

## Excerpts from Alexander Hamilton's Letter to Harrison Otis, December 23, 1800

. . . My opinion is, after mature reflection, that if Jefferson and Burr come with equal votes to the House of Representatives, the former ought to be preferred by the Federalists. Mr. Jefferson is respectably known in Europe – Mr. Burr little and that little not advantageously for a President of the U States – Mr. Jefferson is a man of easy fortune – Mr. Burr, as I believe, a bankrupt beyond redemption, unless by some coup at the expence of the public, and his habits of expence are such that Wealth he must have at any rate – Mr. Jefferson is a man of fair character for probity – Very different ideas are entertained of Mr. Burr by his enemies and what his friends think. . . . Mr. Jefferson, though too revolutionary in his notions, is yet a lover of liberty and will be desirous of something like orderly Government – Mr. Burr loves nothing but himself – thinks of nothing but his own aggrandizement – and will be content with nothing short of permanent power in his own hands – No compact, that he should make with any passion in his breast except Ambition, could be relied upon by himself – How then should we be able to rely upon any agreement with him? Mr. Jefferson, I suspect will not dare much Mr. Burr will dare every thing in the sanguine hope of effecting every thing –

By no means, my Dear Sir, let the Federalists be responsible for his Elevation – In a choice of Evils let them take the least – Jefferson is in every view less dangerous than Burr.

Source: Alexander Hamilton to Harrison Otis, December 23, 1800, The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, [GLC00496.028](https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history/1789-1800/primary-sources/alexander-hamilton-to-harrison-otis-december-23-1800)