

"THE PATRIOTS"

By

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FADE IN:

INT. DINNER PARTY - EVENING

In a posh home a dozen or so attractive party guest mingle.

BRAD, a dapper gent, digs into the dip.

BRAD

Linda this dip is marvy!

LINDA the beautiful matron of the group enters from the kitchen.

LINDA

Well, thank you Brad. Did you by any chance absorb Richard Ellman's piece in the Times' book review section?

BRAD

Of course. P-U. Gunter Grass? I mean come on? The Tin Drum was ages ago. Halt the praise machine already.

Overhearing this, REX timidly joins them. He is slightly unkept and a little less attractive than the others.

REX

Yes, well, perhaps...

Brad and Linda stop mid-chew and eye him...

REX (CONT'D)

I thought Philip Roth's treatise on Updike was judicious though.

Just then TAD whirls in through the door, slightly out of breath.

TAD

Linda, hope I'm not too unpunctual.

Tad fully commands the room's attention. Linda proudly gives him a double-cheek kiss.

LINDA

Of course not, you're just in time to eulogize my dip. Champagne?

TAD

Make it a double.

LINDA

Thanks. I do!

TAD

I have an immense World Trade Center photo incased in a mint glass frame, I bought it about ten years ago and then, well, since 9-11 I've furnished the rest of my home with small World Trade Center photos. It creates a very powerful theme.

Brad pipes in haughtily, wiping dip off his fingers.

BRAD

I had an enormous World Trade Center sculpture commissioned in my rumpus room. It's almost 13 feet high. Beautiful next to the baby grand.

LINDA

Sounds glorious.

TAD

Very patriotic.

Tad notices Rex, trying to ignore the conversation.

TAD (CONT'D)

Rex?

Startled, Rex turns around.

TAD (CONT'D)

When I was at your humble abode last, I didn't notice any World Trade Center tributes.

REX

Oh, um, no, I don't have any. But this photo is really nice, Linda.

A collective silent gasp emits from the room.

LINDA

What are you pro-terrorist?

REX

Of course not. I just, I haven't gotten around to it.

BRAD

You know they want to destroy our way of life. They're jealous of our freedom.

REX

Yeah... You know, actually in my bathroom I have a really neat skyline photo of Washington DC, with the Pentagon, right there, clear as day, in the center.

Tad stomps up to him, face-to-face.

TAD

Pentagon? Those weren't civilians! Though, also a tragedy, the World Trade Center that was the heart of America, those were working Americans like you and me who gave their lives for their country. So don't even...

Tad becomes to distraught to finish his words. Linda tries to comfort him, but he breaks away and dashes into the kitchen. Rex tries to reassure the crowd.

REX

That's true, what Tad said. I never looked at it that way. I'm going to talk to my decorator.

BRAD

You should proud that in America you have the right to decorate how you choose. Do you think in Iran or wherever you're allowed to have a World Trade Center photo in your living room? I doubt it.

REX

That's true. Probably only allowed photos of the Imperial Palace or something.

BRAD

If even that. And do you think they care about our gas prices? No.

Tad reenters. Composed, he marches back into Rex's face.

TAD

I'm sorry Rex, for jumping all over you like that. But you don't understand, I used to live in New York city.

Linda puts her arm around Tad, to comfort.

REX

Tad, I didn't realize...

REX (CONT'D)
Finally, about 5 years ago I decided I
had to leave. It had just gotten so
filthy.

LINDA
It has, hasn't it?

Tad stares at the picture, haunted by memories.

TAD
9-11. I'll always be haunted by those
images on the TV and the sound of Wolf
Blitzer's voice.

REX
Tad, that's awful. I was in New York
that week on business, but I didn't
see it on TV.

Tad gives him a once-over.

TAD
Big difference.

Linda tries to calm everyone.

LINDA
Have I shown you the "lump of soil" I
ordered? It's from the field in
Pennsylvania where that other plane
went down. Come on, I keep it in my
bedroom.

They all begin to follow her. Tad gently tugs her arm.

TAD
I tried to order a "lump of soil" too.
But I was told they were all sold out.

LINDA
I was probably one of the first to
order, I knew there were only so many
"lumps of soil" available.

TAD
Linda, you're such a good American.

Happily they all head for the bedroom to see her treasure.

FADE OUT.