



**Episode 942: Alexander Hamilton, Worse Than You Thought: Hidden History with Brion McClanahan**

**Guest: Brion McClanahan**

**WOODS:** All right, I'm excited about your forthcoming book and we're going to talk a bit about it. Today we'll talk about, I don't know, roughly the first half or so of the book, and then the second half we'll talk about when it comes out. The second half is where we see more of the, we might say the Hamilton legacy, as it goes through the 19th and into the 20th centuries. We'll see how Hamilton's thought is reflected in major court decisions and in so-called constitutional law. Here today we'll talk about Hamilton himself and his ideas and his own career. Now, of course, you are writing this at an auspicious moment in that there is an unbelievable Broadway phenomenon where you can't get into that show for fewer than four figures a seat, as far as I understand. It's amazing that it has –

**MCCLANAHAN:** Yeah, oh no, that's actually why I wanted to write it at this time. I looked at that and said – you go into a Barnes & Noble – It's not just that. You go into a Barnes & Noble and they have like a Hamilton gift pack at the front store. You can get your Chernow Hamilton, your CD of the *Hamilton* musical, you get a t-shirt or a bumper sticker – I mean, it's absolutely nuts what's going on with Hamilton right now. It's crazy. I can't believe it.

**WOODS:** And what I like about your – Well, there are many things I like about your book. I gave you a blurb for it. I'm really happy about it. I really, really like it. It should be read by everybody, of course. But I like the way you set the stage and you show that we're not just arguing about something 200 years old and some dusty old ideas. These really affect the way we live now. And you talk about the way different people have tried to claim Hamilton. Now of course our side has never tried to claim Hamilton, with the exception of my friend Michael Malice, who's a wonderful guy and is just grotesquely wrong on one thing. But that's okay because Rothbard said everyone's entitled to one deviation. Now, I don't know what yours is, Brion. I'll figure it out one of these days. But Malice's is Hamilton. We're going to overlook that.

But the neoconservative right has claimed him, but then on the other hand, there are people on the left who've claimed him. And of all the things you can say about Hamilton, he certainly was not a leftist. Even though he wasn't for limited government in the Jeffersonian sense, that doesn't mean he's on the left. I mean, there are other categories you could think about here. So to me it is funny to see the left try to claim him. But talk to me about that. What do these different groups of people see in him?

**MCCLANAHAN:** Well, I think it's actually – I would say there probably are some libertarians that like Hamilton, kind of the Cato Institute or kind of Beltway libertarians –

**WOODS:** The centralizing ones. Yeah, that is true. I withdraw that. You're right.

**MCCLANAHAN:** And that's because, when you look at this idea that Hamilton embodies everything in America, in some way – if you talk about, as I move forward in the book, you mention how I carry this into the 20th century, and it's with, say, the 14th Amendment that you have this idea that the central government has to enforce liberty. And so Hamilton really didn't think about that at the time. He in fact was against the Bill of Rights. He didn't think it was necessary.

But this whole thing that Hamilton can be everything to everybody comes down to the fact that he was a nationalist. And so if you look at the left, they're nationalists. If you look at the neoconservatives, they're nationalists. And so when you have that particular type of ideology where it comes down to, Okay, I believe that the central government has to do X, Y, and Z. It has to do the X, Y, and Z that I like, but not the X, Y, and Z that somebody else likes, but as long as it's doing what I like, I'm okay with that.

And of course, Hamilton was behind that, because it's just constitutional machinations. It's the idea that we have implied powers. It's the idea that Hamilton believed that the states should be reduced to corporations. He actually said that in June of 1787. Let's just reduce the states to corporations, essentially. I mean, I'm paraphrasing, but he used that word, corporation. And that has meaning.

And so when you look at all these centralizers, all these nationalists, the neoconservatives who want to go out and have a strong central authority in foreign policy or maybe just a different variation of the welfare state – they believe in it in some ways. Or maybe they want to have a strong central authority when it comes to moral legislation or something like that. Those things work for them.

And on the left, you're right; Hamilton wasn't one of their guys, though Miranda has tried to make him that when you're pro-immigration and these type of things. But on the left, they of course love implied powers. They love the fact that you can go out and use the Necessary and Proper Clause as a You Can Do Anything You Want to Do Clause, or the General Welfare Clause – or as Conyers called it, the Good and Welfare Clause. I've looked in the Constitution for that. I can't find it, but of course he said it was the Good and Welfare Clause. So you have that idea that we can have the big welfare state, that we can have a strong executive – that's also neoconservatives. Everybody loves the king, the American king, and so Hamilton loved that idea too.

So all these things fit with the left and the right, which is why Hamilton is a darling of everybody. And as you say in the blurb, when somebody is so loved by everybody, there's a real problem with that. That guy is a real villain. And I say he is the greatest villain, and you said it too, in American history, without a doubt.

**WOODS:** Okay, well, I don't know; I could debate that. But certainly he's on my list. Now, I do want to point out the obvious here. It is true that Brion is having his lawn mowed, and I thought we could wait till later, but then I thought, No, because that means every time you hear Brion's voice, you'll hear — it's like a metaphor for how he grinds up bad arguments. You'll hear a machine in the background; you'll think, Yeah, that's Brion McClanahan. So all right, so we're keeping it in. The lawnmower stays in.

**MCCLANAHAN:** I can blame Hamilton for that too. It's all his fault. So there we go.

**WOODS:** Funny thing is I'll have to tell Chris who does the audio, who can actually take stuff like that out, I want the lawnmower in. It is the McClanahan mower. I want that in there.

All right, let's talk about assumption, because you added a detail in this that is very often left out, which is the fact that at the convention, this topic was covered. And they made a particular decision about whether to say anything in the Constitution about assumption or not. All right, so let's start — again, bear in mind that probably 17% of listeners of the show don't live in the U.S., and so they didn't go to school learning about Alexander Hamilton, so I want to make sure we don't assume anything, so to speak. So even with assumption we don't want to assume anything. So assumption, what is assumption specifically, and what were the constitutional issues involved here?

**MCCLANAHAN:** Okay, well, assumption is the idea that — of course if you look in the Constitution, Article XI clearly talks about the new general government assuming the debts of the old general government under the Articles of Confederation. Everyone knew that was going to happen. But the issue was the state debt and how was the general government going to handle the state debt. So all of the states had gone out and wracked up debt during the American War for Independence. They had borrowed money just like the central authority had.

And several of these states, namely Virginia most importantly, had already paid off this debt. Massachusetts had not. And this is actually why you had Shay's Rebellion in 1787, because the state of Massachusetts had upped their tax revenue, upped their tax rates to a point where people couldn't pay it. And so you had all these farmers who said, Look, we can't pay that tax. We're going to have a tax revolt.

And what's interesting about that kind of aside, people like Sam Adams said these guys should be hung for that, because yeah, you can't say there's no taxation without representation because you're represented. During the war, we weren't represented, so we were opposing taxes. But now you've got to pay them. And I think that was overall how many people thought about taxes in the early republic.

But getting aside from that, so the idea we're going to assume the debts of the states. Now, Hamilton wanted to do it for a number of reasons. His surface reasons were, Look, this is going to build a line of credit. We need a good line of credit because that would ensure that our finances are secure. If we can prove that we'll pay people back, we'll have a strong economy. Also, it would be immoral not to pay back the Dutch or the French because these guys helped us out, so we've got to do that. But underneath all that, under the surface, Hamilton I think knew exactly what he was doing. He

wanted to assume the debts of the states because that would render the states fairly impotent in this new general government. He was reducing them to corporations.

So Hamilton's plan in this case went before the Congress, and there were people that looked at it and said, Wait a second here. You can't really do this. There's nothing in the Constitution that authorizes the general government to assume the debt of the states. And in fact, they were 100% right, because Hamilton and Madison had actually had a conversation about this. And it's written like this: during a long walk in August, Hamilton and Madison went out and had a conversation about state debt, and they decided that they wouldn't even bring it up. They would deal with that later, because if they brought it up at Philadelphia, it would be outright rejected.

So here we go. We're in the new government now. We've got the Constitution ratified. Hamilton's now Secretary of the Treasury, which he thinks he's actually prime minister; he handles all divisions of government. But he proposes to assume the debts, and voila, he does exactly what Madison and Hamilton had decided in August 1787. But of course there's nothing in the Constitution and some people bring this up. Wait a second. You can't do this. You can't assume the debts of the states. It's not written in there.

Of course it passes through, but there was some talk about how this was going to work. Because of the opposition, Hamilton was very worried that this would not go through. So one day, he's outside of his home near Jefferson's home, and Jefferson sees him, and Jefferson had just gotten back from France. And he writes that he saw Hamilton was haggard looking, he was disheveled, he was just pacing, he was beside himself. And Jefferson knew exactly what was going on here, because he was worried assumption wasn't going to go through. There was enough opposition they could block it.

So Jefferson calls a dinner meeting. Look, why don't you come over? We'll invite Madison; we'll talk about this. And so they do that, and of course, what we get out of that is the Washington, D.C. Compromise. Madison agrees to drop any opposition to assumption in return for the capital moving from New York and then later Philadelphia to a southern location, which became Washington, D.C. So Jefferson essentially and Madison did a great disservice to the Constitution. They accepted this implied power to assume debt in return for the capital, and of course you reap what you sow, because implied powers became the thing that Hamilton kept hammering then over and over again as he was Secretary of Treasury.

**WOODS:** So in other words, you would have to come up with the idea of implied powers in this situation because they actively rejected the idea of inserting assumption language into the Constitution.

**MCCLANAHAN:** Yes, absolutely. Absolutely. I mean, Madison and Hamilton in a private conversation knew that no one would accept it. It would actually be flat-out rejected at Philadelphia, and so they never even brought it up because they knew nobody would agree with it.

**WOODS:** Yeah, yeah.

**MCCLANAHAN:** It's amazing that here we are, just a couple of years later, and voila, we've got assumption [laughing].

**WOODS:** Yeah, so here's the thing. Now, of course, given that the convention occurred behind closed doors — it's customary to say that we look for the interpretation of the Constitution from the ratifying conventions. People couldn't have known what was said at Philadelphia. But Hamilton knew what was said, and he knew that there was a deliberate decision made not to insert this language, and yet after it's all over, he's still trying to get this thing, even though he knows that the drafters didn't want that power put in there.

Now, the next issue that tends to come up when we're looking at Hamilton in the early 1790s is the subject of the national bank, and what I think I'm going to do is I'm going to skip over that for now and maybe we'll return to it later, seeing how we do on time, only because I feel like it's kind of been covered to death. Either I've covered it or Gutzman or whatever, in a lot of different contexts, so we'll come back to it if we have time — not that it's not important; it's just that I feel like that one is one thing we have covered more than these other things that I want to hit, because we're going to do the first six chapters of your book, or at least not go beyond that.

So let's go to Chapter 5 and talk about — I like how you name it "The Rebellion." Now, we know this as the Whiskey Rebellion, and you made reference to it a moment ago, where you had people who are protesting against a tax that was lawfully instituted by people's elected representatives, and they just didn't want to pay it. So what are the circumstances here, and how is Hamilton a villain? I mean, aren't these people after all in the wrong?

**MCCLANAHAN:** Well, I think this is a very interesting story in a couple of different ways. So you're right. There was a tax, an excise tax passed on liquor, and Hamilton advocated this because he thought we need some revenue. Now, the funny thing about that is earlier, during the time Hamilton was arguing for ratification, he said, You know what? We're not going to pass any excise taxes. Those things are unnecessary. We're going to run the government on tariffs. So don't really worry about these excise taxes; we're not going to do that.

So his promise lasted approximately three years, because he said that those things are only going to be used in an emergency situation, that only in war or something of that nature would we need to have an excise tax. So he's lying, and I think that's one thing that I hope everyone gets out of the book, is Hamilton is a monumental liar. He does it over and over and over again. That's why the first chapter is "Hamilton versus Hamilton." Who is the real Hamilton? And how do we know — which Hamilton do we believe when he says something?

So Hamilton lied about these excise taxes, so we're going to get an excise tax. And of course the point was to tax farmers. Now, why would Hamilton want to tax farmers? Well, because these people don't support him anyway, so who cares if you tax your opponents? This is exactly what the general government does now. Hey, we don't care if we go after the other side. Those political opponents of ours, we'll just get them. But of course the problem with that is that when your guys aren't in power, they're

going to come back and get you if you have this very powerful central authority to do that.

So Hamilton gets this excise tax, and these farmers all throughout the West — it wasn't just Pennsylvania; it was North Carolina, it was into New York, it was Maryland. These farmers start resisting the tax because it's going to hurt them the most. They have to take their extra crop at the end of the year, their extra produce that they can't sell, and they make it into whiskey or liquor. And of course, what this will do — they need this stuff for revenue. So Hamilton has this tax, and he knows. I mean, these are people that don't support him. These are people that aren't going to vote for the Federalists, so he doesn't really care if he hurts these people or not.

So these people are making this whisky, and they just stop paying — they basically nullify the tax because they don't pay it. They start bootlegging and doing whatever they can. They start shipping the whiskey over the mountains avoiding the tax collectors. In some cases, they start inflicting violence on tax collectors. They tar and feather them, steal their property, etc., etc. And in one very high-profile situation, a tax collectors house is actually assaulted by a militia, this kind of ad hoc militia. They go and they shoot holes through his house. They're trying to find this guy so they can round him up and run him out of town on a rail, so to speak. And there are some people killed, so there is some violence going on in the western parts of Pennsylvania and North Carolina.

And so Hamilton wants something done about this. This is a real problem. So very early on, he starts telling Washington, Hey look, we've got to do something about these tax dodgers, because these people are a threat to America. They're a threat to the United States and the stability of the general government. Well, Washington is actually in some ways sympathetic, particularly with the people in Virginia and North Carolina. These are his people.

So eventually the focus becomes Pennsylvania, and that's where the issue gets very interesting constitutionally. So we would all say, Okay, this is a legally passed tax. You've got to pay the tax. But how to enforce that, how to make people pay the tax becomes the issue. Hamilton thinks they should just march the Army out to western Pennsylvania and round up these rebels and throw them in jail or execute them for treason, whatever the case maybe be. But the Supreme Court Chief Justice at the time, John Jay, and the governor of Pennsylvania, a man named Thomas Mifflin, both agree that that would be entirely unconstitutional.

Now, you might be thinking to yourself, How is that the case? How could this be unconstitutional? Well, Washington had a meeting of his cabinet, and his attorney general at the time, who was — it was no longer Thomas Jefferson. It was Randolph. And they all, Jay and the governor of Pennsylvania say, You know, if you look at the Constitution, it says you can only send the Army into a state with the permission of the state itself. So the governor's standing there and he's saying, I'm not going to give you permission to send the army into Pennsylvania and the legislature's not going to do it either. And John Jay agrees. He says this is unconstitutional. What the farmers are doing is unconstitutional, but sending the Army in is also unconstitutional, so we've got to come up with some other way to solve this problem.

And Washington is actually fairly sympathetic to that position. He says, Yeah, I don't want to make it look like we're going to send the Army in, because that's exactly what opponents of the Constitution said would happen. We're going to get this Army and we're going to march these people in the states and coerce the people. I don't want to do that.

So essentially what he does is he issues a proclamation giving them a carrot and a stick. If you stop, we're not going to do anything. If you don't stop, though, we're going to have to do something about this. We're going to have to send in the Army.

So finally, with enough violence, Hamilton gets his way. And he only gets his way because James Wilson of Pennsylvania, another Supreme Court justice, agrees that this has created a situation that's too large to control with the local authorities. Now, Wilson – people probably don't know who James Wilson was. This guy was also from Pennsylvania, and he hated these western farmers because they had always been his political opponents. This was political payback. If he can send the Army in there and show these guys that he's boss or the federal government is the boss – Wilson was a strong nationalist. This was exactly what he wanted. So he uses a part of what's called the Militia Act to ensure that the Army can be marched into the west and they can take care of these farmers. And that's exactly what happens.

But when they get out there, they don't really find anybody to arrest. Hamilton is gung-ho. He goes out and he starts rounding people up and interrogating people, but nope, these people are protecting each other. And they arrest a few people, but everyone is either pardoned or they're just let go for whatever reason. So this turns out to be a great big disaster, in some ways, ultimately for Hamilton because it's a public relations nightmare for them. In fact, Jefferson starts laughing at Hamilton and Washington. You sent out the Army and nothing really happened. Isn't that funny?

Of course, Democratic-Republican clubs across the West and across the United States closed down because these people were called terrorists and we can't trust these people. So it does have the desired effect in that the general government now can send in the Army to a state, whether the Constitution says they can or not. So if you move forward, you get people like Andrew Jackson, and then you get Abraham Lincoln, and on down the line. Now if there's a "terrorist situation," the local authorities and state authorities just roll over and let the Army march on in, and they don't even try to handle it themselves. We saw that in Boston when you had the Boston bomber there. These people just allowed martial law to take place in their city without really giving the feds permission or not. They just did it. And so this is the great problem with this Whiskey Rebellion ultimately.

**WOODS:** And then not to mention just a few years later when Jefferson is elected, the whiskey tax is repealed, so the whole thing – so they went through all this rigmarole to get a few years' worth of tax that most of the country more or less evaded and one part of the country was up in arms about. I mean, was it worth it to them?

**MCCLANAHAN:** Well, I think it wasn't necessarily about the tax. It was about the supremacy of the federal government. This was what Hamilton wanted, and he knew it. The tax was being reduced. They were trying to give them some leeway in even collecting the tax. And ultimately, they didn't even try to collect it. So this was all

about federal supremacy. It's all about the ability of the general government to send in the Army to coerce a state, and that's exactly what happened here.

And I think that's the dangerous part about it. This is why I say Hamilton screwed up America, because again, you look at the trend from there. So we can now march an army into a state without any permission from the legislature or the governor. Nobody even blinks an eye out that. Oh, you want the Army to come in? Sure, just march them on in. We don't care. Who cares if the local police or something could have taken care of this. No, no, no. Just send in the tanks, because we've got a fugitive on the loose, so just send them on in and we'll accept people banging on our doors with guns in our faces because we've got to find this one guy. I mean, you saw that in Boston. You see it any time there's some type of crisis that involves the potential for military action. This Hamilton precedent in the Whiskey Rebellion, or as I call it, the Rebellion, is the beginning of all this, and I think that's what's so dangerous about it.

**WOODS:** Let's talk about Hamilton's views on not foreign policy really, but on the conduct of foreign policy and the role of the president in that, because then I want to lead into the discussion of course of the Neutrality Proclamation under Washington.

**MCCLANAHAN:** Yeah, so Hamilton, this is the last – it's called "The Proclamation," the chapter is titled that. And so Hamilton was actually bordering on treason when he was Secretary of Treasury. And a lot of people think, Wait a second. Hamilton's bordering – I've never heard this before. And in fact, if you read Chernow's biography, he dedicates about a page and a half to this incident. But it's a really important thing that happened.

So right after Hamilton becomes Secretary of Treasury – and it actually happens on September 11th, 1789. The first great September 11th disaster in American history was appointing Hamilton Secretary of Treasury. Hamilton was the only – well, Knox was around, but essentially Hamilton thought that he was the government. He was not only Secretary of Treasury; he was Secretary of State; he could actually act as Secretary of War in the Whiskey Rebellion. He thought he could do everything. But because Jefferson wasn't there yet, Hamilton thought that foreign policy should be handled by the Treasury Secretary because, you know, trade is part of the Treasury. We've got to have trade –

So Hamilton actually starts carrying on this very clandestine conversation with a guy named Beckwith, and Beckwith was a British agent. And he was introduced to Hamilton through his family, the Schuyler family, his married family in New York. And so Hamilton has a conversation with Beckwith, and Beckwith actually calls Hamilton Agent Number 7. I mean, think about that. Hamilton is given a covert number, Agent Number 7, because the conversations they're having are the exact opposite of what both Washington and Jefferson wanted to happen in foreign policy, because Hamilton tells Beckwith, You know what? I want us to be allies. I want the United States and the British to be buddies. I think that would be the best situation for the United States. And you know, Madison's going to be against it, but uh, we'll get around that, because I mean, the guy will come around. We'll persuade him this is the best thing to do for us.

And so Hamilton carries on this very long correspondence with Beckwith over several months, and as the situation in Europe becomes very dangerous – you get the French Revolution at that point and the United States could be dragged into a war with Great Britain because supposedly we're in a permanent alliance with France – Hamilton is still telling Beckwith, Yeah, yeah, we want to be allies with the British. Don't worry; don't worry. I know it sounds like Jefferson's on board with the French, but I want us to be on board with the British. And he actually lies. He never tells anybody about this, and at one point in a cabinet meeting, he kind of lets it out of the bag just a little bit that, Well, maybe I've been talking to a British agent. But he doesn't actually devolve all of the things that he's been doing.

And so this is essentially treason. He's working against the official foreign policy of the United States, and eventually he accepts neutrality. Now, I know you want to talk about that, so I'll stop there. Eventually he accepts neutrality because he thinks that's in the best interest of an alliance with the British and the United States as well. So I'll let you pick up on neutrality there and ask the question on that.

**WOODS:** Well, I like the fact that you point out in your book that people like Jefferson were also more or less of the opinion that neutrality was a good idea, but that there was something more to it than that. There were a lot of things that might be – see, when you have principles, it makes life interesting and more complicated, because there are a lot of things that might be good ideas but can't be carried out in a certain way and you wouldn't want them to be carried out in a certain way. Or some things that are bad ideas, but that you would allow people to implement because, well, that's their funeral. Whereas there are some people who would take the opposite view and say, I really don't care what the procedure is; I just want my preferences to win the day. And so that seems to be the Hamilton approach.

Now, I've heard – I think Gutzman disagrees with you about the constitutional difficulties of the proclamation, but tell me about them. What's the deal – what's the big deal if George Washington declares neutrality? Isn't that a nice thing?

**MCCLANAHAN:** Well, right, obviously neutrality in this situation was the preferable course. Jefferson, as you said, actually liked the French, but you had Citizen Genet out there outfitting American privateers to go sack British ships, and he's saying, Genet, you've got to stop. You're going to drag us into a war. That's not what we want. Yeah, okay, there are people in America that like the French and you've received this great reception and people are wining and dining you, but you know what? You can't do that. So eventually they tried to kick Genet out, and of course if he goes back to France his head's going to be chopped off with the guillotine, so they allow him to stay here for asylum and then he becomes an American citizen ultimately.

But the point came: okay, what can we do about this? So Washington decides with both Jefferson and Hamilton's blessing, though Jefferson was more lukewarm than Hamilton, to issue a Neutrality Proclamation. So here's the president, he's going to come out and say, We're going to be neutral. But he doesn't actually use that language. He's very careful about that. And that was with the assistance of Jefferson.

But the issue is: can the president unilaterally issue a proclamation? I mean, there's nothing in the Constitution that says the president has a proclamation power. And if

you look at what Hamilton said in *Federalist 69* – again, which Hamilton do you believe? He compared the king with that of the American president and essentially says, Look, the king is not going to have control of the Army or Navy or foreign policy in that way, war, unless the Army is actually called into service. And the Congress does that.

So Jefferson and Madison are a little bit suspicious about this power, but what really sets him off is when Hamilton goes out and starts writing essays promoting this proclamation under the pseudonym Pacificus. So he writes these essays, and Jefferson gets it and says, This guy is mad. Essentially what he wants is an American king. Madison, you've got to take up your pen. You've got to refute this thing because you're the only one that can do it. So Madison doesn't really want to do it. He says, Eh, I don't know. But Jefferson keeps insisting, so eventually Madison writes a rebuttal under the pseudonym Helvidius. So you have the Pacificus-Helvidius debates.

And essentially what Madison says is, Okay, a foreign policy is not only under the direction of the president; the Congress has a role in this too. And so because Congress can declare war, Congress then is the only entity that can declare peace. And they're the only entity then that can say we're going to be neutral or not, we're going to have some type of neutral foreign policy. Only Congress can do that. So I think what you're looking at here is Madison is saying this is the role – the Congress has to have a concurrent role with the president. The Congress also – the Senate also ratifies treaties, and basically what you've done is skip that process. You're just saying we're neutral; we're not going to get involved in anything. And they've done this without a peace treaty; they've done this without some type of treaty at all; they've done it without congressional approval.

So Madison's point, and I think Jefferson's point too, is that Congress has to have a role in this, and because of that, the president just can't unilaterally issue proclamations. That is monarchy and that's not what we have in the United States. We have a president that is restrained in his powers. Even Hamilton argued that in *The Federalist 69*, so what we're doing here is getting an American king, and that's very dangerous for the future of American liberty.

**WOODS:** I will point out, by the way, there is one good thing in all this, that when Hamilton says in *The Federalist* that, Don't worry about it, here's another way that the American president won't be like a king: he won't be directing foreign policy. He's not doing the following things. He deploys the military once the Congress has declared war, and stuff like that. That stuff is left out whenever somebody like John Yoo and all these presidential supremacists start arguing about foreign policy. They love to cite Hamilton and then they leave out the most critical passage of all, which is that one.

**MCCLANAHAN:** [laughing] Right.

**WOODS:** I actually had to go and correct John Yoo on my blog, and then I said, But you know what? What are the chances that a guy with the knowledge of John Yoo doesn't know about this passage? Right? Not very good, I would say.

**MCCLANAHAN:** No, I think this is purposeful, because just like when people cite the Supremacy Clause but leave out the words "in pursuance thereof," they just – "All laws of the United States shall be supreme law," but they leave out that one part, "in pursuance thereof" of the Constitution, because that just ruins everything for them. So if you're going to leave something out, leave out the part that's going to destroy your entire argument. If you're going to say the president has all these powers, leave out the ratifying period when Hamilton came out openly and said the president doesn't have control over the Army. Unless it's called natural service, I can't just unilaterally deploy them anywhere.

And this is essentially what Madison is saying. You can't then just unilaterally say we're going to be at peace either. You can't do that. It's a great idea, and in fact, the Congress then passes a Neutrality Act. They act and say we're neutral. And that's exactly what they were saying. Congress should do this, not the president. And that's the issue here. If we're going to have a king, we should just call it a king. And in one way, Hamilton actually said that. Look, we're going to get a king anyways – he said this in 1787. We're going to get a king. We might as well just call it that from the beginning, and that way it takes care of all this problem we're going to have when we're getting there, people are going to resist it. Just call it a king now, and then we'll skip all that stuff [laughing]. So I mean, he's right. We've got a king, essentially. We're still having this debate because they said they didn't want one. So it's very interesting how all that worked out.

**WOODS:** I want to talk about how you're promoting this book given that it's not coming out until mid-September 2017. I like what you're doing. And it's not anything that the publisher put you up to, right? Regnery? That was not their idea.

**MCCLANAHAN:** No, it wasn't at all. And Regnery's typical model is wait to do your promotions until the book comes out. Wait till September 18th to do anything. And the book industry is changing, and you go out and you look at blogs and other people, what are called mom blogs, these women that have these blogs on how to do different things, how to be sufficient in these ways. And they have *New York Times* bestselling books because they've created a social media following and then they tell people, I'll give you a stand mixer if you just – roll you in a drawing for a stand mixer if you just preorder a book. Or I'll give you a free eBook if you just preorder a book. And so they get all these people to preorder books, and when the book actually comes out, wow, I mean, it's got some buzz to it already because people have already preordered the book.

And so that's the way that publishing and promotions are going, so I wanted to try to get in on that and try it and see if this would actually work. This is the first time I've tried this, so hopefully it'll pay off.

**WOODS:** Well, I love it, so what I want to do is – First of all, everything we're talking about is going to be linked at [TomWoods.com/942](http://TomWoods.com/942). We're also going to link to [BlameHamilton.com](http://BlameHamilton.com). That's yours. That's beautiful. [BlameHamilton.com](http://BlameHamilton.com). And you go there, it's got a nice page, and then it redirects to a page on your site about the offers, the things people get. So you're giving away – depending on if the preorder one book or two books, you're giving away a valuable eBook, you're giving away a whole course on Hamilton, and you're entering people into a drawing. I mean, yeah, go

preorder the book now, because if you order it on September 19th, Brion will still be happy and you'll still get a nice book, but you won't get any of these bonuses, so why would you not do this? This is a crazy thing. Of course you should do this.

**MCCLANAHAN:** Right, I can't understand why people would be so delusional not to order it now. I mean, this is –

**WOODS:** [laughing] Yeah, delusional. That's the word.

**MCCLANAHAN:** You know, if you're going to buy it – the great thing about that is when you preorder it, they don't charge you anything for it right now. You can say, I don't have the cash right now. They won't charge you till September 18th when the book comes out, so you can save all your pennies for all these days. And you know what? Don't be scared by that 29.99 price. It's going to be lower than that.

**WOODS:** Yeah, it is.

**MCCLANAHAN:** Amazon's always 10 bucks lower than that or so, so you're not even going to pay 29.99. You'll probably pay like 20 bucks for it or 19 bucks for it when it comes out. So that's going to be awesome. And then as you said, if you preorder one book, you get an eBook. If you preorder two or more, I'll give you the eBook as well, and I'll give you the six-lecture course on Alexander Hamilton that goes into the first half of the book. I mean, this is awesome stuff. You're basically seeing half of the book before you even get it. So I mean, how great is that?

**WOODS:** Yeah, it's brilliant.

**MCCLANAHAN:** And of course the giveaways. I have three winners. So everyone that preorders gets put into a drawing, which we'll do. If you are the grand prize winner, you get a master level membership to Liberty Classroom. I mean, that is a huge value. Now, if you're already a master-level member, then I'll give you a gift card to Amazon and it's going to be a nice gift card. Same thing with second place, you get a basic plus membership, and third place a basic membership. So if you're already a master member, then you're going to get a gift card there too. So even if you're saying, I'm already a master member, I already like these guys, but you could get a gift card out of it then. I mean, it's free money. So you get the book, you get the class, you get the eBook, and you might get some money. Or if you're not a master-level member, a master-level membership to Liberty Classroom. How cool is that? I mean, it's great stuff. That's a big value.

**WOODS:** Yeah, it is. And I assume most people listening know Liberty Classroom is the site that we started back in 2012 to teach real history and stuff, and it is flourishing and doing very well, and sure, yeah, you'd be crazy not to be a member of that. So BlameHamilton.com is where you should go. And of course be a member of Liberty Classroom, because you'd be taught by Brion. After listening just to this brief conversation today, why would you not want to be taught by Brion?

So I hope this is a smash success for you, because I love the material and I love the way you're promoting it. It is in line with everything I try to teach folks on here

relating to how to use online resources to promote yourself, and you are doing it. This is exactly the right way to do it. So reward Brion for his knowledge and for blazing a trail entrepreneurial by giving away these bonuses.

So BlameHamilton.com. Plus wouldn't it just be fun to type "BlameHamilton.com" into your browser? Just that alone. Even if you don't want any bonuses, just go do that right now, and Brion, I'll talk to you soon.

**MCCLANAHAN:** Okay, thanks, Tom. I appreciate it. Oh, by the way, if you tweet, use the #blamehamilton. I do that too. So that's the new hashtag: #blamehamilton. You can just blame Hamilton for everything. The government stinks so #blamehamilton. Just blame Hamilton for it all. Let's start a trend there and we can try to fight back against this Miranda nonsense of the *Hamilton* musical.

**WOODS:** I am sitting here with my jaw having just dropped at the sheer brilliance of #blamehamilton as a hashtag [laughing]. That is so great. Plus it'll get under Michael Malice's skin. It serves a purpose on so many levels. All right, thanks again, Brion. Good luck.

**MCCLANAHAN:** Thanks, Tom. I appreciate it.