

BUT, MR. ADAMS (EDITED)
1776

Adams, spoken:

All right, gentlemen, let's get on with it. Which of us will write our
Declaration of Independence?

Franklin:

Mr. Adams, I say you should write it
To your legal mind and brilliance we defer

Adams:

Is that so? Well, if I'm the one to do it
They'll run their quill pens through it
I'm obnoxious and disliked, you know that, sir

Franklin:

Yes, I know

Adams:

So I say you should write it Franklin, yes you

Franklin:

Oh no!

Adams:

Yes, you, Dr. Franklin, you
but, you, but, you, but

Franklin:

Mr. Adams, but, Mr. Adams
The things I write are only light extemporanea
I won't put politics on paper; it's a mania
So I refuse to use the pen in Pennsylvania

Others:
Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania, refuse to use the pen

Adams:
Mr. Sherman, I say you should write it
You are never controversial as it were

Sherman:
That is true

Adams:
Whereas if I'm the one to do it
They'll run their quill pens through it
I'm obnoxious and disliked, you know that, sir

Sherman:
Yes, I do

Adams:
So I say you should write it, Sherman, yes you

Sherman:
Good heavens, no!

Adams:
Yes you, Roger Sherman, you
but, you, but, you, but

Sherman:
Mr. Adams, but, Mr. Adams
I cannot write with any style or proper etiquette
I don't know a participle from a predicate
I am just a simple cobbler from Connecticut

Others:
Connecticut, Connecticut, a simple cobbler he

Adams:
Mr. Livingston, maybe you should write it
You have many friends and you're a diplomat

Franklin:
Oh, that word!

Adams:
Whereas if I'm the one to do it
They'll run their quill pens through it

Others:
He's obnoxious and disliked; did you know that?

Livingston:
I hadn't heard

Adams:
So I say you should write it, Robert, yes you

Livingston:
Not me, Johnny!

Adams:
Yes you, Robert Livingston, you
but you but you but

Livingston:
Mr. Adams, dear Mr. Adams
I've been presented with a new son by the noble stork
So I am going home to celebrate and pop the cork
With all the Livingstons together back in old New York

Others:

New York, New York, Livingston's going to pop a cork

Jefferson:
Mr. Adams, leave me alone!

Adams:
Mr. Jefferson—

Jefferson: NO!

All:
"And we solemnly declare that we will preserve our liberties being with one mind resolve to die free men rather than to live slaves." Thomas Jefferson, on the Necessity of Taking Up Arms, 1775...Magnificent!

Adams:
You write ten times better than any man in Congress, including me. For a man of only thirty-three years, you have a happy talent for composition and a remarkable felicity of expression.

Jefferson:
But Mr. Adams-

Adams:
"Reason first—You are a Virginian, and a Virginian ought to appear at the head of this business. Reason second—I am obnoxious, suspected and unpopular. You are very much otherwise. Reason third—You can write ten times better than I can."

(Jefferson -reluctant- and Adams shake hands, all applaud)