

Featured Stories & Locations

CONSTITUTION USA was filmed in almost thirty different cities and small towns around the country. Below are descriptions of individual stories from each episode and where they were filmed to help you find a "local" story or conversation from the series.

Episode 1: A More Perfect Union

Peter explores the Constitution's most striking and innovative feature its resilient brand of federalism. The framers created a strong national government while at the same time preserving much of the power and independence of the states. This delicate balance of power, seemingly hard-wired for disagreement and conflict, has served America well for more than two centuries. But it has also led to tensions throughout American history and still sparks controversy today over medical marijuana, gun control, and Obamacare.

Complete list of stories in episode 1:

- Little Rock, AR – Conversations with Marty Sammon (101st Airborne) and Minnijean Brown Trickey (Little Rock Nine student) about the federal government's intervention to desegregate Central High School.
- Peoria, AZ – Conversation with the Arizona Leathernecks Motorcycle Club about how rights need to be respected
- Oakland, CA – segment about Harborside Health Center, a dispensary of medical marijuana (legal under California law), illustrating how state laws and federal laws can be in conflict.
- San Francisco, CA – Conversation with Environmental Law professor Jody Freeman, about important role of federal government in setting standards for consumer and environmental protection.
- New Haven, CT – Conversation with Akhil Amar, Professor of Law and Political Science, Yale University
- Chicago, IL – Shopping for a motorcycle at Wild Fire Harley-Davidson store
- La Fox, IL – Conversation about Commerce Clause and the dangers of too much federal power with Randy Barnett, Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center
- Missoula, MT – Segment on gun activist Gary Marbut who believes federal government, through the Commerce Clause, has taken over powers that rightfully belong to the states.
- Sharon, NH – Conversation about big government with journalist P.J. O'Rourke, correspondent for *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The American Spectator*, and *The Weekly Standard*
- Boulder City, NV – Conversation with Park Ranger at the Hoover Dam about benefits of major federal-government projects
- Philadelphia, PA – Conversation with Richard Beeman, historian and retired U of Pennsylvania history professor, at Independence Hall about Constitutional Convention
- Falls Church, VA – Conversation with Cheryl at Thomas Sommerville Showroom about toilets

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Episode 2: *It's A Free Country*

Ask Americans what the Constitution's most important feature is, and most will say it's the guarantees of liberty enshrined in the Bill of Rights. In this episode, Peter explores the history of the Bill of Rights, and also takes on several stories ripped from the headlines, involving freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and right to privacy.

Complete list of stories in episode 2:

- Washington, D.C. – Conversation with Al Snyder about Westboro Baptist Church & free speech
- Palo Alto, CA – Conversation about 4th Amendment & Privacy via Skype with Jennifer Granick, Director of Civil Liberties, Stanford Law School
- South Bend, IN – Conversation about church and state separation with Rick Garnett, Professor of Law, Notre Dame Law School
- Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN – Conversation with Somali/American Fathia Absie about seeking asylum at Suuga Karmel (Somali Bazaar)
- Los Angeles, CA – Conversation about free speech with Eugene Volokh, Professor of Law, UCLA School of Law
- Philadelphia, PA – Conversation with Private Investigator, Efrat Cohen about privacy in the digital age
- San Francisco, CA – Conversation about privacy with Alex Macgillivray, General Counsel at Twitter
- Cranston, RI – Conversation with Jessica Ahlquist about separation of church & state
- Cranston, RI – Conversation with David Bradley, author of the removed prayer banner

Episode 3: *We the People*

The high ideals of the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal," endowed with "inalienable rights," didn't make it into the Constitution in 1787. It took three-quarters of a century, and a bloody civil war, before the Fourteenth Amendment of 1868 made equality a constitutional right, and gave the federal government the power to enforce it. The far-reaching changes created by that amendment established new notions of citizenship, equal protection, due process, and personal liberty and today those notions are being used to fight for same sex marriage, voting rights, affirmative action, and immigration reform.

Complete list of stories in episode 3:

- Berkeley, CA – Segment on Kristin Perry & Sandy Stier and the issue of same-sex marriage
- New Haven, CT – Segment, about reverse discrimination case involving New Haven Fire Fighter.
- Chicago, IL – Conversation with Legal Scholar Kurt Lash about 14th Amendment
- Lexington, KY – Conversation with Tayna Fogle about voting rights of felons/ex-cons
- Covington, LA – St. Joseph's Woodworks – Monks making caskets – economic liberty under 14th Amendment
- Princeton, NJ – Conversation with Robbie George, Professor of Jurisprudence at Princeton University, who believes that 14th Amendment equal protection does not apply to same sex marriage.

- New York, NY – Conversation about the right to privacy/“bedroom cases” with Jamal Greene, Professor of Law, Columbia Law School
- Columbus, OH – Conversation about 14th Amendment with Michelle Alexander, Associate Professor of Law, Ohio State University
- Tyler, TX – Segment about the Lopez family and rights under the Constitution of children of undocumented aliens.

Episode 4: *Built to Last?*

In this last episode, Peter travels to Iceland where a few years after the country’s economic collapse, leaders decided to create a new constitution, turning to the U.S. Constitution for inspiration. This prompts Peter to consider why our own founding document has been able to last for more than 225 years. He looks at the systems that have kept the Constitution healthy—amendments, judicial interpretation, checks and balances—and also at the political forces that threaten to undermine the framers’ vision: excessive partisanship leading to gridlock, money in politics, and gerrymandering.

Complete list of stories in episode 4:

- Reykjavik, Iceland – Segment about Iceland’s recent creation of a new constitution using crowd sourcing. Peter travels around the country on the "Magic Bus" some of the constitution’s founders.
- Washington, D.C. – Conversation with U.S. Representative Barney Frank, about gridlock in D.C.
- Havana, IL – Conversation on Chicago River about Asian Carp and failure of federal government to address national problems with Noah Hall, Associate Professor of Law, Wayne State University Law School
- Cambridge, MA – Conversation at Harvard University with Legal Scholar Larry Lessig about the need for campaign reform
- Baltimore, MD – Conversation with James Browning from Common Cause about gerrymandering / Congressional districts
- Sharon, NH – Conversation with journalist P.J. O’Rourke about why Congressional gridlock is not necessarily a bad thing.
- Westfield, NJ – Conversation with Rabbi Sagal about similarities between the Constitution and the Torah, seeing both as living documents.
- New York, NY – Conversation with Adama Bah at Federal Plaza about post-9/11 abuses of civil rights
- New York, NY – Conversation on the Staten Island Ferry about security in post 9/11 with Jack Goldsmith, Professor of Law, Harvard University
- Nashville, TN – Conversation with Olympic Boxing Gold Medalist, Claressa Shields about Title 9/equal rights for women