Here's a who's who of people who played a role in the sale of the Louisiana Purchase:

**NAPOLEON BONAPARTE** rose to power during the French Revolution (1789-1799). After proclaiming himself emperor in 1804, he led a series of successful military campaigns that allowed France to dominate European affairs until 1815. Napoleon's determination to reassert France's presence in North America in the early 1800s resulted in an overextension of his forces and funds. In an effort to ensure that France's historic enemy, Great Britain, could not seize New Orleans, Napoleon decided to sell Louisiana to the Americans.

**ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON** had served in both the pre- and post-Revolutionary War governments of the Colonies and the United States. He was appointed U.S. minister to France in 1801. When American shippers' access to the Mississippi River was threatened, U.S. president Thomas Jefferson instructed Livingston to see if France would sell New Orleans. But France was not interested in Livingston's proposal.
**JAMES MONROE** had served in the Revolutionary War (1775-1783) and later studied law under Thomas Jefferson. As a Jefferson ally with pro-French sympathies, Monroe was appointed minister plenipotentiary and sent to join Livingston in France in 1803. His instructions were to offer $10 million for the sale of New Orleans and East and West Florida. If that failed, Monroe was to negotiate a military alliance with Great Britain.

**CHARLES MAURICE DE TALLEYRAND-PERIGORD**'s support of Napoleon in the years after the French Revolution earned him an appointment as France's foreign minister in 1799. Talleyrand developed a reputation for being a skilled and crafty diplomat. By mid-April 1803, the French did not have the means to invest in a North American empire, so Talleyrand surprised Livingston by asking how much the United States would offer for all of Louisiana.

When France proposed selling the entire territory of Louisiana, Livingston and Monroe moved quickly to seal the deal. Within two weeks, the two Americans and **FRANCOIS BARBE-MARBOIS**, the French secretary of the treasury, agreed on the terms: $11,250,000 as payment for Louisiana and $3,750,000 as a settlement against claims made by the citizens of Louisiana against the French government. Barbe-Marbois later wrote a book about the Louisiana cession.