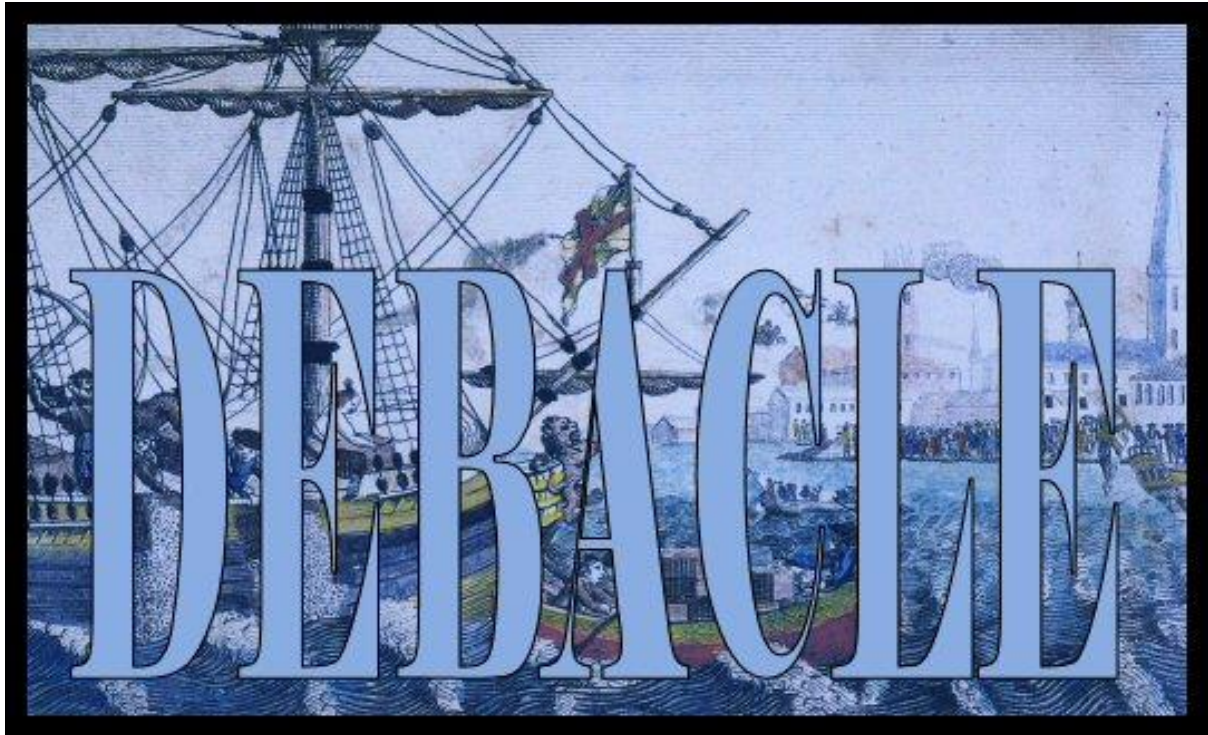




The movie "Debacle" will comprise a stunning representation of American colonial insubordination (from a British viewpoint).

DEBACLE: with well-respected actors, an amazing script, superb scenery ...

What could go wrong?

The Queensland Truckie's Mate must clear the way for our five rescuers to extract American History from the rubbish bin!

PROLOGUE

Scene i: The London Offices of the British East India Company 1773.

Grand and opulent offices of the British East India Company. Many people (mostly male) in 18th century costume wander about. People are busy: clerks write on large sheets of paper with quill and ink, as well-dressed folk look on solemnly.

Grand and imposing music bursts forth and then fades as Connie speaks.

Connie *voice-over* On the 27th of April in 1773, the British Parliament passed the Tea Act (which had been introduced by Lord North). This was intended to save the embattled British East India Company from bankruptcy by granting to the company a monopoly on the tea trade of North America. And this Act came into force on the 10th of May of that same year.

At a small round table sit a thin, neat and finicky man dressed in black with an impressive wig. The other man appears to be a nobleman. A couple of the nobleman's lackeys stand at the ready in the background.

The table is covered with an assortment of steaming teapots, made of various expensive materials. Also sit an array of fine china teacups and saucers.

The nobleman drinks from a steaming cup, holding it without ostentation. This a foil to the behaviour of the finicky man who is all ostentation. The nobleman is deep-voiced. The tea will be presented and drunk without either milk or sugar. However, a fine tea strainer is used.

Finicky man *unctuous* And that one, dear Sir, is "Peck of Lavender". A very popular brew with those who partake of breakfast. In truth, a most superior blend.

Nobleman Aye! I note the subtle hint of lavender, so I do. It likes me well.
Aye! That might become a favourite with my good lady wife, now that I consider it longer.

The nobleman's words have pleased the finicky man. With a silent signal, one of the nobleman's lackeys quickly moves forward and removes the cup.

The finicky man pours some brew from another of the pots into another of the cups and pushes same toward the nobleman. The latter sips. Whereas the finicky man smiles in a pert way, the nobleman beams broadly.

Nobleman And this one? What d'ye call this one?

Finicky man 'Tis named in memory of Anne of Cleves, Your Honour. She that was Queen to our much beloved King Henry, the Eighth of that name.

 "Fourth Wife". It is Flemish yet comely.

The nobleman laughs outright and the finicky man titters behind his hand.

As the nobleman drinks, he nods his approval.

Finicky man Ready to try another, Your Worship?

Nobleman What will ye give me now to sip? For an attorney at law you certainly know your teas. That I will say for you.

The finicky man leans forward and speaks in a soft, hissing undervoice.

Finicky man *whispers* Would Your Grace care to partake of a more robust sample? One with hidden secrets?

The two men look at each other for a moment. There is a distinct flicker in the finicky man's eyes.

With great negligence, the nobleman signals (waving a large kerchief) that his minions should move well out of earshot. They quickly obey the silent orders.

Nobleman *softly, deeply* Well?

The finicky man carefully pours another sample of steaming tea from a small china pot. He pushes the cup and saucer towards the nobleman with great delicacy.

Finicky man *very low* This one we call "Calamity", Your Serene Worthiness. It signifies that the East India Company is in the clutches of the most horrid travails (and those not easily thrown off) and cannot continue in

its fine work for very much longer ... Without (that is) your government's magnificent munificence.

The nobleman nods as the finicky man sits back. The nobleman sips and then makes a gesture towards the finicky man that he too should enjoy a cup of this sample. With precision and grace the finicky man pours himself a cup of this tea.

Nobleman 'Pon my soul! This is a fine brew. And you should know that our government is even now framing a bill to enable the legal exaction of the necessary funds from the stinking rich middle classes. We are entitling it "The Tea Act".

Not **our** middle classes, y'understand. No. We're of a mind to siphon-off the monies that your establishment requires direct from the American colonial types. That's our current thinking. 'Twill serve you well.

As the camera backs off, we can see the two men at the round table enjoying their tea.

END OF SCENE

Scene ii: The Boston Tea Party 1773

Here, the actions suit Connie's words. These scenes will be repeated (with embellishments) in ACT III.

Connie *voice-over* On the 16th of December in that same year of 1773, a group of indignant and disgruntled Bostonians dressed themselves as Mohawk Indians. They crept aboard the ships belonging to the British East India Company and emptied 342 chests of tea into the harbour. The chests too were dumped therein, bobbing about on the water as outraged British officials and local mercantile interests looked on helplessly.

On the shore stands Amos Lightman with the bill of lading in his hand. He is devastated by what he is seeing.

Amos *guttled*

All I have was tied up in those tea chests. All I've worked for.
Please God don't let this destruction ruin me.

The part of Amos Lightman will be played by the same actor who plays his descendant Maurice Sheridan.

END OF SCENE

TITLES ROLL THROUGH

The titles and credits will roll over portraits and paintings depicting middle 18th century Britain: its landscapes and its characters.

We begin with a large and imposing portrait of King George III in full regalia. Connie will voice-over this and then the theme music will take over.

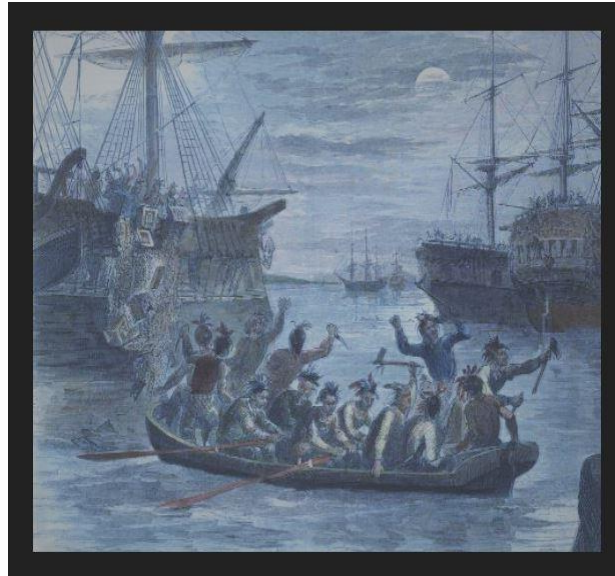
Connie voice-over

As if we really needed another movie about the American War of Independence, the decision has been made on high for such a project to be undertaken, complete with a stellar cast, sumptuous costuming and expensive sets.

My very own husband has been cast in the starring role. Well ... Pitt anyway. I'm sure he's the star ...

The man I share my bed with. My life partner. He is already a celebrity on account of his sweet little TV gardening show. Let's just hope that ... *[Fade out]*

The credits roll through until the last portrait which is a return to the magnificent portrait of King George III.



ACT I

I, Scene i: The Superb Greenhouse Belonging to Alex Manderby.

Alex is busy potting-up in his sumptuous greenhouse. He flicks up his head repeatedly to observe Maurice Sheridan, who wanders about in awe.

As advised, the part of Maurice Sheridan will be played by the same actor who plays his direct ancestor Amos Lightman.

Maurice *from afar* My goodness me, yes! This is brilliant.

Alex *more to himself* Serves the purpose.

Maurice now approaches, looking very pleased with himself.

Maurice Oh! What it is to be telly's favourite gardener. Talk about working in paradise! And let me add: Telly's **handsomest** gardening guru.

Alex I'd hardly stretch to that length. You're making me blush, Maurice.

Maurice Most of the current shower of televisual green-thumbs look like they've been dragged out of the main sewer – except for your good self, that is.

Well, you can act. That's all I *really* care about.

Now! Down to business. Keep working there. We can converse quite well as you work. Mustn't impede your progress.

Alex shrugs.

Maurice Your "homework" was a Concise History of the USA and of course Christie's seminal work: "Crisis of Empire". How did you get on?

Alex Eighteenth century British History has to be the most boring of any of the histories. At least ... I suppose that the Jacobite risings weren't all that shabby. Every schoolboy's dream ...

Put it this way ... I had no trouble dropping off to sleep.

There is a pause while Maurice locates a wicker chair, and plonks himself down on it: pleased, relaxed and patient.

Alex You've called it "Debacle". But by rights, Maurice, this extravaganza of yours ought to be entitled "Pitt the Elder". He made sense of it all.

Maurice Mmm ... But I've sold it as "Debacle".

And so ... Tell me what you know about the Seven Years War following from your soporific reading.

Alex Nothing about the Russian bit. Obviously. And I know nothing of the Prussian bit. Or do I mean Polish? Not enough to scribble on the back of a postage stamp, to be blunt. Thought that that whole business was a waste of time. To swat it, I mean.

Maurice But I asked you to –

Alex Yes, yes. But ... The bit that seemed to matter in the context of your movie was the French and Indian War in the American colonies. Surely I'm correct in saying that! So I only studied that bit. After all, the books you loaned me focused in that direction.

Maurice Well spotted. Good! Excellent!

Alex really does not know where to start.

Maurice Well ... ?

Alex To paraphrase dramatically, then. Ah ... I've forgotten the years.

Maurice 1754 to 1763.

Alex Course. Sorry. I do know it but ...

Okay. So 9 years rather than 7. Hmmm.

Maurice And ... ?

Alex In a nutshell, the British section of America (East Coast) was stronger in terms of population et cetera than the French section (which was further inland). And both sides depended on their Red Indian allies –

Maurice The First Comers.

Alex Right! Must be politically correct. Can't blurt out: "Our Injuns were better than your Injuns". Get your fingers smacked.

Maurice If you will.

Alex Anyway, the upshot was that a 22-year-old George Washington joined the fighting (on the side of the British). Something about a French fort in Pittsburgh. And the expulsion of the Cajuns. I

think.

Maurice The British side made very little headway. Things looked grim.

Alex Great Britain sent troops at the insistence of Pitt. The French sent less troops (preferring to concentrate on the European arena, Seven Year War-wise.)

Maurice That turned the tide.

Alex *nods* That turned the tide. But it cost the British government heaps. Broke Treasury's back. I well recall reading *that* several times.

And then the British, Spanish and French divvied-up America and Canada. They played swapsies with Louisiana and Florida and Quebec ... Blah blah.

Maurice And in summary?

Alex *sighs heavily* The American colonists were asked to pay for the protection they had received and would receive. The better kind of colonist agreed. The rough and rugged frontiersmen did not. There was violence and assaults. And then that great revenue-grabbing exercise (the Stamp Act) clinched the revolution.

Maurice *scathing* "The better kind of colonist?" Good grief!

END OF SCENE

I, Scene ii: A Room in the Flat Belonging to Silvio Agnotti

Glyn Mereton is pacing about in a right state. He swigs a whisky and soda as if it will give him strength. Silvio stands by, bemused.

Glyn No, you don't understand.

The swine wants me to **kill** the dog. Actual slaughter. Really kill it!

Silvio smiles in a saturnine way, then steps forward. He performs a mime of killing a small animal. Then he steps back, proud of his efforts.

Silvio How easy is that?

Glyn But were you doing that with a **trained** mutt?

Silvio *shrugs* Any mutt.

Glyn stares at Silvio and realizes that he does not get the significance of his (Glyn's) gripe.

Glyn No! Look, you're missing my whole salient point here.

Say ... Say we're making a Western. Right! We're making a Western. And in the goods versus bads scene one of the bads shoots a horse. The horse goes down.

Silvio Yes ...

Glyn It's a trained horse. Trained to flop to the ground when it hears the fake gunshot. And then it leaps to its feet (completely unharmed) when the cameras stop rolling. A trained horse. Yeah?

Silvio Okay. Got it.

Glyn You got it?

Silvio Yes! I've got it.

Glyn The horse is **trained** to play dead.

Silvio Right! I get it!

Glyn Well that's where I come in. My "dog" is trained to flop down dead when I "stab" it with the phony knife. And then we all stand back what time the pooch rises triumphantly to its four

feet, wagging its tail.

Silvio Of course. And the trainer marches in, leashes the dog then trots off with him.

Glyn is now incandescent.

Glyn Exactly! Let's use a trained dog. A canine actor. But this complete tosser wants me to actually kill a **real dog**. He insists on reality. Won't tolerate anything but the real thing.

Silvio You mean like a snuff movie?

Glyn Precisely!

Silvio God in Heaven! You're talking about Maurice Sheridan?

Glyn The very man. If I may use your phone, I'm seconds away from phoning the Animal Protection Society.

Silvio signifies his tacit assent, whereupon Glyn stalks off.

Silvio *calls out* He wasn't having a joke with you by any chance, was he? I mean: a jape?

Glyn pops back into view.

Glyn No! He's insane. He's monumentally insane.

Silvio Mmmm ... I've heard that. That he's a tad weird.

Glyn This goes beyond "weird".

Then Glyn stalks off again to make his phone call.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene iii: An Artist's Studio at the Home of Mick Bonnuitt

Michael Stokes (who goes by the nom de guerre of Mick Bonnuitt) sits in his studio, gazing at himself in a small shaving mirror. In the background, stuck to the wall is a poster of himself aged 23 -- a very successful rock singer and front man for the British band Independence Day. His manager (Thomas a'Grande) is in the background wanking heavily on the phone: extolling the various attributes of his charge, Mick. Thomas puts down the phone, very, very pleased.

Mick Could you even begin to imagine that this face was once one of the most loved and recognized faces in the whole of the UK?

Thomas continues to sort out papers. He taps busily on a laptop.

Mick And farther afield ... I mean ... There were fan clubs in Canada, Australia and New Zealand ... France, Japan ... even South Africa.

Thomas merely grunts as he soldiers on: busy and self-important.

Mick I was mobbed. Constantly mobbed. Couldn't get out of a car without being chased by dozens of teenyboppers. Had to run into shops, locking the door behind one ... Had to employ an army of minders to clear a path back to the car. Where are those girls now? And where's the loot? That's where all the money went: being minded and protected from those wild, wild girls.

Mick puts down the mirror and stares sadly at the poster on the wall. Thomas is still very busy. He manages to mutter under his breath.

Thomas *sotto voce* Drugs ... an endless supply of hard drugs -- that's where your money went boyo. Never mind the cost of staff.

Mick does not hear. Or if he does, he does not respond.

Mick God! It was an eternal heaven-slash-hell scenario. In the car there were naked girls. Beautiful girls. You know what I mean. A man could not resist. Simply impossible to resist, Thomas. They were in the shower at the hotel. There were 2 or 3 in the bed

when one was ready to kip. Gorgeous sumptuous love-starved maidens lying about at my behest. How many, many bosoms I must have kissed back then.

Mick stands. He wanders about, watching Thomas work.

Mick I heard what you said to that bloke on the phone. I'm no good at History and never was. I'd rather be in a modern thing. What did you say I'd be again?

Thomas "Who" not "what". King George III. Her Majesty's great-great-great-great ... However many "greats" grandfather.

Cosmetics to make one look younger will be called for ...

Mick He sounds like a plonker.

Now Mick gets up and proceeds to wander about, touching things.

Mick And my money! I have no money left from what should have been (and indeed was!) a most lucrative career. Gone! What wasn't spent on the personal troops and the dolly-birds went on the floor.

Thomas is surprised. He looks up from his laptop. Mick continues with his pacing.

Mick The saying is: "Pissed up against a wall". Isn't that it? Well I didn't even make it that far. Some poor Mexican woman had to fetch a mop and clean up my deposits. Piss, sick, spittle ... You name it. God I hate what I became!

Thomas Settle down, Michael. Settle. All will be well. Your new career as a character actor stretches before you. You will not be remembered as the fresh-faced god of rock, but rather people will recall you as a master player in an 18th century triumph. Much more satisfying, I'd have said.

Mick What did you say it is called, this tour de force? "Dilemma"?

Thomas No chum. But close. "Debacle". It's about the British loss of the Americas. From the British side, of course. Mistakes made, precious egos crushed underfoot, et cetera and et cetera. A melting pot of thwarted ambitions.

 Everyone liked you in that murder mystery thingy and you are now a hot item.

Mick Well, it's a caprice. Is that the word?

Thomas Hmm?

Mick Serendipity. Can't think of the word. My band was Independence Day and here I am eons later doing a rehash of the War of Independence.

Thomas Ironic. Yes, ironic. And even more ironic is the name of the director: one Maurice Sheridan.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene iv: The Superb Greenhouse Belonging to Alex Manderby

Alex and his wife Connie perform horticultural tasks as they converse.

Connie They didn't absolutely ***hate*** the British. That's the moot point.

Alex Enough to go to war with them.

Connie No! Not at first. They were colonists who still loved England. They ... They hadn't wanted to leave anyhow. It was poverty and religious persecution that forced them to –

Alex snarls loudly.

Connie No really! They drew their curtains and dressed all in black when

they learnt that Charles I had had his head cut off. They felt the shame of it all. They did!

Alex

You are deluded, woman. By the time of George II your basic American colonist had moved right away from the lachrymose Loyalist of Charles's day – no – that is, of Cromwell's day. These were thriving businessmen who had progressed to the point where they no longer wanted or needed Nanny to oversee them. They resented the treatment doled out to them by snooty British officials.

Connie

But they --

Alex *sternly*

America was a pot of gold just over the horizon. Sail down to Africa to pick up slaves, nip over the ocean to the West Indies for the rum, sugar, spices and what have you. Dump the slaves for a hefty fee. Up the East Coast to Boston for the tobacco and the furs, then float effortlessly up nor-east to the UK courtesy of the Gulf Stream. A regular goose that lays ever more golden eggs you may say.

You'd think that the dear old Motherland would have nurtured such a cash-cow.

But no. Instead, Britain got herself tied up in the Seven Years War. Rather than stroke the colonists and run everything to please them, good old Britain tried to milk them for more and more and more money (via all manner of taxes) in order to pay for the War. And *that* without offering them seats in the Commons and Lords. Incredible folly!

Connie

Alright then. So this movie you're doing concentrates on the folly of taxation without representation?

Alex

Mmm ... Yes, in a nutshell. But other things as well ... No, you're right. Taxation, excise and "do what we tell you!" and no

representation in parliament.

Connie But won't the peeps find taxation a huge bore? The movie-goers?

Alex Exactly! Yet Sheridan claims that he'll make it enthralling and compulsive viewing. The War from the British side with all British actors. Not a Yankee in sight.

Connie Surely he'll include a George Washington, at least! Or a Benjamin Franklin.

Alex One would hope so, even for a bit of light relief.

Look! I honestly don't want any part whatsoever of this visual history lesson but the paycheque is unbelievable. I couldn't ever make that much brass by pruning roses. So ... QED.

Connie And your role is that of Pitt the Elder. Well, well ...

Alex Yup. William Pitt, Earl of Chatham.

Connie Gouty leg and all?

Alex Oh yes. I've to hobble about on my gammy leg. Must go for reality ...

There is a silence for a minute as they continue to work. Alex looks off into the distance.

Alex Connie ... Can you do something for me?

Connie Sure.

Alex I'm not sure how to put this ... But if you feel uneasy at all, there's someone you should talk to.

Connie What do you mean?

Alex looks about, lost as to how to express his concerns. He rakes his fingers through his hair.

Alex We have to try on our costumes, and test make up, wigs and so on ... And then straight into filming. A rollicking revelry, so I'm

told. You might not see me for a while ...

There's a guy who isn't involved in the movie ... On that quiz show we sometimes catch ... Silvio something Italian. The chef ... You know whom I mean. He's a close confidant of Glyn Mereton. He rang me last night and wondered what I thought of this whole thing.

What I mean is: I have misgivings and now I find that there's **another** person who feels that something just isn't quite right ...

So do me a favour and contact this Silvio guy if you don't feel ...
If you don't feel ...

Alex makes a face and shrugs largely.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene v: An Excerpt from the TV Quiz Show "The Rivals"

Glyn and Silvio are celebrity contestants on a hilarious TV quiz show where a candidate is asked to speak for one minute on the subject of a briefly revealed close-up. He/she does not know what the secret word is. If someone says the secret word, the jig is up.

The female host is Remnata Dromana (called "Remmy" by the cast). She is glamorous and very clever at her job. She wears a low-cut black velvet gown.

There are two other contestants: Brenda and Lucas. Both are seasoned TV performers.

*The contestants have been shown a brief glimpse of a photo (Cumberland Sausage) taken in extreme close-up. Then the photo is replaced by the title of the quiz show: **The Rivals**. The four contestants only have one minute, so they all speak very fast. While the minute of quiz time is in play, there will be a countdown clock on the screen.*

Remmy So what is that, team? You have exactly 1 minute in which to

utter the secret word. Starting now!

Lucas It's a lithograph of two cows grazing negligently –

Silvio What? Cows wearing *négligées*?

Brenda *excited* Ooooh! It's a wasp nest taken from the inside.

Glyn *calling out* Hear! Hear!

 What is hot and wet and comes steaming out of cows?

Brenda Oh God do we have to go there? Where am I with the wasps?
Am I close?

Remmy This is prime time, Glyn dear. And your time is quickly running
down.

Glyn What's hot and wet and comes steaming out of cows? The
answer is the River Medina ferry! Woo! Hoo!

Silvio I ran about on The Esplanade at Cowes once. Quite in the
nuddy.

Lucas Oh please! Do us a favour and move on from Cowes.

Remmy No I want to hear. Go on ...

Lucas I think he's stuffed up that joke. Doesn't that particular ferry
drag on chains rather than being steam-powered? Eh?

Silvio Quite in the nuddy. Student rag of course. No-one saw me.
Three o'clock in the morning.

Remmy And yet ... The photo of this nude romp now features
prominently on the Web under the heading "Things to do in
Cowes" ...

Brenda "General points of interest".

Silvio "Things to do in Cowes at night when you believe that there is
not a soul around" ...

Glyn Not a sausage!

The screen flashes many colours with the flashing pronouncement “The jig is up!” prominent. The four contestants laugh and cheer.

Remmy And you've nailed the secret word, Glyn. It was "sausage". Just in time by a whisker. And we can now see the famous Cumberland Sausage in all its glory. Well done, Glyn!

The screen now shows the original close-up and then the actual sausage comes into view.

Lucas Ah! The jig is up!

Glyn pops a mortarboard on his own head: it is covered in flashing coloured lights. Similarly, Silvio slaps a chef's hat on his own head and it too is covered in flashing coloured lights.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene vi: A Stretch Limousine Being Chauffeur Driven in Daylight

SILVIO AGNOTTI & GLYN MERETON sit in a stretched limo, enjoying champagne. Glyn admires the passing scenery whereas Silvio messes about with his cell phone. They are being driven to a huge empty factory or aircraft hangar somewhere in the London outskirts.

Silvio What became of that dog business? Did you take it to its natural conclusion?

Glyn *wondering* The “dog business”?

Silvio You were asked to stab a dog with your --

Glyn Oh yes! I weakened in the end and merely phoned them for information and guidance. Phoned the Animal Rights people, I mean. Mmmm! They were very supportive. Said that I was under absolutely no obligation to comply with the director's instructions

if I felt any moral compunction in view of same.

There is a pause.

Glyn They would ring Maurice and have a gentle chat with him, they said.

Sylvio Thus, you provided them with his name and phone number, then?

Glyn They faithfully promised to be discreet.

Silvio But that wasn't very white of you to name him. Especially when your original expressed intention was to plump for anonymity. Tsk! Tsk!

Glyn squirms.

Glyn The young lady at the end of the telephone had a voice laced with pure gold. I could not resist.

Silvio Well, we'll find out soon enough what the upshot was. I know how appalled you were by Sheridan's request (anyone would be), but he can be difficult ... This little kerfuffle might arch his back. I hope you're feeling strong, old boy.

Glyn squirms, looking aghast.

Silvio See the thing is that I can't for the life of me recollect what occasion would arise whereby The Right Honourable George Grenville needed to exterminate a dog. Can you recall the background for this murderous scene?

Glyn is distracted by this observation.

Glyn Uh ... Uh ... Grenville was pontificating about the Stamp Act. Yes, and making endless lists of economies he could make. Revenue he could raise by any means. Britain to be solvent *in spite* of her spendthrift ruler.

Silvio And then he swiftly draws his knife to slaughter a pooch. Hmmm

....

Glyn tries to make headway.

Glyn *trying to recollect* Yes, there was a great deal of emotion I think. Although I might be confused about ... Shouting and name-calling. And out of it all, the knife ... the dog ...

Silvio

When the Princess Elizabeth (the first one, you understand) lost her father King Henry VIII, that instantly put the boy Edward on the throne. And it was paramount for the naughty regent Edward Seymour to collect the new king from Hertford to ensure a smooth transition. Legend has it that Seymour burst into the boy's bedroom (all unannounced) and was brought up short by the prince's beloved spaniel in full outrage. Nothing easier for the vile pro tempore ruler than to thrust his sword into the poor animal, leaving the new king aghast and bereft.

Glyn *fires up* Wrong! Wrong in every possible –

Brother ***Thomas***, it was. A naked bid for power. Steal the boy king's person. By then Edward Seymour had long been executed, you know.

And you must get all your facts straight. He **shot** the poor pooch (Thomas Seymour). No sword involved.

[Long sigh during which Silvio appears to pout.]

But anyway ... No, that wasn't part of my remit, I don't think.

Silvio Certainly not.

Ah! We've arrived.

The doors of the limo are opened but neither man steps out.

Silvio Nevertheless, you need to comprehend my concern, Glyn.

His Majesty King George (third of that name) dismissed his Prime Minister (the Honourable George Grenville) on the strength of his own personal dislike for the fellow. Quite unconstitutional. And had Grenville clung to his role in the teeth of this royal disapproval – well, who knows.

But here is the thing. Mild-mannered Grenville, whose purpose was ever to clear England's debt, gets the sack for doing his job, goes home and – what? Drowns the family moggie and kills the dog? No. No. This “Debacle” is not making any sense.

They disembark.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene vii: Inside the Building (Film Studio)

Inside the hangar or factory or whatever it be, there is a chaos of construction and movement. The lads are building sets. There are vans, trucks, forklifts, small cranes and whatever fits. People shout amidst this cacophony.

In a far corner an open dressing room has been hastily put together. Racks of costumes jostle with mirrors and makeup tables. Our actors will gravitate towards this spot.

The reason for the boys and girls being here is to have their costumes chosen, their wigs fitted and their makeup decided upon. All about can be seen prints of 18th century paintings: Pitt the Elder, Lord Rockingham, Lord North, King George III, George Grenville and so on. Men and women (make-up artists) also proliferate.

As they wander into the building (dodging the construction team) Mick and Thomas are continuing a conversation which has oozed out of the car with them.

Mick -- not like Bubba ... his mum wisely invested the money from our royalties and our performances and ... like that. He is so wealthy

now that he could buy and sell a swish Pacific island, should he so desire.

Thomas delivers a meaningful cough.

Mick *nasty tang* No I haven't forgotten how hopeless my mother was ... and my stepfather.

Thomas *defensive* I never uttered a word!

Look out for these mad – My God! Does one need a licence to drive those things? Be careful, Mick!

Mick And the various wives who ran off.

Thomas *tired* Leave it off, now. Besides, you only had two wives. Best not to count the "partners" (as opposed to the wives). You'll give yourself another heart turn.

Mick *sotto voce* Well, this had better pay off.

Silvio, Glyn, Thomas, Mick, Alex and several others welcome each other warmly.

Mick *triumphant* You'll all have to bow and scrape to me because I will be your liege lord. Henry III me.

There is a titter of mirth from all assembled, at Mick's expense.

Silvio Get it right, old man. King George III, if you don't mind. And that's his dial right there.

Silvio sweeps a hand in the direction of the George III portrait. Mick looks less than thrilled.

Mick *shamefaced* I thought there was a "third" in there somewhere. Is he the one who went balmy?

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

*Maurice has a male assistant (Kel Dalton) who now introduces everyone. They will bow or smile and wave as their name comes up.*

Kel                                      Our King is played by Mick Bonnuit who as you all know was the fabulous front man for the rock group Independence Day. Rather propitious. Try to pop in a ballad for you, Mick!

Gouty William Pitt will be played by our fave green-fingers on the telly: Alex Manderby.

For all you quiz show buffs we have Glyn Mereton as Grenville. Gets figuratively shot early --

Jon *catcall*                              But we can smell his body for some time later!

*There is a burst of laughter.*

Kel                                      Nice going, Glyn!

Jon Barrette is Rockingham. Actor extraordinaire.

Roger de Witte will be our Cumberland. Well done!

Now! We have Tye Angleworth as Jessamy Yardley, and Andrew Carmody as Samuel (who helps Pitt to bumble around).

Oh yes. We have a young Fox and here he is: Mark Dinton. When our older Fox comes on board, I'll get back to you.

Okay, chaps! Let's get some makeup and costumes in train. Maurice (who is sorry not to be here to welcome you all) wants you to run through a little teaser. Let's go!

END OF SCENE

## **I, Scene viii: Rehearsal/Walk-Through**

*This walk-through is dated for August 1765. Rather than being a movie shoot (complete with dozens of film crew types and cameras rolling) this is simply a brief run-through where a guy holds a small*

*cinecamera. There are even scripts lying about. Some of the actors are in costume and make-up. Others are in casual clothes. Kel is in charge (Maurice absent).*

*Mick plays King George III. As an actor, Mick is lost and looking about for encouragement. His performance is cringe-worthy.*

*Mick/King slams a hand-written document onto a table.*

Mick/King                      "The Sons of Liberty", indeed!

Jon/Rockingham              We have the situation in hand, Majesty.

*Mick/King works himself into a passion, and then rounds on Glyn/Grenville. Mick/King spits as he speaks (so worked-up is he) and points, shaking his finger in his rage. But this performance is unbelievable and kludgy.*

Mick/King                      Where is that famed mountebank who claims to be Prime of my ministers? That naughty lick-spittle who –

Ah-hah! There is the poltroon in the very flesh!

I never, never liked him! D’rather find the Devil himself in my closet than see that damned fellow’s flabby features.

*[Shakes his finger in time to his words.]*

That gentleman’s opinions are seldom formed from any other motives than such as may be expected to originate in the mind of a clerk in a counting house.

*We see Thomas in the background. He looks stricken. He is sweating (so bad is Mick’s acting).*

Glyn/Grenville              And yet I am the senior member of Your Majesty’s Government whose sole interest is to make whole and well this very sick thing called our Oeconomy. It is mine intention, Sir, to --

Mick/King                      Not for much longer, you tuft-hunter. As boring as a stale pond and just as foul as that he finds glorious jewels amongst the snots in his handkerchief.

Joh/Rockingham              If you please, Majesty, may we return to this most pressing

matter of the recalcitrant colonists in America?

Mick/King

No we may not! I won't hear anything more from any of you. That poonce Georgie Grenville can simply take himself off (if he can manage to do that without breaking wind). I do not want him as my Government leader. He shall give up the trappings of that hallowed permission to some other man whom I shall find more agreeable and amenable.

Glyn/Grenville

Majesty! Whether or not I suit you ... You cannot mean to unseat me in the midst of this most dire of situations --

Mick/King

Yes! Yes! My uncle Cumberland is pushing me towards a rapprochement with **you**, Charlie Wentworth.

*[Points violently at Jon/Rockingham]*

That man that we call "Rockingham".

*[Turns back to Glyn/Grenville]*

So you are dismissed without ... without ... Go! Go! Just go, you pizz-wizzle!

Glyn/Grenville

Rockingham? But you can't--

*Jon/Rockingham puts out a hand to silence Glyn/Grenville.*

Joh/Rockingham

This must stand as the most glorious honour, gracious Majesty, and my thanks to you and to the noble Duke are limitless.

However, you cannot "sack" your Prime Minister simply on the strength of not liking him. Your constitutional duty is to work with Grenville and indeed with all of us to bring about a fine conclusion to this heinous debacle occurring over the water.

*Mick/King is completely gobsmacked by this effrontery. Mick/King is supposed to be furious but just sounds limp.*

Mick/King

Unsay those words! Unsay them, I say!

Jon/Rockingham *proudly* This will not do, Your Majesty.

*Realizing that Mick/King is about to keel over with shock, Jon/Rockingham nods to another man to provide His Majesty with a chair.*

Glyn/Grenville We are provided with a nice philosophical puzzle, here, Your Majesty. When they set forth from these lands to found new lands, our colonists were bound-in with their charter (in the main a Royal Charter) and their ever allegiance to The Crown. We (the English people) traded with them and protected them from their savage Red Indian neighbours and from the even more savage French.

And the Empire (of which the colonists form a true part and of whom you are King) is controlled here in England.

*Apart from Mick/King, the gentlemen nod sagely.*

Glyn/Grenville Suppose that things had gone badly for these folk? Where could they look for succour but to the Motherland? And to its ever-glorious monarch? Your gold, your forest-lore, your weapons, your soldiers, your ships ...

They would have been glad to beg His Majesty for assistance then, gentlemen!

*Now all the gentlemen agree audibly. Mick/King contemplates.*

Glyn/Grenville But with God's genius and a certain amount of luck, our colonial fellows have succeeded to a great degree. And now they do not need to crawl on bended knee with cap in hand to your Royal throne, Majesty. Thus, they begin to grumble about the cost of their allegiance, about being our brothers in Empire.

You need to teach these thankless colonists a lesson in political realities, Sir. The running of Empire stems from London, not from the shores of New England. They are being asked to help defray the costs of protecting them and supporting their trading

endeavours.

Sir, you must allow me (George Grenville) to sternly and rigorously impose your fiscal will upon these reprobates.

*There is a ripple of applause for the fine acting. Glyn smiles and nods his thanks.*

Thomas *sotto voce*            I only wish that my protégé could rise to those heights ...

*Thomas is sad and thoughtful as he watches the group disburse. Mick saunters over to Thomas and slaps him jokingly on the shoulder.*

Mick *jovial*                    So what's this shit, then? ... What they call "revisionist"?

Thomas *unimpressed*        Don't try to be funny, please!

Mick                            Was I any good? Were you impressed?

*The truth is that Thomas found Mick's performance appalling; however, Thomas attempts to gee Mick up.*

Thomas *careful*              Ah ... Yes, quite an improvement. I must try and catch the rushes before --

Mick *smug*                    What would this lot say if they knew about my prison --

*Thomas is shocked and rushes to shut Mick up as well as to haul him out of earshot.*

Thomas                        Shhhhhh! For God's sake!

Mick *still smug*              I went to prison, and now I'm playing the famous king Edward III. Bit of a giggle, that!

Thomas *tired of it all*        It's George III. Please (I beg of you!) remember who the hell you are playing in this movie.

And by the way you were incarcerated owing to your being stitched up by your erstwhile manager. Not your fault at all.

Mick                            That cow! Still, it would make this lot sit up and take notice if they knew.

Thomas                        Certainly. But best keep it quiet old toot. Best keep it quiet.

So. You start filming tomorrow, I believe.

Mick *matter-of-fact*

Not me, me old cock sparrow. Tomorrow, they're filming a riotous drunken brawl (which of course would have been perfect for me as I wouldn't have had to act!) But I don't get a jersey on account of I'm the King and Kingy don't involve his royal person in such messy undertakings. D'ya foller? Me and you will just be spectators together. If you're a nice manager and behave yourself I'll stand you a packet of crisps and a bottle of fizz, just like we was at the football.

*Thomas rolls his eyes.*

END OF SCENE

## **I, Scene ix:** An Excerpt from the TV Quiz Show "The Rivals" (Scuttled)

*Before filming of the TV quiz show "The Rivals" The Author hijacks Remmy's desk. Our shot indicates that the crew members are confused as to why this woman is trying to take over the show. As the scene progresses, studio heavies eject the woman.*

*The Author (Australian accent) speaks to camera. Her one prop is an indistinct hand-drawn map of the east coast of North America.*

The Author

Rightio.

Well darling old John Winthrop and his pilgrims landed in Massachusetts in 1630. The ultimate 13 colonies soldiered on, having some of the same daily concerns as "home" (that is Great Britain) and other issues unique to the Atlantic coast of America: clearing the wilderness, indigenous incursions, the French!

The settlers were up to a point self-governing with ultimate referral to the Crown. They existed at the Crown's pleasure.

They had left "home" for any number of reasons: religious nonconformity or like that ...

*A man with headphones walks up to the desk and begins whispering to The Author. This stirs her into a panic of fast speaking.*

The Author                      No, no! I haven't finished!

*Someone off-screen shouts something. The Author responds.*

The Author *calling out*      People in Australia don't know this shit. The Kiwis don't get any of this. They're sitting there scratching their heads and asking each other what this crap is all about. I'm gonna fill them in, okay?

*The Author faces the camera, but her eyes reveal that she is watching crew members to her left.*

The Author                      Around 1750. This map shows the 13 colonies along the coast or nearby. And there's the Spanish Main down there.

(Go away. Let me finish!)

*Now three men (crew members) approach The Author.*

The Author *speedy*              The new settlers had skills and talents. Ship building, fishing, farming (tobacco and sugar and that). Trading furs, lumber. The British --

*Now the men pick up the woman bodily by lifting the chair on which she sits. The Author grips the desk.*

The Author *almost screaming*      Britain ensured that Britain got the best deal and the colonists got the worst deal -- protectionism -- monopoly so they couldn't trade with the French or that -- the Molasses Act of 1733.

Put me down! You ignorant bastards!

*The Author is carried off, still throwing facts into the void. Remmy calmly strolls in and sits at her desk. She gives to the crew members a world-weary smile.*

Remmy                              Are we okay to go after that diatribe? Good! Let's all get back to

normal.

END OF SCENE

**I, Scene x:** Night Outside Maefield Brae (Residence of Lord Rockingham)

*<< We are now in the portal which Maurice Sheridan has created. This version of history is incorrect. The actors are locked in and cannot return to their real selves until freed by Connie/Silvio/Thomas/Will and Professor Ealemann. These 5 characters work through the medium of Tye as he is directed by Pitt (as played by Alex).>>*

*We can indicate that we are in “portal land” by playing haunting, moody music. A misty curtain covers the screen and then melts away.*

*It is night and Alex/Pitt is being walked about in the company of his big strong manservant Andrew/Samuel.*

*Issuing from the nearby manor house Maefield Brae can be heard a rollicking party.*

Andrew/Samuel                      Ye had best come back to the carriage, Milord.

Alex/Pitt                              Not yet, Samuel. You are a good man, and my well-being is all your catechism. Bless you! However, this old bag of bones insists that I must needs stretch these legs awhile still.

Andrew/Samuel                      If you say so, Sir.

Alex/Pitt *nods*                        I do. I do.

*[Signals to Andrew/Samuel to follow him as a support.]*

Let us take a quiet peep at the so loud festivities, shall we?

*Samuel nods, grunts and lends his support to Alex/Pitt. They toddle towards the manor.*

*Andrew/Samuel does not look pleased.*

Alex/Pitt                              Aye, Samuel, my trusted servant and friend. That there is a

might of sin.

Andrew/Samuel *grim* Sin and bestiality belike, Sir. We must not approach that place where the Devil spawns.

Alex/Pitt *grinning* If I told you that I had received an invitation to that same soiree, what would your wise utterances be, Samuel?

*Andrew/Samuel is grim.*

Andrew/Samuel I should still bustle you away from these environs and then spit on the ground as we drove away.

*Alex/Pitt laughs.*

*Just then Andrew/Samuel realizes that there is someone watching them from the tree under which they stand. He puts a large arm around the shoulders of Alex/Pitt, becoming very protective. Both men look up.*

Andrew/Samuel *calls out* What is this? What is this?

*forcefully* Hi there! Come down from your lusty lookout whoever it is that spies on us from above. Come down! Stand and be recognized!

*Alex/Pitt looks up anxiously.*

Alex/Pitt What on Earth is it, Samuel? Are we to be set upon by footpads, think you?

*Andrew/Samuel is very grim.*

Andrew/Samuel *with* Not whilst I'm here to protect you, Sir.  
*menace*

*Andrew/Samuel looks up as he forcibly shuffles Alex/Pitt away.*

Andrew/Samuel Come you down at this very instant or else the Constable shall  
*threatening* hear of this.

*Tye/Jessamy drops athletically from his lofty perch. He sniffs at Andrew/Samuel, as he is above speaking to a lowly servant and thus addresses himself only to Alex/Pitt (to whom he makes his bow).*

Tye/Jessamy                      I do beg your pardon, Sir William. Tell your man to desist, won't you? I certainly do not mean any harm to either of you.

*Alex/Pitt looks at Tye/Jessamy as if he were an interesting specimen.*

Andrew/Samuel                  And what were you a-doing of in this here tree?  
*confronting*

*As Tye/Jessamy (haughty) struggles not to answer, Alex/Pitt seems to be considering a course of action. He turns to Andrew/Samuel and smiles gently.*

Alex/Pitt                          Samuel, I want you to keep watch for me. Along this lane here. Whistle loudly in the event that somebody should come to find us out.

Mr Yardley and I are going to steal over to yon window and enjoy an innocent laugh or two.

*Andrew/Samuel wants to resist but Alex/Pitt gently but firmly sends him off.*

Alex/Pitt                          Come, Samuel! Mr Yardley is a gentleman of political bent. He and I shall discuss affairs current at a high level. You would doubtless be bored to tears.

*Andrew/Samuel stumps off without a word. Alex/Pitt watches with a whimsical look in his eye.*

Alex/Pitt                          Hmmm ... Not all the Puritanical types sailed off to America, one understands. Now! Mr Yardley, or may I call you Jessamy?

Tye/Jessamy *bowing*              Of course, Sir. I should be honoured.

Alex/Pitt                          Walk me over to the window, Jessamy. I'm a bit of a burden just now ... what with my demmed gouty leg, you know.

Tye/Jessamy                      It is no trouble. I have strong arms and a sturdy back.

*They walk a bit. Tye/Jessamy acts as a prop for Alex/Pitt.*

Alex/Pitt *wry smile*                  And I know just what you were up to in that tree, young man.

Tye/Jessamy *appalled at Pitt's suggestion*      But ... But there is a sweet little family of birds ... of robins that ... that ...

*Rather helplessly, Tye/Jessamy points upwards.*

Alex/Pitt                      No dear boy. You were on the lookout, hoping to espy the  
                                          beauteous Lady Patricia Haselton. Wasn't that it? Birds be  
                                          demmed, eh?

*Alex/Pitt laughs heartily. The sound is covered by the ever louder sounds emanating from the manor house. Tye/Jessamy mutters a lame excuse.*

Tye/Jessamy *disgruntled*    There **was** a nest in that tree after all ... For all that you want to  
                                          make game of me ...

*A loud peal of female laughter is heard. The two gentlemen glance at each other, lifting their eyebrows.*

Tye/Jessamy *reviving*        Besides, Sir. Lady Patricia is a gentle soul. She would hardly be  
                                          inveigled upon to attend such a romp as this.

Alex/Pitt                      If you love the lady so much, I must assume that you have made  
                                          her an offer. Or are about to?

*They have reached the window. They look in. The bright candle-light illuminates their faces.*

*Tye/Jessamy is nevertheless downcast.*

Tye/Jessamy                  My affairs are not such that I could ever persuade Lord Haselton  
                                          to bestow upon me his beloved daughter's hand. Unfortunately.  
                                          So I have not tried. Nor am like to ...

Alex/Pitt                      Really? Oh, well I'll put in a good word for you, Jessamy. Why  
                                          I've known old Haselton these many years. Leave it to me!

Tye/Jessamy *elated and*      Would you really speak to him in my behalf, Mr Pitt? Oh, I should  
*thrilled*                            be unaccountable grateful to you if you might sway him in my  
                                          direction.

Alex/Pitt                      Certainly. Give it a sennight and then make your lady an offer.  
                                          And when you speak to his Lordship, I would advise confidence  
                                          and resolution. He was ever a pigeon for swank.

*Tye/Jessamy soaks up the advice.*

Tye/Jessamy *firmly*                      Swank, Sir. Right you are!

END OF SCENE

## **I, Scene xi:** Night Inside Maefield Brae (Residence of Lord Rockingham)

*<< We remain in Maurice Sheridan's portal – his false world. >>*

*The date is 25<sup>th</sup> March 1765. It is night.*

*Within Maefield Brae there are numerous people (men and women) in various degrees of drunkenness. The noise is overwhelming: laughter, tittering, chat and wild talk and squeals from the ladies. Men are lechers and women are jades. It is all about abandoned sex. A couple of fiddlers are scraping out a tune. Nearby, couples jig about wantonly.*

*Biscuit attempts to stand on a small stool. He is too drunk to manage this. With much accompanying laughter and banter Biscuit manages to stand on the stool with aid from other gentlemen. He calls loudly and forcefully for calm. Those about him give him their attention.*

Biscuit                                      Gentlemen! Gentlemen! And ladies!

*There is an outburst of laughter and many ribald comments from the bosomy women thereabouts.*

Biscuit                                      We have here in our august company on this evening a young man who needs little introduction. A scholar – even now Eton's brightest star. A young man of proven worth. This worthiest of youths is as well-rounded as was any boy from the Renaissance.

For ye all know that his honoured father hath even yet introduced our fresh-faced friend into the arms of womankind.

*There follows now a lascivious howl from the men.*

Biscuit                                      He is indeed well-rounded, I assure all ye who are doubters. And

can gamble all players till they welter under the table.

He has undertaken the Grand Tour of Europe under the auspices of his tutor Mr ... oh fudge! ... Mr Oddbloggs ... or such or such ...

No longer shall I stand upon this unsteady podium. I shall make way for my better. I shall with all due humility invite The Honourable Charles James Fox to take my place, to speak to you all, if he will be so kind.

*There is a loud burst of applause. The camera pans around to find Mark/Fox heavily petting a luscious young thing. People about him pat him on the shoulder. Realizing that he is wanted, he chucks the girl off his knee and leaps onto the stool athletically, as befits a 16 year old.*

*The applause is hearty and deafening. Mark/Fox whips a paper from his pocket and waves it about importantly. There is not a hint of any nervousness: he is as brave as a turkey-cock.*

Mark/Fox                      Here it is.

It bears the imprimatur "Honi soit qui mal y pense" along with "America" and "One Penny".

This dear little stamp was given the royal assent on this very day (the 25<sup>th</sup> day of March, year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and sixty-five) by our glorious sovereign whose name I am loath to speak.

*Many of those attending Mark/Fox catcall "Hanover", "German George" and so on. Mark/Fox calls for silence. When reading the words, he will stress certain words. This stirs the assembled people to "ooo" and "ahh".*

Mark/Fox                      And this is what this petty Stamp Act compasses: An act for granting and applying certain stamp duties, and other duties, in the British colonies and plantations in America, towards further defraying the expenses of defending, protecting, and securing the same; and for amending such parts of the several acts of parliament relating to the trade and revenues of the said colonies and plantations, as direct the manner of determining and

recovering the penalties and forfeitures therein mentioned.

*Mark/Fox waves the paper and shouts triumphantly.*

Mark/Fox                      And this without these brave Americans having any recourse to speak against this act. No recourse! Nor to humbly beg that its tenor be moderated. No recourse! Neither to find a better way to apply an excise that intends to defray the costs of defending the American folk and their trade. ***They have no recourse!*** And why not? Because this rack-rent of a king ... This wastrel monarch of German descent hath decreed and ordained that the loyal colonists of America might not be represented by parliamentary members either on these shores or on those shores! They are taxed but without any suffrage of any kind.

*There is a loud roar of approbation. A crowd of well-wishers gathers close to Mark/Fox, waving their approval with great volume.*

*As the camera backs away, we see a flirty maiden rush from the manor house, giggling and swinging her skirts importantly. Two young bucks rush after her.*

END OF SCENE

## **I, Scene xii:** Night Outside Maefield Brae (Return to Earlier Scene)

*<< We remain in Maurice Sheridan's portal – his false world. >>*

*We have returned to the exterior, where Alex/Pitt and Tye/Jessamy hover about at the window. They are startled by the irruption from the manor house of the flirtatious girl and her pair of swains.*

*Alex/Pitt gives a tired sigh and turns from the window.*

Alex/Pitt                      Come! Poor Samuel will be anxious that I must have been taken under Beelzebub's wing!

*They walk back in the direction of the tree.*

Alex/Pitt                                Shall I take you to your domicile in my carriage, young Jessamy?

Tye/Jessamy                            Thank you kindly, Sir, but no. My bay gelding awaits me in yon thicket.

*They walk on a little. Tye/Jessamy appears deep in thought.*

Tye/Jessamy                            The young man who spoke with such ferocity ... He probably does not number my own years. And yet he possesses a force of character that is hard to describe in mere words. Perhaps he will climb the ladder with much more speed than I could do, and I shall one day watch him fly about above me.

Alex/Pitt                                That was Charles James Fox and he is more likely to be a bane in my life than in yours, Mr Yardley. A veritable thorn in my side.

*The trio of merrymakers have become more boisterous, to the point where the young lady squeals and disclaims very loudly. This alerts Tye/Jessamy.*

Tye/Jessamy *pompous*                Mr Pitt – I believe that I ought to march over there and tell those two young gentlemen what is and what is not acceptable behaviour in the presence of a young unattended lady!

Alex/Pitt                                Nay, leave them be. I believe that you will spoil the lady's sport if you break up their little group. Doubtless her mama has given her permission for the dear miss to frolic about in this unseemly way. Were you to enter the card room, you will probably find her (the so-worthy mama): a raddled old trollop (somewhat befuddled with gin) having straw-coloured hair and huge blots of rouge smudging her chicken skin cheeks. And her sad bosom well uncovered, and her fat fingers (bearing dragon claw nails) laden heavily with all manner of rings and geegaws. Phawh!

Tye/Jessamy *very surprised*                            Do you know the young lady's mother then, Mr Pitt? I mean: are you acquainted with her?

Alex/Pitt                                Not a bit of it. But I have been a close student of life, my boy. These old bags of hay were once as pretty and as desirable as

now we find are their daughters. That is the sad truth.

You must be glad that your sweet Lady Patricia Haselton will retain her precious beauty well into her old age (if she follows faithfully in the footsteps of her aunts and great-aunts). Then my advice to you must be to make haste in claiming her hand. That is my timely advice. There!

END OF SCENE << *Momentarily, we leave Maurice Sheridan's portal.* >>

### **I, Scene xiii:** A Cosy Village Pub Where Thomas and Mick Play Darts

*Thomas and Mick are enjoying a beer as they play darts in a village pub.*

*The play begins, but Thomas will go into voice-over and his words will be represented by a very humorous little film featuring the King in his throne room. The purpose of this scene is to give us a break from Maurice Sheridan's "world" but also to quickly cover what **really** happened between 1760 and 1775 (the start of the War of Independence).*

Mick                                Yeah, well I don't get it.

Thomas                             Just say the words in your script **with feeling** and you don't need to understand anything else.

Mick                                Nah. I need to know what the hell is going on. Maurice the Barbarian insists on realism. He's a sucker for truth. And he wants me to know the bizz behind the story. But me? I don't get it.

Thomas                             I'll race through it for you. Salient points only.



*The first scenario is of the throne room (above). Aged 76, King George II walks solemnly from right of screen to the throne and sits.*

Thomas *voice-over for*  
*1<sup>st</sup> scenario*

The previous king was George II. You should be able to remember that. Died 25<sup>th</sup> October 1760.

*The second scenario is of the throne room with George II seated on the throne. He is speared by a gigantic dart. Two bewigged palace servants trot in with a stretcher. They are followed by George III (played by Mick) as he walks solemnly from right of screen to the throne and sits.*

*This is allowed to take place because the servants have removed the body of the dead king. They carry the corpse solemnly to left of stage on the stretcher.*

Thomas *voice-over for*  
*2<sup>nd</sup> scenario*

So there's the new king, aged 22. He must be careful of any Tory lackeys because the Tories are all tied up with the Old Pretender (he's the Stuart father of Bonnie Prince Charlie and the bitter enemy of all the George's.)

*The third scenario is of the throne room with George III seated on the throne. Newcastle walks solemnly from right of screen to the throne and stands beside it.*

Thomas *voice-over for*  
*3<sup>rd</sup> scenario*

The incumbent Whigs were led by Pelham, Duke of Newcastle. Thus, the new king inherited him.

*The fourth scenario is of the throne room with George III seated on the throne and Newcastle*

*standing beside it. Then Newcastle is overcome by emotion, bursts into tears and flops down on the throne next to the King. The King negligently pats Newcastle on the shoulder.*

Thomas *voice-over for*  
*4th scenario*

In these very early days of the young King's reign, they are all besieged by the Seven Years War and loads of big troubles. George III thought that the Whigs were plonkers and wondered if the Tories might not be a better fit after all.

*The fifth scenario is of the throne room with George III seated on the throne and Newcastle sitting on the other throne, sobbing. Newcastle stands and totters off to left of screen (still sobbing) as Bute walks solemnly in from right of screen to take his position standing beside the throne of the King.*

Thomas *voice-over for*  
*the 5<sup>th</sup> scenario*

Gets his wish. His good mate Bute (the Earl of) gets the jersey as PM, replacing Newcastle. And he is a Tory. The year is 1762. The Seven Years War rumbles on.

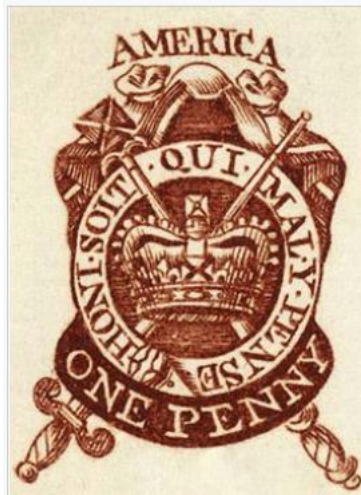
*The sixth scenario is of the throne room with George III seated on the throne as Bute stands beside the throne of the King. Bute walks solemnly to left of screen as Grenville walks solemnly in from right of screen to take his position standing beside the throne of the King. The King turns away from Grenville in disgust.*

Thomas *voice-over for*  
*the 6<sup>th</sup> scenario*

Because everything was screwed-up, Bute took the blame and had to go (to the King's regret). So in marches Grenville, the Whig PM. Kingy can't stand him.

*The seventh scenario is of the throne room with George III seated on the throne as Grenville stands beside the throne of the King. The King remains turned away from Grenville in disgust.*

*A pretty girl wearing a clapboard of the stamp (as depicted below representing the Stamp Act) poses in front of the two thrones. The King appears to be blowing bubbles (as he has become insane, but better not mention that).*



Thomas *voice-over for the 7<sup>th</sup> scenario*

And the Stamp Act is enacted. Yes, I know that you are sick to death of the Stamp Act – we all are! But it lies at the heart of the colonial complaint.

*The eighth scenario is of the throne room with George III seated on the throne as Grenville stands beside the throne of the King. The King remains turned away from Grenville, blowing bubbles from a pipe and bowl. The Stamp Act girl exits with a sexy walk to left of screen.*

*Grenville walks solemnly to left of screen (following the Stamp Act girl) as Rockingham (played by Jon) walks solemnly in from right of screen to take his position standing beside the throne of the King.*

*The King puts away the bubble pipe and bowl and faces the front again.*

*Hardly has Rockingham reached the side of the King when he walks solemnly away to left of screen, his place being taken by Pitt (played by Alex) who requires the two bewigged servants to support and assist him.*

Thomas *voice-over for the 8<sup>th</sup> scenario*

The King cannot stand Grenville and he is shown the door in July 1765. And the much-lamented Stamp Act is repealed.

Rockingham is the new PM. But he doesn't last and now in desperation the King calls in Pitt, Earl of Chatham as PM.

*The ninth scenario is of the throne room with George III seated on the throne as Pitt stands beside the throne of the King. Townshend swans in from right of screen wearing a clapboard. He is trying to look as sexy as the Stamp Act girl. His clapboard bears the legend "Townshend Duties to Confound*

*the Colonists". As Townshend postures in front of the thrones, he is speared by a gigantic dart. The two bewigged palace servants trot in with a stretcher. The servants remove the body of the dead Townshend. They carry the corpse solemnly to left of stage on the stretcher.*

*Pitt hobbles (unaided) to left of screen (following the body of Townshend) as Grafton walks solemnly in from right of screen to take his position standing beside the throne of the King.*

Thomas *voice-over for 9<sup>th</sup> scenario*

The Townshend Duties are in force mid-67. These exactions utterly infuriate the Americans. Then Townshend dies. Pitt is unable to go on and the new PM is Grafton. By 1770, the Townshend taxes have been repealed, all except the one on tea. Tea!

*We now return abruptly to the darts game in the village pub.*

Thomas

The taxes on tea prove to be the thin end of the wedge for the American colonists. In December 1773 they have their big tea party in Boston as a protest.

Mick *nods*

They've had a gutful.

Thomas

They've had a gutful. Right. That burk Bute makes a triumphal return as PM only to see the American colony lost during the ensuing War. 1775 Lexington and Concord. Take it from there. You got it now?

Mick

Yep. All clear. You should have a show on the telly. You could teach that stuff to the punters.

*Thomas rolls his eyes.*

END OF SCENE

## **I, Scene xiv: Night Outside Maefield Brae (Return to Earlier Scenes)**

*<< As advised, we are no longer in Maurice Sheridan's portal.>>*

*PLOT PROGRESSION: Be advised that Alex (playing Pitt) has been too strong (mentally) to fall completely into Maurice Sheridan's portal. Somehow, he must get word to the outside world that there is trouble brewing due to Maurice's activities.*

*In this crucial scene, Alex decides to place his trust in Tye.*

*Their scene is over, so Andrew and Tye indulge in some horseplay.*

*Alex limps along, persisting in his role as Pitt. He stops and looks about him, with a wild expression on his face. Then Alex takes a step forward and tumbles heavily. Tye rushes to his aid.*

*Tye alarmed*                      Jeez Alex! Whaddaya doing? Are you okay, man?

*Andrew lollops up.*

*Andrew*                          He prob'ly tripped up on a tree root. Nearly did myself. Let's get you up on your feet old cock.

*It is an easy job for Tye and Andrew to pull Alex to his feet. Tye dusts Alex down.*

*Tye smiling*                      There you are, then!

*Alex*                                I would thank you. However, I was playing Pitt just then. I decided to throw in a jot of verisimilitude, on Old Sarum's behalf.

*Andrew perplexed*              Uh?

*Tye*                                 That's what they called Pitt. He was the Earl of Chatham as well as the MP for a rotten electorate called Old Sarum. Assured of always getting elected because there were no voters to vote him out. Bit of a laugh that one. Imagine what a killing our current MPs could make of that if we still had those – whaddya call 'em?

*Alex*                                Rotten boroughs. Relic of the pre-plague days. By that I mean that there had been thriving villages and hamlets, but they were hard-hit by the various plagues. Their populations were completely wiped out. At any road, the authorities kept them

going for the sake of voting in a "sure thing".

Andrew                      How come you gents know all this?

*[To Alex]*

Are you a professor or something?

Alex                         My brother-in-law is (if that counts).

No, our beloved Sherry (Maurice Sheridan) dinned it into me. For what reason I know not.

*Alex looks about him. He is perturbed. Then he pulls it together, as Andrew and Tye are about to march off.*

Alex                         We're currently flapping about in 1765. Now, in that year Pitt was a gouty old thing of – what? 57 or 58 years? Thereabouts. I decided that without either of you two to act as his prop, Pitt would take a tumble, giving the effect of gravitas. Nice ending to the scene.

Andrew                     Well, so long as Sherry doesn't mind.

Tye                          Let's do it again then. No goofs. I'll gasp "Mr Pitt!" or "Sir!" rather than "Alex".

Alex *rueful*                That might work except that there's no-one to film us. No crew and no cameras, as you see ...

*Andrew and Tye look about them but are only very mildly surprised.*

Tye                          I expect they've gone home already.

*Andrew strides off. As Tye is about to follow him, Alex stops him.*

Alex                         Where are you two off to in such a hurry?

Tye                          Drinking comp. Quiz night's not until tomorrow evening so we're going to limber-up our throats with a jugs-w'hay!

Alex *warning*             You be careful! Andrew Carmody won the Bachelor of Booze

during his all-too-short college days.

Tye *grinning*                      *Moi aussi.*

*Tye waves goodbye and prepares to leave when Alex calls him back. Alex signals to Tye to come close to him.*

Tye                                  What's up?

Alex *very softly and carefully*                      If when I play Pitt you see me tumble (just like I did a moment ago) play along with it, yeah? Come to my aid just as you did. That will look genuine. Nice touch. Stoop down and put your noggin very close such that I can whisper to you. Follow?

Tye *shrugs*                      Sure. And call you "Mr Pitt".

*Alex merely nods. So does Tye. Tye then scampers up the rise into the night. Alex follows Tye's progress with his eyes.*

*Then the boisterous trio re-appear. The girl is pretending to be offended that her swains wish to touch her breasts and kiss her. With much raucous disturbance, the trio rush back into the manor house.*

Alex *rueful, annoyed*                      If only I could think ... If only I could work it out ... What would old Pitt do?

END OF SCENE

END OF SCENE << *We leave Maurice Sheridan's portal.* >>

## **I, Scene xv:** Interior, A Fine Restaurant

*Connie enters the restaurant, looking about keenly at the diners. We see the maitre d' approach her, offering assistance in her quest. He is wreathed in smiles and his gestures are unctuous and over-polite. Together they spot Thomas and Silvio at a far table. The gentlemen are deep in conversation.*

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Thomas                               He cannot act. Can't act to save himself. I don't know what sort of a pig's breakfast he'll make of King George III. But heaven help me, I managed to get him that part. Have to hire a tutor for him, 'suppose.

Silvio                               Sheridan hasn't yet commented on Mick's appalling acting abilities. Oh, you should be able to pull it off.

*The gentlemen are interrupted. The maitre d' ushers Connie up to their table and bows himself off. Connie crisply thanks him, about to sit. However, Silvio and Thomas are extremely put out.*

Thomas *discomposed*       I'm sorry, my dear but this is a private dinner. Would you mind leaving us alone?

*Connie sits anyway.*

Connie                               Yes, I would mind. Do I **really** look even remotely like an autograph hound? I've given up my regular session at the beauty salon so that I could catch up with the pair of you. And I've had to bribe one of the stagehands to obtain your direction. Cost me a score, the greedy piglet.

*The men are flustered.*

*Connie makes herself comfortable. During the conversation, Connie will speak at a-mile-a-minute. She will summon the waiter, order from him, then seamlessly continue with her barrage. Thomas and Silvio will appear to be both spellbound and appalled.*

Connie                               You've met me before but obviously you've completely forgotten me. Not being a luscious babe with those "Mammy!" collagen lips, enormous tits and a slinking kind of saunter. Men are ever attracted to the wrong women and only realize it when their intellects have been battered by nothing-sayings and their wallets are empty. Ruled by their dicks, every man-Jack of them!

Here's our waiter! Yes, I'll have a scotch and soda with ice and lemon. Oh, and bring me one of those prawn Toledo things that chef specializes in. Thank you! Lovely. I assume that you gents

have ordered? Good!

Of course, I'm Connie Ealemann. Professor Ealemann's sister. But you're more likely to know me as Alex Manderby's wife. Alex plays the gouty William Pitt in the movie extravaganza, of course. Alex is the gardener on the telly: "What Grows Where".

And that's why I sought you out (even though it cost me 20 pound and a great deal of inconvenience). Now I realize that you two gentlemen couldn't give a flying fuck about Alex's whereabouts but it happens that (although I'm very used to being a grass widow) this time it feels different. Something is going on. And now he's disappeared from view but not before doing a considerable amount of frowning and sighing when he **should** have been learning his lines. For his role as Pitt.

So where is he?

*Both men are completely gobsmacked. Connie looks them over with withering contempt.*

Connie *acid-tongued*      Here sit two of London's most celebrated conversationalists and both of them are lost for words. Well, well ... How that the worm doth turn!

*There is a distraction as the drink and food arrives. Everyone shifts about.*

Connie      A wife always senses these things and --

Silvio *suave*      Before you launch into another verbal tsunami, Ms Ealemann, please allow me to make this very pertinent comment. I earnestly believe that you do not need recourse to any beauty salon. You are superb.

*Connie takes the fulsome compliment in her stride.*

Connie      Obviously I was just being massaged and waxed. Don't even **think** of Botox or silicon in my presence.

Silvio      Mmmm ... Well, I've long been a great fan. Often seen you

bobbing in and out your husband's gardening show. Really look forward to same. But your being more beautiful in the flesh ... I mean in real life ... That must explain why I did not immediately recognize you when --

*Silvio nudges Thomas under the table. Thomas rushes to agree, almost choking on his food to do so.*

Silvio *very persuasive* Will you tell us why you suspect that "something is going on" ... ?

Connie He's missing. That's what!

Alright ... Alex was worried about something ... Something to do with the script for this movie thing. No not just the script ... I mean the scenes. They didn't make sense to him.

*Thomas frowns and nods. Silvio watches him do so.*

Silvio I feel exactly the same. Unsettled and distracted. That's partly why Thomas and I are meeting today. To discuss the ...

Listen here! Whether you like to admit it or not, Glyn Mereton (who appears to be a complete plonker on our silly game show) is a very well-respected actor. Consummate. He lines up in all those murder mystery genre productions which proliferate. Receives applause from the crew whenever he acts. Tears at the heartstrings.

So why oh why! **Why** is this genius thespian playing the role of Grenville? He's only in the story for a bare minute before Kingy chucks him over. And thus he is no longer even a blip on the radar. Do you see where I'm coming from? Why bother to cast a major actor in such a nothing role? Makes no sense. No sense at all ...

*Silvio is displeased and annoyed that he cannot figure it out. He blows out his breath in a distracted sigh and rakes his hair with his fingers. Then he turns his eyes towards Connie.*

Silvio I wish you'd tell me all you know.

Connie I rang my brother (the Professor). Seems that my brother has been in a close encounter with a genealogy expert. Sheridan's ancient family being the subject under investigation. You understand of course (why wouldn't you? He makes no secret of it) that he claims to be related to the 18th century playwright of the same name.

Cut to the chase: rumour has it that Maurice Sheridan has spent innumerable hours over the last few months investigating a certain man called Amos Lightman, who had in his possession a certain bill of lading. Now, it seems that if Sheridan can get his hands on that document ... Lightman was a mercantile type ... born in England but had emigrated to the colonies. Brother is also having a look at that pile of horse manure.

*[Leans forward, whispering importantly]*

Sheridan has joined up as a member of several online heritage services in order to trace his relationship with this Amos Lightman. He's offered many a DNA sample to advance the quest. Such is his eager desire to find out that he is related to Lightman. That is the **certain** Amos Lightman with the **certain** document.

*Connie sits back, watching for the inevitable effect of her words. There is some shifting, grunting and wondering from the two men. And now Maurice is directing our War of Independence movie. Is there a sinister plot, here? Possibly ... Possibly ...*

Connie *crisp* Anyhow, all this doesn't return my husband to the fold.

With that in mind, I've made plans.

Will Dalziel wrote the "Debacle" screenplay then slid back into obscurity. My intention is to grill him. If anything is off, **he's** the very man to confirm it. Dalziel found the book "Crisis of Empire"

amongst his old University stuff and decided to work it into a film script for movies or TV. I. R. Christie was the learned author. Dead now, of course. But back to the bacon fat.

Will is divorced and lives with his widowed sister Marjorie Trent-Staple in the country. Sussex? Somewhere like that ... In an attractive old manor house. "Maefield Brae" I believe the name is.

She is on the verge of taking in boarders to make ends meet. This work of Will's may keep the wolf from the door. Hope so, for their sake. "Naice people" ... Yes, "Maefield Brae" ...

Now, she is desperate to know everything about the nobility and aristocracy – and to be invited to meet them. Her ultimate dream is to curry favour with the royal family.

To that worthy end, I shall dangle various royal connections in her face and naturally (for his sister's sake) Dalziel will open up like a peony in the sun. And we'll dredge up the whole sordid story, no doubt.

If you gents would deign to accompany me to this "Maefield Brae", I could lead old Marj off on a nobility-slash-gardening tour, and you two could fire off a series of acutely-appropriate questions at Will. QED.

Thomas

You have connections with the royal family?

Connie *nods vigorously*

Of course. Another brother is head gardener at Windsor Castle. That explains why Alex so often refers to the gardens there. On his show. "What Grows Where".

*Thomas and Silvio sit back, stunned.*

Connie

So ... When will you lads be ready to push off for the country? The Weather Bureau seems to be suggesting that Wednesday

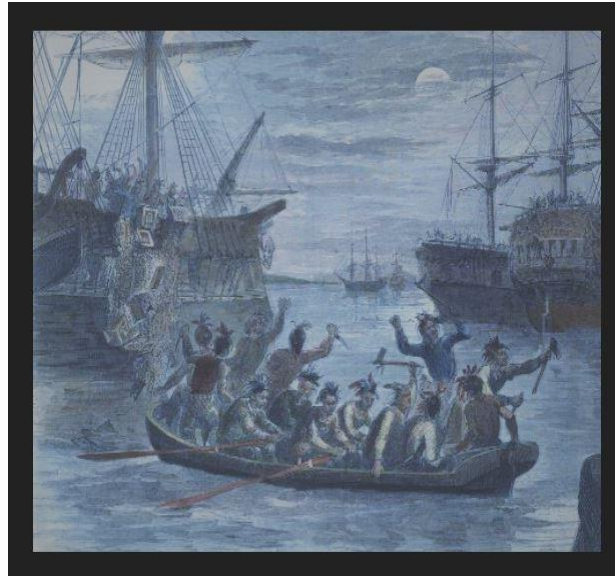
will be sumptuous (weather-wise). Whatever that means.

Wednesday then. I have access to a half-decent motor now that Alex has shuffled off. You must give me your directions and I'll collect you at ... What? 8.30? Or do you prefer to say "half-past eight"? Sounds more English and proper doesn't it?

*The camera backs away, showing Connie still holding sway as she eats and drinks.*

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT I



## ACT II

### II, Scene i: Interior, The Robust Manor House of the Duke of Cumberland

<< *We are once again in the portal which Maurice Sheridan has created. In the real world, the Duke of Cumberland advises his nephew (King George III) to shaft his PM George Grenville. The King is only too glad to comply as he despises Grenville on the strength that the latter carps forever on the subject of the royal expenses. Cumberland pushes for Rockingham to gain the top job.*

*BUT in Maurice's portal, Grenville will not be sacked. Rather Grenville will work vigorously to appease the American colonists such that they will not go to war against the mother country.>>*

*Once again, we can indicate that we are in "portal land" by playing haunting, moody music. A misty curtain covers the screen and then melts away.*

*Glyn/Grenville stalks down an oak-lined corridor with purpose. He marches along in a soldierly way.*

*When he comes to a heavy pair of doors we can hear delightful chamber music issuing forth from within this room. Glyn/Grenville steels himself, then opens the doors and enters. Glyn/Grenville steps*

*forward with great deliberation. He does not look at all pleased to see any of the assembled guests who are seated at a formal dining table. There are bewigged servants scattered about in the background. Then Roger/Cumberland stands and the music grinds to a halt.*

Roger/Cumberland            I'm awfully afraid that you have not been invited to my matinee, Mr Prime Minister. Kindly leave my premises forthwith, Sir.

*Glyn/Grenville attempts to stare Roger/Cumberland down.*

*Roger/Cumberland looks about and then clicks his fingers. A huge dog advances menacingly on Glyn/Grenville who stands his ground. Roger/Cumberland is extremely composed.*

Roger/Cumberland            I find that I am unable to control my watchdog. Please take yourself off and thus no blood need be spilled.

*There is a pregnant silence almost in the form of a confrontation.*

Roger/Cumberland            Sir! ***Sir!***

*The dog is now about to pounce on Glyn/Grenville. With casual grace he whips a keen blade from its small scabbard on his lower leg and plunges the shimmering steel point deeply into the dog. The dog gives a screaming yelp of pain, then collapses to the floor, dead. From the table there is a hubbub of concern, shock and horror. Two ladies faint.*

*With neither emotion nor affectation, Glyn/Grenville clears the gore from his blade on the edge of the tablecloth, then restores the blade to its scabbard. He promptly nods towards one of the startled footmen. Glyn/Grenville orders the man to remove the carcass with a flippant gesture.*

Glyn/Grenville                That canine pudding is offensive to the ladies. Summon assistance for them, won't you?

*Between them, the servants manage to comply with Glyn/Grenville's peremptory orders. This includes lugging the dog's corpse out of the room and patting the hands of the ladies who are now coming to. Some of the gentlemen guests now stand, uncertain what action to take.*

*Glyn/Grenville turns to the Roger/Cumberland who has been struck dumb, so appalled is he.*

Glyn/Grenville *grim*                    Do not set your dog upon me. It will not serve.

*Grenville turns to the musicians.*

Glyn/Grenville *pleasant*            Continue to play gentlemen, an you will. In the words of the much-lamented Congreve, music has charms to soothe a savage breast.

*The violinist who leads the small orchestra nods. Bright music pours forth.*

*Glyn/Grenville turns again to Roger/Cumberland.*

Glyn/Grenville                    Come, Your Grace! Your inhospitality has proved unfortunate and ill-conceived. Give me the favour of a few private words in your library, won't you?

*Roger/Cumberland splutters as he wipes his brow; he then somehow agrees. The two men leave the room, with Glyn/Grenville bowing and offering a few words of apology to the assembled guests.*

END OF SCENE << *Momentarily, we leave Maurice Sheridan's portal.* >>

## **II, Scene ii:** Interior, Back Room at Police Station

*The back room is tiny. It is crammed to capacity with evidence bags, cardboard boxes and assorted paraphernalia. It appears that the young woman works at a miniscule desk upon which an old-fashioned desktop computer grinds away.*

*Senior Constable Vicki Bruce wears a white lab coat over her police uniform. She glances over some notes on a clipboard.*

Professor Ealemann            Thank you **so** much Vicki for giving me a leg up ... This has been like swimming in mud, to be more than honest.

Vicki                                Prof – how many times have **you** helped me?

Now! Before I give you the results, we have to dive into our "meat-and-potatoes" dialogue as you will be aware. That is, did you acquire the DNA samples you sent me legally? Was any undue or importunate force used on the subject to obtain the DNA samples?

Professor Ealemann *po-faced*      They were got by trickery. The subject is unaware that I've snaffled them.

*Vicki is dubious. She fiddles about with objects which are to hand. Then she sighs and addresses Professor Ealemann directly.*

Vicki      That's not what I wanted you to say.

Professor Ealemann      Then let's review scientific method. Want nothing. Expect nothing. Consider everything. Let the evidence speak in its own voice.

Vicki      You're twisting me around.

Come straight! Where the Hell did you get those DNA samples?

Professor Ealemann      I perform consultancy work for a variety of bodies. Several of my "bodies" deal in family trees. Ancestry ... Genealogy.

One receives a sample-collecting pack. One swabs under the tongue with the huge cotton bud provided, then one posts the sample back. My ... er ... purloining (let's call it "purloining") of the DNA from my subject **might** be considered to be part of my consultancy work. At a stretch, granted.

*Vicki is being bamboozled by the Professor's glib speech.*

Vicki *frowns*      You're still twisting it around.

Still, we catch bag loads of crims that way. Cold crimes are being solved every day because some idiot decides to check out their family using good old DNA. You'd be surprised!

*[Shrugs. Gives in.]*

Alrighty. I'll play the game. But you are **not** to do this again, Prof.

Professor Ealemann      Alrighty.

Vicki      Who is this Richard Sheridan dude?

Professor Ealemann      The playwright and humourist Richard Brinsley Sheridan was born in Ireland 1751, living most of his life in London. Died there 1816, a pauper.

His connection with America was **very** strong. Never visited the colonies but spoke out against the shabby way they were being treated exactly as did Charles James Fox. They were allies, you see.

So ... Here's the thing. The Americans even tried to reward this Sheridan for his efforts to thwart the War of Independence. Saw him as a saviour.

Vicki *nods*      Okay. That's cool. Someone famous ...

Any road, my supervisor discovered three direct descendants of this Richard Sheridan. They all willingly offered DNA samples. The scientists at the DNA testing lab thingy have declared that all three of these rellies are in fact related. So ... boxes ticked there.

However, you gave me that ill-gotten DNA swab to check against them. No relation. Sorry (if that's not what you wanted to hear) ...

Professor Ealemann      On the contrary, dearest Vicki -- that's **exactly** what I wanted to hear! Well done! Thank you.

Vicki *beams*      Great! Nice to get a positive outcome. Here! Take the notes. You might need them.

And don't be a naughty boy again!

Professor Ealemann      Got ya. Candidate for sainthood, me.

Oh, and by the way ... if you happen to glance at "Flags of the World" in the Toplevel search engine, don't do a back flip if the US flag appears for a split-second to have a Union Jack in the canton. Just a glimpse and then it sets itself to rights. Mmmm ...

*Professor Ealemann has the notes. As he strides out of Vicki's work area, he waves those notes by means of farewell. Vicki looks after him, confused. She mutters to herself.*

Vicki *frowns*      There is not the remotest possibility of my looking up flags, Prof  
...  
But cheers! Thanks for the tip-off ...

END OF SCENE

## **II, Scene iii:** An Excerpt from the TV Gardening Show "What Grows Where" (Scuttled)

*With Alex missing, Connie will anchor Alex's gardening show: "What Grows Where".*

*The cameras have stopped whilst Connie dashes off to grab a couple of potted cumquat bushes.*

*The Author hijacks Connie's workbench. Our shot indicates that the crew members are confused as to why this woman is trying to take over the show. As the scene progresses, Connie protests strongly.*

*Then the police arrive to haul The Author (violently resisting) away.*

*The Author's only prop is an indistinct hand-drawn map of the east coast of North America. At first, she is chatting with some crewmen who are out of shot.*

The Author      You know how 'Straya looks like a dog's head? The map of  
'Straya? Well, the pointy bit (the ear) is Queensland.

*Someone in the crew calls out indistinctly.*

The Author                      No, it's big. Apparently, you can fit Texas 2½ times into the state of Queensland. It's the tropical one with all the coral islands and that ... And Mount Isa.

*Someone in the crew calls out indistinctly. The Author looks down at Connie's workbench. She shakes her head, portentously.*

The Author                      Yeah, well the Queensland Truckie was **insistent** that I explain to the punters how the British allowed themselves to slip into the War of Independence because he reckons --

*Connie (carrying two heavy potted cumquat plants) storms up to her workbench. She looks daggers at The Author as she slaps the plants onto the benchtop.*

Connie                              Get out of the way, will you? Will somebody please remove this desiccated specimen?

*The Author tries to placate Connie.*

The Author                      Hang on, Darl! (Nice cumquats ... you can steep them in brandy – did yer know that?)

You know what, Darl? Straya wasn't even **discovered** by Captain Cook until 1770. This stuff happened even **before** then.

Connie *nasty*                      I'll get rid of **you**, sister!

*Connie dashes off. The Author takes the opportunity now offered. She gesticulates: the cameraman should stake up his camera and film her. The Author speaks direct to camera.*

The Author                      Now listen! Great Britain and France warred for 9 years such that they could apportion North America. Great Britain (the winner) gained confidence. More control over colonial affairs, especially the wilderness controversy (the westward encroachment into native hunting grounds) and the rationalization of the various currencies. Due to the shortage of metal currency along with the dodgy bills and even resorting to the bartering of tobacco crops, this was at an impasse. No-one (on either side of the Atlantic)

could benefit.

And over all this, the legislators in Great Britain were trying to unify the 13 colonies whereas in fact these colonies had differing and often conflicting aims.

*Two burly policemen rush in. They haul The Author out of camera shot by lifting her off the ground (one either side). She struggles valiantly and yells her last bons mots as they do so.*

The Author *shouts* Imperial defence versus the need to finance that defence. The colonists began to speak of “unfairness” ...

Connie Right! Rolling? We’ll scrap that tedious tosser’s History lesson.  
So ... Cumquats!

END OF SCENE

## **II, Scene iv:** Interior, The Palace (on the way to the Throne Room)

*<< We are once again in the portal which Maurice Sheridan has created.*

*This scene puts meat onto the skeleton of Maurice’s plans.*

*By this means, the War of Independence will certainly be averted.>>*

*Once again, we can indicate that we are in “portal land” by playing haunting, moody music. A misty curtain covers the screen and then melts away.*

In this scene, the acting is superb (**especially from Mick!**), the costumes sumptuous and the drama intense.

*In the company of Bute and Shelburne, Mick/King appears in a corridor in the midst of a tirade.*

*Dressed in a very regal silk costume, he walks towards the camera (which has to keep backing away) as he heads purposefully towards his throne room.*

Mick/King *savage temper* Mass of Tea Sets ... Nay! What do ye call it? That plaguey land of Quakers and Calvinists from Cornwell and Holland in their three-cornered hats bearing brooches made of barley straw. Confound it! What is it --

Bute Do you refer to "Massachusetts", Your Majesty? The Colony of Massachusetts?

Mick/King Aye! That'll be it! That'll be it!

The Caucus Club of Boston and the rabble of New York ... Mobs of disloyal renegades ... and Sons of Liberty ... I'll show them "liberty"!

They waft about in a haze of strong savage liquor and reeky tobacco smoke in their foetid colonial clubs... My agents have apprised me of these nasty goings-on. I know it all!

All of these reprobates plotting to overthrow each and every legitimate chamber of legislation that they can find. Seeking a speedy way to push some bigoted bumpkin into a position of power and privilege without soiling their own calloused hands in the process.

*Here Mick/King halts abruptly and waves a paper at Bute.*

Mick/King *apoplectic* Proof? D'ye require proof?

Here is this missive from that vile maggot Otis who crassly calls the House of Commons (**my** House of Commons! **My** noble gentlemen!)

*[reads and spits as he does so]*

"a parcel of button-makers, pin-makers, horse jockeys,

gamesters, pensioners, pimps and whore-masters."

Hear ye these flagrant words?

*Those men nearest to Mick/King assist him to sit on a randomly-placed velvet sofa. Bute hands over a small flask of brandy. With trembling hands, Mick/King sips the liquid. He is now much calmer.*

*Mick/King returns the flask to Bute.*

Mick/King                      Yes, yes ... I know that you all believe that I take these things too hardly. That I behave as if a malevolent sprite may have taken over my royal personage ...

But were I more sophisticated in the Art of Fisticuffs, gentlemen I should travel o'er the ocean (no matter how perilous such an undertaking might be) and punch every man-jack of them in the nose. So I should!

Bute *soothing*                      You are a caring father to your people, Majesty.

Shelburne *soothing*                      Heavy is the head that bears the crown, Sir.

Mick/King *thoughtful*                      My Scottish forebear King James had a grandson; famous for hiding in an oak tree while the pesky Roundheads raked the woods to find him then execute him (an they could). His credo was ever to keep his own counsel. Aye! Keep his own counsel. Perhaps it behoves me to follow his lead ...

*Mick/King slaps his knee decisively.*

Mick/King                      And so I shall ...

Puritan vermin ...

Ruffians and scalliwags ... and smugglers, too, in order to dodge my excise officers. And now I find that the majority of my very ministers have changed the colour of their allegiance and intend to support the American point of view. Now, you see what I am up against!

They even now clamber over each other in their haste to install

their traitorous schemes.

*[Shouting]*

Vipers! Turncoats all!

Shelburne

Majesty. Please do not bestir yourself such that --

Mick/King *aggressive*

I am hemmed-in by plots and counter-plots. I am entangled *in* faction and *by* faction. Sir! Do you dare to stand there and deny it?

Bute *very calm*

We are your loyal supporters, Dread Sovereign. 'Twould be better (you should be better served, Majesty) were you to confront these lowly men who await you in the audience chamber and let them hear the severe tenor of your utterances.

*Mike/King mumbles and grumbles that he is very much put upon as Shelburne and Bute help Mick/King to rise to his feet.*

Mick/King

Aye! Well said! So shall they hear my thunder!

*Mick/King marches towards his throne room with Bute and Shelburne close beside him. These three men are now joined by Roger/Cumberland and Jon/Rockingham. Mick/King pulls up short at the sight of the group of stern-faced gentlemen awaiting him there.*

Mick/King

What is this, then? Do these gentlemen intend to threaten the divine and majestic person of their King?

*Roger/Cumberland sees Glyn/Grenville and begins to quake. The waiting gentlemen look grimly towards Mick/King. Their bows are sketchy at best. Mick/King is very put out at the lack of formality.*

Mick/King

Is this how ye greet His Majesty who answers only to God? Is it? Were he a barman from Billingsgate or Limehouse (doling out ales and whiskies to the working men in their oilskins) could not His Majesty expect a more seemly welcome?

*Roger/Cumberland can no longer wait. He shakes a finger at Glyn/Grenville.*

Roger/Cumberland

You Sir! You slaughtered my hound. Without which beast I am

*shouting* more bereft than a doting mother whose own child died in her fat arms.

*The gentlemen look about. Glyn/Grenville stands his ground.*

Glyn/Grenville You set the beast on to kill me, Your Grace. There were many witnesses to the attempted murder, as Your Grace must attest. Along with them a gang of merry musicians. I've no doubt that they all will stand good for the truth of the matter.

*Now we understand. Roger/Cumberland is more than keen to explain to Mick/King why he has deserted Jon/Rockingham for Glyn/Grenville.*

Roger/Cumberland *pleading* Your Majesty! This vile jackanapes pulled me aside from my dinner guests with some force and then drew from me my promise to support his interests in preference to those of Lord Rockingham. I cannot begin to describe to you, Dread Sovereign, the manner of his address, his use of force, his --

Jon/Rockingham *appalled* What! You have tossed me over then?

Glyn/Grenville He most certainly has changed his mind, and that after I decorously and punctiliously pointed out to him that the only possible course of action here is that which I propose. I used no importunate power upon His Grace.

Mick/King Might and power – You shall feel the hangman's noose and then you might know our power, Sir!

You propose ***nothing***, Grenville the Gull. Your term as my Prime of Ministers is over. You shall not dare to speak on behalf of the government. Rockingham here replaces you. So get out of my sight with haste, Sir.

Glyn/Grenville *gentle but defiant* I remain as the Prime Minister, Majesty. That is the will of the people. I intend to immediately repeal those bills we have enacted in that the American colonies will no longer be subject to

the Stamp Act nor they should be liable to billet British troops.

Bute *angry*

You are a traitor, Grenville! By this little speech you prove it.

*As Glyn/Grenville speaks his associates nod and mumble "Aye".*

Glyn/Grenville

But herein lies the root of our intention. America will be appeased. No more shall we have contumacious and heinous diatribes issuing forth from the other side of the Atlantic Ocean.

Majesty, America will indeed be part of the Great Britain that we love and cherish. England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland will gain a sister: America. Be she ever so far from us, she shall be enfolded into this Commonwealth.

There will be offered seats in the House of Commons for the colonial representatives. We shall ask each of the 13 American colonies to nominate two of their leading luminaries to be knighted as barons and thus they may take their seats in the House of Lords. At a stroke, we become America and America becomes us.

*This speech stuns Mick/King and his entourage. They are for a moment struck dumb.*

Bute *shocked*

Impossible! This is pure madness!

Jon/Rockingham

Unthinkable! Unthinkable!

*shocked*

Mick/King *shocked*

This wild talk ... It is intolerable!

*The associates of Glyn/Grenville catcall in his support and Glyn/Grenville signals for silence. This gesture horrifies Mick/King.*

Glyn/Grenville

The new members of the Commons and these six-and-twenty nobles that I propose may opt to remain *in situ* on the Atlantic shores, should they so choose. Or it may suit them to come here to Britain. Howsoever it is to be achieved, the American colonies will thus maintain a direct voice in all of the British decisions

which affect them. All fair and all equitable.

*Shelburne has taken recourse to a hip flask of brandy. He now shakes a fine lace handkerchief at Glyn/Shelburne.*

Shelburne                      You have certainly changed your tune, Mr Grenville.

Glyn/Grenville                You will doubtless ask me to outline how we shall keep Great Britain fiscally afloat in the case that the American colonists do not pay up. And believe me sirs that there will be no more money to be got from that quarter. However, I am more than glad to expound upon my manifesto. Let me continue.

Well, Your Majesty, nothing could be easier than to gain the necessary funds. Since that you (our glorious consecrated King) stand also as the Elector of Hanover my suggestion (developed over some few days with deep and devoted consideration) is that His Majesty might filch the funds from Hanover (and not America).

*There follows a horrible silence. Mick/King sits open-mouthed, staring at Glyn/Grenville.*

Glyn/Grenville                No troops to be sent to America and if they (the colonials) require monies to defray their various debts, then they shall surely seek them at their own pleasure through their own legitimate avenues.

True, they must answer for their actions to the British government and to His Royal Majesty, as is the case for all Britishers. Our new proposals effect this desired outcome. But the colonials shall never longer be bullied or cowed by us.

Then there is nowhere else to look for funds but Hanover, to which country we owe null allegiance, save through Your Majesty's bloodlines.

All fair. All equitable.

*Finally, Mick/King finds his voice. He is so shocked that he is barely able to speak.*

Mick/King *apoplectic*      ***You – want -- me -- to -- desert -- my -- Hanover?***

Are you mad? Surely your wits have wandered off, Mr Grenville.  
This is the very essence of insanity here.

Roger/Cumberland      Shall I send for the physician, Majesty? This man has taken leave  
of his senses, evidently.

Mick/King *forceful*      Little Hanover cannot find a farthing – not even a faked one.  
Fancy expecting such a minor principality to send aid to the  
proud Empire which is Britain. You are indeed a clown escaped  
from a band of fairground players, I think.

Glyn/Grenville      And therein lies the basic truth. Rather than support the growing  
nation of America when it is most sensible to do so, you would  
foster the old standards of Hanover from which you can gain no  
return. In fact it is worse to say than that: for Hanover bleeds  
England. Hanover is a leech, sucking our very blood. Cut it loose!

Mick/King *appalled*      Hanover will ***fall*** without Britain's fiscal support, you buffoon.  
Why! The French even now posture at her borders and threaten  
to invade.

Glyn/Grenville *careless*      Let them. They can have Hanover with your blessing. Long may  
they find that pocket handkerchief of land useful.

*Mick/King leaps forward as if to strike Glyn/Grenville (who stands his ground, apparently daring the monarch to hit him). Several men lurch forward to hold back Mick/King. Mick/King struggles to free himself and Glyn/Grenville insolently gives back look for look.*

Mick/King *seething*      How dare you! It is and has always been my express intention to  
send my troops to protect and support Hanover. I am indifferent  
to the cost. Whatever it is, 'twill be compassed.

Now, what have you to say to ***that***, you snipe?

*Glyn/Grenville points towards Mick/King in the most offensive manner.*

Glyn/Grenville      Only this ... You are bent on throwing away the contents of the

British public purse on will o' the wisp schemes which can do nobody any possible good. Hanover is a dead weight around our necks. Let it fall to the French and good riddance to it. But foster America. The repercussions of **not** doing so might well be momentous.

*Amidst the gasps and mutterings, Alex/Pitt shambles into the stateroom. Every man stops silent. They watch Alex/Pitt approach Mick/King (who is now freed from restraint). Alex/Pitt bows as best he can.*

Alex/Pitt softly                      Your Majesty. I beg you to pray to God to give you guidance. There is much to worry you herein; and much to ponder on. Indeed, this wise counsel of Mr Grenville and his associates becomes you well. But it needs time to mellow in Your Majesty's mind.

You might well consult with his holiness the Archbishop. He is a sound man, a good man. But do nothing in too precipitate a fashion. Do not (I beg of you) give way to rash haste. That is the haviour of hacks and plodders. You are the Divine King. Yours must be the final voice once you have thought long over the various heads of the arguments presented here today.

*Mick/King stares at Alex/Pitt, his lips trembling. When he speaks, Mick/King almost whispers. Mick/King is very close to weeping.*

Mick/King                              Mr Pitt, my head hurts. I want to recline on a couch in order for one of my housemen to bathe my troubled brow with lavender water. And I shall sip a goblet of lemon barley broth as a restorative. 'Pon my soul I shall! Nothing ever so efficacious as lemon barley broth ...

*Mick/King looks about him, silently begging for support. Roger/Cumberland sidles up to Mick/King, offering his arm. With murmured thanks, Mick/King toddles off with Roger/Cumberland. Apart from Glyn/Grenville all the men bow solemnly. Mick/King takes only 3 or 4 steps before stopping, to turn back to Alex/Pitt.*

Mick/King *trembling*            I love all my subjects who have made their very homes on the other side of the world, Mr Pitt. I love them with the fondest warmth of a caring father.

Must I lose them if I rile them enough? Is that what that lardbelly Grenville brays about?

Alex/Pitt *slow nod*            Surely Sire. That must be.

Mick/King                        And he advises me to let Hanover go. The ultimate betrayal!

Alex/Pitt                         I strongly suggest earnest prayer, Majesty. God will show you the right way ... Put your trust in Him.

*Sadly, Mick/King nods as he is escorted off by Roger/Cumberland.*

*Alex/Pitt turns to face Glyn/Grenville. The two men stare at each other, their faces unreadable.*

END OF SCENE << *We leave Maurice Sheridan's portal.* >>

## **II, Scene v:** Interior, The Office of Harry Mullins

*Music: military. Snare drums and piccolo.*

*Harry Mullins welcomes Professor Ealemann into his shoebox-sized study. We do not yet hear any conversation. If we did hear the discussion, it would be along the lines of: "Come in, Professor!"*

*"Drag up a chair. Sorry for all the mess." "Sorry to burst in on your private time, Mr Mullins". "Not at all! Call me Harry. Now ... what can we do for you?"*

*The music stops suddenly. Professor Ealemann sighs. The conversation is now audible.*

Professor Ealemann            I sent you all that I had in my email.

*Mullins nods.*

Mullins                          Right! Let's make a start with your "Lewis".

*Professor Ealemann refers to a battered old notepad (made of paper).*

Professor Ealemann Er ... Lewis Sheridan was born in 1817. He was born in the Parish of St Brigid. Surrey. So ... English.

(Please understand that my real point of interest is Amos Lightman. Born 1739 also in the Parish of St Brigid in Surrey. Then emigrated to America at about 20 years of age. Harried out of the parish for his heretical utterings.)

Without prejudice: I want a link between these two blokes.

Mullins Yes. I gathered that from your email.

Beth Tolstrup returned to Mayfield Brae from America to work as a maid. She married this Lewis Sheridan.

Professor Ealemann Beth Tolstrup?

Mullins Yes. This is what you are after, I believe. Now, I've used parish rolls and records, the jottings of Lord Rockingham's man – a chap named Jessamy Yardley ... and Births and Deaths data. Although the latter is usually a waste of breath, best to be sure.

Professor Ealemann Okay ... And ... ?

*restless*

*Professor Ealemann scribbles in his notepad as Mullins speaks.*

Mullins Beth Tolstrup (as I said, she was born in America) was the daughter of a man called Tolstrup (naturally) and one Callie Lightman (who was born in 1766). And she was one of the daughters of Amos Lightman (as we know born in England in 1739). Direct link.

*Professor Ealemann stops writing. He looks about, deep in a brown study.*

Mullins Is that alright? Or have I hit a nerve?

Professor Ealemann I allege that trader Amos Lightman was owed £2,500 in 1773

which he would have received had the Boston Tea Party not taken place. His family was left destitute by the destruction of the tea. Various claims were made over the following decades on behalf of the family, but they could not be honoured without sight of a stamped document which it is believed Amos set alight. Gripped by the grief of seeing his fortune thrown into Boston Harbour, one imagines.

*Mullins is deep in thought.*

Mullins                    The East India company was at the centre of the business in Boston Harbour ... I'm thinking that your Amos must have joined forces with them ...

Professor Ealemann      If the Lightman manifest had survived (that is, not been burned) then the impecunious kinfolk of Amos Lightman prosper. Better still, had the Sons of Liberty not destroyed the tea chests, Amos becomes an incredibly rich man.

*Mullins continues to mull over the issue at hand.*

Professor Ealemann      Let's understand one another. If Amos Lightman had made a packet in America, then the present-day Sheridan clan might well be billionaires?

*Mullins pouts and shrugs.*

Mullins *reluctant*        I suppose so. Depends on the fortune and on the number of descendants.

Professor Ealemann      Well, I have a VIP in mind who is a direct descendant of Lewis Sheridan.

Mullins                    And therefore a direct descendant of Amos Lightman.

                                  There's a footnote. One of Lightman's letters survives: he speaks of copious tears wetting his whiskered cheeks. And that grinding

poverty would from that time dog his weary steps.

Professor Ealemann

Maudlin but true ...

Tell you what! Try searching for the flag of USA. What do you see?

*Mullins gives the Professor a strange look as he types.*

Mullins *surprised*

What the ... !? I must be going balmy.

Professor Ealemann

All tickety-boo now?

Mullins

Yes. But for a moment ...

Professor Ealemann  
*grins*

Had you going, did it? The Union Jack on the flag of the USA.  
Preposterous!

See you!

END OF SCENE

## **II, Scene vi:** An Excerpt from the TV Cooking Show "Delectable Agnotti" (Scuttled)

*The Author does the same as before. She hijacks a TV show so that she is able to get her message across. Some blokes will escort her off. Then Silvio will have a flash of inspiration – he runs after her.*

*Here The Author (wearing a frilly apron) stands at Silvio's island bench.*

The Author

Now tea.

Lord North's Act of Parliament (1773) was aimed at preventing the smuggling of inferior tea into the colonies. The colonists were forced to pay an overhead for receiving good tea from the East India Company. However, the intention of the Act was to cut-out the middleman. So in the long run, the Act worked *in*

**favour of** the colonists. But that wasn't the point, was it? It was a tax enacted in London with Royal assent that affected the colonists and yet **not one single colonist** had been consulted or had spoken in the House of Commons on this Bill or any of that.

So you could say (and probably bucketloads of people have said it already) that the tea chests represented the oppression of the American colonists by those in authority in Great Britain.

*Silvio watches from the sidelines as two security guards approach The Author.*

The Author *to the guards*      Yeah. I got my message across. Finally! I just hope that the Kiwis and the Aussies are on top of it now. When I next hear from the Queensland Truckie, I'll let him know that I've given the viewers a heads-up.

*The Author is escorted off (no resistance this time) by the security guards. A crew member calls out something indistinguishable.*

The Author *calling back*      The Queensland Truckie? He took Will Dalziel's play and changed it a bit such that the Boston Tea Party never happened. He was arksed to do it by a computer bloke. Sherringham? Something like that. And he got paid cash-in-hand, no paperwork. Wink, wink, nod, nod.

Any rate ... job done!

See yuz!

*Silvio takes a moment. When the truth hits him, he reacts by running after The Author.*

Silvio      Hey! Excuse me a moment ... er ... Madame.  
The author of this stuff you mentioned ... Where is he?

The Author      "Where is **she?**" Right here, mate! Right here.

Silvio *confused*      Then who is the Queensland Truckie?

The Author                      The storyteller. He tells me what to write and I write it. He can barely fill out his logbook, never mind writing a 3-act play. But he comes up with grousy plot ideas. Jucking fenious!

Silvio                              He tells you what to write? Well, I need to speak to him urgently. Where is he?

The Author *shrugs*              Cloncurry. Either there or thereabouts. Road train. Beef cattle.

Silvio                              Not in Ireland ... ?

The Author *laughs*              No, mate. FNQ. Far North Queensland. Out of mobile phone range most of the time. Can't be contacted or that (usually).  
  
You can arkse me anything, but.

*Silvio takes strength from this. He is thinking quickly.*

Silvio                              Okay.

*Silvio wants the guards to back off.*

Silvio                              I need a bit of time with this wom-- ... er ... with this lady.  
  
Please!

*Happy to oblige, the security guards trundle away, leaving The Author and Silvio alone. Silvio speaks urgently in such a way that only The Author hears him.*

Silvio                              Listen! A few of my actor friends from "Debacle" have gone missing. They appear to be in some kind of lockdown. I need to be able to contact them. Any ideas?

The Author                      Yeah, sure. The Maurice man is a jucking fenious (not like my Truckie, but a fenious with computers). He has all your mates captured in a portal.

*Silvio is appalled. He does a double-take.*

Silvio                              ***What?!*** That's not possible.

The Author                      He has an ***agenda***. I love saying that: makes me sound important. An agenda! The Truckie reckons that somebody will

have to break into the portal without the Maurice man knowing anything about it and free the captive souls.

Look out! They want you to cook them something ...

*Silvio whips around to see the crew becoming impatient. When he whips back to The Author, she has gone.*

END OF SCENE

## **II, Scene vii:** Interior, Will's Library in Maefield Brae

*Connie can be seen in full flight, taking charge of Marjorie who follows in Connie's wake, transfixed. Connie is touring the garden and judging by the unheard chatter, she is bewitching Marjorie with her talk of the much-loved aristocracy. Marjorie wears a battered old gardening hat (made of straw) and carries an ancient bloom-basket. The latter is now half-filled with all manner of floral tributes.*

*Will, Thomas and Silvio sit at an old table in Will's library, drinking whisky. A solid and ancient wooden box takes pride of place on the table. Next to it lies the small green-covered copy of "Crisis of Empire". It has evidently been very well thumbed through.*

*We have obviously arrived in the middle of a discussion or debate (but not yet a "heated debate").*

Thomas                      I'm not trying to gee you up at all, Will. But ... go into any web search engine and type in "US Senate" or "US President" or anything along those lines. And wait ... and wait ... and wait ...

                                    Depending on where you are looking, there will be a brief glimpse of something strange. At one point I found "House of Nabobs". Bizarre.

*Will looks at the other two men and then shrugs his shoulders.*

Will                            Nothing to do with me, Squire.

                                    Is that why you two are here? Because you think that I've

somehow --

*Silvio is silent. Both Will and Thomas look towards Silvio, but he appears to be off with the fairies.*

*Will drinks. He is deep in thought.*

Will                    I'm basically saying that the War of Independence was forced upon them. This little green book tells that story. I've stuck to it religiously.

You know that all I reckoned upon was a FOX contract: a little show on their History channel. The Americans would have lapped it up. But now I can see that it's ...

So the man who set the events in train was the Duke of Cumberland. Not the one who made so much trouble for Queen Victoria. This was an earlier model. He was uncle to the young king. George III. You are aware (are you not?) that he wasn't the **son** of George II: rather his grandson. Oh, well you know that quite well being quiz show people ...

Thomas                Yes, I've read your screenplay. Marvellous work. But coming from the horse's mouth ... Always that extra layer of --

Will                    The Duke of Cumberland spoke to the king on behalf of that grandee Lord Rockingham **against** George Grenville being his PM. The king despised Grenville anyway since he was all about reining the king in – making him more accountable to parliament as was demanded by the constitution. So that started the rot when Grenville was sacked. It's all here in this book.

Thomas                And Sheridan?

Will                    Richard Brinley Sheridan the playwright, do you mean? No, nothing to do with the Americas. He did have a son, though ... And many by-blows from his tempestuous affairs ... But I've never heard that any of them made it to America ...

*Silvio remains silent, but fiddles with his mobile phone. Without a word, he turns the screen of his mobile phone around so that both Will and Thomas can view the “new-look” US flag, complete with Union Jack in the canton instead of the stars. Thomas stares at the tiny screen as the flag turns back into “Old Glory”.*

Will                                      This is crazy! What is going on here?

*Silvio suddenly stands. He walks away, deeply considering what he must tell the other two men.*

*Will (appalled and stricken) opens the ancient box and pulls out two small flags: Australia and New Zealand.*

Will                                      Look! Bit of luck that I kept –

Here are the flags of Australia and New Zealand. Very telling ... See? The blue ensign (aka the Union Jack) proudly stands in the canton of both flags. These two countries run everything themselves: the break with the mother country performed with elegance and poise. No bloodshed. Just a shaking of hands and a few signatures on a length of parchment. A token link to the Windsors was preserved by means of Governors-General. That’s what the USA could have done and thereby saved themselves all of the slaughter and wringing of hands.

But we’re well past that point by over 200 years. Can’t go backwards in time ...

*Will replaces the flags in the box. Thomas and Will drink. Silvio is very far away, absorbed in his own thoughts.*

Will                                      So ... that lady’s husband has vanished? The TV gardener?

Thomas                                  Can’t altogether blame him. If long-distance conversation were an Olympic event, she’d be gold medal material. Never shuts up!

*Will and Thomas chuckle, whereas Silvio is buried in his own world.*

Thomas                                  Silvio’s pal from the quiz show (Glyn Mereton) can’t be found. He plays Grenville. As well, I can’t locate my rock ‘n’ roll protégé:

King George.

*Silvio (still standing) is on a different mental plane.*

Will                                      You must be suspecting a sinister plot, then. What do they call that electronic hole into which everyone disappears? A "port-hole", is it?

*The music sizzles malevolently. Silvio turns to stare at Will. Then Silvio slowly nods his head.*

Will *grins*                                That's not the right word. But it's something like that.

*Suddenly Silvio stirs.*

Silvio *thickly*                            A portal. It's called a portal.

No-one in a fit believes in the existence of such a senseless thing but ...

An interesting Australian woman whose husband has a close connection to all of this blithely informed me that our friends are indeed locked in a portal of Maurice Sheridan's making. To free them, we have to break into that portal (without Sheridan being any the wiser). We find them and rescue them.

That's hard to take in (I know!) but that's what I was told.

Thomas                                    Maybe ...

*Will and Thomas look blankly at Silvio.*

*Marjorie and Connie pass by the window again, going in the opposite direction to that which they traversed previously. The bloom-basket is now over-flowing with horticultural specimens. And Connie continues to speak at 19 to the dozen.*

Thomas                                    Yes, maybe you are right, Silvio! About the portal.

Last night I did something unspeakably evil.

I used the Watergate burglar method. Broke into Maurice Sheridan's office. Found some rushes for the movie on his laptop. They are nothing like that which you wrote, Will.

*Thomas indicates Will's script. Silvio nods but is nevertheless surprised. Silvio is about to interrupt but does not get the opportunity. Will opens his mouth but can say nothing. Thomas wriggles about; he has come to life.*

Thomas

Listen! My charge is a pathetic excuse for an actor. There's no getting around it. Alright, so I have pushed him down this path, spending hours and hours relentlessly training him up. What the hell else has he got, I'd like to know!

Oh, he's done tribute shows and reunions times out of mind. Being an old rock star ... That's what they do. But not enough to keep him in cigars and vermouth. I thought acting would be a godsend for him; loads of them do it. It's just that he's so wooden, graceless ...

Anyway, I wanted to see what I was up against. Maybe I could ... I dunno what I intended to do when I viewed the grisly spectacle of ... That's the basic reason for my treachery last night.

*[Sighs heavily]*

But on those rushes: Mick was genius. Worthy of every acting award. Believable, compelling ... His eyes reflected the mood expressed by his words. I was almost weeping ...

However (and it's a big **however!**) what I saw bore little if any resemblance to your screenplay. Or to the 18<sup>th</sup> century History I took at Grammar school.

What's really strange is that the wild party scene was filmed right here: at "Maefield Brae".

*Silvio whips around, looking keenly at Will.*

Silvio *whispers*

Wild party scene? That doesn't feature in your script as I recall ...

*This is an intense moment as the camera closes in on Will. He looks towards each man in turn and slowly shakes his head.*

Will                                      No. I did not write any such a thing as a "wild party scene". And certainly not a single cameraman has been near the place to film such an undertaking. Not a single one!

END OF SCENE

## **II, Scene viii: Interior, Silvio's Kitchen**

*Silvio is busy preparing a wonderful meal. He is chopping and slicing. His mobile phone rings. He answers it.*

Connie (phone)                      Hello. Connie Ealemann here. Is this a bad time to talk?

Silvio                                      No. It's okay. Now is okay. Fire away.

Connie (phone)                      My brother (the Professor) is a dab hand at Probability Theory and he has crunched the numbers. Are you ready for this?

Silvio *pleasant*                      Yes. Ready when you are.

Connie (phone)                      Are you sitting down?

Silvio *crisp*                              Yes. I'm seated and ready. Please get on with it, will you!

Connie (phone)                      Okay, then. If the American colonists had been handled correctly and had stayed within the Commonwealth fold (in the same way that New Zealand and Australia did) then our situation now would be catastrophically different to what it is. I'm speaking about the world-as-we-know-it. The whole world.

The US Civil War would not have happened. However, several more minor skirmishes would have resulted in parts of North America.

There would be no World War II. World War I would have been much earlier and longer and much more deadly owing to several

ballistic discoveries by various people who would be either dead or completely non-existent under our current regime.

Now, this is the horrible bit. During that Great War, the natives of several African countries would have been obliterated. Wiped-out without trace. India would have gone through a lengthy and sanguinary civil war. And the Germans would have come up with a monster bomb which they would try out on Denmark. That country and all its inhabitants blown to smithereens. Just a new part of the North Sea which used to be Jutland.

That's it. My brother is ultra-confident on these predictions.

Silvio *whispers*

So ... So we have no other choice but to stop Sheridan by whatever means? Let ... Let the Boston Tea Party proceed and then the subsequent war?

Connie

Yes, I'd say so. Good luck with that, boys.

*The phone connection ends abruptly. Silvio allows the phone to sit on the table. He touches it with his fingertips.*

END OF SCENE

## **II, Scene ix:** Interior, In The Palace and Leaving The Throne Room

*<< We are once again in the portal which Maurice Sheridan has created.*

*It appears that Alex/Pitt is onto the "portal" scheme and has thrown all his dependence onto Tye/Jessamy.>>*

*As Alex/Pitt hobbles away from the stormy meeting between Glyn/Grenville and Mick/King (where Alex/Pitt advised caution) he bumps into Tye/Jessamy, whose face is wreathed in smiles at the sight of Alex/Pitt. This scene is a throw-back to the earlier instruction that Alex/Pitt gave to Tye/Jessamy in "In High Spirits".*

Tye/Jessamy                      Sir! I cannot thank you enough. Words cannot express ... I am the happiest of men. I am to wed the lovely Lady Patricia Haselton within the month. And I owe all of my good fortune to your kindness.

Alex/Pitt                          Delighted!

Aye, I am sorry that I can do no more for you, Master Yardley. Offer you a place in my employ or some such ...

However, were I your patron outright, you would find your lot irksome, tiresome and boring in every degree. Much better placed with my Lord Rockingham.

Tye/Jessamy                      Oh, I am very happy to serve Rockingham's cause, Mr Pitt. He keeps me busy in the best of ways.

Alex/Pitt                          Excellent! Excellent!

Tye/Jessamy                      But should it become possible for me to serve **you** in any conceivable way, then it is yours for the asking. You must know that.

Alex/Pitt                          Thank you! I feel that I may safely repose my trust in someone who took on Haselton (as you must have done) and won the battle as well as the prize.

Tye/Jessamy *laughs*              Swank, Sir! I was a very lion. Squared my shoulders and launched into a steely speech; hardly allowed him to utter a word and **snap!** The lady was mine.

*Alex/Pitt nods wisely and turns away. He stops and then turns back to the younger man. The latter smiles warmly.*

Tye/Jessamy                      I really am in your debt, Sir. I shall never forget.

Alex/Pitt *nods*                      Aye!

*We see that Alex/Pitt is frowning and concentrating hard; his face shows that he is considering something important.*

Alex/Pitt"                      Aye! You may be of assistance, Jessamy. Indeed yes! There is a curious ... Something is afoot ...

*Then Alex/Pitt falls. Tye/Jessamy starts to say "Alex", but then remembers the plan and quickly changes his utterance to "Mr Pitt".*

*Tye/Jessamy drops to his knees such that he will be able to hear Alex/Pitt should he whisper. Alex/Pitt strongly grasps the lapels of Tye/Jessamy, almost pulling himself from the floor.*

Alex/Pitt *harsh whisper*      Has Grenville killed a dog by any chance? Did you hear of that?  
*This question surprises Tye/Jessamy. However, he nods and responds in a whisper.*

Tye/Jessamy                      Yes! The Duke of Cumberland's huge wolf. Grenville sprang into the midst of one of Cumberland's bang-up dinner parties (complete with string section). Quite a brawl! Grenville slaughtered the hound without a hint of warning, I was told. Turned the dinner guests right off their food, I heard.

*Alex/Pitt releases the other man's lapel and turns away in obvious agony. Alex/Pitt groans and moans. Now Tye is unsure if his companion is Alex himself, or Alex playing Pitt.*

Tye/Jessamy *confused*      Are you ... Are you alright?

Alex/Pitt *very urgently in a rasping whisper*      Listen here! If a gentleman or indeed a brace of gentlemen comes to you and they need admittance to ... Nay, if a certain lady calling herself "Connie" might come to you ... If they mention a thing called a "Debacle" then I shall rely on you to offer them every kind of aid. Stand by them and be their very friend.

*Tye/Jessamy is still on his knees, hovering over Alex/Pitt. He stares at Alex/Pitt for a moment then raises his head smartly.*

Tye/Jessamy *sharply*              Somebody approaches. I can hear strong footsteps.  
*We can also hear a man walking purposefully.*

Alex/Pitt *a pleading*              Please! I asked Jessamy to do Pitt a big favour.

*whisper*

*There is no time for an answer but Alex/Pitt is reassured by the subsequent actions of Tye/Jessamy.*

*Sheridan (dressed in modern casual clothes) marches in. He is very angry.*

Maurice *in command*      What are you two doing?

Tye *insouciant*      It's this gouty leg, Maurice. Alex hobbles about and it is really giving him pain. Keeps bloody falling over.

Maurice *nods*      Okay. Let's take it again from Jessamy thanking Pitt. And try very hard not to keel over again, Alex.

*Maurice turns on his heel and heads out of the room. Alex (now on his feet again) stands four-square (no longer a frail man with a gouty leg). He cannot help himself and calls after Sheridan.*

Alex *very bold*      What's the point, Mr Sheridan? There are no cameras here to film the "do that scene again".

*Maurice pulls up short. A quick frown flicks over his face. He turns back to face Alex. He is now jovial.*

Maurice *smiles*      Don't bother yourself about that, Alex. Not your concern.

*Alex sighs heavily. He is disgusted. He stoops to pick up the crutches.*

Alex      Back into character.

*The two actors shuffle about such that they have resumed their former positions.*

Alex (to himself)      Just work with me, my darling Connie. For God's sake! So much depends on this!

Tye      You ready?

Alex      Sorry. Clearing my throat. Your line.

Tye/Jessamy      I really am in your debt, Sir. I shall never forget.

Alex/Pitt *nods*      Aye! ... Aye ...

END OF SCENE

**II, Scene x:** Interior, Tye's Dressing Room

*The scene now moves to Tye's dressing room that he is supposed to share with a few people who have gone missing. Tye is not in the room at the beginning of this scene.*

*The door to Tye's dressing room bursts open revealing Silvio. He looks at first surprised and then relieved. He turns to call out to Thomas (unseen).*

Silvio *calls back from the door*     Jackpot! This one is open!

*As Silvio steps into the dressing room and looks around, Thomas comes flying around the doorway.*

*He glances at the door: at the nameplates.*

Thomas *annoyed*                     Shit! No-one home. This is supposed to be the bolt-hole of Errol, Mark, Tye and D'Maine. But empty ... Shitto!

*Silvio retrieves his mobile phone from a pocket.*

Silvio                                     Listen! I'm going to phone Will. He is supposed to be meeting us here.

*As Thomas flicks through the dozens and dozens of papers scattered about, Silvio tries to get a signal on his phone. He succeeds.*

Silvio *talking into his phone*                     Bingo! We've managed to gain entrance to a dressing room. Lower floor. Come right after you take the lift down. It's number 18. Right! Yeah! See you.

*Silvio pockets his phone and then joins Thomas in flipping over the many papers which might give them a lead.*

*Silvio is the first to hear the whistling. The door opens. Whereas Silvio half-expects Will, it is Tye who marches in.*

*Tye is hardly surprised to see strangers in his room. He saunters in, throwing his script onto the table.*

Tye *off-hand*                             You guys make yourselves comfy. There's a tea-making machine somewhere. Total crap unless you're into pond water. No, it's

"bring-your-own-tea-bags" here, you know?

I'd go with you to the pub but I **have** to learn my lines. Mr Pitt and I are breaking balls.

*Silvio and Thomas quickly look at each other. Thomas mouths the word "Alex" and Silvio responds with a thumbs up. Meanwhile Tye is busy learning his lines. He speaks again without taking his eyes off the script.*

Tye *casual*

Talking of "balls" (as we were), this place is amazing. Wonder if it wasn't a retreat for British tars during the '60's. You know – Royal Navy. I say that because there's a room filled (over-filled) with dummies dressed in Naval officer attire. Piles of uniforms. Caps stacked a mile high. Covered in cobwebs.

And another room has a ship's radio – or a ham radio or whatever. Nah! It's not a room – bloody broom cupboard. But the piece of resistance is a storeroom crammed to the rafters with model ships in bottles everywhere along with a couple of old-fashioned pinball machines! And they still work even under a heavy layer of dust. Man! Boner!

*Silvio and Thomas nod, but they have hardly taken in Tye's words (so busy are they with rifling through the pages lying around).*

*There is a knock at the door and Will enters. He nods to Silvio and Thomas. Tye is oblivious: he is learning his lines. Silvio and Thomas continue searching through the various papers.*

Thomas *vague, to Will*

There's a pond water machine in the corridor, I believe, if you're thirsty.

*Will has also begun to flip papers about. He finds a script.*

Will

Pond water? No thanks. Gave it up for Lent and now can't seem to pick up the thread again ...

Is this the script they're working from? Because if so, looks kosher. That is to say: looks to be just what I wrote.

*Silvio comes over to glance at the script found by Will.*

Will                               By the way, have you heard the awful pronouncement of  
Connie's brother?

*Silvio and Thomas nod. Will turns to Tye.*

Will                               I say, may I please just glimpse that script to check if --

*Tye gladly allows Will to riffle through the pages. Will nods and hands the script back to Tye, who resumes his study.*

Will                               Okay. That's true to what I wrote. Thanks.

So now I'm **really** confused ...

*[To Silvio and Thomas]*

Have you heard the goss, then? The "Grand Scenario" dreamt up  
by Professor Ealemann? You've been apprised?

*Again, Silvio and Thomas nod. Will sits down with a shaken sigh.*

Will                               It's monumentally the most grisly, earth-shattering --

Thomas *with finality*       We must do something. However "grisly" and "earth-shattering"  
... We must pull a rabbit out of the hat and have it whistle  
"Dixie". **We – must – do – that!!**

But (truth to tell) all is in vain because it is totally too late. Too,  
too, too, too late.

*Will, Silvio and Thomas are in total despair. A shattering sigh is all that we can hear.*

*Then Tye looks up, frowning.*

Tye                               You lot believe that this turkey-cock has won, then, do you? Our  
vile director? He who has everybody shit-scared and can't glance  
sideways?

*Nobody answers. There is a gloomy rumble of groaning from the men.*

Tye                               Because you might try looking at the problem from a different

angle.

*Thomas turns to Tye, a look of enquiry on his face.*

Tye                               It's the Fiat Camponella solution. You know ... look at the thing from a different angle.

*All three men turn towards Tye, looking at him as if he is crazy.*

*Tye realizes that he has lost them and gives a small chuckle.*

Tye                               The Fiat people were perplexed (I like that word!) "perplexed" because they couldn't fit the dashboard components around the steering wheel. So someone said (one of their genius boffin guys said) that they had to change the way they were looking at it. They pulled everything apart and knocked it up on a computer. So the **last** thing they did was to fit the steering wheel into the configuration they wanted to be the boss configuration. Worked a treat.

That's what you have to do.

Will *horrified*               Re-align a steering wheel in a Fiat?

Tye *awkward*               No, no, no ...

You are all thinking in an old way.

I'm saying that the Fiat Camponella solution is to look at it in a **new** way.

Silvio *acid-tongued*       No matter how we look at it, the deed is done. Without the War of Independence, we have complete chaos. Literally a debacle.

Thomas                       World-as-we-know-it ... Gone!

Will                            With that sheet of parchment in his hot hands, Sheridan has won.

Thomas                       I can't even begin to think how --

Tye                            Maurice has organized for someone to call off the big Tea Party.

What has to be done to bring the world-as-we-know-it back on square again is to call off the call off.

Will *wondering*

How?

Tye

Get to America. Whatever it is that Maurice has thought up, ***you*** have to undo. Didn't have planes back then ... Have to sail. Get to Boston Harbour by ship. And do that within the portal. Too easy!

Will *appalled*

What are you saying?

Tye *shrugs*

The Fiat Camponella solution dictates that --

Thomas *angry*

Oh to Hell with your ruddy Fiat!

Silvio *very keen*

No, no, no ... Tye is on the money. Work backwards from the desired outcome. Brilliant!

Tye

Think like Old Sarum!

Will *surprised*

Is he somebody who's involved with Fiats? I'm not sure that I follow ...

Tye *reasonable*

I figured out your best plan for myself. I started to think like Mr Pitt. Earl of Chatham. Member for Old Sarum. Him!

*Will, Silvio and Thomas all stand and begin to walk about, watched by Tye.*

Tye

So my next suggestion was that you guys all stay here in the 1700's and work behind the scenes (where Maurice can't see you or find you). If and when I get the chance, I'll belt around to put you guys onto a ship.

Silvio *very keen*

You like Pitt. Of course, you like Pitt. Why not?

Alright ... Pitt will be our best bet then. Can you get a message to Alex slash Pitt as to our new tack?

Tye *shrugs*

Not sure ... We're all very closely watched by M.S.

*Everyone appears to be stonkered now. There is an overwhelming dismay. Silvio drops into a chair to nurse his head in his hands.*

*Then Will snaps his fingers and looks bright, inventive.*

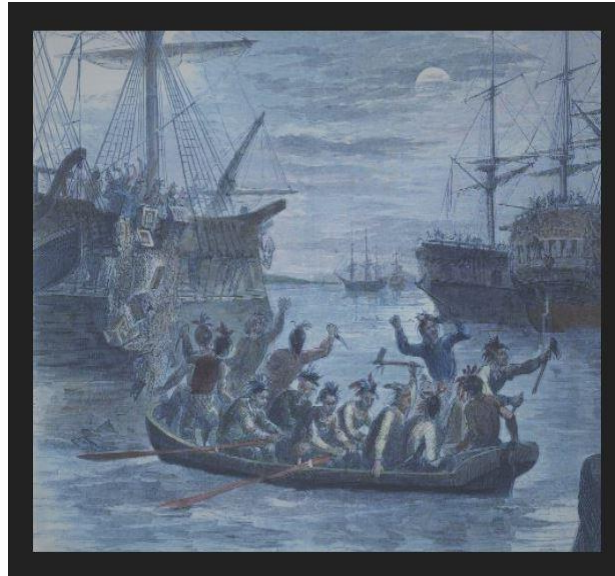
Will *eager*                      When they move back to the Brae, it would be brilliant if we could wrangle it so that we could get inside.

Thomas                      Why?

Will *triumphant*              There's a priest's hidey-hole. I found it about a year ago; very few people know about it. In the cellar it is.

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT II



## ACT III

### III, Scene i: Interior, Entrance to the Orangery, Maefield Brae.

<<Now the outside world bursts into the portal. This is achieved without Maurice's knowledge due to Will's hidden priest's hole. However, Maurice becomes more malevolent and hostile. He feels that somebody (or more than one person) has breached the portal opening. He turns to attack various of the characters. His greatest worry is the Tye/Alex pairing. But they hold strong against his threats.>>

*Connie is dressed superbly in a round gown of shiny satin (striped cherry and cream). Her wig of blonde curls sits beneath a large-brimmed hat festooned in cherry-coloured fabric flowers. Her cosmetics suit the fashion of 18<sup>th</sup> century Britain. She looks utterly stunning.*

*Connie enters the orangery at Maefield Brae with tentative steps.*

*Connie calling tentatively* Hulloo! Hulloo!

*A solemn bewigged butler (Hargreaves) marches to the door. His manner is stern and unwelcoming.*

Hargreaves                                      Madame? May I see your card of invitation, please?

*Looking distressed, Connie rifles through a reticule which dangles from her wrist.*

Connie *uncertain*                              Um ... I'm certain that it's here ... um ... somewhere ...

*Hargreaves begins to usher Connie out the door. Connie spots Tye/Jessamy hovering in the background. She is inspired.*

Connie *loudly*                                      Fie! What a **debacle!** To be unable to find one's --

*Tye/Jessamy (suddenly alert) strides forward. He rescues Connie from being ejected by the stately butler Hargreaves.*

Tye/Jessamy *taking command*                              Let me handle this situation, will you Hargreaves? Lady in distress ... I'll take over and you may return forthwith to your butler's pantry ...

*Hargreaves bows in his usual stately manner and then marches off in straight-backed butler fashion. When she speaks to Tye/Jessamy, Connie uses her eyes expressively.*

Connie                                              I am Mistress Connie come to see Mr Pitt on an urgent matter. It is about this "Debacle" about which everyone is in such a stir.

*Tye/Jessamy "makes a leg" (that is bows with attitude) and Connie curtsies.*

Tye/Jessamy                                      Mistress Connie. Charmed. I am Jessamy Yardley, protégé of my Lord Rockingham.

*This mention of Rockingham causes Connie to frown.*

Connie                                              Ah ... But ... it is Mr Pitt that I am come to see.

Tye/Jessamy *nods*                                      Of course.

Connie                                              There are others without. Gentlemen of the highest order. May I instruct them to enter this orangery?

Tye/Jessamy                                      Do they visit with Mr Pitt?

*Connie nods quickly.*

Tye/Jessamy                                      Then please invite them inside. 'Twill be my honour to welcome

them on behalf of my Lord Rockingham.

*Connie gives another bob of a curtsy and then gestures dramatically through a glass door. The three gentlemen come into view through the orangery door.*

*Silvio is dressed as a fop: a macaroni of the first stare, complete with high wig, snuff box and lace handkerchief. His makeup is over the top. He even sports a couple of black patches on his cheeks.*

*Thomas follows Silvio in the guise of a well-to-do country squire.*

*Then follows Will who is done up as an 18<sup>th</sup> century clergyman (dressed in black). He walks about with fingers clasped, hoping to look holy.*

*Connie gestures to each man in turn as she introduces them to Tye/Jessamy.*

Connie                      This is Signior Silvio Agnotti a connoisseur of fine Italian wines.  
And this gentleman is Sir Thomas a'Grande, of whom you can  
have heard only noble reports. And then lastly The Right  
Reverend William Dalziel whose holy works precede him.

*Connie fans herself with delicate grace as the gentlemen all bow with great dignity.*

Connie *coquettish*        La! This is a very fine house. Signior Agnotti has expressed a  
strenuous desire to inspect the so famed cellars of Maefield Brae.  
May we do so as an entrée before meeting His Lordship?

*Silvio goes into character as an outré Italian nobleman, kissing his fingers and uttering common Italian culinary phrases.*

Tye/Jessamy              'Twould be the very highest honour to introduce you to His  
Lordship after you have sampled the delights of his cellar.  
Please! Follow me.

END OF SCENE

**III, Scene ii:** Interior, The Famous Cellar of Maefield Brae.

*Tye has left them in the cellar and has climbed the steep spiral stairway (stonework) to return to his duties. The four conspirators gather deep in the Maefield Brae cellar, next to a huge, ornate cherry wood chest. Will gestures to the chest as he speaks.*

Will                               It was quite extraordinary. I was attempting to move this old chest. Some ancient manuscript that I'd found in the library suggested that the way into the priest's hole was got by means of a large heavy piece of furniture. This boy seemed the answer. However, when I fiddled around with the blighter (it weighs a ton, let me tell you!) I must have accidentally meddled with a small part of the decorative moulding. *Eh voila!*

Connie                           That must mean that if the moulding is touched in a certain way with the trapdoor opening and people pouring inside the hidey-hole – if they can shut the door from the inside, then no-one will guess that the priest's hole is occupied. The moulding won't give the game away. Excellent!

Thomas *frowning*           I'm trying to follow you (not very successfully as it happens) ...

Will                               What Connie is implying is that a keen eye will spot if a trigger has been trigged (in the case where it is obvious like a lever having been pulled, or a book on a shelf moved). This method is undetectable. Yes! It is the best I've seen. Unfortunately, though there's not much room in the hole. Quite a squeeze.

Look! Here's the trick.

*Deftly, Will fiddles with a strip of decorative moulding that runs along the front side of the chest. A loud "click" is heard. Will steps forward to pull the door back. It is evident from the looks on the faces of Connie, Thomas and Silvio that they are appalled at the miniscule size of the priest's hole.*

Will *proudly*                   Once inside we can securely close this door. We can open it again of course. Our only danger then will be that some other person knows the trick of the moulding. But I doubt it.

Thomas But can we breathe?

Will Certainly. There are several large pin pricks. So long as we keep quiet, we should go undiscovered.

Silvio Hell! There's no room!

Connie Yes there is. That little bench might just hold two bums. Will and Thomas: you two sit. Silvio can perch on Will's knee and I'll sit on Thomas.

Thomas Grab a couple of bottles of red. That will give us something to do.

Silvio You won't be able to drink old fellow if you have Connie on your knee with all her billowing gown cutting off your air supply.

Thomas Alright then. Let me rephrase. Having wine will keep my mind off what I would *want* to do with Connie perched on my knee. You've said it yourself: a very beautiful woman.

Connie *scolding* Never mind all this talk. We must get ourselves settled before somebody comes down to the cellar. Imagine if Maurice the Cad should swan down here.

Will We also need an action plan.

Connie Absolutely! An action plan is what's called for.

*The party of four speedily enter the priest's hole and disport themselves as per Connie's instructions. There is a moment of concern when the door cannot be shut due to Connie's "billowing gown". That is quickly overcome with the four trespassers now safely hidden.*

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

Tye (as Tye) clomps noisily down the stone steps. He whistles merrily as he stooges about in the cellar (ostensibly searching for wine). He is soon joined by Maurice.

Maurice is obviously concerned. He looks about as if suspicious that something untoward is occurring.

Tye clutches the necks of three bottles of white wine between his fingers.

Tye pleased That should do the trick!

Maurice sniffing I can detect a very distinct fragrance ... A woman's perfume ...

Tye tutting "God's Breath", it is. Favourite scent for all young gents during the reign of Georgie Three. Glad you approve!

Maurice frowns I didn't say that I like it. Reminds me of a cheap tart.

Now listen! Hargreaves allowed some strangers to enter – on your instruction, he tells me.

Tye No. Well, yes on my say-so. That is, not strangers ... They were cast members. All kosher.

Maurice frowns Which cast members?

With his free hand, Tye pats Maurice on the shoulder.

Tye Alright. I confess. These loonies were invited here by myself so that we may hold a clandestine meeting of our far Left political cadre under the veil of your largesse. We are "The Politically Correct Flesh-Eating Ogre Party". Total number of members: 5. Yet to pen our manifesto but under the right circs ...

Here Tye jiggles the three bottles of wine at Maurice. Tye grins evilly as he continues in a conspiratorial way. Maurice is suspicious, annoyed.

Tye tinkling You never know ...

Tye gives a crack of laughter as he saunters off. At the stone steps he shouts back at Maurice.

Tye Actors, Old Toot. Actors! You may want to frisk them. I would if I were you.

Maurice hesitates. He wanders a bit around the cellar. We can see that Maurice is extremely uncomfortable. Again, he sniffs.

He touches an old dresser, opening drawers and stroking the woodwork. Then he slaps the dresser in some frustration. He then turns to the chest, running his hand all over it. Maurice even runs his fingers thoughtfully over the decorative moulding on the old chest. With an irritated sigh, Maurice walks smartly out of the cellar and up the stone steps at a trot.

~~~~~ **Break** ~~~~~

*Inside the priest's hole Connie switches on a small torch, pointing the light upwards.*

Connie *glowering* "Like a cheap tart?!" What the Hell would **he** know!

Silvio Who would ever have guessed that Tye was a mastermind?

Will "Glib" is the adjective that springs to mind.

Connie Tye taped it all up. We all believe that Sheridan's plan is to kybosh the Boston Tea Party. If we can find out how he means to achieve that end, we can foul it up. The one man who will know what that entails will be my Alex in his role as Pitt. Therefore, all I need to do is confront Alex, ask a few questions and the thing is done.

Thomas The problem now being: how do you confront your husband without Maurice getting wind of it? He is all-hearing, all-seeing in this portal.

Silvio Can't bring Mr Pitt down to the cellar as he's known to have a gammy leg. Outside? In the lush garden?

Connie *angry* Will you please quit touching my breasts?

*Silvio and Will chuckle. Thomas pretends to be mortified.*

Thomas Goodness! I'm ever so sorry – Confines of the priest's hole. Your ruddy gown.

Connie *wisely* Yes, I know only too well: your hands -- they home.

Silvio For this to work we need to fool Sheridan. Now he might recognize me from the telly. Same goes for you Connie. Will ... perhaps. From my vantage point (atop Mount Dalziel) the only possible candidate is Thomas a'Grande. You Thomas are probably unknown to Sheridan. What is more to the point, of all of us you are dressed most inconspicuously.

Thomas Right! And say what to Pitt? My words must be succinct. He must understand the matter immediately, convey his answer and then allow me to escape back to you lot here.

Silvio When Tye was re-aligning the Fiat steering wheel he told us that he had begun to think like Pitt. Chatham. Old Sarum. You'll recall that. Okay! Tye advised that we work from the 1700's (which we are doing).

However that may be, this must be comprehended within Pitt's brief. Here's the thing! Let's ask Pitt how the British government intends to properly deal with the vexation of taxation in the Colonies. How can the spill-over from protest to outright rebellion be avoided? What steps are the British heavies taking?

Will *excited* Marvellous! That begins the dialogue with Pitt-slash-Alex.

*The door to the priest hole is carefully opened and the four occupants stand, stretching.*

Connie to Thomas Say this. Connie, Westmore-on-Mere, glass slippers, blue doll's house, crepey hair and Rolling Stones. Then say: "How does Maurice plan to scotch the Boston Tea Party?" When he answers simply nod and leave. Come back here.

Thomas *blinks.*

Will That's like "I went shopping and I bought – "

Connie Shh! Let him concentrate.

*[To Thomas]*

Connie, Westmore-on-Mere, glass slippers, blue doll's house, crepey hair and Rolling Stones.

Thomas *struggling*      Connie, Western-on-Mere, glass slippers, blue doll house, crepe hair, Rolling Stones ... and ... er ...

Connie      Then ask the pivotal, seminal question. Good! Off you go!

*Thomas turns slowly. He is muttering the list to himself.*

Silvio'      I'll slip off your knee, Will and take a'Grande's place. Then Connie dear may snuggle up on *my* knee. You might remove the gown if you are finding it too incommodious, Dearest.

*As Thomas heads off we can see that he is memorizing Connie's list.*

Connie *voice-off*      How peculiar! I always thought you batted for the other side, sexual-preferences-wise. Well look at your get-up!

*As Thomas climbs the steep stone stairway, we just hear Silvio deliver a roar of laughter. His fellow conspirators beg him to shut up.*

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene iii:** Interior, The Ballroom of Maefield Brae.

*An enormous crush of merry people is found in the ballroom. The noise level is very loud: almost deafening. These partygoers dance about (although there is no room to move) in a riot of bright colours. All are dressed in their finest 18<sup>th</sup> century silk and lace.*

*We see Thomas thread his way (with difficulty) through the throng, then hesitate as he approaches Pitt (who is at the centre of a group of earnest political types). Thomas stands out in that he is costumed as a priest. We see Thomas make his deep bow to Pitt, and we see Pitt acknowledge him with a nod. The camera moves back, back, back.*

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene iv:** Interior, The Famous Cellar of Maefield Brae.

*Thomas returns down the stone stairs. He heads straight to the door of the priest's hole where he knocks several times. He hears a burble of voices (probably assuming that the noise emanates from the party upstairs). There is no answer from the priest's hole. Worried, Thomas fiddles with the decorative moulding on the old chest. Then Thomas hears the approach of somebody (more than one person) and backs away in alarm.*

*To Thomas's huge relief, Connie, Silvio (now minus the wig) and Will saunter towards him. They have been sampling the fine wine (under Will's direction).*

Will                                      Ah! How did it go?

*Thomas shakes his head.*

Thomas                                  No good. Alex has been nobbled. Didn't have a clue what I was saying. Nearly pissed myself when Tye introduced me to his patron Lord Rockingham. Thought Jon would certainly recognize me, but luckily he had no idea.

However, the Pitt conversation was a non-starter, I'm afraid.

Connie                                  But you spoke the catalog I gave you?

Thomas                                  I was clear and concise. Made sure that he heard every word above the din. No good. No good.

Silvio *bereft*                              But ... Alex was our only hope.

Thomas                                  We'd better resume our positions in the hidey hole. No doubt I would have been followed. This time I'll have Silvio up on my knee and Will can take a turn with Connie.

*Connie takes umbrage at this.*

Connie                      Just mind what you're saying, a'Grande. I'm not a floozy I'll have you know.

*A heavy footfall is heard. The four conspirators start in alarm. However, they hear Tye/Jessamy whistling as he descends. So now they all relax. Tye/Jessamy has a large black cape over his arm.*

*On seeing the trespassers, Tye/Jessamy gives an elegant bow as he approaches them.*

*Tye/Jessamy to Connie*      My dear Mistress Connie. I beg you to once again take your pew in the priest's hole. Here is a cape which I should advise that you wear. When I have finished my mission with the gentlemen, I shall return post haste to escort you to the garden, where Mr Pitt will organize to speak with you.

*Connie gasps. The four men fit Connie out in the cape, setting her up in the priest's hole. While all this proceeds, Tye/Jessamy continues.*

Tye/Jessamy      You three gentlemen must forgive me. I earnestly believe that you were best served by degrading yourselves to the rank of saucy tars. Your ship ("The Dartmouth") is even now having her consignment of tea loaded within her hold. You will join the other sailors on the voyage to America, along with a kinsman of Mistress Connie.

A missive from His Majesty advises the colonists that all of their just demands have been met. The Dartmouth's noble captain will read the King's proclamation to the good people of Boston as soon as he may. That ***must*** avoid the necessity for war, for the colonists will be placated.

Mr Pitt indicates that (for the desired outcome) you must destroy that missive.

*Two bewigged footmen descend to the cellar. They carry three jute duffle bags stuffed with 18<sup>th</sup> century sailing outfits. Immediately, Silvio, Thomas and Will begin to strip off as Tye fixes shut the door to the priest's hole.*

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene v:** Exterior, The Garden of Maefield Brae.

*Connie is quite wary. She holds her black silken cloak about her as she peers out from behind the bushes and shrubs of the Maefield Brae garden.*

*The merry-makers at Lord Rockingham's soiree tend to come and go from the manor house. There is a constant babble of noise. Then Samuel/Andrew assists the gouty Alex/Pitt from the doorway and along a path. Alex/Pitt calls back to someone (probably Tye) who stands in the doorway.*

Alex/Pitt                      Nay! 'Tis almost the witching hour and I must tarry not. Please thank your patron for me, won't you? And good night!

*Connie gasps as Alex/Pitt (supported by Samuel) nears her hideout. She takes courage, making a "Hsst!" sound.*

Alex/Pitt *to Samuel*              Zounds! I must have imbibed too freely of Rockingham's sherry. Let me answer the call of nature, will you? Go and stand at a distance, won't you Samuel? Nearby that tree from which Master Jessamy descended not so long since.

*Alex/Pitt soon finds Connie. They look at each other for a while. Connie is unsure if Alex is acting Pitt or has become Pitt.*

Alex *shaken*                      Darling, darling, darling girl!

*No more the doddering cripple, Alex pulls his wife into his arms. They kiss with all the expected ardour. Connie allows her tears to gather and fall.*

Connie                          Why didn't you respond to Thomas?

*Alex shakes his head.*

Alex                              Too closely watched. I can't believe how dangerous all this is. Did the boys get away alright?

Connie                                      Yes. Well, Tye seems to think so. I overheard something --  
They're being shipped to America as sailors. And I think that I  
might have overheard that my brother is to go with them.  
Malcolm, I assume ...

*Alex nods. Then he resumes his character. Ostensibly fiddling with the front of his costume, Alex/Pitt hobbles out of the bushes to rejoin Samuel.*

Alex/Pitt *calls*                              Be so kind as to fetch my carriage, Samuel. I can stagger no  
further. Home and to bed.

*Connie (now alone) snuggles tighter into the cape.*

Connie *to herself*                              What happens to me, then? Do I stay here ... ?

*Then we hear a loud "Hsst!" Connie swings about and her face beams.*

Connie                                      Tye! Oh thank you, my dear!

*With that, Connie disappears.*

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene vi:** Interior, Aboard "The Dartmouth" (Captain's Cabin).

*Silvio, Will and Thomas are now dressed appropriately as rough Limeys. They even sport fake beards, have long hair plaited into traditional queues, and smoke corncob pipes.*

*They reach the captain's cabin just as Professor Ealemann (in his Pirate Jock Absolute gear) approaches. Panic sets in among our three sailors, who are unacquainted with Connie's brother.*

*Silvio, Will and Thomas immediately go into dodgy imitations of West Country yokels from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. "Aaaaaaargh ... Ye olde ... Thankee koindly ..." They are appalling. Professor Ealemann looks them over indifferently. Then the Professor points towards Silvio.*

Professor Ealemann                              You're that chef who lurks around on the telly, aren't you?

*The three sailors visibly relax.*

Thomas *relieved*                      God! I thought I was going to thoroughly wet myself. Who the Hell are you, then?

*Professor Ealemann produces a large key with which he opens the door to the captain's cabin.*

Professor Ealemann                Obviously I am Pirate Jock Absolute. Get in and hurry up about it.

*Professor Ealemann shepherds his group of tars into the captain's cabin and then locks the door from the inside.*

Thomas                                What's this all about?

Professor Ealemann                The King's letter. It has to be destroyed. It is stowed in a leather bag, locked in a small red case. This case is engraved "The King's Business". A letter to our well-beloved subjects across the seas in America.

*The four men scabble about in the small cabin, going through everything as quickly as possible as they speak.*

Silvio                                  Pirate Jock ... But who are you *really*?

Professor Ealemann                As we stand here in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the USA does not exist. *urgently* There is a Federation of America which is overseen by a regal Governor-General rather than a president. In parliament the lower house is the House of Commons and the upper: the House of Nabobs.

The utterly reprehensible actions of Sheridan have cast George Washington into the role of "just another soldier". Thus, the capital of America is named New London and there is even a replica Westminster Abbey there.

Silvio                                  Christ Almighty! That *can't* ever be what Maurice Sheridan intended!

Professor Ealemann

No. He failed in "consequences of actions". Didn't think it through ...

The British royal family (what's left of it in the UK which is little more than a flaccid backwater) now consists of a couple of old relics. Everyone else bailed out and moved to America yonks ago. Australia, New Zealand and South Africa are all states of this mighty federation (fyi not including Alaska) that came about because of Sheridan's blind stupidity.

And he cannot put it back. Mark that: **he – cannot – put - it - back.**

He is totally unable to set everything right. Our only hope is to find the letter!

*Will gives a shriek of excitement.*

Will

Here it is! Key? Do you have a key?

*The case is chained to a downpipe in the captain's cabin. The men rattle about in a panic, trying to find a suitable key.*

Will

Never mind. I had an interesting boyhood. A short piece of wire will suffice.

*Immediately, Thomas passes some short lengths of wire to Will who deftly bends and squeezes with his bare fingers.*

Will

We'll leave this baby chained as we found it. All I shall attempt is to ... ah! ... There it is!

*Will dives into the red case, dragging out the much-wanted leather pouch. Quickly, Will opens the pouch. In his fingers he holds the Royal missive. All four men greedily read this, speaking some of the words.*

All four men

Gracious subjects ... brotherly love ... no longer subjected to the punishment of naughty children ... insomuch as ... due representation ... shall be satisfied ...

Silvio                                      What did they say? "Publish and be damned"? Well, this is  
"destroy and be damned". Let's rip into it!

*Thomas, Will and Silvio eagerly rip the Royal letter to shreds. Will begins to stuff pieces of the paper into his mouth.*

Will *thickly*                              Spitballs! Chuck 'em out the window.

Thomas                                    Porthole.

Will *abashed*                            Of course.

*Silvio, Thomas and Will laugh at themselves as they enjoy this boyish game. Meanwhile, Professor Ealemann acquires a quill and a small bottle of ink. He searches for some parchment or paper of any kind, then begins to write.*

Professor Ealemann *drily*      Whilst you lot are tied-up in your traitorous endeavours, I'll make  
up a far better letter. What King George would **really** have  
written in fact.

Thomas *laughing*                      Treason abounds!

Will                                        Do you need your quill knifed?

Professor Ealemann                  You're in the right of it. It's a mongrel of a writing implement.  
However, it will serve the purpose. Our colonial gentlemen will  
be too hot under the collar to care about neat penmanship.

🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀 **Break** 🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀

Professor Ealemann                  There!

*The others read the letter, then nod their approval. Will blots then folds the letter and then he carefully returns it to the leather pouch. From there it is transferred to the King's red box. This Will locks once more using the wire.*

Thomas                                    Well done! That'll inflame the colonists.

Silvio Will, you must tell me one day about your "interesting boyhood".

Will You know, we're bloody lucky that old Captain Whoozits didn't burst in on us.

Professor Ealemann No we're not. Not lucky, that is. Slipped the old boy a mickey finn. And then filched his cabin key.

*Professor Ealemann shrugs fatalistically.*

Professor Ealemann I, too had an interesting youth.  
*naughty*

Thomas That was thoughtful of you to put the skipper out of commission. Shows daring and resourcefulness.

Silvio Come on! Who **are** you really?

Professor Ealemann Connie's brother. I thought you'd guess.  
*grins*

*The other three men relax, looking thoughtful.*

Will Ha! The Professor ... Should have known.

*The Professor glances out of the porthole.*

Professor Ealemann Right! We're entering the harbour. Gentlemen! Time for tea!

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene vii:** Interior, Maurice Confronts Tye

*Tye is slumped in a chair in his dressing room, learning his lines. He helps this process by drinking Will's wine direct from the bottle. Maurice marches in without knocking and without apology.*

Maurice What are you doing, Tike?

Tye *surprised* Being a professional actor. What about you?

Maurice *snarls* Don't lip me, boy! That dungeon-fodder Pitt – and you, Angleworth. Some nasty betrayal has been going on here. Letting "actors" into the Brae, dealing with the outside world no doubt. But you are in the portal with the rest of us. This is your world until I have succeeded to gain that fucking bill of lading.

*Tye goes to speak but Maurice rounds on him.*

Maurice *arrogant* Know this! You and Manderby are but fringe players in my plans. I can snuff you both out however and whenever the mood takes me.

*Tye bites his lips.*

Tye I'm sorry that you feel that way ... I am playing Lord Rockingham's servant who will --

Maurice *mulish* Where is Pitt? I'll finish this now!

*Without waiting for Tye's reply, Maurice swings around, leaving the dressing room.*

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene viii:** Interior, Tye Employs The Ham Radio

*With Maurice gone, Tye legs it speedily to the "broom cupboard" where he cranks up an ancient ham radio.*

Tye Hello? Yes, I can hear you plainly. The chap I need to speak to urgently is called "The Queensland Truckie". That's right. We understand that he was in the environs of a place called Cloncurry in Far North –  
  
Right you are! I'll give you a phone number for him to call. Can't

promise that I'll be able to get back on this radio thingy again.

Okay. Ah ... over and out!

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene ix:** Exterior, On the Deck of The Dartmouth

*Hundreds of canoes, dinghies, yachts, pontoons and skiffs bob about in Boston Harbour such that the occupants of these small vessels may hear the King's much looked-for Proclamation.*

*The Dartmouth's captain was given a mickey finn by Professor Ealemann (as we know). So he is in no fit state to read out the Proclamation as planned.*

*The captain is unable to even get to the rail in order to throw up, so he is carried off by some of his sailors. The ship's doctor bears the red box. It is the doctor who applies the key to the box. Then he extracts the leather pouch which he hands over to the Second Lieutenant (who will deputize). The Lieutenant speaks in a very plummy English voice.*

Lieutenant                      Gentlemen! Our glorious King George has sent us on our way with a declaration of his so great love for you all. Sadly, my brave captain is indisposed. Thus, it shall be my pleasant duty to read out this missive to all of you gathered here.

*With great solemnity, the leather pouch is opened. The Lieutenant reads out the following. The effect of the letter is to create a roar of riot and despair amongst the boaties. This anger erupts likewise on shore.*

Lieutenant *reads*                      To Our American Subjects,  
We are a wise, tender and merciful King, whose only thoughts are ever to protect, honour and love our many subjects (both at home and over the seas). Gross misrepresentations have been made by many of our subjects who otherwise profess loyalty to

our Crown and to our Person.

How galling to a loving King then must be the wilful, shameful, wanton and vile demands made by those Colonials who trespass upon our Kingdom. The Object is too important, the Spirit of the British Nation too high, the Resources with which God hath blessed her too numerous, to give up so many Colonies which she has planted with great Industry, nursed with great Tenderness, encouraged with many Commercial Advantages, and protected and defended at much Expense of Blood and Treasure.

We shall not brook Usurpation, Rebellion, Revolt, Conspiracy nor any other contumacious undertakings from our subjects in America. Be aware that our Wrath is great! God is on our side in this Iniquitous affair. Our Punishment upon the Recalcitrant will sting in its Swiftmess.

George the Third, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, and so forth.

*The Lieutenant scurries away in alarm. The mob chants and bellows its anger.*

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene x:** Exterior, On the Road From Cloncurry Qld

*The temperature hovers around 44 degrees Celsius.*

*A long road train (loaded with beef cattle) moves slowly past the stationery camera such that we get an idea how long it is. The signage on the truck door states: "Queensland Truckie FREIGHT HAULAGE". The Truckie swings open the driver's door and descends the ladder backwards, finishing with a wary step down onto the dirt.*

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*The skinny, wiry driver is a man in his late 60's. He wears elastic-sided boots (battered) and woollen socks. He wears a dirty baseball cap, sunglasses (taped together with a band-aid), a dirty old navy singlet and dirty black footy shorts. His suntan reflects the fact that he drives on the right side of the truck (as expected) with the windows open (to let the sun in). What remains of a roll-your-own cigarette hangs from the lips of the driver. He sweats profusely.*

*Our camera now checks out the surroundings. There is nothing. The land is parched, barren, flat and lonely. The only sounds come from the purr of the motor, the driver as he checks his rig, and from the beef cattle. The driver hawks and spits as his mobile phone (in his pocket) rings. The driver answers the mobile in a deep, gruff voice.*

Queensland Truckie           Yair whatdya want?

*[Pause]*

Righto. No worries.

*With a long sigh, the driver ends the call and checks for messages. Then he presses the screen. A dial tone is heard. The driver takes a last puff of his cigarette, then scrunches the butt underfoot.*

Queensland Truckie           I was told to ring ya. Whatdya want?

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene xi:** Interior, Maeburn Brae.

*Maurice stalks into the room. Alex/Pitt awaits him.*

Maurice                       Somebody ... ***Somebody*** has been trying very hard to scuttle my film: "Debacle". The clever money is on Alex Manderby for the blame. You! Bloody William Pitt the Elder. You!

*Maurice strides about, angry and bitter.*

Maurice                       You can't hide from me. That "poor old cripple" stunt can't veil your culpability. Eh? Try as you might, me old cock sparrer ...

Your guilt is written on your ruddy face.

*Maurice strides up to Alex/Pitt such that they are face-to-face. Alex/Pitt does not flinch. Maurice whispers harshly in a very threatening tone.*

Maurice                      I'll win. I've already won. You have lost, Manderby.

*Alex/Pitt remains strong in this diabolical face-off. Maurice hisses with rage.*

Maurice                      Say something. Beg for your life.

*Alex/Pitt remains silent. Maurice grabs the shoulders of Alex/Pitt and shakes the man hard.*

Maurice                      Say ***something!***

*When Alex/Pitt finally does speak, his voice is steady and clear.*

Alex/Pitt                      Confidence is a plant of slow growth in an aged bosom.

Maurice *snarls*                      I meant speak as yourself Alex. Beg for your life. "Please Maurice – don't shoot me."

You can shut up with the Pitt utterances (wise or otherwise). It's all finished now, despite your valiant efforts to scotch my schemes.

*Alex shambles forward, wincing with the supposed pain in his gouty leg.*

Alex/Pitt                      If I were an American, as I am an Englishman, while a foreign troop was landed in my country, I never would lay down my arms — never, never, never.

Maurice *angry*                      Shut up! It's over, Alex. Beg me. Drop to your knees and beg me.

*With all his strength (and despite extreme pain), Alex/Pitt drags himself towards Maurice so that his chest breasts that of Maurice.*

Alex/Pitt                      Unlimited power corrupts the possessor.

*Without any further hesitation, Maurice pushes back from his closeness to Alex/Pitt. Maurice draws an elegant pistol from his jacket and shoots Alex/Pitt in the heart. Alex/Pitt gasps as he grips his*

*chest with his hands (which ensures that he lets the walking stick go). Alex/Pitt lurches forward to slump to the floor in a heap.*

*Maurice stoops. He notes that Alex/Pitt is not yet dead. Rather, Alex/Pitt takes his last gasps of breath.*

Alex/Pitt *very weak*                      How ... ?

Maurice                      How did I create the portal? There is a computer clock: a world clock. All the times are correct in the case that the earth always spins at exactly the same rate. But it doesn't. It loses a hundredth of a second each year. I tapped into the clock and managed to cause a fissure at the exact time when the clock compensates for the lost split-second, slicing it into a million parts. Easy.

Well no ... That's not quite it. I'd been working on this thing for years. But it took the new i7-10710U Intel Core to allow me to actually slice into the time-byte. And on a standard laptop, too!

Pity you don't understand a word I'm saying, old toot.

*Maurice is now very pleased with himself. He is enjoying Alex/Pitt's death as much as the thought of becoming a plutocrat.*

Maurice                      Funny thing – death ...

Look! I died when I was 15. Car accident. I was off in another time zone when the doctors reefed me back to life. One thanks them and writes letters and becomes a minor celebrity for 15 seconds ... Yet, all one can remember is the thrill of legging it about ancient Egypt, ancient Rome ...

*Maurice stoops again to check Alex/Pitt's pulse. Then Maurice stands, smiling.*

Maurice                      Turrah, old toot. Off to America, me. To watch my forebear rake in the money.

*Maurice strides out of the room.*

END OF SCENE

|                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Medley of Scenes Related To The Boston Tea Party.</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------|

Here we revisit ACT I, Scene ii.

The following scenes move speedily from one to the next:--

- A small boat is rowed up to The Dartmouth. There are several men aboard who are dressed as Mohawk Indians.
- It is our group of Englishmen (Professor Ealemann, Silvio, Thomas and Will) who assist these disguised colonists up the rope ladders and then aboard The Dartmouth.
- Our Englishmen quickly lead the Sons of Liberty down to the hold where Professor Ealemann unlocks a steel gate.
- The Englishmen assist the Sons of Liberty to haul the tea chests up on deck.
- We can see and hear a riot of joy coming from those on shore.
- Knives and hand-axes are used to rip open the chests. The tea therein is poured into the harbour.
- Laughing and triumphant, the Sons of Liberty push the empty chests overboard. They are assisted at all times by our Englishmen along with several like-minded sailors.

Connie *voice-over*

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of December in the year 1773, a group of indignant and disgruntled Bostonians dressed themselves as Mohawk Indians. They crept aboard the ships belonging to the British East India Company and emptied 342 chests of tea into the harbour. The chests too were dumped therein, bobbing about on the water as outraged British officials and local mercantile

interests looked on helplessly.

*On the shore stands Amos Lightman beside whom stands Maurice. Amos holds the bill of lading in his hand. He is devastated by what he is seeing. Maurice is completely flummoxed.*

Amos *gutted*                      All I have was tied up in those tea chests. All I've worked for.  
Please God don't let this destruction ruin me.

Maurice *appalled*              No! No! This must not be! No! Stop! I order you to stop!

*Maurice staggers forward. Suddenly, from a boat which has rowed back to the dock from The Dartmouth, Professor Ealemann (still costumed as Pirate Jock Absolute) pushes through the roaring crowd. He scarcely notices Maurice, who is haplessly flapping about trying to stop the tea party.*

*Professor Ealemann strikes a match as he reefs the bill of lading from the hands of the startled Amos Lightman.*

*The Professor holds the burning document as the camera closes in on the tongues of flame.*

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*As Professor Ealemann speaks the following voice-over, we will look at some famous paintings of the War of Independence. This artistic exercise will continue for the End Credits.*

Professor Ealemann              What do they say on that crazy quiz show? "The jig is up".  
*voice-over*                      Pirate Jock Absolute scotched the scheme. He and his sides  
(Silvio, Will and Thomas) illegally boarded His Majesty's sailing  
ship which happened to be carrying all the pertinent news from  
Britain. So it was that although King George, Pitt, Grenville and  
the rest of them had worked to free America from its colonial  
enslavement (via Sheridan's portal), the news never reached the  
Americans. It was chewed and spat out by rough sailors on The  
Dartmouth. Following that, Amos Lightman's embryo fortune had  
been chucked into the Boston Harbour. It was said that Amos  
himself burned the bill of lading. I just wanted to make sure of it

...

*There follows an awkward silence.*

Professor Ealemann  
*voice-over*

Maurice Sheridan killed my brother-in-law Alex Manderby. Well, no-one is going to section him for that. Who'd blame anyone for wanting to kill him? I mean, my gardener brother and I have thought of same more than 100 times. Useless burk.

I ask you: what sort of mentally defective person gets on the telly and spouts botanical or horticultural wisdom? You should hear my brother on the subject. Deserves to be buried in his own compost heap, does Alex Manderby.

"The jig is definitely up". No doubt I'll hear that Sheridan has legged it to some outlandish place ... Spain, south of France ... might even join up with the Queensland Truckie.

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene xii:** Interior, In The Film Studio (refer back ACT III, Scene vii).

*Our camera focuses on an empty deck chair. Suddenly Silvio appears to be sitting in that chair. He is dressed as he was in ACT III, scene vii.*

*Tye (in his Jessamy costume) stands before him.*

Tye (*as Jessamy*)                      Monstrous grateful am I to encounter your good soul again, stap me if it ain't so.

*Silvio stares at Tye in horror. Then Tye gives a crack of laughter, grabbing Silvio's hand to shake it. Then Tye slaps an open laptop onto Silvio's knee.*

Tye *delighted*                      Had you going there! I'll round up the others to make sure everyone got back okay. Bit concerned for Alex ...

Oh! Topspeed search engine: I've found the entry for George Washington. And Old Glory is back to her old self. It's all returned. Hallelujah!

*Glyn and Mark are spellbound as Will and Thomas explain what happened to them.*

Will ... a ruddy portal, it seems. You guys couldn't get out of it until the deed was done (and even then ...)

We had to invade the portal without that Sheridan naughty-c-word getting wind of it.

Tye *grinning* Pretty neat, huh?

Thomas You were pivotal to our success, Tye m' boy.

The Prof (old salty dog that he is) penned a sensational substitute letter from the King. You should have seen their faces (the Americans) when it was read out to them. Genius!

*Silvio flicks through an online encyclopedia.*

Silvio United States of America. Senate chambers. President. White House. Dollar bills. Royal family safely tucked away in good old England. Everything back to normal.

God! That was scary plus 8.

Will *moralizing* But this event through which we have been dragged brings into sharp focus the real dangers of time travel – of wanting to tweak history. The “what-if” school. Yes, an academic exercise – granted. But one cannot possibly go back in time for real and change what has actually occurred.

*A forklift screeches to a halt. The driver shouts abuse at Alex. This causes everyone to look in that direction. Jon and Glyn rush forward, hauling Alex to his feet.*

Jon *alarmed* Jesus, Manderby! Can't lie about in here, old cock. Get run over. This is nothing more or less than a madhouse.

Glyn *concerned*                      You alright? No bones broken?

*Tye rushes up.*

Tye *worried*                      Hey! Alex, mate – you okay?

*Tye and Alex warmly shake hands.*

Alex *chuckles*                      Thanks to you. Your sage advice --

Tye                                      No, mate. That unbelievable monosyllabic plonker in Terra Australis ... Anyway, it worked! That's the main thing.

Glyn                                      What was that?

Alex                                      To be true to William Pitt the elder. That is what the Queensland Truckie in his wisdom advised.

Maurice worshipped reality. So to turn him on his head, the ubiquitous truckie made the trite suggestion that I should be true to my character. With that in mind, I wafted into some of Pitt's adages. 100% Pitt and 0% Manderby.

He shot me in the heart. But Pitt died in his bed. Not by gunshot. Not real. So he lost on that one.

*[Looks about]*

Did everyone else make it? Connie? Is she alright?

Jon                                      Sound as a bell. Everyone is fine! But I think we may have lost our King George.

Alex *shocked*                      No way! He was phenomenal.

Glyn *shame-faced*                      The portal Mick was. The real-world Mick ... er ... stinks.  
Sorry but there it is.

Alex                                      We'll see ...

Jon                                      Why not let's ramp-up Kel? He can act the socks of most people. And if you've imbibed the requisite 40% proof ...

*Glyn snaps his fingers as revelation dawns.*

Glyn *excited*                      With the right amount of Vermouth in the blood-stream, darling  
Kel can look strikingly like George III. If the light is right ...

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene xiii:** Exterior, The Superb Gardens of Marjorie Trent-Staple

*A long trestle table covered in all manner of tablecloths groans under the weight of numerous scrumptious dishes along with cutlery and crockery (of all different shapes, sizes and colours). Wine bottles and glasses proliferate.*

*People mill about in jolly mood. Silvio appears dressed as the familiar fop. This gesture receives loud applause and laughter, even from those who did not see him in Maurice's world. As he moves about amongst the crowd, Silvio is heard to call out to somebody.*

Silvio *loudly*                      Lobsters from Maine and New England clam chowder. Flown out  
this morning from the States in a fast jet. To – die – for!  
  
Marjorie and I whipped up the authentic Boston Cream Pie. Yes!  
Spectacular!

*Silvio speaks loudly because out in the garden, Mick and a few fellow musicians are belting out an oldie-but-a-goodie to the delight of the assembled friends.*

*Connie arrives dressed in her 18<sup>th</sup> century outfit. There is large applause when she appears, as she looks charming and beautiful. Somebody calls out to Alex as to why he refuses to dress up as Pitt. Alex pretends to be grumpy.*

Alex                                  If only you realized how utterly sick to death of being a gouty old  
cripple I am ...

*Thomas is already seated (in ordinary street clothes). The professor is dressed as something resembling a pirate. Everyone is confused: Professor Ealemann then announces the back story to his chosen costume.*

Professor                      I am a New England smuggler. Naturally! That fact should be more than self-evident.

*This raises a laugh and some applause. Mick and the other musicians have packed up and now sit with the others.*

Connie                         Tell us how we did it. How we beat Maurice's dastardly plan.

Professor                     Pitt did it. He gave us Jessamy. Without that vital link the people from outside could not hope to get in. And ... Everyone would have been trapped in that other world. By that I mean humanity as we know it.

Mick                             But he would have put it all back right without any of us noticing, wouldn't he?

Professor                     My worry is that he might not have been able to do that. It's all very well to tease time going forward; but to retrace the steps might have been beyond even Sheridan's capabilities. And he desperately needed the Boston Tea Party **not** to happen.

Will                             Remembering Chaos Theory, that small change still would have precipitated us into uncharted territory ... Tiny change; massive impact. A world where America did not have possession of Alaska but it **did** have Australia and all that lot. Just as starters.

Alex *thoughtful*               Mmmm ...

Thomas                         Thank the Lord fasting that we had Tye then.

Alex *grateful*                   He kept his head. Covered all our tracks. Without him ...

*Tye stands and toasts his alter ego Jessamy. Everyone else stands and joins the toast.*



## END CREDITS

The end credits will appear against a black backdrop where more famous paintings of the War of Independence appear.