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## **An Independence Day conversation with a daughter**

By William F. B. O'Reilly  
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Daughter: Daddy, what's the Fourth of July?

Father: It's the anniversary of our declaring independence as a country.

Daughter: Why did we want to be impedebent?

Father: In-de-pen-dent. Because we didn't want bosses. We wanted our own country where people could be in charge of their own lives, where there weren't big jerks in red coats around taking our lunch money and telling us what to do.

Daughter: Is that why Thomas says: "It's a free country" whenever he bangs into me on line?

Father: Well not really . . .

Daughter: Is it true? Are we a free country, are we the freest country in the WHOLE WIDE WORLD?!

Father: Well, yes. Well, no, actually. We used to be, but . . .

Daughter: You mean Thomas is wrong?

Father: Well, no and yes . . . It's complicated. And Thomas shouldn't be banging into you on line, darling.

Daughter: So we're not the freest country?

Father: Well, it depends who you ask. The Heritage Foundation says we're the 12th most free; The Cato Institute has us at 17th; Global Finance has us at 10th; Reporters without Borders says we're No. 46; Forbes says we're No. 10, and all of them have us dropping every year . . . .

Daughter: That's not true. They're lying. Who could be freer than us?

Father: Have you ever heard of Mauritius?

Daughter: What does free mean? Does it mean you don't have to pay?

Father: Well, you actually have to keep paying for freedom, but that's kind of complicated, too. Remember when I told you about busybodies, the ones who always want to make up new rules for you? Well don't ever let them put themselves in charge of you -- no matter what. That's how you lose freedom.

Daughter: But we're still the best country in the world -- right?

Father: You bet we are.

Daughter: And we still get to have fireworks?

Father: You bet we do.

Daughter: By the way, I know how I'm related to mom. I came out of her belly. But how exactly am I related to you? Or is that complicated, too?