

***THE NEWS HOUR* (a dark comedy)**

(synopsis)

A nearly middle-aged couple, DONNY and ANNIE, drop in on their best friends and neighbors to share good news, bad news, and bad, bad news. They start with the bad news: a co-worker of Donny's dropped dead from a heart attack. The bad, bad news is that their son has gone and gotten two rings pierced into his tongue. The good news is that ANNIE is pregnant, with twins, but they aren't hers—or DONNY's for that matter. ANNIE is acting as a surrogate mother out of a desperate need to experience pregnancy one last time; neither she nor DONNY want more children at this point in their lives.

But something's amiss with their best friends, LAURA and LARRY, who are not their usual loving selves. LAURA, it turns out, suspects LARRY of carrying on in gay male chat rooms on the Internet. LARRY, who has seen his wife's car repeatedly parked behind the same motel, suspects LAURA of having an affair, and in a burst of anger, accuses her outright in front of their friends.

DONNY, appalled by what seems the threatened breakup of his friends' marriage, tells LARRY the real news: It is he, DONNY, who is having a "harmless fling," and LAURA, out of friendship, has been lending him her car for the purpose. ANNIE is not privy to this information, and the three friends agree that, out of friendship, it's best ANNIE remain in ignorance. LAURA, out of friendship, takes the fall as the guilty party.

And as for LARRY carrying on in gay chat rooms, well, the chat rooms were all-male all right, but they were rooms for husbands seeking peer help in dealing with unfaithful wives.

[29 pages, standard play format]

CAST

LAURA	middle-aged
LARRY	her husband, middle-aged
DONNIE	best friend; middle-aged
ANNIE	his wife; middle-aged

SETTING

A suburban kitchen

TIME

The present