

OUTLINE FOR TV SHOW ON "TEAM OF RIVALS"

- 1(a). Your book, a fascinating read, is 750 pages long and chock full of information. It cannot remotely be covered in a single hour. Therefore, I shall not ask you about some of the better known events of Lincoln's life such as the Emancipation Proclamation, the Gettysburg and first and second inaugural addresses, the Trent affair, relations with McClellan and other generals, or Lincoln's assassination. Rather, we will generally focus on lesser known, sometimes largely *unknown*, aspects of Lincoln's life and career.

Let us, then, start with the question of what might be called the state of "Lincolnography." Because the Civil War occurred and Lincoln was president 150 years ago, a lot of people seem to think that everything that can be found or written about them *has* been found or written. Yet nothing could be further from the truth, as historians constantly unearth or write about new material. Your book often falls into the category of a book that provides new material or new slants, does it not?

- (b). Explain why you focused on Lincoln *and the members of his cabinet*. Doing so allowed you to mine material about the Cabinet members and their families that also sheds light on Lincoln himself, right? This had never really been done before, right?
- (c). You also gave quite a bit of emphasis to the women in these men's lives, and to what these women did and believed. This has not previously been done very much in regard to the wives of these historical figures, has it? (The only work I can think of that was similar with regard to the 19th Century in this regard was the recent work about the women's social lubrication of Washington early in the 19th Century. Are there other such works?)
- A. Explain why it was important to bring in and discuss the women in these men's lives.
2. Explain why Lincoln brought into his cabinet the kinds of people he did - - his rivals for the nomination plus men like Stanton, Welles, and Montgomery Blair. He wanted the country to have the strongest people at the top, plus he felt he could "control" even these strong men, right?
3. Discuss the boyhoods, youth, early professional years, and some of the general characteristics of Lincoln, Seward, Chase and Bates. Include, among other ideas:

- A. The growth, social mobility and westward movement for opportunity in the US in the early 19th Century. All four nominees partook in this.
- B. The great importance of oratory in those days (unlike today perhaps). Apparently Seward and Lincoln were both wonders in this regard.
- C. The incredibly high interest in politics in those days. (In the mid 19th Century, 75 percent of the people voted in Presidential elections.)
- D. Lincoln's boyhood, including the death of his mother and later of his sister (he was familiar with human suffering, you say); being left alone with his sister while his father went looking for a wife; his complete lack of formal education; his reading and study -- he taught *himself* everything, even including Euclidean geometry later in life; his listening to and then practicing how to tell his friends his father's yarns (explain the relationship of this to the Gettysburg Address (c.f. William Chafe's idea that the characteristics of youth foretell the man); his relationship with his father, who cared nothing for book learning and would hire him out. (You say there is evidence his father even destroyed some of his books. Discuss this. If true, it is a terrible thing for his father to have done. (I know because my father, for similar but opposite reasons, once destroyed by sports equipment.)); his relationship with his stepmother (who, poignantly enough, lived to see the dirty ragged little urchin become president and America's greatest man; his realization of his own superiority; his unrelenting ambition (the little engine that never stopped, as Herndon once put it); his desire to leave a legacy so that people would know he had lived; his extraordinary empathy and sensitivity (would it be fair (and maybe even non sexist?) to say that he was preternatural, even female, in these regards?; his memory, ability to think and ability to interpret; his friendship with Joshua Speed; his storytelling and humor; his relationships with women (Ann Rutledge, Mary Owens) and how he and Mary Todd ultimately came to get married; his melancholy temperament, which was a constant part of him; the sadness of his face and the way it would change and light up when talking (a point historians don't usually mention); his roar of laughter, which so many people remarked on but which historians don't usually mention; the incredible amiability of his persona; the fact that thoughts were the most important thing to him (I once read a description which said he "lived in his head"); his feeling for language and love for Shakespeare; the fact that, in politics and everywhere else, he had to and did do everything for himself; his running for the Illinois legislature a couple of times; his views while in the legislature and the effect for his views of the depression of 1837; his going to Congress and the trouble he ran into over the Mexican War (it was not so different than the experience

of dissenters to Viet Nam and Gulf II, was it?); the times he met Seward and Stanton.

- E. Discuss Seward's education, his early career in law and politics, his involvement with Thurlow Weed (and describe who Weed was); the effect on him of his trip to Europe; his antislavery views; the effect on him, and what happened, when he and Frances made a trip to the South; his becoming governor; his leadership of the antislavery forces; his becoming a Senator; his wordsmithing ability, which ultimately led to phrases that created Southern hatred, like "higher law" and "irrepressible conflict."
 - F. Discuss Chase's boyhood, first in New England and then in Ohio; his education; his incredibly strong ambition and its frustration during his initial stay in Washington; his move to Cincinnati and how he got involved in some *very* important cases involving slavery (Birney, Van Zant, Matilda); his becoming a leader of antislavery forces; his loss of three wives (in those days early deaths were common); his election to be governor; the friendship with Stanton; his connections with Seward; the way in which, and the fact that, he made enemies -- and was maladroit at human relations; his grooming of Kate; his role in the creation of the Liberty, Free Soil, and ultimately the Republican parties.
 - G. Discuss Bates' early years, his education, his success in St. Louis, his "homebodiness" and long abandonment of politics, his presidency of and speech at the 1847 Convention.
4. Discuss Lincoln's attempt to become a Senator in 1855, the reason eastern Republicans forsook him, how he lost despite having 45 votes, the friends he made by his magnanimous conduct and how they helped him in 1860, and Mary's reaction to the loss.
5. Discuss Lincoln's planning and action to win the 1860 nomination. Include:
- A. His "speechifying," including quickly accepting the invitation to speak at Cooper Union, the reaction to that speech, the subsequent speeches in New England, and his meeting Welles in New England.
 - B. His "second choice" strategy and why it worked (including that the others had all made enemies, and the delegates and politicians were afraid Seward would lose the election. (Seward felt it was in the nature of being a leader in America that one would make enemies.))

- C. The Republicans' need to win Indiana, Illinois, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.
 - D. The jockeying to have the convention in Chicago and the importance this proved to have.
 - E. The help he received from dedicated friends at the convention, including Davis and Judd, who were grateful for his magnanimity in 1855.
 - F. The deals his "handlers" made at the convention and how they got Indiana's vote.
 - G. Packing the Wigwam with Lincoln supporters.
 - H. Discuss the mistakes made by his rivals, including:
 - i. Seward took an eight month trip (so he wouldn't say anything wrong), so he was absent during a crucial period and, when he returned, made a speech that many considered too conciliatory to the South. (His own wife didn't like it.) Also, he and Weed didn't understand either Greeley or Cameron.
 - ii. Chase did not take steps to unite the Ohio delegation behind him (and there were others there that wanted to be president, like Wade), and he didn't go after delegates.
 - iii. Bates made a speech saying that people should stop agitating the Negro question.
 - I. Seward outwardly put on a good show when he lost, but was deeply hurt and knew that, because of age, he had lost his last chance to be President.
 - A. After reading *Team of Rivals*, one might well think that Seward was in fact one of the great men of the 19th Century. Would you agree with such an assessment?
 - J. Chase was fairly bitter at his loss in 1860, never gave up an overwhelming desire to be President, tried to become President again in 1863-64, doing a number of obnoxious things, including trying to undermine Lincoln, and, after he was on the Supreme Court, he tried again in 1868.
6. Discuss the campaign of 1860, including: the fact that Seward proved willing to make

speeches, went on a long speechifying tour on which he was magnificent (and spoke to 50,000 in Detroit -- without a microphone, no less); Lincoln treated Chase graciously and the latter agreed to and did make speeches; Bates gave a warm letter of recommendation; Lincoln made no speeches (this was the custom then) but extensively controlled the campaign through meetings in Springfield, letters and telegrams; Stephen Douglas, in what could be called a heroic act after fall state elections made it clear Lincoln would win, broke with tradition and stumped the South beseeching it to stay in the Union; Lincoln urged Weed to make, and Weed did make, heroic successful efforts in New York; Lincoln did not vote for President because he did not think it right to vote for himself (this was still a major ethos in the Midwest in the 1950s. Was it ever the ethos in the east?).

7. Describe the process of picking the Cabinet, including: Lincoln's decisions within a day or two of election, decisions largely mirrored in what became the Cabinet; the erroneous belief of Seward and Weed (who went to Springfield) that they would pick the Cabinet; the negotiating and the to-ing and fro-ing with Seward, Chase, Bates and Cameron; the reasons for choosing Blair and Welles; the fact that Lincoln read Chase correctly and called Seward's bluff.
8. Describe Stanton's back channel meetings after the election with Seward, Chase and Sumner, and explain the reasons for Stanton's efforts. (It reads like a Deep Throat episode.)
- 9(a). Before taking office Lincoln would say nothing lest the situation be made worse. He said that people knew what he thought -- it was all in prior speeches. But he privately urged Seward to introduce compromise resolutions while concealing their source. Seward's efforts made no impact, but Seward took a lot of heat for them. So Lincoln had it both ways: outwardly he looked the steadfast man of principle, while he privately sought to compromise and let Seward take the heat for this.
- (b). This raises the question of whether Lincoln, great as he was, was entirely the man of principle he seemed and for which he is widely praised today, or in fact was sometimes a conniving, even sneaky, politician. Among other episodes in the book (in addition to the one in 10(a)) that would support the conniving and sneaky idea are: (1) he privately told people what to say during the campaign but said not to let it be known that this came from him, and once even sent a copy of a prior speech, all the while saying he would say nothing; (2) the (Seward-invented) way in which he raised 300,000 more troops by getting the governors to ask him to do so; (3) his raising a secret fund (ala Nixon and Watergate?) from Weed for New Hampshire and Connecticut elections; (4) forcing out Montgomery Blair in order to reach a deal with the Radicals in 1864; (5) saying, in a Clintonesque way, that there were no peace

commissioners “in the city” -- they were at Fortress Monroe -- in order to obtain House passage of the 13th Amendment. Is it possible that Lincoln was sometimes unprincipled in one way or another in behalf of achieving a more important principle? What is your view on all this?

- 10(a). Describe the levees and open houses at the White House during Lincoln’s presidency, and the fact that, for awhile, all were open to anyone, so that there could be thousands of people.
- (b). Describe how, at first, Lincoln would see any and all who wished to petition him. This took away time he could ill afford, but he felt he had to do it for people.
- (c) Describe the parties and entertaining at the homes of Seward and Chase.
- 11(a). Describe the education, personality, ambition, sense of inferiority, jealousies, uncontrolled buying, and uncabined grief at her childrens’ deaths of Mary Lincoln.
- A. Explain why you think that it was not Mary or hellishness at home, but ambition, that kept Lincoln from going home when he was riding circuit.
- (b). Describe the brains, neuroses, abolitionism and “stay-at-homeness” of Francis Seward which caused Seward’s daughter-in law to be his hostess, and how Frances was always pushing abolitionism and then the idea that the war was one to eliminate slavery.
- (c).. Describe Kate Chase’s education, beauty and charm; the fact that she was responsible for furnishing her father’s home and served as hostess for her father; was ambitious for him to become President, and threw great soirees; and her romance.
- 12(a). Explain that Seward was the first to recognize, by June 1861, that Lincoln was the best of them all. He became very loyal to Lincoln.
- (b). Describe how close Lincoln and Seward became, with Lincoln spending evening after evening at Seward’s house (to Mary’s disgruntlement) talking and relaxing before the fire.
- (c). Describe how much Lincoln came to value the advice of Seward and, when he joined the cabinet, Stanton.
- A. Describe the deeply respectful, mutually accommodating relationship between Lincoln and Stanton.

- B. When there was an opening on the Supreme Court in 1864, Lincoln could not part with Stanton, whom he found irreplaceable.
- I. Based on your book, one could get the idea that Stanton possibly was the best Secretary of Defense or War the country ever had. What is your view of this? (There was also, of course, Henry Stimson.)
- (d). Although the Cabinet was a group of strong men, you say that Lincoln impressed his purposes upon them and controlled it. (He had great, and increasing, self confidence.) Seward said that Lincoln's was the only vote that counted, and you say that Lincoln did as he thought right regardless of what the Cabinet thought, except when Cabinet members convinced him he was not right (e.g., the timing of the Emancipation Proclamation, and giving permission to the Virginia legislature to convene.)
- (e). Various Cabinet members got angry over what appeared to be the favored access of Seward, Stanton and Montgomery Blair.
- (f). The feuds in the Cabinet were constant until Chase and Blair left, and were bitter at times. Describe the feud between Chase and the Blair family, including Montgomery.
- A. Describe how Chase thought himself the indispensable man, was prickly, and offered his resignation four times, until Lincoln accepted it (to Chase's surprise and dismay). But Lincoln sugar coated his acceptance by letting it be known he would be happy to nominate Chase for Chief Justice when Taney passed away, and he did so. (He did not trust Montgomery Blair regarding the rights of blacks, and he couldn't spare Stanton.) Chase then stumped for Lincoln in 1864.
13. It is really interesting that, while almost the entire South misjudged Lincoln, William Rives of Virginia read him correctly. Explain the circumstances under which this occurred. Do you have any view as to why Rives got it right while the rest of the South - - and many in the North - - got it wrong?
14. Explain the relief of Fort Sumter matters and the mix-up regarding the Powhatan, a mix-up for which Lincoln took blame.
- 15(a). In recent years some conservative thinkers have said that Lincoln began and greatly furthered the process, which they abhor, of manucapturing ever greater power for the central government and, within the central government centralizing power in the Executive. To me there seems much that is mean spirited and wrong in what I think is essentially a critique driven by "reactionaryism." Yet it is true that, when he took

office and had to commence taking strong action (hoping that Congress would ratify his action, as it did, when it reassembled), Lincoln set the date for Congress to reassemble at July 4th, nearly three months after Fort Sumter fell, thus enabling him to act without Congressional hindrance for a lengthy period. Why did he put off the new session of Congress for so long? Doesn't this lend credence to what the critics say?

- (b). At the other end of the war, Lincoln remarked that it was fortunate that Lee's army surrendered when Congress was not in session, because it would be much easier to deal with the South and reconstruction without Congressional hindrance. While this view likely was true (and reflected the Lincolnian self-confidence you speak of), it is also a view that supports the reactionary critics' position that Lincoln was something of a power-mad "centralizer," does it not?
16. Describe the extent to which Washington was isolated and cut off for a period after Sumter, Lincoln's distraught worries about this, and the reasons he suspended habeas corpus along the railroad corridor, a subject that has received increasing attention and criticism in recent years. Would you agree or disagree that, in the circumstances, this criticism is not well taken, perhaps even verges on frivolous?
17. Describe John Stuart Mill's idea of what the war really was all about, a view he shared with Lincoln.
- 18(a). Describe how Lincoln and Stanton personally reconnoitered on land near Norfolk, and were responsible for ordering an attack that resulted in the fall of Norfolk and the destruction of the Merrimac. This is really quite an amazing story because it must be the only time in history that an American President personally reconnoitered on enemy soil (though Lincoln refused to call it such as shown by a comment he made after receiving a message saying the rebels had been driven from our soil after Antietam or Gettysburg, I forget which.)
- (b). As the reconnoitering showed, Lincoln seems to have been quite a gutsy guy physically. Other events showing this were his exposure to enemy fire at Fort Stevens, walking across the railroad trestle spanning Aquia Creek, his refusal to change the way he acted despite the known threat of assassination (he apparently had a file of assassination threats that he kept in a drawer, and even his trips to the Anderson Cottage (on one of which he got a bullet through his top hat apparently) might have been dangerous), his trip into Richmond where the torpedoes (mines) could almost be touched as his boat went by and where anybody could have shot him from a window as he walked the streets.
 - (c). Lincoln constantly visited the troops in their encampments, and sometimes

participated there in grand reviews. He drew sustenance and confidence from these visits, and often spoke to lots of soldiers in the encampments (and in hospitals too). This process helped create an almost mystical bond between Lincoln and the soldiers (even more so than the feeling of the American forces (and civilians?) for FDR in World War II?), and was one of the reasons he was reelected in 1864 when 8 out of 10 western soldiers voted for him and 7 out of 10 in the Army of the Potomac did so. (Incidentally, how are these figures derived -- how do we know it was 8 of 10 and 7 of 10?)

A. Although she wanted no publicity for it and therefore got no credit for it, Mary Lincoln too visited soldiers in D.C. hospitals extensively, took them vegetables, sometimes wrote their families, etc. (Today there would be TV cameras trailing like locusts.) Why do you think she has received so little credit for this historically?

19. As the workaholic Stanton never understood or sympathized with (despite the episode you mention where he discussed poetry and literature for an evening), Lincoln also drew sustenance from going to the theater (hundreds of times apparently), reading humorists, telling jokes, discussing Shakespeare (with a leading actor one night), etc. (Seward did likewise in several respects, including theatergoing). These activities enabled Lincoln to get away from it all (you speak of his living, while at the theater, in the historical periods involved in the plays he was watching -- yet another example, as it were, of how he "lived in his head"), and helped enable him to maintain his emotional balance.

A. Stanton, on the other hand, had no outlets, and drove himself to do his duty no matter the extent to which this caused him emotional grief. Tell the story of the family that was literally on their knees begging him not to execute the husband/father, his refusal, and how he then went into the next room and grief strickenly, wailingly, called upon God to help him to do his duty.

I. Though he did not care for and sometimes even was angered by Lincoln's joking around, Stanton did quickly come to realize that Lincoln had enormous ability. He wrote a colleague that never were people so deceived as they were at Cincinnati.

20(a). Unlike the leaders of today, whom I regard as displaying a form of gross cowardice while sending other people's children and spouses to die, the children of Civil War leaders were in the army, at the front and under fire. This was true of Bates, Seward, Blair (whose brother, Francis, was a general), and Welles.

- (b). Perhaps oddly in the circumstances, Lincoln secured a *relatively* safe billet for his son Robert (although it is also true that Grant and members of his staff were occasionally under fire (and at least once Grant almost blundered into enemy lines and could have been shot or captured).) Perhaps Lincoln did this because neither he nor Mary could have stood the death of yet another son, two having died already, one of whom, Willie, seemed to possess a lot of Lincoln's own characteristics. (In those days, and until after the revolution in medicine in the last 30 years of the 19th Century, death at an early age was horribly common.)
- 21(a). Discuss Lincoln's efforts to persuade the border states to accept compensated emancipation, coupled with colonization, the reaction of the border states to this, and the reaction of black leaders to this.
- (b). Early in the war, before the Emancipation Proclamation, Congress, on two occasions, passed emancipation laws. Describe this, and explain why these laws seemed to have no impact, while the Emancipation Proclamation had a huge impact even though it, like those laws, could have no immediate effect in rebel states.
- (c). Explain your reasons, one way and another, for saying it is ultimately impossible to know Lincoln's views of blacks. (E.g., his lack of any recorded racially-based discriminatory acts, his treatment of Douglass, his sharing in the views generally held by whites of those days and his belief in colonization, the possible changes in his views during the war, and his belief in giving citizenship and education to blacks.)
- (d). Explain how Lincoln helped secure passage of the 13th Amendment, including some arm twisting and log rolling.
22. Explain that, in the first session after the Southerners left Congress, it enacted laws that have had an enormous long term influence on the country, laws that could not be passed while the (in my opinion benighted) Southerners were still there. These included the Homestead Act, the Morrill Act, and the Pacific Railroad Bill. Explain all of these. One might also include the first income tax.
- 23(a). Describe the behind the scenes, ultimately stillborn, Cabinet machinations to get rid of McClellan and how stunned the Cabinet was that Lincoln had put him back in charge.
- (b). Do you agree or disagree that (as Stanton apparently thought (and as do I)) McClellan was in effect guilty of treason by not coming to Pope's aid because he wanted to be sure he would be in overall command of the forces?
- (c). Lincoln's putting McClellan back in charge raises two major, interrelated issues about

Lincoln. It is generally thought that many of Lincoln's actions, e.g., emancipation, reflected exquisite political timing and a feel for the people. He did things only when the country was ready to accept them, not while it would still reject them, is the basic idea. Similarly, despite his sometimes rapid changes of commanders in the east and occasional changes in the west, he sometimes stuck with inept commanders for a long period of time -- McClellan being the prime example -- because he felt he had nobody to replace them with and/or, in McClellan's case, he was good at training an army albeit not at fighting it. There are some people, however, who question the generally prevailing views. They feel Lincoln could have and should have moved faster than he did on slavery (the same feeling as Frances Seward and other abolitionists had), and that his failure to act more quickly reflected not just (or most importantly?) timing, but his basic conservatism. (Might it also have reflected a desire, consistent with his general persona, to be liked by conservatives?) They also feel that there *were* other potential commanders, as was ultimately shown by men like Grant, Sherman, Sheridan and Thomas, but that Lincoln was too slow to recognize this (and also too caught up in appointing political generals?). Your view on the question of Lincoln's actions is that they reflected exquisite timing, and I do not know your view on the question of finding new generals. In any event, please discuss these matters.

24. Describe Lincoln's views of the "awful arithmetic" after Fredericksburg.
25. Describe: (i) how Lincoln would respond to defeats by redoubling efforts, which created a sense of optimism and hope, and helped avoid permanent despair; (ii) Lincoln's desire and ability to let bygones be bygones, and not to quarrel with people once they stopped attacking *him*; (iii) his "technique" as it were of writing angry letters to blow off steam, then putting those letters in a drawer and, upon further reflection, never sending them (e.g., the letter to Meade); (iv) his process of "cumulative thinking," in which he would write ideas down on scraps of paper and then ultimately combine them into one speech or document.
26. Lincoln's letter to Corning (briefly describe it) reached ten million people. That is an amazing number, since it was half of the North's population. How did people calculate the number?
- 27(a). You discuss how Mary Lincoln got injured because the Lincolns' carriage, left unguarded, had been tampered with. How does one explain that security around Lincoln was so loose, so terrible? And this despite death threats received previously and subsequently. Was such looseness the general norm in those days? Ultimately, we paid for it with Lincoln's life.
- (b). Lincoln himself got a mild case of smallpox in the fall of 1863. Why is it, in your

judgment, that this is never mentioned? Is it simply irrelevant?

- 28(a). Who was Count Gurowski?
- (b). Describe Whitman's feeling that Lincoln's face had an indirect and subtle expression. Did any one else ever say or notice that? It does seem to describe aspects of Lincoln's personality, doesn't it?
29. Explain why Weed threw dispositive support to Andrew Johnson for Vice President in 1864 (lest Seward possibly have to leave the Cabinet). If one had to pick the single biggest mistake of overriding consequence that Lincoln ever made, wouldn't it be letting Johnson be picked for Vice President?
- 30(a). What were Lincoln's views, as far as we can know them, on Reconstruction, and how do we know what we do know?
- (b). Explain that Radicals wanted to go much further, and be much harsher, than Lincoln.
- A. The use of the word radicals usually is, and pinning this label on the Sumner/Wade, etc. wing of the Republican Party was, a way of characterizing people in a pejorative way. Is it really fair to do so with regard to the relevant wing of the Republican Party in the 1860s? After all, they were right, weren't they? History proves this, doesn't it? If so, why should historians continue to refer to them by the pejorative term, used in their own day, of "Radicals?"
31. Discuss the changes in the Cabinet after the 1864 election.
32. After the so-called "Peace Conference" in 1865, Lincoln dispelled the Radicals' suspicion and anger by making a full report, including the relevant correspondence. He had previously done something similar by reading Radical senators the correspondence he had had with Chase. The point here is that he seemed able to dispel concerns by simply presenting the full and unvarnished truth. Would you agree with that? (It is so different from today, when politicians have learned never to pass up an opportunity to spin and lie when the simple truth would do.)
33. Tell about the John Yates Beale case and the dismay it caused Lincoln.
34. Explain Swett's view of the way in which Lincoln could be considered a religious man: in terms of honesty, good motives, duty, accountability, etc.
- 35(a). Describe the pleasure Lincoln took in the company of Hay and Nicolay.

- (b). Tell of Hay's dream 40 years after Lincoln's death.
36. Tell of the enormous celebrations in Washington when Richmond fell and when Lee surrendered. Have there ever been any similar celebrations in America except for New York on VE and VJ Days?
- 37(a). Tell of Lincoln's dream of his own death and his reaction to it. (He told people of it, yet the security was *still* lax at Ford's Theater!)
- (b). Tell how Seward figured out that Lincoln was dead.
- (c). When did Grant say Lincoln was "incontestably the greatest man I ever knew?"
38. Tell of Stanton's so poignant, poetical, and perspicacious comment "Now he belongs to the ages." Did this remark, as far as you know, just come to Stanton? Is there some biblical or other precedent for it?
39. We are putting on the screen the remarks by Tolstoy that appear at the front of *Team of Rivals* and on pages 747-748. Describe the circumstances of the remarks in 1908 in the North Caucasus. And how did Tolstoy come to know so much about Lincoln? As well, how did people in the wild mountains of the Caucasus come to hear of him?