

SERVING JOY (5th Draft - October 23)

Revision 1

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Around the table are three couples: DENISE & MALCOM (late 60's conservative, church going), MARG & PETER (upper middle class, immaculately dressed, overly complimentary), GRAHAM & SUE (Sue being the alpha of the group, Graham would rather be dead than at this dinner party... but here he is)

MARG

Oh this just
smells *wonderful* Joy...Doesn't it
smell wonderful Peter?

PETER

Oh.. Just wonderful, yeah, no
really... Wonderful.

The rest of the table pipe in with their obligatory comments over the smell of the food.

JOY

Oh look, it's nothing fancy...

Joy places the final three bowls down then rushes back into the kitchen shouting back over her shoulder.

5 KITCHEN:

JOY

Now, please start, i'm just going
to check on the veggies and i'll
be right in.

6 DINING ROOM:

SUE

Are you sure you don't need a
hand in there Joy?

5 KITCHEN:

Joy pulls a tray of sweet potato out of the oven and sits it on the corner of the stove. *

Joy turns away from the tray and shouts back over her shoulder. *

JOY

No, no Sue, all under control.

The tray nearly tips off the edge of the bench, Joy's hand shoots out and averts the accident. Phew. She slides the tray into the oven and sets a small timer.

6 DINING ROOM:

Sue glances to her husband Graham, Sue is quite fond of a non verbal exchange with her husband.

5 KITCHEN:

Joy takes a deep breath, wipes a little of the sweat away from her brow and after a moment of composure heads in to take her seat at the table. Pan down to the various pots boiling away on the stove.

In the background we again hear Marg commenting on how wonderful the soup smells.

6 DINING ROOM:

JOY

Ok then...

Joy takes a seat at the head of the table, Marg goes to take a mouthful of soup-

SUE

(Glancing at Marg)

Now before we start, I think we should all raise a glass to Joy and her recent efforts. Should she ultimately receive the nomination is beside the point, she has been an invaluable member of the community centre for... What, 27 years?

JOY

Well 28 technically...

There's a knowing chuckle round the table that makes absolutely no sense to the audience.

SUE

Sorry, 28 years! She has orchestrated countless fundraisers, stunning community events and all with her own renowned precision & class... And her occasional *manic* perfectionism that's raised all of our blood pressure over the years!

The group laughs and exchanges knowing looks.

SUE

No, good on you Joy. And i'm not saying my vote can be swayed... But a good roast can be very persuasive!

More laughter.

SUE

To Joy!

MARG

Here here!

Everyone raises their glasses and does their various 'cheers' across the table.

JOY

Pressure's on for the roast now!... Alright now why don't we all start before it gets cold, Graham do you need (another topup)

Denise opens her mouth but instead gives Malcom 'the eye'.

MALCOM

Oh... Joy. Sometimes in our house we like to... Say grace before we eat.

Everyone looks to Joy, Sue particularly curious for Joys reaction.

JOY

Oh! Oh of course. No, of course sorry, yes! Um...

SUE

How about you lead us in a prayer Joy?

Beat. Joy bows her head, the table all follow suit.

JOY

...Heavenly father, we ask that you bless this meal... and ah.. I ask that I don't burn the roast

Everyone titters except Denise.

JOY

And i'd like to thank you for -

Mid way through Joys prayer comes a loud crash that sounds like it was from the kitchen. Joy freezes.

GRAHAM

What the hell was that?

CU on JOY as she looks over her shoulder, brow furrowed.

JOY

... Sounded like it came from the neighbours?...

PETER

Do you want me to go (have a look? Joy)

JOY

No don't be silly, it's probably the neighbours kids. Sorry, where was I... Um... Yes, thank you lord Jesus for blessing me with such wonderful company who've stayed (by my side)

Suddenly there's an even louder crash and a loud bass echo like something heavy falling over. It's quite an unusual sound for such a quiet house. The guests look concerned. Joy gets up out of her chair.

JOY

I'll just be (one moment)

PETER

No Joy you sit down i'll (go have a look)

JOY

No Peter really sit down (it'll be the neighbours, it's fine)

PETER

No come on Joy you take a seat

Peter stands up and pushes his chair back moving towards the doorway.

JOY

(Shouting, a little too loud)

Peter SIT DOWN YOU'RE SOUP IS GETTING COLD.

Everyone falls silent. It seems like an overreaction, but everyone knows what Joy can be like. Peter looks slightly offended, Denise raises her eyebrows. Sue glances to Graham - no comment.

JOY

It's fine, it'll be the... Bloody neighbours kids.

Joy leaves the room.

7 **INT. KITCHEN/HALLWAY - NIGHT** 7

Joy moves anxiously through the kitchen, eerily quiet this time except for the bubbling of the pots.

Another sound, fainter from the same direction.

JOY walks out the other side of the kitchen to a dark hallway and opens a door leading to a stairwell.

8 **INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT** 8

She shuts the door behind her and moves down the stairs into a dimly lit basement. As we move down the environment slowly reveals itself and we see that Joy's basement is filled with hardcore sex paraphernalia; a sling hangs in the middle of the room, various bondage whips and chains hang from the walls, and off to one side is the source of the noise: a bondage gimp in head to toe latex. The gimp has broken it's way out of a cage in the corner of the room and writhes about on the floor, a shelf of BDSM gear has been spilled across the floor in the process. Joy's face goes red with fury.

JOY

What have you done you WORTHLESS
FUCKING PIG

She runs over the the gimp and grabs it's leash, the gimp is fully covered, mask, ball gag in mouth in full latex, it's unclear if it's male or female.

JOY

So help me God if you ruin this
dinner party for me you will
spend all week in the deprivation
chamber. IS THAT WHAT YOU
WANT?????

The gimp shakes its head aggressively. Joy drags the gimp across the room by its leash.

JOY

Look at the mess you've made you
disgusting pig

9 **INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT** 9

Everyones sits uncomfortably round the table, the tick of the clock on the mantel is the only sound. Marg cranes her neck to look out into the kitchen.

MARG

(tentatively)
Is everything ok in there Joy?...

No response.

Another uncomfortable silence.

DENISE
Wasn't Joy's prayer was lovely

MARG
Oh, just beautiful wasn't it.

PETER
Mmmm, yeah, really beautiful.

MARG
Such a way with words, i've
always said that about Joy,
she's a (beautiful speaker)
-

DENISE
You know Malcom and I have
been talking -

MALCOM
Oh I don't think now is (really
the time)

DENISE
No, Malcom, I think... Now is
actually the perfect time...

INTERCUT WITH:

10

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

10

Joy has now tethered the gimp to a tool shelf. She removes its blindfold and grabs its head in her hands, speaking through gritted teeth.

JOY
Listen up you pathetic slut, you
signed up for this... Don't pussy
out on me now. No one can hear
you up there. If I hear one more
god damned peep out of you I will
flog your arse so hard that you
wont be able to sit down for a
fucking week!!!

CUT BACK TO:

9 DINING ROOM (CONT'D):

DENISE
Well, Malcom and I know someone
who... ah, has Joy ever had a, a
partner?

Glances are exchanged.

Marg goes to speak, Sue cuts her off

SUE

Not in the 27 years I've known her.

Marg shakes her head in agreement.

DENISE

Well Malcom and I have met... someone special, who we think would be (perfect for Joy)

GRAHAM

I hate to rain on your parade but I was always under the impression Joy was a lesbian.

Joy enters the room in the middle of GRAHAM's comment (awkward silence). Graham bites the bullet and breaks the silence.

PETER

Was everything alright Joy?

JOY

What?

PETER

The noises?

JOY

Oh... Oh yes, the neighbour kids. Out of control!

Joy laughs a little too loud to overcompensate. Then clapping her hands:

JOY

Anyway, we won't let some disobedient... brats ruin our night! I am ready to celebrate!

Joy tops up her glass rather hastily.

JOY

Now! I just want to say, to each and every one of you, it's been 28 of the (most inspiring, challenging)-

Over the top of Joy's speech we start to hear a faint scraping sound... It's very jarring... Like nails on a blackboards. Joy pauses. The noise has stopped.

JOY

- and rewarding years. Sue, you've been the most sensational, mentor and role model for me and I wouldn't -

The noise starts again. This time louder and sustained.

CUT TO:

10 BASEMENT:

The gimp is now pulling the entire shelving unit with it closer towards the stairwell. As the metallic shelves scrape over the concrete floor it creates a high pitches squeal.

9 DINING ROOM:

Back upstairs Joy tenses, but her initial reaction is to push on talking slightly louder.

JOY

ah, I wouldn't have the opportunity to - potentially - step up in the coming years, should the board chose me and... ah... You know what?

Joy hastily gets up out of her chair. There's three black remote controls sitting next to a CD player. Joy fires the CD player to life blasting out some pretty intense Opera. Denise (seated right next to the CD player) jumps in shock.

Sue looks perplexed.

JOY

The party hasn't begun until the Wagner's on!

Everyone looks to one and other, confused. Joy continues to shout over the music which is only just masking the sound from downstairs.

JOY

What else can I say?... Denise! A constant source of positivity and inspiration and the countless hours you've put in over the years -

Joy turns to Marg just as the screeching from downstairs reaches a peak. Marg waits patiently in anticipation.

JOY

And Marg... ah... I am going to check on the roast. Excuse me.

Marg looks almost hurt.

SUE

Marg go in and check on her would
you?

15 **INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT** 15

Joy has now dragged the gimp into the sling and is
fastening its restraints.

JOY

Come on you *lump*.

16 **INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT** 16

Marg opens the door to the kitchen.

MARG

Joy do you need -

Marg is surprised to find Joy isn't in the kitchen.

Marg moves to the ringing timer, switches it off then
looks around for Joy. She looks towards the dark hallway.

MARG

Joy?...

17 **INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT** 17

Marg moves down the hallway, closer to the basement
doorway and hears strange clanging sounds like chains
coming from below. Marg reaches for the door.

ECU on the door handle turning.

INTERCUT WITH:

18 **INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT** 18

The gimp 'looks up' in the direction of the creaking door
as Joy looks over her shoulder in horror.

Joy has only shackled one of the gimps hands when she
looks over her shoulder, she places the keys on a nearby
shelf.

17 HALLWAY:

Marg opens the door and goes to take a step down the
staircase where she's confronted by Joy.

JOY

Marg!

MARG

Joy? Is everything ok??

JOY
 Everything's fine. Are you
 looking for the bathroom?

Joy rather forcefully directs Marg back up the stairs and into the hallway. Marg tries to look beyond Joys shoulder and catches a glimpse of... Something strange.

18 BASEMENT:

CU on the gimp, seizing the opportunity to get the attention of this stranger.

17 HALLWAY:

Joy swings the door shut.

In the dark hallway Joy is an intimidating presence standing over Marg.

MARG
 Oh... No... No I don't need the
 bathroom.

JOY
 Well then perhaps it's best you
 go and take your seat.

19

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

19

TITLE CARD: *Main Course - Braised lamb with honey glazed carrots and roast vegetables.*

A quick succession of shots as before:

Wine sloshing into a wine glass a little too fast

ECU on a vaguely grotesque mouth cackling

An electric carving knife firing to life severely and slicing through the lamb

Tongs serving out vegetables to various plates

A steak knife cutting through meat on a plate

ECU on another grotesque mouth chewing through the bloody meat

CU on Marg downing a glass of wine a little too quickly

Rosie cheeked faces laughing and nodding

Red wine teeth & lips

In the background of some of these shots (under the cacophony of laughter and plates clinking) we hear Marg comment a few too many times how 'wonderful' it all is ('just wonderful')

20

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

20

Joy is playing hostess, topping up Peters drink. We join the main course mid conversation.

JOY
No really, there's plenty
more gravy, sing out if you
want more.

SUE
And I kid you not, she
says 'back away from the
microphone or i'll start
singing!!

Another timer goes off in the kitchen and Joy moves out with a slightly manic energy

DENISE
Joy, Malcom and I were at a party
the other night and we met the
most interesting gentleman.

INTERCUT WITH:

21

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

21

JOY
(from the kitchen)
I'll be with you in a moment
Denise.

Joy looks tensely at the door to the basement while she places the ramekins in the oven.

20 DINING ROOM:

Joy returns to the table and sits down.

DENISE
And we thought, perhaps you'd
like to come along next time.

INTERCUT WITH:

22

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

22

Down the the basement we hear the conversation continued as a murmur. CU on the gimp hanging in the sling, it's staring intently at the keys on the shelf. One arm has been left unshackled as Joy was interrupted by MARG. The gimp reaches towards the shelf but it can't quite get there.

20 DINING ROOM:

JOY

Oh... Yes absolutely, sounds lovely Denise. Sorry, what was this?

DENISE

It's a group Malcom and I attend after church, and this gentleman is really like no one I've ever met!

MARG

Well that sounds really lovely Denise, doesn't that sound lovely Peter?

JOY

Oh this sounds like suspiciously like some sort of setup Denise. Now, I'm very flattered but -

PETER

Well I've always said it's never too late; Wendy, a lady who temps for Sue has been telling us she actually does *online* dating.

GRAHAM

Oh for goodness sake leave the woman alone

PETER

Oh, well I wasn't saying it's necessarily right (for Joy)

SUE

Oh for heavens sake I'm not sure Joy wants to talk about (this)

JOY

No, no really, look, it's fine... To be perfectly honest, at this stage (of my life)

As Joy has been speaking a slow noise has been building in the background. It's a sort of squeaking, and second to that, a muffled... Cry?

DENISE

There's that noise again...

CUT TO:

22 BASEMENT:

The gimp is using the inertia of itself in the sling to start swinging towards the shelf, each time its swings it gets a little closer and the chains holding it up start to squeak quite heavily.

20 DINING ROOM:

Push in on Joy red faced and furious.

JOY
Denise, it's nothing, the pipes
in this place are... Ancient and
they sometimes...

Peter, stands, looking towards the noise, straining to hear.

INTERCUT WITH:

23

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

23

CU on the souffles in the oven starting to sink and overcook a little.

20 DINING ROOM:

JOY
Come on, who's for another
drink?? (Barked) Malcom, turn the
music back on!!

*
*
*

Malcom looks startled to be called upon. He moves confusedly towards the CD player and picks up one of the remotes.

*
*
*

Reverse shot of the table, in the living room behind the dinner party the TV comes to life. Malcom has used the wrong remote.

*

Joy hasn't noticed yet and instructs Malcom

*

JOY
No... No not that one Malcom it's
the smaller of the three

*
*
*

Malcom uses the correct remote and fires the CD player to life with some intense Opera music; drowning out the noise from downstairs.

*

As the TV comes to life we see it's a video link to the basement. We see the absurd image of the dinner party guests looking on in disbelief at Joy in a manic state with deafening Opera music playing, while behind the party on the screen is the comical image of the gimp swinging wildly back and fourth across the room.

Joy turns from the CD player and nearly spits out her drink when she sees what's on the TV screen. Luckily everyone is facing Joy with their backs to the television.

JOY
Malcom, pass us the remote would
you.

*
*
*

Joy races to Malcom and in her panic, fumbles to get the remote from his hands but instead knocks it away from him and onto the floor. *

23 KITCHEN:

CU on the souffles starting to turn black and smoke filling the oven. *

20 DINING ROOM:

CU on Sue - as she senses some sort of light and movement behind her - slowly begin to turn her head. *

Joy torn between lunging for the remote and almost in slow motion sees Sue turning and then in a moment of panic belts out an Operetic note along with the track. *

Everyone looks up in shock.

Joy stands panting. Then running with it, continues her Opera serenade to the table. As she does she edges closer to the dropped remote, fishing around with her foot.

JOY

Come on everybody, it's not a
dinner party till we've all
joined in an sung.

Sue looks like she's in a state of petrified mortification, Marg and Peter sort of go along with it, polite/drunkenly mouthing along to the famous Opera track. Denise is blissfully sings along, she's at an age where she's generally stopped caring.

22 BASEMENT:

Downstairs the gimp swings so close to the keys on the shelf that it's hand nearly grazes past them.

20 DINING ROOM:

JOY

Come on everybody, Sue, you too!!

Sue mouths to Graham 'she's drunk'

Joy - still singing - snags the remote with her foot and at that very moment the fire alarm goes off in the kitchen.

23 KITCHEN:

Smoke billows from the oven causing a smoke detector to go off.

22 BASEMENT:

Downstairs a sprinkler system comes to life, showering down over the gimp.

20 DINING ROOM:

Joy looks over her shoulder to the billowing smoke coming from the oven, then back to the TV screen still on behind everyone.

JOY
(barked)
Sue! Could you check on the
souffles?!

Sue raises her eyebrows and trots out of the room to the kitchen.

MARG
Well why don't I go and (help
Marg)

Marg goes to turn around and make her way around the table to follow Sue. Joy in a state of sheer panic, lunges towards Marg.

JOY
NO MARG WAIT!!

Joy loses her balance, falls backwards and in her haste grabs hold of the table cloth pulling the contents of the table with her and spilling wine and plates all over herself.

There are various screams and gasps.

23 KITCHEN:

At the same time in the kitchen, Sue has pulled the burning ramekins out of the oven with a tea towel but burns the side of her hand and drops the whole tray causing them to shatter all over the floor.

22 BASEMENT:

Down in the basement the gimp has swung all the way over to the shelf and precariously hangs on until after a few creaks the shelf on the wall snaps free of its bolts and everything comes crashing to the floor including a dim lamp which falls to the watery ground and after one quick spark the entire house is sent into blackout.

24

INT/EXT. HOUSE - DOORWAY - NIGHT

24

TITLE CARD: Desert - Cancelled

The majority of guests have dispersed, the remaining; Sue, Graham, Malcom & Denise are moving quickly out of the house with coats over their arms. Joy guides them out into the street with a flashlight.

A car screeches off in the BG.

SUE

No no! Truly darling, no baring
on my decision whatsoever ...

JOY

I really don't know what to
say...

SUE

Oh don't be silly, we'll all have
a big laugh about it on Monday!

Kisses on the cheek are exchanged and Joy closes the door, putting her hand to her heart in terror.

25

EXT. HOUSE - MALCOM & DENISE'S CAR - NIGHT

25

MALCOM

It's been a big year for her
darlin, she's not ready.

DENISE

No, no, you're right... I just
want to see her happy. I thought
he'd be perfect for her.

MALCOM

Maybe when she's under a little
less pressure.

From below comes a new voice

MALE VOICE

So what did she say??...Didn't
she want to meet me...

Denise and Malcom look down to their open car-boot. We cut to their POV and see in their boot is a gentleman about Joys age, in full bondage gear, restrained in the boot of their car, blindfolded, almost shaking with anticipation.

Denise reaches down and fastens a gag into his mouth. She looks down, her warm face drops to a look of disdain, and in a voice we've never heard from Denise:

DENISE

Shut up pig.

Denise slams the boot closed plunging us into darkness.

The end.