

Wash Your Bowl

A full-length play

By Dylan James Amick

A dinner party celebrating an engagement amongst friends devolves into a spectacle of guilt when a distant terrorist attack steals their attention for the evening.

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CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
Louis	Newly engaged	30	Male
Cara	Newly engaged	27	Female
Paul	Cara's friend	27	Male
Zoey	Cara's friend, Roald's partner	28	Female
Roald	Cara's friend, Zoey's partner	28	Male
Blake	Louis's friend	30	Male
Tiera	Blake's date	25	Female

SETTING: A New York Apartment in fall of 2019.

PRODUCTION NOTE:

'/' before a line indicates simultaneous speaking

SCENE 1

A beautiful, renovated apartment in Harlem; the one bedroom home of Cara and Louis. The open living room is sunken two steps lower than the rest of the apartment; one must *descend* into it. An adjacent dining room with six seats is divided only by an elevated floor. An open door frame UPSTAGE leads to the hallway that goes off to the kitchen on the right, and the bathroom and bedroom on the left.

THE SOUND of someone working in the kitchen trickles into the apartment.

Through the main door, LOUIS enters, wheeling in a vintage slide projector on a cart. It is bulky and he struggles with it, but he moves the projector into the center of the living room.

Louis takes an extension cord off of the cart, plugs in the projector and powers it on. The light lands against a flat wall with a painting on it. The projected square is centered around the painting.

Louis considers his options:
"Does it need to be changed? Is there a different wall? What the hell is that guy in the painting actually doing?"

Louis goes towards the kitchen stopping just before leaving view, and turns back towards the painting. He goes to the painting and delicately lifts it up, looking for somewhere else to store it in the room.

The sudden sound of a blender offstage scares Louis as he almost drops the painting. He quickly recovers, glad no one saw.

LOUIS

...too much ice?

CARA

It's a Bloody Mary with crawfish.

LOUIS

You bought crawfish in New York?

CARA

Yes, they were frozen. I think they're fine for Bloody Marys.

LOUIS

(Melodramatic)

Is there too much vodka? Is the drink so strong it's turning them into drunken fish zombies?

CARA

They're shellfish.

LOUIS

Hardly their fault.

CARA

I think Roald is allergic to shellfish.

LOUIS

Oooh... Isn't his girlfriend vegan too?

CARA

Not anymore. Got too expensive.

LOUIS

So they probably don't get too much seafood either way. Can't we just give him one without the crawdad?

CARA

I already dropped a handful in the blender.

Louis gives her a look.

CARA

I figured frozen it could be like a flavored ice!

LOUIS

So Roald doesn't get any Bloody Marys. To be fair, it won't kill him to miss out.

CARA

But we didn't specify BYOB.

LOUIS

We still have a full bar.

CARA

I used all the vodka.

LOUIS

A mostly full bar. Plus beer.

CARA

But this is the signature cocktail.

LOUIS

Roald just isn't gonna have any I guess.

CARA

I just feel like if you tell people you are providing drinks, and then tell them there is a signature cocktail, wouldn't you assume it would be universal?

LOUIS

When drinks are provided I'm usually choosing between Amstel and Heinken Lights.

CARA

~~This isn't a pizza party!~~

LOUIS

~~It's never too late-~~

CARA

People are gonna come in with expectations about the drinks.

LOUIS

I don't think anyone is expecting you to have exotic cocktails waiting for them when they walk in.

CARA

They're Bloody Marys, not Mai Tais.

LOUIS

That might have actually been a little more on theme.

CARA

Not helpful right now.

LOUIS

OK, new idea: we just call them Carries. We've done movie dates too. Just stick Steven King's face on the pitcher, set it leaning on top of a *barely* cracked open door so the second they walked through-

Louis mimes having the Bloody Mary fall all over him. Imitating the prom scene from *Carrie*.

CARA

Babe, I'm really worried Roald's gonna be upset.

LOUIS

Oh Cara, you shouldn't worry about that...

He begins to comfort her.

LOUIS

We both know he's gonna find something to be mad about.

CARA

You don't think he's gonna feel excluded?

LOUIS

He'll pull through.

CARA

But is this a moment when I'm letting a friend down by not doing the simple task of buying more vodka?

LOUIS

I'm more than happy to run out to the liquor store, but it'll be at least twenty minutes. You just gotta tell me-

CARA

Forget it. You're right. We'll have beer and whiskey.

LOUIS

He can drink like a fish that wouldn't kill him.

Louis texts on his phone.

CARA

(indicating to the projector)

This looks great out here.

LOUIS

Yeah, it sure is something.

CARA

What do you mean?

LOUIS

Nothing.

CARA

I know it's not nothing, because you called it something.

LOUIS

That doesn't make any sense.

CARA

Just tell me.

LOUIS

It's nothing! I'm... I'm just going through the slides.

CARA

None broke did they?

LOUIS

Nope. No broken ones.

CARA

Thank god. Those were so expensive.

LOUIS

Yes, they were. Which, if we dig a little deeper in that general direction, I feel like uncovers questions like, maybe, did we need to rent a carousel projector?

CARA

Do you not like it?

LOUIS

I like it fine.

CARA

Louis, this would be a really mean time to tell me you didn't like this idea.

LOUIS

I'm not saying that. No one is saying they don't like the idea. This is my favorite idea of all time; it's the sliced bread of party planning.

CARA

Just say what you don't like about them.

LOUIS

Again, not dislike; just questioning the thought process.

CARA

Why?

LOUIS

It was SO expensive.

She gives him a look.

LOUIS

Your words.

CARA

Yes, I know this cost money, but I really wanna show you off a little. I'm so happy to be engaged, and this is our chance to share it with our friends.

LOUIS

And I am very excited for this dinner party that we are hosting for them to share the moment. I just don't get why we need a presentation too.

CARA

If everyone had that mentality I'd be out of a job. "I mean, it's just make up. Bride does that every day."

LOUIS

Listen, I'm all about people hiring you for their presentations. How else am I gonna maintain my extravagant life style of exotic, aquatic cocktails? But that's a wedding. The thing we're months from.

CARA

It's less serious?

LOUIS

It is objectively-

CARA

I wanna put the best foot forward. I know it's just the smaller version of our family's announcement party, but I want to have that same feeling. Our lives are gonna change, and I want to show our best friends how excited I am for that.

Louis debates his next comment.

LOUIS

Do we need two title slides to accomplish that?

CARA

Excuse me?

LOUIS

I get the presentation; let's dim the lights and do a little show. But at \$45 a slide, did we need to make two title cards?

CARA

This is a night worth investing in, that is all I think I did with that order. Which you could have helped with if you were so worried about the price.

LOUIS

It just feels excessive. A slide projector from what? The 70's? I'm just missing the connection.

CARA

Timelessness. It's a vintage projector because our love is timeless.

Oh. LOUIS

Yeah. CARA

Damn, that's pretty good. LOUIS

CARA
People dress up to look nice, you practice telling jokes so they sound funnier. I don't feel bad about curating this experience.

LOUIS
Did that quote not fit on any slide?

Cara is hurt by his comment.

LOUIS
Seriously? You know I'm just kidding.

CARA
I think you're trying to be rude.

LOUIS
Hey, hey - that's not what I meant.

CARA
Well sometimes you should think about how those comments come off.

LOUIS
It's just, there is a level of reality I think we owe.

CARA
Our friends are coming over to enjoy our cute story of falling in love, culminating in a proposal on top of a mountain. That's what we owe them.

The couple comes together and Louis holds Cara.

LOUIS
I still feel like saying the word welcome would have the same effect - but I see your point. I'm sure everyone is gonna love it, and Instagram the shit out of it.

CARA
God, the last thing I need is everyone looking at their phones all night. I just want this to go well.

LOUIS
It's a party celebrating us. We'll find a way to have fun.

CARA

It's almost time!

Cara goes to the corner and puts on a record. *Soulful, but not too distracting.* Louis stares at the projector with a disappointed look on his face.

LOUIS

Could we at least turn the projector off for now?

CARA

Oh. I just thought we'd have the "Welcome" up when people came in.

LOUIS

I was thinking maybe we could save the lamp? Don't want to have to pay for that if it burns out.

CARA

Well I don't want to waste it, since we are paying for this anyway.

LOUIS

Still use it in the slide show! It's a great, focused, demanding start. WELCOME!

CARA

Sure, go ahead and save it. It will be fun to turn it on and surprise everyone.

LOUIS

The projector in the middle of the room might give the surprise away, but we'll see.

CARA

You always have something to say.

LOUIS

I'm in the art of talking.

CARA

I think you're so funny.

LOUIS

Thanks.

The pair kiss until Cara's phone goes off and it pulls her away.

CARA

(looking at her phone)

Paul just got off the train, so he should be here in a couple of minutes.

LOUIS

Great, a little alone time with Paul.

CARA

Just try to be nice.

LOUIS

The whole time? Do I get to set my own limit? What are the rules here?

CARA

He's a good guy, and he's my friend.

LOUIS

Can I just say one more thing about him?

CARA

I'd prefer if you didn't.

LOUIS

But I thought of it when you were talking, and now I'm really proud of it... please?

CARA

Fine, let's hear it.

LOUIS

Paul has the kind of personality that makes popular TV shows unbearable.

CARA

Riveting stuff.

LOUIS

Going for a broad emotional appeal.

CARA

Well it didn't work with this broad.

LOUIS

Heyyo! The lady of the evening with some wordplay.

CARA

Get on my level.

LOUIS

How many vodka soaked crawfish did you have?

PAUL

I just figured it would be a champagne toast. I don't even like champagne.

LOUIS

Why don't you like champagne?

PAUL

Mostly the taste. I don't enjoy it.

LOUIS

Stands to reason.

PAUL

Glad you agree.

Paul puts the beer down, and pulls one out for himself.

CARA

You are just a card. Showing up at your friend's engagement party like we were pregaming!

PAUL

Sorry, it's my first one of these.

LOUIS

Ours too.

PAUL

Look, I just thought it would be polite to bring something.

LOUIS

Were they all out of Yellowtail?

PAUL

It's a sipping beer. The kind you have while you actually talk to people.

CARA

Little early in the evening for a pissing contest guys.

PAUL

Well can I go ahead and drink one of my beers so I'm ready?

LOUIS

Please, go ahead. And really, thanks for the sentiment. Class act.

PAUL

Sure. Well, here's to you and all the love that eluded my divorced parents. Cheers!

Paul cracks the beer and begins drinking alone.

LOUIS

Here, here. Cara can I get you a drink?

CARA

That'd be great babe.

LOUIS

Two Carries?

PAUL

What's a Carrie?

CARA

One of Louis's many unfunny jokes. The Bloody Mary sounds great.

PAUL

Oh is it brunch already?

Louis goes to get the drinks, texting the entire way.

CARA

So how's work?

PAUL

Work's just work, it's always crazy. We have a campaign that goes live end of this month.

CARA

Are you writing much for this one?

PAUL

Yea, more so then usual. Most of the main press release is me.

CARA

That's incredible!

PAUL

I guess. It's really just a pitch summary.

CARA

But you wrote it.

PAUL

It's not me though, it's all just bland. We could try new things, make these actually fun to read instead of a reference you just skim, but no one wants to take chances on anything.

CARA

I mean it is technical writing.

PAUL

It could be so much more interesting though. Everyone is already glued to their phone all day, let's play in to that. Let's give 'em something to look at.

CARA

You haven't changed at all since college.

PAUL

Since I was a closeted actor, really? No change?

CARA

That's not what I mean. Like your spirit hasn't changed.

PAUL

In that I still don't talk about spirits?

CARA

Your confidence. Still taking on the world.

PAUL

Someone has to.

LOUIS

(returning)

Paul did you want one of these drinks?

PAUL

I'm gonna stick to beer, thanks.

(to Cara)

Where are you off to next?

CARA

I'm on the Cape all next week. Heading down Tuesday just to have the day, but working Wednesday and ceremonies every day after.

PAUL

People get married on Thursday?

LOUIS

I'm sure people get married every day.

PAUL

But we aren't talking justice of the peace, five-close-friends weddings here. Real ceremonies, big enough to hire a make up person.

CARA

I mean most weddings hire someone to do make up.

PAUL

What's a Thursday wedding like?

CARA

I guess it's closest to a Friday wedding...

PAUL

But people work the next day. Is it a power move?

LOUIS

It's probably mostly a money saving thing. Less incentive to fill a ballroom on a Thursday.

CARA

Exactly. Their ceremonies are typically the same size.

PAUL

But the guests, are these locals-only weddings? If you're out of town and in the party, that's Wednesday too.

CARA

I'm sure they're local. And either way, it's a wedding. If you're in the party it's probably a big deal for you as well.

PAUL

I think taking days off is a big deal for some people.

CARA

A handful of guests leave right after the first dance for work the next day. If you travel from out of town, you skip the rehearsal dinner (just freaking make sure you let them know). You start the reception by 9, it's a totally reasonable evening.

PAUL

Getting wedding drunk on a weekday just sounds a little college to me.

CARA

Like showing up to a dinner party with a case of cheap beer?

LOUIS

Well if any groomsmen pop up tonight, I'm sure they will flock towards you Paul.

CARA

I don't think Blake's his type.

PAUL

I'll drink to that! When you two tie the knot, do us all a favor, and make sure the day after is guaranteed off for us.

LOUIS

I don't think we're getting married on a Thursday.

PAUL

I've thought about it.

CARA

About Louis putting a ring on it?

PAUL

Sorry, but no. I've thought about if I ever get married, and that's a pretty big if right there because I don't really know that I want that kind of responsibility to a person-

LOUIS

Big fan of this so far.

PAUL

I'm saying that if I got married, I think it would be on a Sunday.

CARA

Sunday night?

PAUL

Sunday day.

CARA

Why Paul, I never would have imagined.

LOUIS

Big Etta James fan?

CARA

Oh, I love that song!

PAUL

More of an 'At Last' guy myself.

LOUIS

Same album.

PAUL

Yes it is. But I think Sunday during the day allows the most time to get down to a wedding, which is always a thing I see in movies, so it feels like part of the experience.

CARA

Totally following you.

PAUL

You wake up Sunday, by two you've been drinking. Leave that night if you need to, or take a Monday off if you have the privilege.

LOUIS

Or just don't work in an office industry.

PAUL

Sure. But the best part of a Sunday ceremony is all the savings you were thinking about, you pass that right over to the couple. Flying for cheap on weekdays now, where ever I'm off to for the honeymoon.

LOUIS

You're a man of the people.

CARA

There is nothing wrong with making your wedding day about you. That's exactly what I want us to do.

PAUL

Good. When is the special day gonna be?

CARA

(cutting off Louis)

We're going to announce it later!

PAUL

Will there be more press coming?

LOUIS

We're actually doing this as an exclusive announcement.

PAUL

OK Lebron.

CARA

I just don't want to have to repeat it for every person. This dinner is a group celebration and we can wait until everyone is here. Right?

The other two mutter in agreement. Paul wanders over to the dining area.

CARA

(to Louis)

Hey, I'm gonna pop into the kitchen and finish up some hors d'oeuvres. You OK?

LOUIS

I'm fine.

Cara exits into the kitchen,

SCENE 4

Louis takes his drink to be closer to Paul.

LOUIS

So Cara told me you just got back from a trip.

PAUL

Think she's lying about it?

LOUIS

...I mean we all know Cara's a liar.

PAUL

She does have that look to her, you should watch out for that... I just got back from Toronto.

LOUIS

Nice, visiting anyone?

PAUL

No, I just went to look around. Caught a Jays game.

LOUIS

What was your favorite thing you saw there?

PAUL

I saw a lot of cool shit up there. My first time going, but Toronto is beautiful. It's a lot like New York (On some water you wouldn't wanna swim in), but I went right outside the city to Bluffer's Park, and there was a hiking trail. Just beautiful; I had my camera with me because I've been practicing shooting with real film, and I spent an hour getting shots of the coast line. The city barely peeking behind the trees... I love shooting like that, but when I went down to walk the beach there was this kid running around with her parents. She's like five or six, but she is running up to the waves and trying not to get splashed. And she keeps falling. I don't bother her, because it's a kid on a beach and I'm not trying to get called a pedo in a foreign country. But I keep my eyes on her, I'm taking my time looking for my next picture. And then her mom is like "It's time to go, we gotta leave now," and this kid is NOT having it. She's wailing. She wants to play in the water still, but the mom is holding her and saying she can't. Then, out of the blue, the mom decides to give the kid her phone to play with, like that will cheer her up and what does this kid do?

LOUIS

Oh no.

PAUL

This little shit grabs her mom's phone with this, like, spin-move and B-lines toward the water. The mom is stunned for a second, but then starts chasing her, and right when she catches her - BOOM! This kid hurls that phone right in the water. Sayonara! It was perfect.

LOUIS

Did you get it in a photo?

PAUL

No, I just saw it. But it's crazy like, that kid, she just knew. Already. She didn't need to just stare at a phone when she could look at the world. That's naturally in us!

LOUIS

...cool.

PAUL

Yeah, I thought so. It was a good trip.

LOUIS

Sounds like it.

PAUL

(trying to remember)

So uh, how's everything with the shows coming?

LOUIS

They're fine. I've been doing a lot of open mics.

PAUL

Sounds fun.

LOUIS

Yeah it's good. It's work, but it's good.

PAUL

Sounds like it.

LOUIS

Yeah.

Paul pulls out his phone and begins to check it.

LOUIS

I have some coming up, some-

PAUL

I got in the stupidest argument on twitter today.

LOUIS

Uh, what about?

PAUL

This person just trying to raise money for some charity.

LOUIS

How selfish of them.

PAUL

I think it actually was really selfish. It wasn't a call to donate, it was shaming from somebody up on a high horse.

LOUIS

I hear texting on horseback is the number one killer of teenage cowboys.

PAUL

This dude on Twitter, they're talking about how there is so much trouble in the world right now, and now more than ever - which on a separate note is just a phrase I hate - and that's why he was doing his part and donating to the ACLU.

LOUIS

Do you think he shouldn't?

PAUL

I think every idiot with a checkbook donates to the ACLU. It's a hugely funded organization; why not try and find other lesser known charities that would kill for a fraction of those donations.

LOUIS

I mean I figured it all goes to the same good.

PAUL

One organization isn't going to save us all. If that was possible, it'd be the government.

LOUIS

Spreading the resources I'm sure helps. I mean, that's inequality in the first place, right? Making sure that didn't happen.

PAUL

Like if people wanna help immigrants, there are a bunch of charities based only in Texas and Arizona that need that money. They're the ones dealing with this shit right on the front line and people don't even know their names.

LOUIS

What are some places we could be donating to?

PAUL

It's all online if you look it up. Just do that for 10 minutes before you make a donation. Which is the other thing that pissed me off about the post - don't donate to charity just to brag about it.

LOUIS

I mean if you brag about it for social media points, your donation is really just buying likes, right?

PAUL

Exactly. Why should I answer to a stranger online to prove that I'm doing my part?

LOUIS

Again, that feel's like the government's job. To make me doubt myself like that.

PAUL

I just had to call them on this holier-than-thou bullshit.

LOUIS

Why you?

PAUL

Because other people are too afraid too. I let 'em know. Like Cara said, been that way since college.

LOUIS

Yeah. The stories I hear of your NYU days really sound like something.

PAUL

I bet it was the same for your friends at - Wait, where did you go again?

LOUIS

UVA.

PAUL

Very cool.

LOUIS

It's no NYU.

PAUL

Well at least they both abbreviate well.

LOUIS

God forbid we have to say the whole name.

PAUL

I know, right? You got any thoughts on that Hill guy?

LOUIS

The football player? He's really good at football.

PAUL

But do you think the Chiefs keep him?

LOUIS

One of their star players? Probably.

PAUL

Real messed up. He admitted that he choked his girlfriend and he still got drafted.

LOUIS

Pretty late, but I see what you mean.

PAUL

We show him on TV every week. Don't you think about that?

LOUIS

Tyreek Hill is a football player. He's a guy who runs really fast, and that's the most I think about him.

PAUL

Interesting. Very... telling.

LOUIS

Well as long as you don't record my threats I'll tell you anything.

The joke does not land with Paul,
who goes back to his phone.

LOUIS

That was a joke of course. I don't have anyone to threaten.

PAUL

Awesome.

(Pointing to the empty wall)

What happened to that painting Cara did?

SCENE 5

Cara enters from the kitchen
holding a tray of hot hors
d'oeuvres.

CARA

You guys hungry?

PAUL

I thought we had to wait for the rest of our community?

CARA

This is a starter you ass. We have plenty. Plus, Roald just sent me some weird text assuring me he was still coming.

LOUIS

Why was it weird?

CARA

Because it was for an event that was starting within an hour that he was one of six people invited to. Why would he not show up?

PAUL

What happened to-

LOUIS

What are these babe?

CARA

It's ham with ricotta cheese.

LOUIS

Sounds wonderful. Where did you find this?

CARA

It was at some wedding I worked last month. I spoke with one of the cooks and he said it was great because no one can mess it up.

LOUIS

I'm sure I could find a way.

Three phone alerts sound off in succession throughout the apartment. Only Paul checks his.

CARA

I think you should set your sights on something just slightly more impressive than that babe.

PAUL

Holy shit.

CARA

What?

LOUIS

(going for his phone)
What's going on?

PAUL

(Looking at his phone)

Shit is going down in France right now.

LOUIS

What do you mean?

PAUL

There was a terrorist attack.

CARA

Oh god.

PAUL

Some religious group just took over a store.

LOUIS

Like a food store?

PAUL

Just says it's a hostage situation.

CARA

That's terrible.

LOUIS

Should we put it on the television?

CARA

Why would we do that?

PAUL

That's not a bad idea. It'll probably be mostly speculation, but more details could be nice.

CARA

I don't think we need to have it on in the background. I'm sure they'll keep sending important updates.

PAUL

You don't want to know about what's going on?

CARA

More like, I don't see what gluing our eyes to the television does to help it.

PAUL

So this is an issue with watching TV now? That's life and death for you?

LOUIS

No one's saying that. Let's not let current events take the party hostage.

PAUL

Dude, they've got people trapped in that building.

CARA

And I promise if anything get's too serious, we can turn it on. I just don't think it needs to set the mood as everyone comes in.

PAUL

Whatever you say. I just don't know what's going to make it more serious.

Another knock at the door.

Cara gets the door, Paul opens another beer.