

= Give Me a Ring Sometime =

" Give Me a Ring Sometime " is the first episode of the American situation comedy Cheers . Written by Glen and Les Charles and directed by James Burrows , the episode first aired September 30 , 1982 on NBC . The pilot episode introduces the employees of bar Cheers : Sam Malone , Diane Chambers , Coach Ernie Pantusso , and Carla Tortelli ; and regular customers : Norm Peterson and Cliff Clavin . In this episode , Diane , brought in by fiancé Sumner Sloan , meets the employees and patrons of the bar . When she realizes that her fiancé has left her alone in the bar , Diane accepts Sam 's offer to be the bar 's waitress to start over .

In the original script the employees were the principal characters , and Norm and Cliff were not included . Later revisions added Norm and Cliff , and scenes were restructured and rewritten . Originally , Cheers ' set would be a hotel , but it was ultimately changed to a bar . Ratings were low when the episode first aired , but were moderately successful in reruns . It has been critically praised over the years , and earned its writers awards for Best Writing in 1983 .

= = Plot = =

As owner Sam Malone opens the bar , a professor Sumner Sloane (Michael McGuire) and his Boston University student fiancée Diane Chambers are the first customers . They are planning to go to Barbados to be married , but do not have a wedding ring ; Sumner leaves to get the ring from his ex @-@ wife . While she waits , Diane learns about the other people in the bar . Sam is an ex @-@ baseball player and a recovering alcoholic . Waitress Carla Tortelli is a bitter divorcée with four children . Male patrons are playing a " body sweat in movies " trivia game , which repulses Diane . Sumner returns a few hours later , suggesting Cool Hand Luke as a " sweaty " movie and telling Diane he could not get his ex @-@ wife 's ring . His ex @-@ wife calls the bar with a change of heart , and Sumner leaves Diane again .

Diane and Sam argue about Sumner , and Sam pointedly tells her Sumner is probably on a plane with his ex @-@ wife . Diane calls the airport to change their flight reservation , and finds out that " Mr. and Mrs. Sloane " have already used it . Heartbroken , she prepares to go home before realizing that her job as Sumner 's teaching assistant is gone . Out of pity , Sam offers her a job at Cheers as a waitress . Because of her educational background , Diane initially refuses ; however , when she remembers a number of orders (including special requests) from a table she reluctantly accepts the job . The following day , Diane 's first customer is an international tourist (Erik Holland) , asking for his lost luggage .

= = Casting = =

The pilot introduces employees of the bar , Cheers , in Boston , Massachusetts in order of appearance :

Sam Malone (Ted Danson) is a recovering alcoholic , a former baseball player , a bartender and the owner of Cheers .

Diane Chambers (Shelley Long) is a college student and " bar misfit " who is abandoned by her fiancé , Sumner Sloane . She becomes a waitress at the end of the episode .

Ernie Pantusso (Nicholas Colasanto) is a " forgetful " , " gravelly @-@ voiced bartender " , nicknamed " Coach " because he was Sam 's coach during his career as a relief pitcher for the Boston Red Sox .

Carla Tortelli (Rhea Perlman) is a bitter , " wisecracking , cynical waitress " and divorcée whose husband , Nick , abandons her and her four children .

The creators rejected the idea of casting a star such as Mary Tyler Moore , and sought actors who were previously unknown to the public . They interviewed almost 1 @,@ 000 people for the four principal roles : Sam Malone , Diane Chambers , Carla Tortelli , and " Coach " Ernie Pantusso . Steve Kolzak (credited as Stephen Kolzak) cast the original characters . According to Danson , Rhea Perlman was the first to be cast . Former umpire Ron Luciano auditioned for Coach ; however

, the producers " wanted an experienced actor " . Robert Proske , who later appeared as Rebecca Howe 's (Kirstie Alley) Navy father in the 1992 Cheers episode " Daddy 's Little Middle @-@ Aged Girl " and an author in the 1996 Frasier episode " A Crane 's Critique " , turned down the role of Coach . Actor @-@ director Nicholas Colasanto won the role .

Auditions were held for Sam and Diane . Three pairs were tested : William Devane and Lisa Eichhorn , Fred Dryer and Julia Duffy , and Ted Danson and Shelley Long . Before the show premiered Danson appeared in 1979 's The Onion Field ; Long appeared in 1982 's Night Shift , starring Henry Winkler of Happy Days . Fred Dryer later appeared as Dave Richards , a sportscaster friend of Sam 's , in " Sam at Eleven " in 1982 . Sam Malone was originally " a former wide receiver for the New England Patriots " , and Fred Dryer was considered for the role because he was a football player . However , NBC executives liked test scenes with Danson and Long so the creators chose them instead , making Sam a former relief pitcher for the Boston Red Sox . Ed O 'Neill also auditioned for the role of Sam Malone .

We had some surprises . Some actors were terrific by themselves but not in concert with others . Each actor read the same scene . Everyone got the same chance . We were looking for actors who could make us laugh by being loyal to the characters . Then we matched them up .

Two customers were introduced :

Norm Peterson (George Wendt) , recognized by everyone in the bar , enters for a quick drink .

Cliff Clavin (John Ratzenberger) appears for a conversation with other male patrons about bar trivia .

George Wendt and John Ratzenberger originally auditioned for the role of " George " , and Wendt was cast . In the original script , George was Diane 's first customer at the end of the episode . Annoyed with Diane 's long @-@ winded explanation of how she became a waitress , he delivered his one @-@ word line : " Beer ! " After Wendt was cast , the writers revised the script ; his role evolved into Norm Peterson , the first onscreen customer to enter the bar and " [badgering] Diane rather than the other way around " . After Wendt was cast , Ratzenberger suggested to the producers that a know @-@ it @-@ all character be added ; this led to the creation of another character , Cliff Clavin .

One character who was cut from the pilot episode was an unpleasant , racist , wheelchair @-@ bound old woman named Mrs. Littlefield , supposedly a regular customer of Cheers , who was intended to be a recurring character . Her lines were filmed as part of a rough cut of the pilot . However , the producers decided to cut the character out of the episode , as they found her character did not mesh with other characters or with the overall tone of the show . Nevertheless , the uncredited actress who played her can still be seen as a background performer in a few scenes . Some sources credit this actress as Elaine Strich , although the unidentified actress who is still seen on camera looks nothing like Strich . In answer to a question about the actress , Cheers writer / producer Ken Levine has stated on his blog " that was not Elaine Strich " The producers ultimately decided to eliminate Mrs. Littlefield completely from the show from that point forward , necessitating changes to some yet @-@ to @-@ be @-@ filmed scripts for the first few episodes .

Three other bar patrons have speaking roles in the completed episode : John P. Navin , Jr. portrays a teenage boy in the cold open , Erik Holland has a brief bit as Diane 's first customer , and Ron Frazier appears as a barfly who stands at the bar near Cliff (and who offers " Ben Hur " as his choice for the sweatiest movie ever made .)

= = Production = =

The creators of Cheers (and the crew of Taxi) , co @-@ writers Glen and Les Charles and director James Burrows , created a sitcom project in 1981 . Initially set in a hotel , the setting changed to a hotel bar and finally a " Boston neighborhood bar " . The show was filmed not in a pub , but on Stage 25 of the Paramount Studios lot . Cheers ' set was inspired by the Bull & Finch Pub in Boston , now known as Cheers Beacon Hill (pictured , right) . A Boston bar was chosen because of its " interior [made out of] brick , polished mahogany , and brass " ; the city was chosen because it is " cosmopolitan " , " a great sports town " and was not previously explored on television . Because the

creators are sports fans , an athletic element was added to the bar . Burrows said that the show was intended to be about a bar which people visit for more than drinks .

Jokes from earlier scripts were used . In one scene , Carla Tortelli orders a phone caller to do something about their unruly children . When one of the bartenders suggests hiring a babysitter , Carla replied that the caller was the babysitter . The cast did not know the ending of the pilot episode during production , since the final draft of the script was dated April 16 , 1982 .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

The NBC premiere lineup on September 30 , 1982 consisted of (beginning at 8 : 00 pm Eastern and Pacific Time) Fame , Cheers , Taxi and Hill Street Blues . Cheers debuted at 9 : 00 pm against the two @-@ hour season premiere of Magnum , P.I. and the one @-@ hour season premiere of Too Close for Comfort . It finished in 60th place (out of 63 programs) , with a 9 @.@ 6 Nielsen rating . In Alaska , it premiered on October 14 , 1982 at 8 : 00 pm AKT . On December 23 , 1982 the episode was rerun , receiving an 11 @.@ 5 rating and finishing 57th out of 68 programs airing from December 20 ? 26 , 1982 .

= = = Critical reaction = = =

When the episode originally aired in 1982 , Fred Rothenberg of the Associated Press called it an introduction to a " new wise @-@ cracking comedy " , " a warm and wacky companion of a television show , a delightful place to spend idle time , [and] a five @-@ star watering hole " known as Cheers . Television and radio critic Mike Drew said it was not great but " funnier [...] with cute lines [...] than " any other sitcom , even those (like Archie Bunker 's Place on TV and Duffy 's Tavern on radio) set in bars . Fred L. Smith of The News and Courier found this episode similar to Taxi : " Both are set in a place of business ? Cheers at a [Boston bar] , Taxi at a [New York taxi company] ? both have a sensible guy and a pretty , preppy girl as main characters ? Ted Danson and Shelley Long in Cheers and Judd Hirsch and Marilu Henner in Taxi ? and both are wacky comedies . " He found it " amusing " ; some jokes , funny ; many others , forced ; and the number of " weird characters " in the show greater than their real @-@ life bar counterparts .

In 2009 , Lex Walker on the Just Press Play website found this episode " sadder and more sentimental " than funny ; the episode focuses " less on character development and more on " Diane restarting her life as a waitress after the loss of love , and he said it contradicts " what [Cheers] will grow to be " . Nevertheless , he called the episode a true introduction to the series and considered the intertwining stories of Sam and his friends the series ' premise . In 2010 , Robin Raven from Yahoo ! Voices called it one of her top five Cheers episodes . In 2011 , Austin Lugar from The Film Yap website called it the " best " . IGN ranked it number nine of the top ten Cheers episodes .

= = = Awards = = =

At the 1983 Primetime Emmy Awards , writers and co @-@ creators Glen and Les Charles won the Emmy Award for Outstanding Writing in a Comedy Series for this episode . The brothers also received a Writers Guild of America Award for Best Screenplay - Episodic Comedy . The episode earned production designer Richard Sylbert and set decorator George Gaines an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Art Direction for a Series (won by Tales of the Gold Monkey) .

= = = Home media = = =

The first home media release of the episode was a VHS cassette in the United States on September 29 , 1993 . It was part of the initial launch of seven cassettes by Paramount Home Video

. One volume contained only the pilot episode itself , while each of other six volumes contained two episodes . The episode was released on Region 1 DVD as part of the season one box on May 20 , 2003 , and as part of Fan Favorites : The Best of Cheers on March 6 , 2012 .