

TREASON OR REASON (The Rest of the Story)

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INTRODUCTION

Ben[**edict Arnold**] is conflicted. He joined a revolutionary east-coast startup, [**The Continental Army**], after 7 years of working in the industry. It was all he knew other than a short stint as a pharmacy assistant [**an apothecary**]. He truly believed in the company and its mission [**the American Revolution**]. He was all in, but organizational politics have brought him to a difficult decision.

MAKING A NAME

Ben[**edict**] was a rising star in the [**The Continental Army**]. He moved from one success to another, but the powers that be [**Congress**] didn't seem to appreciate him.

His first assignment was a raging success. He volunteered to work with Ethan [**Allen**] on a project in New York [**The siege of Fort Ticonderoga – May, 1775**]. This was one of the [**The Continental Army's**] first big wins. It was not the biggest; the project at Boston [**The Battles of Lexington and Concord – April 19, 1775**] was the biggest. But everyone agreed that the New York project was just as significant and Ben[**edict**] had shown himself to be an effective leader.

When he sought to take on a new **project** [**Attacking Quebec**], he was passed over, but that did not stop him. He lobbied his boss, George [**Washington**], for the opportunity to work on the project, and eventually George [**Washington**] granted his request and gave him a promotion [**to Colonel**].

He briefly worked with [**General**] Richard [**Montgomery**] on a joint-venture [**Battle of Quebec – December, 1775**] in Canada. It did not go as planned. Richard [**was killed**] and Ben[**edict**]'s health was affected [**He was shot in the leg**], but he earned the respect of his colleagues and another promotion [**to Brigadier General**].

His next project did not go as well, either [**Battle of Lake Champlain – October 1776**]. The competitive environment was such that success was unlikely. Against all odds he salvaged a bad situation [**15 small vessels, 90 guns, and 500 sailors against 27 ships, 79 guns, 8 howitzers, and 697 sailors, 1000 soldiers and 650 Indians**] without losing his shirt. Nevertheless, this project felt like a major setback

[80 killed and wounded and 120 captured vs. 40 killed and wounded for the British].

He was then assigned to **[General] David [Wooster's]** failing project **[skirmishing with forces led by Royal Governor, General William Tryon]** in Ridgefield, Connecticut. David **[Wooster]** was badly understaffed **[700 to 1000 Americans to 1,800 British]** and he left the company **[Wooster was killed in battle]**. The project was only saved due to Ben**[edict]**'s leadership **[Arnold rallied the troops, created a defensive line, and had a horse shot out from under him in the battle]**. Ben**[edict]** wouldn't have classified it as a win, but he again averted disaster. These experiences were frustrating, but it was nothing compared to what happened next.

PROVING HIS WORTH

He was assigned to work with **[General] H. L. [Horatio] Gates** in New York. **[General Gates]** was a retired **[British officer]**, and arguably the most experienced member of the **[Continental Army]**. He was openly contemptuous of **[General Washington]**. He felt that he could do a better job **[as Commander-in-Chief]**, and in some ways, he was right. He was an excellent administrator and he had created much of the **[Continental Army's]** infrastructure, so Ben**[edict]** was pleased when he found out that he was to work with H. L. **[General Gates]** on one of the **[Continental Army's]** most important projects. But pleasure soon turned to disappointment.

After disagreements over the direction of the project, H. L. **[General Gates]** demoted Ben**[edict]**. H. L. then made a series of terrible decisions that nearly destroyed the project **[He was losing the Battle of Saratoga – October, 1777]**. Ben**[edict]** acted quickly to recover the project **[Disobeyed orders and rallied the troops]** when all appeared to be lost, snatching victory from the jaws of defeat, but again, it cost him terribly as his health declined further **[Shot in the leg a second time]**.

All those who were witnesses knew that Ben**[edict]** was the hero, but H. L. **[General Gates]** took all of the credit. To add insult to injury, the board even gave H. L. **[General Gates]** a bonus **[Congress struck a gold medal in his honor]**, while Ben**[edict]** was ignored. Moreover, this project was critically important because success here brought in a new round of investors **[the French who sent 12,000 soldiers and 32,00 sailors]** that saved the firm **[Continental Army]**.

CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES

Ben**[edict]** was a bit of a polarizing figure, and he knew it. People either loved him or hated him. Some thought he was a true believer **[in the revolution]**; others thought he was corrupt **[lining his own pockets]**. Ben**[edict]** found the latter charge

preposterous. How could he be corrupt when he had sacrificed so much? He had worked tirelessly for years for the firm [**Continental Army**], and he had yet to be paid beyond his expenses [**Congress owed him £10,000 for salary and losses—or \$370,000 in current U.S. dollars**]. His boss [**General Washington**] promised that one day, he would be paid in full [**after the war was over**], but that day was far off in the future [**and only if depreciation didn't destroy the value of his wages**].

Shortly after this incident, Ben[edict]'s circumstances changed. First, he was re-assigned to a desk job in the Philadelphia office [**Military Commander of the city of Philadelphia**]. He hated the administrative post. He wanted to be where the action was, and he knew it was not in Philadelphia [**The British had held Philadelphia briefly, but they had evacuated to consolidate their forces in New York City**].

Shortly after arriving he found out that he was passed over for promotion [**by Congress**]. He could handle being passed over by better men, but Ben[edict] was upset because promotion was a purely political process [**It was political. Congress appointed two generals from each state. He could not be promoted because of the quota process**]. He argued that he should be promoted, and eventually he was, but at that point, he would be the least senior of the executives. Many of the others were, at least by Ben[edict]'s account, far less capable than he.

The only good part of the assignment in Philadelphia was that he met and married Peggy [**Shippen, a loyalist from a powerful Philadelphia family**]. Three months later Peggy was pregnant, and now he had to think about supporting his family. Dissatisfaction with the [**Continental Army**] rose as did his expenses.

TENDERING THE OFFER

Peggy introduced Ben[edict] to an old friend, [**Major**] John [**André**], [**an Adjutant General**] who worked for the largest international conglomerate in the industry [**The British Army**]. Peggy urged Ben[edict] to consider the offer, appealing to his pride and his circumstances. Ben[edict] had a lot to offer, but the [**Congress**] did not seem to value him. Besides, he had bills to pay and a family to feed.

Ben[edict] believed in the [revolutionary cause], but if he stayed [**with the Continental Army**], he was not guaranteed anything. It could all vanish. On the other hand, if he joined the [**British Army**], all of his expenses would be paid immediately. He would have an equivalent position [**Major General**] immediately, and his prospects of personal and professional success were all but **guaranteed [at the time, it appeared that the British would win the war]**. The only difficulty

was that Ben[edict] knew that he was only as valuable to the **[British Army]** as he was because he carried the **[Continental Army's]** intellectual property **[Plans for the capture of West Point]** in his head.

Ben[edict] reasoned that this would be a win for everyone. **[The Continental Army]** would certainly go out of business **[lose the war]**, but perhaps it would be bought out by the multinational **[end the war and reunite the colonies with the mother country]**. At any rate, Ben[edict] thought that he had to do what was best for him **[and he felt slighted by Congress and the Continental Army]**.

Just before **[Major]** John **[André]** made the offer, Ben[edict] got into some trouble at work **[a court martial]**. Some of his rivals **[Jealous officers who did not like him]** accused him of mishandling **[the Army's]** funds. His boss, **[General]** George **[Washington]**, reluctantly rebuked him for these incidents. These were minor violations **[he was acquitted of all but two minor violations]**, and George felt that he should be applauded for his successes **[Major victories in battle]** rather than chastised for the petty violations. But **[Congress]** got involved and politics prevailed. Ben[edict] was charged with negligence as he could not account for roughly \$37,000 **[£1,000 in 1789 or roughly one tenth of what Congress owed him]** of the **[Army's]** funds. He had not stolen anything. He was just sloppy with the paperwork while he delivered on the **[Continental Army's]** major **[objectives]**.

He resigned, but George **[Washington]**, recognizing his talent, kept him on. Ben[edict] asked to be re-assigned to a different project in New York **[Commanding the Fort at West Point on the Hudson River]** and he was granted the opportunity. A native of Connecticut, he wanted to be closer to home. It was one of the **[Continental Army's]** most important projects **[Because it kept the British from Sailing up the Hudson]**. George **[Washington]** knew that the **[Army]** was lacking capable leaders, and he believed he could rest comfortably knowing that Ben[edict] was in charge. Moreover, it would keep him in the **[Continental Army]**.

[Note: When Washington later learned of the plot to turn over West Point to the British, Washington said, “Arnold has betrayed me! Whom can we trust now?” to Lafayette].

A FINAL DECISION

As his role in the **[Continental Army]** became increasingly unstable, Ben[edict] was hedging his bets. He continued to negotiate with the **[British Army]**. After he was put in charge of the New York project **[Commander of West Point]**, the **[British]** agreed to double what he was owed by his **[Congress]** if only he would come to work for them. His new appointment **[As commander at West Point and his**

ability to turn that strategic fort over to the British] had increased his value and their prospects of dominating the market **[winning the war]**. They needed what he knew in order to wipe out their competition **[The Continental Army]**.

Now, Ben**[edict]** has to make a decision.

If he goes **[over to the British]**, he will metaphorically stab everyone in the back—everyone he has worked with, everyone he has led, everyone that has trusted him **[The patriots]**. He will trade his personal success for the success of **the [American cause]**. But why should he care? **[Congress]** overlooked him and rivals have undermined him. The work itself has overwhelmed him and **[the Continental Army]** has underpaid him. Besides, it is not as if **[the Continental Army]** could enforce **[his oath and prevent him from defecting to the British]**.

If he stays, he has a good chance of becoming the president of the **[United States]** someday—but he someday may never come.