

## BUS 302 Organizational Behavior

### Lincoln's influence tactics (from *Lincoln*, 2012, dir. Steven Spielberg)

*About 25 minutes of excerpts, starting at 1:35:40*



*The story: It is January 1865. President Lincoln has won reelection to a second term. The Civil War may be coming to an end, as the North is on the march across the Confederacy. But slavery is still not yet abolished, and President Abraham Lincoln finally confronts this critical moral issue directly, by seeking passage of a Constitutional Amendment, the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment, to abolish slavery. The Senate passed the amendment in 1864, but now Lincoln needs a two-thirds majority in the reluctant, fractious House of Representatives before it can go to the states for ratification. The movie tells the story of how he the President pushes his advisors, Representatives, and the nation to that historic achievement.*

*For our purposes, we are especially interested in the wide range of influence tactics and techniques Lincoln employs. The movie suggests—and historians agree—that Lincoln was highly skilled at wielding influence. But the movie also suggests how hard it is to persuade others to do difficult things.*

#### **SCENE 13: BIPARTISAN SUPPORT (1:35) • [JANUARY 28, 29 OR 30, 1865]**

Part 33: (Hotel, Washington, late night) The disheveled, exhausted lobbyists are gathered in their hotel room. Seward enters with Lincoln in tow. The men are stunned. Bilbo even curses. Lincoln jokes and encourages them, directs a strategy session, and begins firing off a series of critical directives, especially regarding a Pennsylvania Democrat named Alexander Coffroth.

Part 34: (Thaddeus Stevens' office, night) A nervous Alexander Coffroth enters Stevens's office. The Radical leader informs him that if he wants to hold his seat he must switch his vote in favor of the amendment. Coffroth agrees.

Part 35: (Hotel, Washington, late night) A return to the previous point-of-view as Lincoln continues his conversation with the lobbyists, now focusing on George Yeaman, a Democratic congressman from Kentucky.

#### **SCENE 14: FAIRNESS AND FREEDOM (1:39)**

Part 36: (Seward's office, State Department, daytime) Lincoln and Seward are facing a nervous Congressman Yeaman who is resisting any switch of his vote in favor of the amendment. Lincoln attempts to persuade him, answering various objections, but the conversation ends inconclusively.

Part 37: (Home of Congressman Hutton, Washington, night) Lincoln discusses the amendment outside the front door of a Democratic congressman named Hutton, whose brother has died fighting for the Union.

Part 38: (Lincoln's White House office, night) The president is engaged in deep strategic discussions with Congressman Ashley, Secretary Seward, Preston and Montgomery Blair. Both aides Nicolay and Hay are present. Ashley objects to the secret peace talks. Lincoln flashes anger, demanding action "Now, now, now!" When the men appear uncertain about how to obtain the remaining votes, Lincoln shouts, "I am the President of the United States, clothed in immense power!"