

"NEWHART"

(pilot)

"In The Beginning..."

Written by

BARRY KEMP

FINAL SHOOTING SCRIPT

PRODUCTION #1210

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"In The Beginning..."

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CAST

DICK LOUDON.....BOB NEWHART
 JOANNA LOUDON.....MARY FRANN
 GEORGE UTLEY.....TOM POSTON
 KIRK DEVANE.....STEVEN KAMPMANN
 LESLIE VANDERKELLEN.....JENNIFER HOLMES
 MR. SHAVER.....JACK DODSON
 MRS. HAMILTON.....NATALIE CORE
 MR. POMERANTZ.....MERRITT OLSEN
 MRS. POMERANTZ.....BETH LE GRANT

SETS

ACT ONE

INT. STRATFORD INN LOBBY - DAY
 INT. LOBBY - A FEW WEEKS LATER
 INT. DICK'S STUDY - A FEW DAYS LATER

ACT TWO:

INT. LOBBY - THE FOLLOWING DAY
 INT. DICK'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS
 INT. LOBBY - SATURDAY NIGHT
 INT. MEETING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

"NEWHART"

"In The Beginning..."

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. THE STRATFORD INN LOBBY - DAY
(Dick, Joanna, Mr. Shaver, George)

THE MAIN ENTRY AREA TO THE 15 ROOM "STRATFORD INN" IN NORWICH, VERMONT. BUILT IN 1774 AND OCCUPIED ONLY INTERMITTENTLY SINCE THAT TIME, IT HAS BEEN UNINHABITED FOR THE BETTER PART OF THIS CENTURY. EXCEPT FOR A THICK LAYER OF DUST, EVERYTHING IS AMAZINGLY INTACT FROM IT'S EARLIER DAYS. AND BENEATH THE DUST IS A TRUE TREASURE--HARDWOOD FLOORS, AN OPEN-HEARTH FIREPLACE, WAINSCOTING, A MAHOGANY STAIRCASE. A SMALL AREA FOR RESERVATIONS IS ON THE LEFT SIDE OF THE ROOM, WITH A DOOR BEHIND IT LEADING TO AN OFF-STAGE STUDY. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM IS THE FIREPLACE AND COMMON AREA. BESIDE THE FIREPLACE ARE DOUBLE DOORS LEADING TO AN OFF-STAGE ROOM LARGE ENOUGH FOR CONFERENCES OR BANQUETS.

(MORE)

AS WE OPEN, RUSTLING CAN BE HEARD
AT THE UPSTAGE ENTRANCE OUTSIDE--
THEN WE SEE THE SMILING FACE OF
DICK LOUDON APPEAR AT THE FRONT
DOOR. IN A MOMENT, HE IS JOINED
BY HIS WIFE, JOANNA, WHO LOOKS A
LITTLE LESS EXCITED THAN DICK, AND
BY MR. SHAVER, A REALTOR. MR. SHAVER
INSERTS A KEY INTO THE LOCK, BUT THE
DOOR IS STUCK. HE RAMS AGAINST IT
A FEW TIMES AND THE DOOR FINALLY
UNSTICKS AND OPENS.

MR. SHAVER

(REFERRING TO THE STUCK DOOR)

You'll want to fix that.

MR. SHAVER ENTERS, FOLLOWED BY
JOANNA AND DICK.

MR. SHAVER (CONT'D.)

Well, here it is, "The Stratford"
-- one of the oldest inns in
Vermont and still standing virtually
the same as it did back in 1774.
And pretty much the same as when
you folks saw it two weeks ago.
They say James Madison once stayed
here.

DICK

Really? See Joanna, that's what's
great. Just being in a place like
this, we can know things about some-
one like James Madison we could never
know from any book.

JOANNA

(CONFUSED) Like what?

DICK

(ON THE SPOT; LOOKING AROUND)

Well, for one thing, we know
he didn't care where he slept.

(TO SHAVER) You did say there
was a caretaker, right?

MR. SHAVER

(NODDING) George Utley. His
family's been taking care of this
old place for as long as anyone can
remember.

DICK

(TO JOANNA; REFERRING TO THE
INN) So, what do you think?

JOANNA

(TRYING TO SOUND CONVINCING)
I like it.

DICK

(DISCOURAGED) No, you don't.

JOANNA

Yes, I do. I'm just as excited
about this as you are...

DICK

No you're not.

JOANNA

All right, maybe not as much as
you, but I'm pretty darn excited.
I haven't cried, have I?

DICK

Honey, we don't have to buy an inn
We can forget the whole thing.
We'll say we just came up for the
drive, took in some scenery, smelled
some fresh air...

JOANNA

What about our deposit?

DICK

...ate a \$2000 lunch...

JOANNA

Dick, that's ridiculous. (SOFTENING)
Besides, I have a feeling you love
this place.

DICK

(CONFESSING) Yeah. I know it
needs work, but there's something
about this one that's different
from the others we've seen. It's
real. It's genuine...It's cheap.

SUDDENLY SOMEONE IS HEARD TRYING TO
OPEN THE FRONT DOOR. THEY RAM IT,
IT UNSTICKS, AND GEORGE UTLEY SORT
OF TUMBLES IN, WITH HIS TOOL CHEST
IN HAND.

MR. SHAVER

Oh, George... (TO DICK AND JOANNA)
The caretaker. (TO GEORGE) I want
you to meet Mr. and Mrs. Loudon.
It looks like they're buying the
place.

DICK

Well, let's say we're close.

GEORGE

Shoot, I bet I'm out of work then.

DICK

Not necessarily. (WITH A LOOK TO
JOANNA) We'll still need a caretaker.

GEORGE *

How about a raise?

DICK *

No.

GEORGE *

Fine. (GEORGE HEADS FOR THE STAIRS (

DICK

George, before you go...Do you mind
my asking what you're working on?

5A.

A *

GEORGE

Oh, you know that little doo-
hickey on a furnace inside
the door where the screen
is?

DICK DOESN'T, BUT HE SHRUGS AS IF HE
MIGHT.

GEORGE (CONT'D.)

I'm working on the thing next to that.

DICK NODS. GEORGE EXITS UP THE STAIRS.

DICK

Sounds like a real knowledgeable guy.

JOANNA

Oh, Dick, why don't we go ahead
and do this?

DICK

You mean that?

JOANNA

Sure. I'm not saying we won't have
doubts. We're used to Manhattan.
Our friends are there. Our whole
life is there. Do you realize I'm
on the collection committee to six
different diseases?

MR. SHAVER

(HOPEFULLY) We have disease here.

JOANNA

(IGNORING SHAVER) Not to mention
your work. You're used to writing
in a tiny little apartment. Who
knows if you can write up here?

MR. SHAVER

We always say if you can't write
here, you can't write.

THEY BOTH LOOK AT SHAVER.

JOANNA

(TO DICK) Then there's all the
repairs this place needs...
which neither of us knows how
to do.

DICK

Well, I have written some "How To"
books.

JOANNA

Unfortunately, you never wrote
one on "How To Change Your Life."

DICK

Let's face it, Joanna. There are
a million reasons not to do this.
That's why most people don't.
Maybe that's the one reason we
should. I mean, we're standing
here on the threshold of the
greatest adventure of our lives--
we have that rare opportunity to
pursue the American dream, and all
we have to do is have the courage
to say, "let's go for it."

JOANNA

That's stirring. Where have I heard
it?

DICK

It's from the prologue I wrote to
"Building Your Own Patio Cover."

JOANNA

Right. (A BEAT) Are you excited?

DICK

(SMILING) I'm excited.

THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER AND SMILE. DICK HOLDS
OUT HIS ARMS. SHE MOVES TO HIM AND THEY HUG.

JOANNA

Mr. Shaver, I guess we'll take it.

MR. SHAVER

(ECSTATICALLY) Goodie!

DICK AND JOANNA KISS. SUDDENLY GEORGE COMES
BOLTING DOWN THE STAIRS.

GEORGE

(PANICKY) Wait, God, hold everything!

You didn't take it yet, did you?

DICK

(CONCERNED) Just now, why?

GEORGE

(TRYING TO REASSURE THEM) Oh, no
big deal.

ON DICK AND JOANNA'S REACTION, WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

ACT ONE

Scene 2

INT. LOBBY - A FEW WEEKS LATER
(Dick, Joanna, George, Young Man,
Young Woman, Kirk)

THE LOUDONS HAVE MOVED IN AND ARE
IN THE PROCESS OF GETTING SETTLED.
AT THE MOMENT, JOANNA IS ON HER
HANDS AND KNEES, WORKING AROUND
THE FIREPLACE. SHE IS WEARING
AN OLD PAIR OF JEANS AND A
SWEATSHIRT. DICK ENTERS FROM
HIS DEN, CARRYING A RATHER LARGE
BOX.

DICK

Joanna, look what I found in
the study.

JOANNA

What is it?

DICK

It's... (REALIZING HE DOESN'T KNOW)
a box of stuff.

JOANNA

Lucky you.

DICK

(SETTING DOWN THE BOX) Honey,
this isn't fair. I'm on a
treasure hunt and you're down
here on your hands and knees
scrubbing char off the fireplace.

JOANNA

You want to switch?

DICK

No. I just wanted to let you
know I was aware of it.

GEORGE ENTERS, HAVING SOME TROUBLE WITH
THE STICKING FRONT DOOR.

GEORGE

Remind me to fix that. (COMING
DOWN TO THEM) I hung the shutter
back up that fell off.

DICK

I didn't know a shutter was off.

GEORGE

Yeah, I knocked one off this
morning trying to fix a window.

DICK

Oh. I didn't know there was anything wrong with a window.

GEORGE

(DISGUSTED) Yeah, I broke the darn thing trying to clean it. What do you want me to do next?

DICK

(QUICKLY) Nothing.

JOANNA

George, you could fix the front door.

GEORGE

What's the matter with it?

JOANNA

It sticks.

GEORGE

(MAD FOR NOT REMEMBERING) Oh, right!

I'll go get my plane and shave it!

GEORGE EXITS OUT THE FRONT DOOR.

JOANNA

I think it's going to take a long time to get this place in shape.

DICK

It'd go a lot quicker if we could get George to stop working on it.

A YOUNG COUPLE NOW APPEAR AT THE FRONT DOOR.
THEY UNSTICK IT AND ENTER.

DICK (CONT'D.)

Can I help you?

YOUNG MAN

We weren't sure anyone was here.

Are you open for business?

DICK

Uh, not really...

(HE LOOKS TO JOANNA, WHO NODS HOPEFULLY)

But we sure can be. Why not? (DICK

LAUGHS NERVOUSLY)

YOUNG MAN

Great. How much are your rooms?

DICK

How much are the rooms? Why
don't I get out the ledger here
and check. (DICK PULLS OUT AN
OLD, DUSTY LEDGER)

JOANNA

To be honest with you, we're new
at this. We just bought the place.

YOUNG COUPLE

(UNDERSTANDING) Oh!

DICK

(READING THE LEDGER) Rooms, here
we go. That'd be a farthing.

JOANNA

(EMBARRASSED) Dick... (TO THE
COUPLE) How's 40?

YOUNG WOMAN

(REGRETFULLY) That's a little
more than we wanted to spend.

JOANNA

How's 20?

JOANNA LOOKS AT DICK AND SHRUGS.

YOUNG MAN

Hey, 20's fine!

DICK

Good. (SLIDING HIM THE LEDGER)

If you'll just give us your

John Hancock...

YOUNG MAN

Where?

DICK

Here, under... (READING) under

John Hancock. (HE LOOKS TO

JOANNA)

JOANNA

(HANDING THEM A KEY) Here you go.

Top of the stairs and down the hall.

YOUNG WOMAN

Thank you.

THEY TAKE THEIR LUGGAGE AND GO OFF
UPSTAIRS.

DICK

Thank you... (READING LEDGER)

Mr. and Mrs. Pomerantz.

JOANNA

(CALLING AFTER THEM) I'll

bring you up some fresh linens
in a minute.

YOUNG WOMAN

Okay. Thank you.

JOANNA

Dick, we have guests! Our first
20 bucks!

DICK

You were worried about the money,
weren't you? (SHE LOOKS GUILTY)

Joanna, we figured it out. I
make enough from my writing
to keep this place going even
if nobody stays here. And we
still have enough left over for...
you name it.

JOANNA

Food?

DICK

Possibly, if that's what you really want. Look, don't worry, we'll have guests.

A YOUNG MAN, KIRK, APPEARS AT THE DOOR, BANGS AGAINST IT AND ENTERS.

KIRK

(REFERRING TO THE STUCK DOOR)

I know what you're thinking--that door made an ass out of me. But I'm glad it happened and I'll tell you why--because now you know I'm not just some slick-talking guy off the street. How you doing? Kirk Devane.

DICK

(SHAKES HANDS; A LITTLE CONFUSED)

Dick Loudon. My wife, Joanna.

KIRK

Happy to meet you. Happy? Thrilled. I own the place next door.

JOANNA

"The Minuteman Cafe?"

KIRK

And souvenir shop. I was so glad when I heard somebody bought this place. Ought to be good for both of us.

DICK

Let's hope so.

KIRK

Listen, if we're going to be neighbors and maybe even friends, then there's something you have to know about me right up front.

DICK

(CONFUSED) What's that?

KIRK

I'm an habitual liar. Actually, that's not true. (OFF THEIR LOOKS TO EACH OTHER) What I mean is, it's something I'm aware of and I'm working to correct. I only bring it up because admitting it is part of my therapy.

DICK

(STILL CONFUSED) Well, thanks for being honest.

KIRK

Actually, I'm not in therapy. I lied about that. But everything else I said was true. Or probably as close to it as I'll ever get.

SFX: THE PHONE RINGS *

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DICK

Excuse me. (ANSWERING PHONE)

Hello?...Who? Oh, yes, Mr.

Pomerantz...What can I

do for you?...uh, let

me check...

DICK GRABS THE NEWSPAPER ON THE
COUNTER AND LOOKS AT IT.

DICK (CONT'D.)

(INTO PHONE) Low tonight should be
around 30, with gusty winds and a
chance of freezing rain, why?...

your window is missing. I believe
our caretaker knows something about
that, Mr. Pomerantz. We'll fix it
right away...no trouble at all...

really, it's not a silly request...
you're welcome.

HE HANGS UP.

KIRK

So, Dick, they tell me you're a
writer. That's more than
fascinating. Anything I'd know?

DICK

I don't think so.

JOANNA

Dick writes mostly informational books--"How To Panel In Hard To Reach Places"... "The Joy of Tubing"... "Know Your Harley"...

DICK

We don't have to list them all.

SFX: THE PHONE RINGS AGAIN

JOANNA

Why not? You're good.

DICK

(ANSWERING PHONE) Hello?...yes, Mr. Pomerantz, what is it?...You don't have any heat?...Maybe it just feels like you don't have any heat because you've got that big hole where the window usually is...Did you feel the radiator?... You know sometimes they take awhile...You don't have a radiator?... Do you have anything up there at all that looks like it might give off heat?...Your wife's getting a little steamed. (DICK REACTS WITH A LAUGH) Listen, tell her not to worry. We'll take care of everything...Honest, you're not being a pest.

HE HANGS UP; THEN THINKS A BEAT AND
TAKES THE PHONE OFF THE HOOK.

KIRK

Look, you're busy and I'm bored
so why don't I drop back over
some other time? (HE HEADS FOR
THE DOOR) Oh, did I mention I
give your guests a 10% discount
at my place?

DICK

No you didn't.

KIRK

Good.

KIRK EXITS.

JOANNA

I bet after you get to know him
he grows on you.

DICK

I'll take that bet.

JOANNA

(WITH A SMILE) I'll get those
linens. (SHE STARTS UP THE STAIRS)

Can we still afford the maid we
talked about?

DICK

Sure. It's an operating
expense. It's all deductible.

JOANNA

Great!

SHE GOES HAPPILY OFF UPSTAIRS.

DICK

(TO HIMSELF) I'll just deduct
it from our savings.

GEORGE NOW REAPPEARS OUTSIDE THE DOOR.
HE STARTS TO COME IN BUT HE REALLY HAS
TROUBLE GETTING THE DOOR OPEN. HE RAMS
AGAINST IT SEVERAL TIMES AND FINALLY
UNSTICKS IT. HE ENTERS CARRYING A
CARPENTERS PLANE.

GEORGE

Well, I got my plane. Now which
door was it?

ON DICK'S REACTION, WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

ACT ONE

Scene 3

INT. STUDY - A FEW DAYS LATER
(Dick, Leslie, Kirk, Joanna)

DICK IS SITTING AT HIS WRITING DESK.
WITH HIM IS A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG ALL
AMERICAN-LOOKING GIRL NAMED LESLIE
VANDERKELLEN. SHE IS APPLYING FOR
THE POSITION OF MAID.

DICK

If you don't mind, could I ask
why you're interested in being
a maid?

LESLIE

Well, to be honest with you Mr.
Loudon, I just want to get out and
experience the real world. All my
life I've had everything given to
me---money, cars, clothes, schooling.

(MORE)

LESLIE (CONT'D.)

I want to find out what it's
like to be average.

DICK

It's fun.

LESLIE

Anyway, I probably don't have a
chance, but I'd really like to
have the job and I'd really work
hard at it. As for my qualifications,
I have a degree in European History
and I'm presently attending
Dartmouth studying for my Master's
in Renaissance Theology, and in my
free time I'm practicing with the
hope of becoming a member of the U.S.
Olympic Ski Team.

DICK

Well that's basically what
we're looking for in a maid.
Okay, Leslie, I can't see
any reason not to hire you.
In fact, I can't see any
reason not to vote for you,
so I guess you have the job.

LESLIE

Really?! Oh, Mr. Loudon,
that's terrific! Thank you!

SFX: KNOCK ON THE DOOR

DICK

Come in.

KIRK ENTERS, CARRYING A LARGE BOX.

KIRK

Hi, Dick. I just brought
over some things from the
store that I've been looting
from this place over the
years. Nothing of any real
value.

DICK

(TAKING OUT A BOOT PULLER)

This looks interesting.

KIRK

Yeah? (HE TAKES THE BOOT PULLER
BACK) Well the rest of the stuff
is junk. (SPYING LESLIE) Hi,
there. I don't believe we've had
the utter thrill of meeting. I'm
Kirk.

LESLIE

Leslie Vanderkellen. Kirk what?

KIRK

Douglas.

DICK

That's not true. (TO KIRK) You
said you were trying to stop. (TO
LESLIE) His name is Kirk Devane.

KIRK

Actually, that's not true. I lied
to you, Dick.

DICK

Your name is really Kirk Douglas?

KIRK

No, it's not that either. (IN AGONY)
You see what a sickness this is?

JOANNA ENTERS.

JOANNA

Hi, how is the interview going?

DICK

Great. This is Leslie Vanderkellen.
My wife, Joanna. (INDICATING KIRK)
And you know...whoever. We just
hired Leslie. She's going to move
in and work while she goes to school.

JOANNA

(SINCERELY) Oh, wonderful.

DICK

Well, Leslie, that's about it.
Why don't I get George to show
you around?

KIRK

Why don't you get me to show
her around?

LESLIE

(TO KIRK) Thank you.

AS KIRK LEADS HER OUT.

KIRK

Could I ask what you're studying?

LESLIE

European History and Renaissance
Theology.

KIRK

Say hello to fate. That's what my
degrees are in.

LESLIE AND KIRK EXIT.

JOANNA

Dick, the local chapter of the
D.W.I. called.

DICK

The who? _____

(MORE)

25A.
C

JOANNA

The "Daughters of the War for
Independence". They heard
from the Real Estate agent
the inn was opening again
and they want twelve rooms
for the next weekend.

DICK

Why?

JOANNA (CONT'D.)

Apparently a number of their ancestors stayed here during the winter of 1775.

DICK

That's great, but I don't think we're ready to host a lot of people yet.

JOANNA

Dick, we're talking about a lot of money. And look how much we've lost fixing up the Pomerantz's room.

DICK

Joanna, that money is not lost. We'll still break even. Maybe not in our lifetime, but the point is, we bought "the Stratford" to restore it, not to make money on it. We're talking about our integrity here.

JOANNA

Okay fine, if you feel that strongly about it, I'll tell them no. (SHE STARTS OUT) I'll also tell them you won't be giving a speech on the inn's history.

DICK

What's that?

JOANNA

(TURNING BACK) Like they wanted you
to.

DICK

They said that? (SHE NODS ENTICINGLY)
See, that's not fair. You know what a
sucker I am when it comes to talking
about this place. I love stuff like
that.

JOANNA

It's up to you , Dick. What do you
want to do?

DICK

I've already taken my position.
There's only one thing I can
do. (A BEAT) I'm changing my
mind.

ON JOANNA'S RELIEF, WE...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

Scene D

FADE IN:

INT. LOBBY - THE FOLLOWING DAY
(Dick, Leslie, George and Kirk)

IT LOOKS A LOT NICER THAN WE'VE
SEEN IT UP TILL NOW, ALTHOUGH
THE FURNITURE IS STILL IN SHEETS
AND SLIPCOVERS. LESLIE IS ON
HER KNEES, WAXING THE HARDWOOD
FLOORS BY THE DOOR TO THE DINING
ROOM AS DICK ENTERS FROM HIS
STUDY.

DICK

Leslie, the mattresses we
ordered are on their way
and I'm working on my speech,
so could you show the men
where to go when they get
here?

LESLIE

I can if you'll do this. I
can't leave the wax when it's
wet.

DICK

No, I don't want to do that.
Where's Joanna?

LESLIE

She's cleaning the bathrooms.

DICK

I don't want to do that either.

GEORGE ENTERS FROM THE HALLWAY AT
THE TOP OF THE STAIRS, AND CROSSES
THE LANDING TO THE OTHER SIDE.

DICK (CONT'D.)

George, good. When the mattresses
get here could you show the
men where they go?

GEORGE

I can't. I've got a little
problem in the Pomerantz's
room.

DICK TURNS BACK TOWARD LESLIE. BEHIND
HIM, GEORGE CARRIES IN A LARGE RED
FIRE EXTINGUISHER AND CROSSES BACK
TO THE OTHER HALLWAY, UNSEEN BY DICK.

DICK

(TO LESLIE) I'll tell you what.
Here's the master key. Just tell
them to take the mattresses and
go upstairs and wherever they
see a bed, leave one.

LESLIE

Okay.

DICK LEAVES KEY AND GOES BACK
INTO STUDY. KIRK ENTERS THROUGH
THE FRONT DOOR.

KIRK

(SPYING LESLIE) Hi. Remember me?

LESLIE

You're Kirk something.

KIRK

Right. If you're not busy, I
was wondering if you'd like to
go to a movie.

LESLIE

(LOOKING UP FROM HER WAXING)

You're joking, right?

KIRK

Right. I meant go for a pizza.

LESLIE

I'm waxing the floor.

KIRK

How about tomorrow?

LESLIE

I can't tomorrow. See, I have this really close friend. We've been almost like sisters since I was ten years old. The last two years she's had this really serious illness and we didn't know if she was going to pull through, but she has and she's met this guy and they're really in love and tomorrow night they're getting married and she's asked me to be her Maid of Honor.

KIRK

Any chance you can get out of it?

LESLIE JUST LOOKS AT HIM.

CUT TO:

INT. DICK'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS
(Dick, Kirk and Joanna)

DICK IS WORKING. KIRK ENTERS.

KIRK

Don't look now but something magical is happening between me and your maid. How's it going?

DICK

I'm really busy, Kirk. I'm researching my speech for the Daughters of the War for Independence.

KIRK

This will only take a minute. I just want to show you the keen souvenir I'm planning to sell them.

DICK

I don't want this weekend turned into a carnival.

KIRK*

(AMUSED) A carnival? Dick, you make me sound like a con-artist.

DICK

Kirk, you did say you were an habitual liar.

KIRK

And you believed that? Listen,
I take the heritage of our
country very seriously.
That's why I came up with
this.

HE PULLS OUT ONE OF THOSE LITTLE
PLASTIC BUBBLES THAT HAVE THE
WINTER SCENE BUILT INSIDE THEM.

DICK

A toy?

KIRK

It looks like a toy, doesn't
it? But inside is an authentic
recreation of the winter of
Valley Forge.

HE TIPS THE BUBBLE AND THE SNOW FLIES.

KIRK (CONT'D.)

(SETTING IT DOWN) You can see
the hell they're going through
right there.

DICK

Look, Kirk, I really am busy.

KIRK

Okay, I've gotta get back anyway.
I guess I was just trying to do
something patriotic...to show my
love of country.

DICK

Don't forget Valley Forge.

KIRK

Keep it. I have a whole gross
coming in from Taiwan.

KIRK EXITS. DICK RESUMES HIS
RESEARCH. HE PICKS UP A LETTER.
PICKS UP ANOTHER LETTER. LOOKS
AT IT. HE GRABS A THIRD LETTER
AND IS READING IT AS JOANNA ENTERS.

JOANNA

Well, we've got the rooms
cleaned, the baths ready,
and the carpets vacuumed.

DICK

(INVOLVED IN HIS READING) M-m-n.

JOANNA

Leslie's working out great. Do
you know her family owns their
own island in the Carribean?
She told me that this morning
while we were cleaning grout.

DICK

Joanna, I'm sorry, but this is
amazing.

JOANNA

What is?

DICK

I was looking for some special material on 1775 like the Daughters asked me to and I ran across this packet of old letters in the basement. Listen. This one's from January of that year. (READING) My dearest Annabelle--I could not march on to Concord without expressing to you my deepest gratitude for the kindness you showed me, and, in fact, the entire platoon, upon our recent visit to "the Stratford Inn." My sincerest regards to all of your fine young ladies who understand the rigors of battle and the tender affections which soothe a soldier's heart. (HANDING HER THE LETTER) From there he goes into a more bawdy prose.

JOANNA

What does this mean?

DICK

I think it means that in
the winter of 1775 "The
Stratford Inn" was a...
whatever word our forefathers
used for cathouse.

JOANNA

Oh, Dick, no. How in the
world are you going to
tell a Daughter of the War
for Independence that her
great, great, great grand-
mother may have been...

DICK

A fun date? I don't know.

ON THEIR LOOKS, WE...

DISSOLVE TO:

ACT TWO

Scene G

INT. LOBBY - SATURDAY NIGHT
(Joanna, Dick, Leslie, George
and Kirk)

IT IS FINALLY COMPLETE NOW--
THE FURNITURE IS UNDRAPED AND
ARRANGED AND EVERYTHING IS
POLISHED AND SHINING. THE
SOUNDS OF WOMEN ARE HEARD
OFF IN THE MEETING ROOM.
JOANNA STANDS LOOKING INTO
THE ROOM AT THE DOUBLE DOORS.
DICK ENTERS DOWN THE STAIRS,
DRESSED IN A COAT AND TIE AND
CARRYING HIS SPEECH.

JOANNA

Oh, Dick, there you are. They're
waiting for you.

DICK

How do I look?

JOANNA

(STRAIGHTENING) Nervous.

(MORE)

JOANNA (CONT'D.)

Have you figured out what
to say yet?

DICK

If I'd figured that out I
wouldn't care how I looked.

JOANNA

They seem like they're
having a good time.

DICK.

Yeah, well, I'll put a stop
to that.

LESLIE ENTERS FROM THE MEETING ROOM,
CARRYING AN EMPTY TRAY, FOLLOWED BY
GEORGE.

LESLIE

I've served the hors d'oeuvres.
Good luck.

DICK

Thanks.

GEORGE

I set up your podium.

DICK

Oh, okay.

GEORGE

I put it by the fireplace in
front of all the chairs.

DICK

Good.

GEORGE

It's brown.

DICK

I think I'll find it.

GEORGE

I'm here if you don't.

KIRK ENTERS, BACKING OUT OF THE MEETING ROOM CARRYING A VENDORS TRAY.

KIRK

(YELLING AT THE WOMEN) Fine, don't buy any! People like you probably didn't buy War Bonds, either! (HE TURNS AND SEES THE OTHERS) Tough room, Dick.

DICK

Thanks for warming them up.

KIRK EXITS.

DICK (CONT'D.)

Well, I guess this is it.

JOANNA

Good luck, honey.

SHE GIVES HIM A QUICK KISS. DICK STRAIGHTENS HIMSELF AND GOES OFF INTO THE ROOM.

RESET TO:

INT. MEETING ROOM - CONTINUOUS
(Dick, Mrs. Hamilton, Women and
Joanna)

THE WOMEN ARE NOT IN ANY PARTICULAR
ORDER AS DICK ENTERS, BUT HIS
PRESENCE GETS THEIR ATTENTION
AND THOSE WHO ARE STANDING AND
VISITING BEGIN RETURNING TO THEIR
SEATS. THE CHAIRWOMAN, MRS.
HAMILTON, SPIES DICK AS HE APPROACHES.

MRS. HAMILTON

Oh, there you are.

SHE SMILES AND MOVES QUICKLY TO THE PODIUM.

MRS. HAMILTON (CONT'D.)

Daughters, could I have
your attention, please? We are
ready to open the second half of
our meeting.

THE 20 WOMEN QUICKLY QUIET DOWN.

MRS. HAMILTON (CONT'D.)

This is something I know we've all
been looking forward to, since many
of us feel a kindred spirit for
"The Stratford Inn", and especially
the winter of 1775.

THERE IS A GENERAL MURMUR OF AGREEMENT.
DICK SMILES UNEASILY.

MRS. HAMILTON (CONT'D.)

I'm sure our guest speaker tonight
is going to enlighten us further on
that.

(MORE)

MRS. HAMILTON (CONT'D.)

He is an author, a self-admitted history buff, and the owner of the "Stratford." Please join me in giving a warm welcome to Dick Loudon.

THE APPLAUSE IS SO BRIEF THAT IT ENDS BEFORE DICK CAN GET TO THE PODIUM.

DICK

Thank you. (HE

PLACES HIS NOTES ON THE PODIUM)

Well, what can I tell you about

"The Stratford?" It was built in

1774 by Nathan Potter and named

because it was built much like his

ancestors' home in Stratford, England.

Nathan Potter died only two months

after the inn was built and his family

moved to Boston, where Mrs. Potter

apparently had relatives. Then...

(QUICKLY MUMBLING) Somebody else

bought it. (LOUD AND CLEAR AGAIN)

Jumping to the 1800's...

THERE IS A GENERAL CONFUSED REACTION.

MRS. HAMILTON

(RISING) Excuse me, Mr. Loudon for

interrupting, but you "jumped" over

1775.

DICK

Did I? (CHECKING HIS NOTES)

Oh, by golly, I did.

MRS. HAMILTON

That's really what we're interested in. You see, several of us have letters from our ancestors indicating they stayed here during that winter and apparently had a wonderful time.

DICK

You're sure it was here.

MRS. HAMILTON

Oh yes. Mrs. Allen has a letter from her ancestor calling it "The Strafford," and I have a letter from mine referring to an inn only 40 stones throw from the Great Bend in the White River.

DICK

Yeah, that would nail it.

MRS. HAMILTON

So we really would like to hear what you know about that particular year, and the rest of the stuff you can flush.

SHE SMILES AND SITS BACK DOWN.

DICK

Well, when you put it that way...But before I tell you about the winter of 1775, keep in mind...there was a war going on...and war, as everybody knows, can be... not good. Plus, it was probably lousy weather... which probably forced them to spend a lot of time indoors...

MRS. HAMILTON

Excuse me, again, Mr. Loudon, but what are you trying to say?

DICK

It's what I'm trying not to say, Mrs. Hamilton. You know, sometimes people think they want to know things and then when they know them they wish they didn't.

MRS. HAMILTON

(INSISTENT) What do you know, Loudon?

DICK

Well, since you're forcing me to say this...Ladies, according to my information, in the winter of 1775, when all of your ancestors were staying here, "The Stratford" was not so much an inn as it was a... a house of...let me put it this way. There's every reason to believe you may not be so much "Daughters of the War for Independence" as you are "Daughters of a 3 Day Pass."

THERE IS A PAUSE. THE WOMEN, SILENTLY, LOOK TO EACH OTHER IN UTTER DISBELIEF. DICK STANDS BEFORE THEM, WAITING FOR SOME KIND OF RESPONSE, BUT THERE IS ONLY THIS DAZED SILENCE AS THEY SIT LOOKING BACK AT HIM. DICK CONTINUES TO WAIT ANOTHER MOMENT, NOT SURE WHAT TO DO NEXT.

DICK (CONT'D.)

I can tell by your stunned silence that you're not taking this well...I wish there was something I could say.

DICK (CONT'D.)

But really, it's not as bad as you think. If you could read some of the letters I read...this place meant a lot to our fighting men. It inspired them to rededicate themselves to the war effort--sometimes after only a few hours.

MRS. HAMILTON

Are you saying we shouldn't be upset?

DICK

*

*

Maybe not. You know, maybe Vermont wouldn't be Vermont today if "The Stratford" hadn't been what it was then.

MRS. HAMILTON *

My God! He could have a point.

DICK

And it wasn't just Vermont it helped. From the letters I read, guys from New Hampshire and Massachusetts got over here, too.

MRS. HAMILTON

Good for them!

DICK

*

(ENTHUSIASTICALLY) Let's face it, America might not be America today with out "the Stratford". And I, for one, am not too proud to tip my hat and say, "well done."

MRS. HAMILTON

(LEAPING TO HER FEET) Hear!

Hear!

THEN THEY ALL LEAP TO THEIR FEET AND SURROUND DICK, CHEERING. JOANNA ENTERS. DICK EXCUSES HIMSELF AND CROSSES TO HER AS THE WOMEN CONTINUE TO TALK EXCITEDLY AMONG THEMSELVES.

JOANNA

(CONFUSED) Am I crazy or are those
women happy? (DICK LOOKS BACK AT
THEM AND SMILES) I don't know what
you said, but it sure turned the trick.

DICK

Well that's kind of a "Stratford"
tradition.

AND ON THIS, WE...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO