations. We are passing the legislation tomorrow. The Pequots are at war with us, and soon will overwhelm Roger Williams and the others.

WINTHROP

I'm voting against it. How can they murder each other without arms?

VANE bursts into the room.

VANE

Sirs, I've heard from Roger Williams, the Pequots are trying to make an alliance with the Narragansett.

DUDLEY

We have to stop them! They'll wipe out every town in New England!

VANE

How can we stop it? Who can do that?'

WINTHROP

Roger Williams.

VANE

Well we need his help, then, Let me write a letter.. Can you find a runner? The poor Indian who brought the letter looks quite spent.

-
SCENE

INT. WILLIAMS' HOUSE - PROVIDENCE

An Indian runner knocks on the door. Mary answers it, seemingly accustomed to taking in Indians. The Indian gives her the note, addressed to Roger Williams. Roger is in his small office, working on matters of state, Mary brings in the note. On reading it he stuffs it in his pocket and grabbing a bag of sugar, dashes into the night. There is a storm brewing, but he nevertheless launches his canoe and disappears, heading south into Narragansett Bay, paddling as fast as he can in rough seas.

After a terrible battle with the elements he arrives at dawn wet, exhausted and shaken, at the shore nearest the main village of the Narragansett, having paddled thirty miles against the wind. He knows where he is because he has been there before to negotiate treaties. He runs miles and miles through the woods, finally arriving at the village.

SCENE

INT. NARRAGANSETT LONGHOUSE

Panting, WILLIAMS asks to talk to CANONICUS. The longhouse is filled with a visiting delegation of PEQUOT AMBASSADORS and their guard of warriors, The Narragansett seem uneasy, as if they are being intimidated,

He takes some water and catches his breath.

CANONICUS

Roger Williams! Happy to see you. Tell me what you want.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Great Sachem, do not make an alliance with this this tribe. It means war between us.

PEQUOT AMBASSADORS

They have made the eastern tribes of Massasoit your slaves, and that will happen to all the tribes. Now is time to stop the white man, the last chance.

WILLIAMS

(pulling out the bag of sugar)

Great one, we have an alliance that is stronger than between you and these murderers. We have made trade, we have bought land, you have been in my trading post and taken what you wanted.. your women have metal pots to cook the corn.

CANONICUS

You have a swift tongue.. we will talk tomorrow.

CANONICUS rises and goes to the back of the longhouse, behind curtains, WILLIAMS

tries to follow him but is restrained. He sleeps in the longhouse terrified of the Pequot warriors, who are at war with the English. In the morning, he waits for CANONICUS. The Pequots are constantly looking at him and talking among themselves, letting out great peals of laughter, describing how they would torture him.

SCENE

INT. NARAGANSETT LONGHOUSE

After three days, the giant MIATONOMI emerges from behind the curtain and suddenly starts chasing the Pequots out of the longhouse.

CANONICUS and Williams talk.

CANONICUS

They are looking forward to killing English and taking their guns and armor. Also, they have a witch who will swim below your ships and put holes in them. Be careful, I have seen what they do to prisoners.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Thank you Canonicus, and Miatonomy, you were a sight.

MIATONOMI is warming to ROGER WILLIAMS. Disaster is averted and Roger can take it easy on the return voyage with a following wind back to Providence.

SCENE

EXT. NARRAGANSETT BAY

CAPT. UNDERHILL is sailing with twenty men from Boston to the Saybrook fort, he stops at Providence.

SCENE

INT. ROGER WILLIAMS' house, Providence. The main room is filled with worshippers, he is delivering a sermon, when he is through the house empties and fills with Indians. MIATONOMY enters and sits across from WILLIAMS. They discuss strategy against the Pequots.

CAPT. UNDERHILL enters and sits at the table.

CAPT. UNDERHILL

The Saybrook fort is under siege, the Pequots have tortured and killed a number of Gardiner's men. The river and the towns are not safe, they are murdering and kidnapping. Endicott came with an expedition that just marched around and made them madder, stirring up a wasp's nest. They killed Tilley by cutting off his hands and putting coals in the stumps.

WILLIAMS talks to MIATONOMY, who nods gravely.

WILLIAMS pulls out a rough map of southern Connecticut and Narragansett Bay.

ROGER WILLIAMS

The chief and I have come up with a strategy. The main Pequot village is here, and another fort is over here somewhere, where their Grand Sachem would be. If you land an expedition, they will simply disperse. So you would have to take them by surprise, which you could do if you went overland from the Narragansett territories over here. It is a long day's hard march, but Miatonomy has offered 50 men and guides.

CAPT. UNDERHILL

Thank you great Sachem. I would have to convince Gardiner and Mason, which won't be easy, but that's a good strategy. As a man of peace, you shouldn't be so good at war.'

ROGER WILLIAMS

Captain, you must promise me to spare the women and children.

CAPT. UNDERHILL

I can only speak for myself and my command, on that point, but I will relay your concern to Captain Mason.'

SCENE

EXT. INDIAN VILLAGE – NIGHT

The Pequot village burns to the ground, total mayhem, slashing swords, flying arrows, muskets firing, women, children and old men moaning and dying.

SCENE

INT. COTTON'S LIBRARY - BOSTON

DUDLEY

This issue with Anne Hutchinson is all your fault, Cotton, preaching that covenant of grace. People should earn redemption, they should have to work for it, and you say you have it whether you work for it or not, that it is given, but only to a few. That's what gave Hutchinson all those ideas. It's an abomination what she's been saying, calling our dear clerics frauds for teaching a covenant of works. And Vane fell for it, even our Captain Underhill, they all listen to her. Worse than Roger Williams. They are the Quaker plague all over again.

COTTON

I woke her spirit, there is no doubt. She hung on my every word, and every word was about the spirit.

WINTHROP

Roger Williams saved us from certain disaster, and yet his banishment continues. I see that our heretics are thriving in Rhode Island. They've built another ship to fill with mutton and wool. I have a good idea, we'll send them Anne Hutchinson. We'll be rid of her whole crew. Talk about heretics, talk about Separatists, the Antinomians are worse than the Quakers. I'll do it next year when they vote you out of office and I will be governor once again, God willing.

DUDLEY

Oh I hate democracy.

WINTHROP

An odd sentiment about a process that elevated you to governor.

DUDLEY

If you arrest Hutchinson, there will have to be a trial, and she will be allowed to speak. Her tongue is silver and sharp.. I caution you, she could sway everyone against you.

WINTHROP

I'll take that chance.

DUDLEY

Now the Narragansett are the most powerful tribe in this part of the world, and they seem to be iron tight with Roger Williams. Doesn't that worry you?

WINTHROP

He is a man of peace.

DUDLEY

Canonicus will go to war at some point, and after that, God willing, the whole area will be under the jurisdiction of the Massachusetts Bay Charter, after we give them a good bashing.

COTTON

Amen to that. If the people of God fall away from God, there will be physical calamity and great destruction, the Almighty should be appeased through humble prayers, and the government must ensure that the people are humble and prayerful, in order to protect them from God's vengeance.. Blasphemies are a public danger. We must protect the town of Providence and the Rhode Island settlers from themselves. I believe you gentlemen agree?

WINTHROP

WeIIIIIIIIII.. we ask for a unity, but not a uniformity. There is some leeway in how people behave, one person's blasphemy is another's holy word. That's not a reason to invade another colony. But we do not want to tempt the vengeance of God, here or elsewhere.

COTTON

Men by nature are slothful, lecherous, depraved creatures. We must create a civil government that helps them overcome that and help them live in the light of Christ.

WINTHROP

Roger Williams would agree with that, except he says that is best done by separating church and state, which is absurd. And Anne Hutchinson promotes anarchy, saying she is so blessed by the Lord's grace that our laws do not apply to her. We'll see about that.

SCENE

INT. HOUSE OF ROGER WILLIAMS – PROVIDENCE.

Anne Hutchinson arrives with a troop of followers, a number of her own children, cattle, wagons. She moves into the Williams' modest house while her new house in Portsmouth is being finished.

MARY

Stay as long as you like, though the house doesn't have very much room. The children
can all share a bed.

ANNE HUTCHINSON

Thank you, Mary. You and Roger are a light in the wilderness.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Tell us about your trial.

ANNE HUTCHINSON

The magistrates are all like puppies, their tongues hanging out while Satan welcomes
them. They have lost their way, and God will bring a terrible sword down on them,
especially Winthrop. God will smite him.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Governor Winthrop is a very pious man, we are very close.

ANNE HUTCHINSON

We'll don't stand too near him, because a bolt of lightning is going to send him to hell.
Anyway, he hath banished us both from Boston, and the Lord will judge him for that.

ROGER WILLIAMS

But it remains us who have been banished and uprooted, lost our property and friends,
suffered hardship. I think John Winthrop is untouched by vengeance and quite
comfortable in Boston.

ANNE HUTCHINSON

Almighty God has burned my house, but only in order to give me a better one. I rejoice
in him, and He in me.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Sure

SCENE

1640

There are over 120 souls in Providence. Roger Williams is the governor and has set up a
fur trading post near Warwick.

1642

Coddington tries to get a royal charter for Aquidnet, now called Rhode Island, and Roger
has to sail to England.

ROGER WILLIAMS

(to Mary)

I have to go, no choice. Otherwise we will simply be taken over. The United Colonies are circling like sharks, ready to tear up our colony and devour it. I have two Winthrops, the father to the North and the son to the West, watching and waiting, and Bradford to the East, and Coddington to the south. I must go to London.

MARY

But you aren't allowed in Boston, and we have no money. How will you get there?

ROGER WILLIAMS

I'll go to New Amsterdam, then on by Dutch ship to old Amsterdam, then cross the channel to England. I've had time to brush up on my Dutch. I'll try to get my book published.

MARY

The Key? Is it finished?

ROGER WILLIAMS

I'll finish it on the boat.

SCENE

ROGER WILLIAMS in New Amsterdam, meets the mayor, then in Amsterdam, where he meets SPINOZA, then on to London.

SCENE

Interior London JOHN MILTON's study. JOHN MILTON, HENRY VANE, DEXTER THE PRINTER and ROGER WILLIAMS are discussing WILLIAMS' manuscript.

MILTON

(reading from the manuscript)

Dexter, you must read this. "A little key opens a box, wherein lies a bunch of keys. One candle will light ten thousand." That's very nice. "Nature knows no difference between Europe and Americans in blood, birth, bodies. God having one blood made all mankind." A pretty thought. Have you met old Dexter, my publisher? Well, he's a printer, but also a wonderful editor.

SCENE

EXT. ALONG THE THAMES – DAY

JOHN MILTON and ROGER WILLIAMS walk by a bookstall. 'The Key to the Language of the Americas' is prominently on display. MILTON buys a copy.

MILTON

Let's see what the great protector thinks about this. Everyone else seems to like it.
They turn a corner towards Whitehall.

SCENE

INT. OLIVER CROMWELL'S OFFICE - WHITEHALL.

CROMWELL is dressed as a field general, surrounded by weapons and officers.

ROGER WILLIAMS

(to CROMWELL, who is reading 'The Key' and barely paying attention)

You should really come see for yourself. The great advantage of liberty of conscience is the government doesn't have to police the minds of citizens.. it saves time and money and innocent blood.

CROMWELL

Governor Williams, your domain is a baby's nursery. I must rule all of England, including Ireland and Scotland, and we must decide what the religion of England will be. And it will be your religion too.

ROGER WILLIAMS

That was the very issue with the headless king, he was the head of the church. Now the church is headless as well and that is good for everybody!

CROMWELL

Not for the Scots.. they want their Prebysters to have say so. They're willing to go to war about this.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Another war over religion. You know, in Providence, everybody has freedom to decide, and everybody gets a vote on who will govern them.

CROMWELL

Who's everybody?

ROGER WILLIAMS

House holders at first, now some women, widows who are head of household.. And the printers can print what they want, and the thinkers can think what they want.

CROMWELL

That wouldn't work in Britain. The thinkers think very bizarre and dangerous thoughts.

MILTON

(offended)

I beg your pardon?

ROGER WILLIAMS

The people should not be subject to law or power without their consent, and that applies to how they worship. Let me speak to Parliament.

CROMWELL

(sneering)

You are quite the democrat, Governor Williams. I will ask them but it won't do you any good. They'll vote with the Scots. Where's your charter? I'll sign it.

ROGER WILLIAMS presents the charter.

CROMWELL

(reading the charter)

It guarantees freedom of religion and expression. Well, that's going to be quite an experiment.

SCENE

INT. BRITISH PARLIAMENT

ROGER WILLIAMS has the floor, uses it like a trained preacher.

ROGER WILLIAMS

The blood spilled, the wars and massacres, the persecution for cause of conscience, we have put a stop to that in Rhode Island Plantations, and you can do the same here.

Don't create a state church, England is in a blessed period with out such a devilish creature! The Anglicans cannot burn another heretic, only excommunicate him, and excommunication would not bother me one bit. The Anglican Church is corrupted by politics. Political power comes from the people, not from the Almighty, and therefore political power should not be used to ram religion down peoples' throats, as down the barrel of a gun. It is against the teachings of our blessed light the Lord Jesus Christ to persecute people for their beliefs.

SPEAKER

Does anyone second the motion of Governor Williams, to maintain the status quo vis-a-vis the lack of an official state religion? Does anyone support no state religion?

LORD 1

The question is not whether or not to have a state religion, of course we need a state religion. The question before us is which particular interpretation of Anglican practice to make official.

ROGER WILLIAMS

None of you is in the ministry, why are you deciding these things for people who should be able to decide for themselves how to worship?

LORD 2

(to much shouting)

I don't care which religion people practice, he's right, it's none of my business. What I object to is separating church and state. That should not be advocated, for it would bring the wrath of God down on England. We cannot tolerate just any religion at all. God would sink Great Britain, there would be the English Sea where England is now.

ROGER WILLIAMS

But that's exactly what we should advocate. Martin Luther said that the government..

SPEAKER

I'm afraid your time is up.

ROGER WILLIAMS

..the government extends no further than over the bodies and good of their subjects, not over their souls. Thank you gentlemen.

He is jeered out of the upper house.

SCENE

INT. DEXTERS PRINT SHOP – LONDON

There is a messy pile of manuscript sheets on a table, ROGER WILLIAMS is feverishly re-writing, DEXTER is setting type. Out of the chaos comes a book. Title page on screen.

"The Bloody Tenet for Persecution for Cause of Conscience"

NARRATION

(in voice of Roger Williams)

The civil sword shall not make one Christian.

Forced worship stinks in the nostrils of God

*Boast not proud English, of thy birth and blood
Thy brother Indian is by birth as good.
Of one blood God made him, and thee, and all.
As wise, as fair, as strong, as personal.
By nature, wraith's his portion, thine, no more
Till grace his soul and thine in Christ restore.*

*Make sure thy second birth, else thou shalt see
Heaven ope to Indians wild, but shut to thee.*

SCENE

EXT. LONDON STREET - NIGHT

THE HANGMAN sets flame to a large pile of ROGER WILLIAMS' books.

SCENE

EXT. SHIPBOARD

ROGER WILLIAMS sailing into NARRAGANSETT BAY clutching the Charter for Providence Plantations and Rhode Island. Standing next to him, staring out to sea, is DEXTER the printer. His printing press is slashed to the deck of the ship.

In the distance they spy a small armada of canoes and small boats. The CAPTAIN calls for arms to be brought up on deck. They approach to see fourteen canoes of settlers, friends and Indians greeting him in celebration. MARY is clutching an infant, a son born while he was away. ROGER WILLIAMS raises the Charter to the skies and thanks the lord, mutely. The people cheer.

SCENE

INT. NARRAGANSET LONGHOUSE

ROGER WILLIAMS and CANONICUS are meeting to discuss matters of state. CANONICUS is dying.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Great father, you brought peace to the land, in a troubled time.

CANONICUS

As did you, Roger Williams.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Our friends and neighbors, to the north, to the west, to the east, they are uniting against us again. I am herding cats trying to keep our alliance strong. These friends, wolves dressed as sheep, want to eat us for breakfast. What do I do Great Sachem?

CANONICUS

Your God is all-powerful. Ask him.

CANONICUS dies. ROGER WILLIAMS gently takes the blanket that he had given CANONICUS and lays it over the body. Time is frozen in the Narragansett village.

SCENE

NARRATOR

King Charles II has taken the throne in England and the whole situation is unstable for puritan colonies. The United Colonies arrest Miatonomy and hand him over to the Mohegan chief Uncas who cuts his throat.

SCENE

EXT. WILLIAMS' house, Providence Rhode Island. ROGER WILLIAMS is leading a prayer group out the front door and down to the river.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Let the Lord of peace, to whom we pray, whose second coming we anticipate, be our guide in this wilderness. Let us be baptized fully aware of the unbreakable bond we are making with our Lord of Lights, not as an infant, but as a deciding faithful accepting God's grace. Let us have a Baptism, let us march to the water's edge and immerse ourselves and accept God's grace! I will be the first!

ROGER WILLIAMS hands a cloth to MARY, who dips it in the river and baptizes her husband. The entire congregation then marches into the river fully clothed, singing a hymn and splashing about. ROGER WILLIAMS after being baptized, baptizes them, dunking their heads under water. They are singing a hymn, blessing out.

ROGER WILLIAMS

And having accepted this grace, how could we put fellow men and women into bondage? We have said no to the ultimate debasement of human beings, no slavery, we have made that the law of the land, by the consent of the people, put to the vote in this democracy, but Mister Coddington and the rest are so dissatisfied with their overflowing coffers they insist on practicing this horrible violation of human rights in Newport, to further enrich themselves. Slave ships sail from Newport straight to Africa.. they take their hard-won liberty and use it to enslave others. We will stop them, the Lord will be our Guide!

CONGREGATION

Amen!

ROGER WILLIAMS

I feel the love of God in you.

CONGREGATION

Will you be our leader and teacher?

ROGER WILLIAMS

My duty is to the civil government, not the church, since you have elected me your Governor.. My church is in my heart, and I must remove myself from this congregation of saints. You have all declared your faith consciously, with full knowledge of God in the highest! You have leaders among you to spread the rapture, to prepare for the second coming of Christ, but I must remove myself.

CONGREGATION

We will spread the rapture! We will prepare for the second coming!

ROGER WILLIAMS

(to Mary)

That sneak Coddington got his own charter, and it has to be vacated. They all want to be slavers,. They want to set up Newport as a slave port. We have to stop them. I have to go back and scrape and beg the king..

MARY WILLIAMS

How can you go back? With what?

ROGER WILLIAMS

I'll have to sell my trading post. I have no choice. Massachusetts, Connecticut, Plymouth, they are waiting for the first sign of weakness. (pointing to the North, West, East) Winthrop the younger has a charter that eats up half the colony, making us part of Connecticut, and Coddington is Governor for Life of Rhode Island. If we are to survive we must fight back with all our strength and treasure and guile.

MARY WILLIAMS

I just want a house, to raise our family, to farm and survive. You need this entire country! Let them have it! Just stay here, without moving, for one day.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Mary, I also want that. But I am a statesman with no church. My duty is to the people, and I must separate that from my duty to our Lord. But first I have to go to Plymouth to testify in that murder case, the murder of Sassamon. The guards of Massasoit are coming with me, then I will return after the murderers are hung, and then I go back to London. This won't take long, I will return in the spring. I will send you money when I can.

He starts to put on his shoes, Mary helps him dress. In the main room are ten Wampanoag warriors.

SCENE

EXT. PLYMOUTH TOWN – SLEEPY SUMER AFTERNOON

An Indian runner arrives, knocks on BRADFORDs door. BRADFORD emerges, blinking in the bright sunlight.

BRADFORD

Someone call for Samoset to translate..

INDIAN RUNNER

(not needing a translator)

Roger Williams! Dead!

BRADFORD

That can't be true.

INDIAN RUNNER

Yes, yes!

People are gathering around, incredulous, mortified, though some knew he had it coming. The town settles into shock.

The sounds of a lusty hymn come from the woods, catching peoples' attention. Down the main street marches ROGER WILLIAMS, in a cloak and hat, a great cane, with his guard of warriors. He has taught them a hymn.

*'God makes a path , provides a guide
and feeds in the wilderness
His glorious name while my breath remains
O that I may confess'*

The people stand slack-jawed at the transformation of their former preacher, grateful that he is alive, mad at having been tricked.

BRADFORD

I heard you were dead.

ROGER WILLIAMS

I don't think so. Then I would be in paradise. Instead I am in Plymouth.
He turns around and his honor guard is laughing at him.

BRADFORD

Welcome, then, Governor Williams

ROGER WILLIAMS

Thank you Governor Bradford

SCENE

EXT. SHORE OF THE RIVER AS IN FIRST SCENE _ NIGHT

Providence is burning in the background. 72 y.o. ROGER WILLIAMS , wearing a sword as Captain of the militia, shouting across the river:

ROGER WILLIAMS

We can still make peace!

METACOM

They wanted to take our weapons.. our land, our culture, we had no choice but to fight, to destroy you.

METACOM turns his back and his warriors disappear into the woods. Roger Williams stands with his rag tag militia behind him He sees that Christ did not come, chaos came. As a peacemaker he is staring at failure. Meanwhile the Indians have disappeared.

SCENE

EXT. PROVIDENCE TODAY – DAY

Standing at a statue of Roger Williams.

NARRATOR

Providence was rebuilt, but the tribes never recovered, their former territories carved up among their conquerors and new European arrivals. The English King James II after taking over New Amsterdam tried to take over the New England colonies and revoke their charters, appointing the long dreaded Governor General. This arrangement only lasted one hundred years before the New England colonies rose up against the king. After the War for Independence, the new government, at the insistence of Thomas Jefferson, put freedom of speech and worship into the First Amendment, as the ultimate right of the citizens of the United States. Jefferson was a big fan of Roger Williams. The vote to ratify the first amendment was very close, many important founding Americans did not want a separation of church and state. The group that brought in the necessary votes were the Baptists, who were now spread throughout the

thirteen states. The law banning Roger Williams from Massachusetts was finally revoked in 1926. Secular Democracy, however, has spread throughout the world, except in Islam and China and a few other places. Other than that, it is the way we govern each other.

In France it is called 'laïcité', or freedom of expression.

When Roger Williams died, he was put into a rough casket and buried in his yard. When years later they went to dig up his remains and give him a proper burial, all they found was an apple tree. The root of the tree was dug up and it oddly resembled a man, so they kept it, thinking the apple tree had grown into Roger Williams, down his spine and out his toes.

SCENE

THE NARRATOR takes them down to the vaults that hold the root. Fade out on bustling Providence, people tapping on their cell phones.

end