After all the drama that went down over the Constitution, we needed someone with “unimpeachable integrity” who could not only be a symbol of unity, but also a commanding chief executive. Hmmm I wonder who that sounds like?

OH RIGHT! GEEEEEORGE WASHINGTON! GWash was so awesome that people who were iffy about the Constitution agreed because they knew he’d be at the helm.

Hamilton wanted this for a long time. He was writing letters to Washington about it and they spoke very candidly about the importance of the job and all the responsibility. Washington, of course, needed some convincing - he even said the idea of being the president made him feel “a kind of gloom” - and Hamilton was always there to nudge him in the right direction.

HAMILTON VS. JOHN ADAMS

While Hamilton was being all supportive of Washington, he was at the same time antagonizing John Adams.

- Abigail Adams told John that anything less than Vice President would be beneath him, and he agreed so he ran for VP.
  - This was a potentially problematic because:
    - 1) under the Constitution, the presidential electors cast two votes apiece, but they didn’t vote for Prez and VP separately. Meaning, whoever came in second was the Vice President (Thank you, Madison for that tidbit in Act II)
    - 2) If there was a tie, the vote went to the House of Representatives
    - 3) AND! Because of this, someone campaigning for VP might actually end up President depending on the votes.
  - George Clinton was also in the picture and that made Hamilton nervous. To him, this whole America thing depended on Washington being president. So he tried to get voters away from Clinton but feared they’d go to Adams and not Washington.
  - At this point, Hamilton and Adams didn’t know each other personally. They knew OF each other and maybe they didn’t have the highest opinion of one another, but there was no bad blood. Well….Not. Yet.
  - In fact, Hamilton told Madison he thought Adams was trustworthy and would make a good VP.
  - Still, it was ALL ABOUT GWASH. So Hamilton went around convincing people not to vote for Adams and he got his way. Gwash was prez (69 electors), Adams was VP (34 electors).
  - Even though Adams was VP, the fact that he didn’t get a lot of votes was a huge blow to his ego. He even considered resigning altogether. On the other hand, Hamilton only spoke to about seven or eight electors - meaning he didn’t have THAT MUCH to do with Adams only getting 34 votes.

Yeah… and then there’s the fact that Adams didn’t know that Hamilton was going around taking votes from him. During this time, he even asked Hamilton if he’d mentor his son Charles - which ended up happening. So as you can imagine, John Adams was not at all thrilled when he found out what Ham was doing with the votes. He thought it was completely unforgivable.

- Adams was FURIOUS and Hamilton couldn’t believe Adams was so upset. To Ham, it wasn’t about hurting Adams it was about helping Washington. This was just the beginning of their drama.
But seriously, Adams would know if he was a target of Hamilton’s. Just ask George Clinton…

HAMILTON VS. GEORGE CLINTON (Round two! FIGHT!)

Now that Hamilton prevented Clinton from being president, he shifted his focus to killing his political career entirely. He thought that even as governor, Clinton would do everything he could to undermine the new government.

- Hamilton teamed up with Philip Schuyler to make this happen.
- They went to Bardin’s Tavern on Broad Street to have a big meeting and appoint a challenger. (can’t find the exact address, unfortunately)
- They suggested Robert Yates run against him in New York.
  - YES! THAT Robert Yates. The Robert Yates who screwed Hamilton during and after the #ConCon. (whattup Nicole and the AHA Society!)
  - Turns out he was totally down with the Constitution after it was ratified in New York, so Hamilton forgave him and figured he’d be a good choice to run against Clinton.
- You know who else was at that meeting? Oh ya know, just Yates’ close personal friend AARON BURR. “Yes sir, we keep meeting”
- Now that Hamilton had a squad - shout out to Hollis/@HamitonsSquad! - he was ready to go.
- He once said, “In politics, as in war, the first blow is half the battle.” So he hit Clinton first and he hit him HARD.
  - …with a series of sixteen anonymous letters, because of course. This time he wrote under H.G.
    - He attacked everything about Clinton: his personality, his narrow minded views, his character, his manners, his military career - he said he could only find proof that Clinton was in the field ONE TIME.
    - Hamilton wanted New York to continue to be the capital and apparently Clinton said no because he didn’t want Congress to be there.
- Federalists loved everything Hamilton was doing. They supported him 100%.
- The downside is that Hamilton made it personal. So while Clinton never wrote back himself, his goons did and they attacked Philip Schuyler.
- For whatever reason, Hamilton always seemed so overly sensitive to the fact that people would get personal even though - and sorry to sound like a child - he started it.
- Regardless, Yates lost and NY became bitterly divided.
- Clinton hired Aaron Burr to be state attorney general.
  - Chernow says Clinton didn’t like OR trust Burr, but he did it all in the name of politics
  - This is the first time Hamilton felt betrayed by Burr

WILLIAM TELL

Something came out under the name William Tell that COMPLETELY ripped Hamilton apart. Most importantly, it was the first time Hamilton would be accused, in writing, of adultery. Even better, it said…!

- Page 275: “Your private character is still worse than your public one and it will yet to exposed to by your own works, for [you] will not be bound by the most solemn of all obligations! ******
  - Chernow says those seven asterisks must have signified the word “wedlock” !!!
  - Cue the “oooooohhhhhhhhh” from The Reynold’s Pamphlet because MY GOD.
WASHINGTON IS PRESIDENT

- When Washington was being paraded to New York from Mount Vernon, the poor guy was in crazy debt. He had to take out loans with crazy interest rates just to make the trip to BE THE PRESIDENT. Whaaaaaaaaat?
- He was always trying to find a balance between being head of government but also being a man of the people. He’d be polite, but have dignity.
- 10,000 peeps showed up to watch him being sworn in. Hamilton watched from his balcony on Wall Street.
- Washington was… a little awkward. He was embarrassed by the rigamarole and it was obvious that he was uncomfortable with the whole thing.
- Hamilton and Eliza went to the first Inaugural Ball on May 7th, 1789.
  - Eliza and Washington danced. They had a very nice relationship. But even as they danced, she noted that he never stopped being president.
  - As LOJ says, “every American experiment sets a precedent”
  - Everything from what the president should be called, to if, how, and when he should take visitors, and everything in between lead to serious debates.
- John Adams tried to be mimic royalty and that outraged republicans and lead to mocking from George Washington. Sit down, John. Calm down.
  - Adams lived in this “enchanted mansion” known as Richmond Hill, which is where Burr would eventually live.
  - He rode in an expensive coach, had servants, the best wigs.
  - He wanted Washington to be called “His Highness, the President of the United States of America and Protector of their Liberties.”
  - Even though John Adams really did just want to show respect for the new government, people thought maybe he wanted a hereditary monarch so he could eventually keep everything in the Adams’ Family (ha, not The Addams Family)
  - People dubbed him things like “His Rotundity” and “Duke of Braintree.”
- Washington asked Hamilton for help with the presidential details. Ham’s suggestions:
  - He’d see visitors once a week and only for a half hour, and no repeat visitors.
  - Private dinners should be limited to six or eight people and Washington shouldn’t linger.
  - Washington would meet with senators but NOT congressmen.
- Washington wasn’t a lighthearted guy. Everything was SUPER serious and stuffy and flat out BORING.
- He also had seven slaves shipped up from Mount Vernon to help his white servants. BLEHHHHHHH.

NEW YORK AND THE CAPITAL
- There was a big and widening gap of rich and poor in New York. The more things change, the more they stay the same AMIRITE.
- People feared that if the capital stayed there, the country would go back to into aristocratic ways.
HAMLETON AND CONGRESS
  - Hamilton watched everything veeeeeeery closely.
  - When it first met, the House allowed people to watch. Hamilton realized the power of curiosity. At the EXACT SAME TIME, Senate met upstairs in secret. They did this for the first five years.

Things were really up in the air. For a while, Washington WAS the executive branch. Everyone was kind of lost because they didn’t have anything on which to base their moves. The financial state was especially uncertain.
  - The government had already suspended interest payments on most of its foreign and domestic debts
  - American bonds traded at big discounts compared to European exchanges, meaning people didn’t really have a lot of faith in the new system. But in spite of all of that, things were slowly but surely taking shape.

OH, HELLO ANGELICA!
  - Angelica Church comes back from England to see GWash’s inaguration
  - She married John Barker Church, which is a LITTLE tricky because he’s a member of the British Parliament.
  - Angelica was super fashionable and lived in a world where tons of drinking, gambling, and “discreet adultery were routine.”
  - She was lonely and missed home. Page 282: She wrote to Eliza, “What are Kings and Queens to an American who has seen a Washington!”
  - She was over the social scene and envied the city and conversations her sister must be having. She was, all together now… lookin’ for a mind at work, work!
  - “Read excerpt from page 282 with Angelica’s garter and sassy Peggy”
  - A few of her children got sick so she had to go home and it was a TOTAL SCENE when she left. People couldn’t handle it. Eliza couldn’t even be there to send her off and the people who WERE there were messes. Hamilton wrote to Angelica, “We gazed, we sighed, we wept… Some of us are and must continue, inconsolable for your absence.”
  - Hamilton and Eliza actually bonded over how much they both loved Angelica. Ham writes again, “Betsey (STAHP, BETSEY) and myself make you the last theme of our conversation at night and the first in the morning.”
  - “Read Eliza excerpt on page 283”

GEORGE WASHINGTON GETS SICK
  - In mid-June 1789 Washington came down with something that nearly killed him.
  - Started as a fever, then there was something in his thigh - either a tumor or anthrax, which was a bacterial disease farmers would contract from animals
  - Either way, it was awful and he was in terrible shape and they had to do the operation without any anesthetic and HE SURVIVED.
JULY 4TH, 1789
- GWash had to sit this one out because OH RIGHT HE ALMOST DIED. What a warrior.
- Hamilton gave a speech on his friend General Nathanael Greene, who died three years earlier
- Because he’s Hamilton, he couldn’t just say nice things about his friend. No, he had to go and insult the Southern Army. Greene was known for making something out of nothing, so Hamilton decided to openly mock the Southern militia.
  - He also mentioned the the slaves at every right to hate their owners, and the owners deserved to be hated. Which, come on, that’s 10000% legit. Still, it was controversial at the time.

OH HEY SPEAKING OF CONTROVERSY!
- New York needed two senators and there was a plan with Hamilton, the Schuylers, and the Livingtons and Hamilton... kinda screwed it up. Okay yeah no he totally did. Sigh.
  - A Burr biographer said of the powerful NY families: “The Clintons had power, the Livingtons had numbers, and the Schuylers had Hamilton.”
  - Here’s what happened:
    - General Philip Schuyler was a certainty for one of the seats. He promised the Livingtons that he’d support James Duane for the other seat.
      - If this went through, the Schuyler/Livingston alliance would’ve been great and isolated George Clinton. It never happened.
    - Hamilton didn’t like Duane for the seat, so he opposed him and backed Rufus King instead
      - King was handsome, from Harvard, he and his wife socialized with the Hamiltons, he opposed slavery.
      - Hamilton convinced Phil Schuyler to back him, too - because he needed both his friend AND father in law to hold senate seats.
    - This was a MASSIVE eff you to the Livingtons
      - George Clinton jumped in and SECRETLY helped King get elected, just so the Livingstons would be on Clinton’s side.
    - The whole thing weakened Hamilton in his home state and created a LOT of tension.
“TREASURY.” “...LEZGO.”

- Remember when Washington kept passing over Hamilton during the Revolution? It almost happened again with the Treasury Secretary position.
  - Washington went to Robert Morris first. Remember him? He’s the guy who basically financed the entire Revolution. So yeah, I can see why Washington would want to repay the guy - in every sense of the word. Plus, he knows his stuff. He’s a financial genius. ... Until he wasn’t. “...Oh shit.”
  - He declined and suggested Hamilton. Chernow says Morris cited “private reasons” but it was because dude was on his way to bankruptcy and debtor’s prison. YIKES. He eventually served in the Senate instead. Oh good. Perfect.
  - Once again, Washington seems surprised that Hamilton would be a good fit for finances. Remember even back during the war, he seemed to have no idea that Hamilton was a financial genius. I still don’t get how that happened. Especially when Chernow says his appointment to the head of Treasury seems completely inevitable.
  - It wasn’t going to be an easy job. Everything that had to be done would cause drama. PLUS, it was all based on the British model and we all know how everyone feels about THAT.
- Treasury Secretary was a HUGE pay cut for Hamilton. He’d only be making $3,500/year, which was a lot less than what he was making as a lawyer.
  - His friend Robert Troup thought taking the job was a bad idea since Hamilton needed all the money he could get for his ever-growing family. NOPE.
  - Instead, Hamilton ended all side jobs while he was in office and stayed totally focused.
  - Fun fact: you know who didn’t do that? Washington, Jefferson, and Madison
- They had to keep this all a secret because all of Ham’s rivals would try to take him down
- He was nominated and confirmed on the same day. He wanted to hit the ground running to establish power. So...
  - The next day, he arranged a $50,000 loan for the federal government from the Bank of New York
  - The day after that (Sunday) he worked at the office all day
  - The day after THAT, he went off to Philly to get another $50,000 loan
- Ten days after he was confirmed, the House of Representatives asked him to prepare a report on public credit and gave him 110 days to get it done. This was actually the PERFECT job for Ham. He was the only person who had the right tools: financial knowledge, he was a lawyer, he had experience as a public servant, he knew the constitution in and out. He was the guy.

WASHINGTON CREATES A CABINET
... from scratch because nothing existed yet! It wasn’t in the Constitution, so Washington had to invent it. It took a while for things to fall into place.

WASHINGTON AND HAMILTON ARE UNSTOPPABLE ONCE AGAIN
- Chernow says they had complementary talents. They couldn’t do apart what they accomplished together.
- Washington had amazing judgement, he rose above politics, he had an assertive presence. He was the epitome of presidential. They also balanced each other out emotionally
- But at the core of their relationship, they wanted the same thing: to see the thirteen states become a single American nation.