

SAUCED

Written by
Janet Quinonez

quinonezjanet@gmail.com
323-553-0577

INT. PROVENANCE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Tracking shot through the "front of house". Elegant surroundings, well-appointed interiors and soft, ambient music plays.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. PROVENANCE RESTAURANT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Celebrity Chef JULIAN DEMPSEY (40s), raging alcoholic and owner of PROVENANCE, number 2 on LA restaurant critic Mack Harrison's "list" barks orders at his crew.

JULIAN

Fire two branzino, one steak mid rare! Get moving, unless you want to be here past midnight.

MANDY (20s) a SERVER, rushes in carrying a plate.

MANDY

Table 9 says this fish is overcooked.

JULIAN

Goddamnit, Dennis! Why can't you cook a fucking branzino? This fish looks like it swam upstream in a goddamn volcano!

Julian bulls his way over to DENNIS, a hapless line cook, carrying the PLATE. The entire kitchen STAFF continue working but are clearly watching the dress down in progress. A Julian Dempsey tirade is business as usual.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

I asked you a question. Can you or can you not cook a simple piece of fish?!

DENNIS

Yes, Chef.

JULIAN

Does this look properly cooked to you?

DENNIS

No, Chef.

Julian shoves the fish in Dennis' mouth.

JULIAN
What do you taste?

Dennis still has a mouthful of the fish.

DENNIS
(mouth full)
Branzino. Slightly over, Chef.

JULIAN
Did you hear that everyone? Not
over. Slightly over. Now he has a
palate. I'll tell you what I
taste...

Julian delicately touches his finger to his tongue.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
... Underneath the taste of charred
fucking cremains, a delicate
undertone of... you getting the
fuck off my line!

JULIAN (CONT'D)
Move! I'll do it myself.

Julian grabs the pan, but the handle has been too close to
the fire and he burns himself. He throws the pan across the
kitchen.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
Mother fuck!

DAVID (20s), Maître D', resident drug dealer, part time DJ
and full time rich kid, peeks in to the kitchen.

DAVID
Critic's in the house! Table 1!

JULIAN
Fuck... FUCK!

Julian takes a swig from a magnetized flask which is neatly
stashed under the metal counter. Sweat beads into the corner
of his eye. His face is flush with the heat from the kitchen
and the alcohol. He throws a kitchen towel across the
counter.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
Sarah, take over.

Sarah (40s), Julian's no nonsense sous chef and trusted right hand woman, steps up to the pass.

SARAH
Yes, Chef!
(to crew)
All right kids, show's over. Back to work. Dennis, don't go anywhere near that fucking fish station.

INT. PROVENANCE RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Julian and David exit the chaotic kitchen and enter the front of the house.

JULIAN
(through gritted teeth)
You imbecile. How in the hell did Mack Harrison get in here without me knowing it?

DAVID
He booked with an alias. Captain Morgan?

JULIAN
And you didn't think twice about that name?

DAVID
Should I have?

JULIAN
What did you think, we had a fucking pirate coming in?

Julian approaches Table 1, where MACK HARRISON (Late 30s), LA TIMES food critic is seated. Inspired by Jonathan Gold.

MACK
Good evening, "Don Julio".

JULIAN
"Big Mac Attack!" What can I start you with?

MACK

I want to try this "new" dish I've been hearing so much about.

JULIAN

I'm very proud of it.

MACK

As proud as you were of that sun-dried tomato disaster?

JULIAN

Sun dried tomatoes are terribly underrated.

MACK

You know who else still has sun dried tomatoes on the menu?

JULIAN

Who?

MACK

Let's just say, when you're there you're family.

JULIAN

I've missed this repartee.

MACK

Are you coming to Taste of LA?

JULIAN

Of course, I wouldn't miss it. Even though you'll be there.

MACK

I have to be, it's my list.

Julian checks his invisible watch.

JULIAN

Mack, you're showing amazing restraint.

(beat)

Usually, you announce your list much sooner in every conversation. If you'll excuse me.

Julian approaches the HOST STAND, where DAVID is taking a reservation. David hangs up the PHONE.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
 Goddamn that guy. What's going on
 with the Brock Turner fan club at
 Table 4?

DAVID
 I'll get rid of them.

JULIAN
 Okay. I'm out for the night...
 Nikki's waiting for me.

Julian exits. He stops to take a photo with an adoring
 customer. David joins Mandy at the host stand. They watch
 Julian and the boys take the shots.

MANDY
 I don't get it. He's such an
 asshole in the kitchen. He turns
 on the charm and everyone eats it
 up.

DAVID
 He's like a backwards mullet.

MANDY
 What?

DAVID
 Party in the front, business in the
 back.
 (beat)
 Look, whatever he's doing, it's
 working. We're number 2 on Mack
 Harrison's list.

MANDY
 I think the amount of cocaine
 Julian does has a little something
 to do with it.

DAVID
 I hope so. Julian's my best
 customer. Ever wonder how I keep my
 job?
 (beat)
 Hey, do you know who Captain Morgan
 is?