

Cooking with Kyle

By Michael Cornetto

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FADE IN

INT. KITCHEN SET - DAY

An amphitheater-like area contains seats for an audience, but it is empty.

Three big unmanned cameras stand sentry at the front of the semi-circle. They are flanked by two monitors that are pointed toward the audience.

The monitors beam the image of KYLE ANDERSON (32). He is attractive, cultured and slightly effeminate. He stares directly and sincerely out from the monitor.

KYLE

A famous french chef once said
'Cookery is not chemistry. It is
an art.'

A woman's hands place a casserole dish containing cooked veal onto the bottom rack of an open oven. An engagement ring is visible on her finger as she turns the thermostat to warm.

KYLE (V.O.)

I agree with him wholeheartedly,
the most important ingredient of
any meal is its presentation.

The woman's hands fill tiny bowls with colourful ingredients, a tablespoon of paprika, a teaspoon of salt, a pinch of cumin, some sprigs of parsley and a little minced garlic.

KYLE (V.O.)

You can make the most scrumptious
meal on this planet, but...

The woman's hands lift the lid of a pot that sits on a bench top near a stainless steel sink. It is two thirds full of cloudy water, a clump of yellowish pasta at its bottom.

The focal point of the room, the kitchen set itself has only three walls but otherwise it looks like a normal kitchen. It has an island bench.

KYLE (V.O.)

You won't impress a single soul
unless it looks good as well.

Behind the bench stands a short woman. She stirs the contents of a pot with a wooden spoon, her face hidden by the lid she holds in her hand. She lowers the shiny lid.

DORA BADILUCA (28) is revealed. She is shockingly ugly. With her downward slanting eyes, smallish lower jaw and nearly absent ears, she could easily qualify as disfigured.

She replaces the lid on the pot, then wipes her hands on a tea towel. With a frown and a sigh, she glances up toward the empty audience.

INT. KITCHEN SET - LATER

There is a full audience, they laugh.

KYLE (V.O.)
There is no such thing as a
little garlic!

More laughter.

Kyle stands behind the bench, an amusing exaggerated grimace on his face as he sniffs the contents of a tiny dish containing minced garlic. He spreads the garlic on the small pieces of uncooked veal.

KYLE
Make certain each piece smells
equally terrible.

Off stage the handsome, smirking FLOOR MANAGER (25) makes a circular motion with his hand above his head.

Kyle nods, looking slightly alarmed. He hurriedly throws the veal pieces into a casserole dish.

KYLE
(quickly)
Veal can be quite tender, but it
must be cooked properly. 30
minutes at 350 degrees should be
adequate.

He rushes to the oven and sticks the casserole dish on the top rack. Using pot holders he pulls another casserole dish from the bottom rack.

KYLE
They should be browned on the
outside and cooked through.

He tips the casserole dish so that the audience can see the small browned pieces of veal inside.

The smirking floor manager makes an urgent grabbing motion.

Kyle cocks his head. Then he runs over to the bench and slams the casserole dish down.

KYLE
(even faster)
To prepare the linguine, simply
add butter and spices...

He plucks the lid off the pot near the sink and throws it aside. Without looking in the pot, he empties a small bowl of butter and a few tiny bowls of spices inside.

KYLE
...mix thoroughly.

He fumbles with a wooden spoon, then he stops. He stares at the open pot with disappointment in his eyes. The butter and spices float on the cloudy water.

Then with an impish smile, he tilts the pot so the audience can see the mess he has created.

The audience roars with laughter.

The smirking floor manager cues Kyle, pointing at him with his middle finger.

Kyle narrows his eyes with anger. Then professional as he stares straight into the camera, a pleasant smile pasted on his face.

KYLE

Once again it is time to earn our
crust. When we return I'll show
you how to turn these veal
medallions into a feast for the
eyes.

Kyle's face beams from the audience's monitors as they fade to black.

Then Kyle storms off of the kitchen set.

INT. BACKSTAGE

The decor is cinder block and wooden frame in the backstage corridor. Dora waits for Kyle near the stage entrance.

DORA

You messed up the linguine again.

KYLE

I suppose you'd have done better?

DORA

Well. Uh. Lemme think...Yes!

KYLE

That goddamn floor manager rushed
me. I swear he has it out for me.

DORA

Well maybe you should have
thought twice before you invited
him to your place for one of your
'special' meals, Kyle.

KYLE

Well maybe you should just be a
good little assistant and go
clean up that mess, Dora.

INT. KITCHEN SET

Dora walks onto the set.

DORA

(muttering softly)
Be a good little assistant, Dora.
Go clean up that mess, Dora.

Several audience members gasp. Dora looks up at them. A young girl in the audience points at Dora and shrieks.

SMALL GIRL
A monster, mommy! It's a monster!

The mother looks angrily at Dora as she clutches her frightened child to her bosom.

Frowning, Dora lowers her head then continues her journey toward the island bench.

INT. GREEN ROOM

The green room is spartan, containing only a couch, some folding chairs, and a water cooler.

RODGER RODGERS(38) sits on the couch and reads the newspaper. His dress style is Hawaiian business casual.

Kyle enters. Rodger glances up from the paper.

RODGER
Kyle, baby. How is my number one chef today?

Kyle shoots Rodger a disgruntled look, then continues to the water cooler ignoring him.

Rodger stands, staring at Kyle with concern.

RODGER
What's the matter baby?

Kyle fills a paper cup at the cooler and takes a sip.

KYLE
How many times do I have to tell you not to call me baby? Not only is it truly annoying, but the term went out of fashion decades ago.

RODGER
Sorry about that sweetheart.

KYLE
Not any better!

RODGER
Darling? Honeybunch?

KYLE
Why are you here Rodger?

RODGER
I got you a gig.

Kyle shows wary interest.

KYLE
Not another children's party. Dora hates those.

RODGER
No. This one's bigger, much bigger, and it's got a paycheck to match.

KYLE
How much?

RODGER
A hundred thousand smackeroos.

Kyle looks confused.

RODGER
Dollars, a hundred thousand dollars.

KYLE
Just for one night?

RODGER
Yep. This Saturday night. They wanted to hire Helmut Lock but...

Kyle's eyes narrow.

KYLE
Where?

RODGER
At the governor's...

The green room door opens and an out of breath, pimply-faced YOUNG INTERN (19) sticks his head inside.

YOUNG INTERN
You're wanted on the set, Mr Anderson.

They both look at the intern who flushes red from the attention.

KYLE
Tell them I'm on my way.

YOUNG INTERN
Yes sir.

The intern runs off.

Kyle throws his crumpled paper cup into the bin and heads toward the door. Rodger seems expectant.

RODGER
So what'll I tell them?

KYLE
That I'll do it, of course.

RODGER
Oh yes!

Kyle exits but Rodger can hardly contain his enthusiasm; he shouts after Kyle.

RODGER
Give em hell out there,
sugardumpling!

INT. KITCHEN SET - LATER

The audience is empty. Interns busy themselves with the task of cleaning the kitchen set.

The floor manager picks up an elegantly presented plate of veal medallions on linguine with peppercorn sauce and begins to eat it.

Kyle and Dora huddle in a quiet corner of the stage. Dora seems frustrated.

DORA
I can't do it!

KYLE
For ten thousand dollars?

She flashes her ring.

DORA
I'm getting married on Saturday.

KYLE
Reschedule.

DORA
Kyle!

KYLE
Alright, I'll pay you twenty thousand!

DORA
No! Not a chance.

KYLE
Well dammit. How much do you want then?

DORA
Listen Kyle. I've been thinking. After I get married I want to move on...

Kyle looks stricken.

DORA
It's not you. You've been great but I think I've had enough of television. Maybe I'll open a small restaurant or...

KYLE
(angry)
I'll do it myself then.

DORA
Now don't go doing anything
stupid. I have this friend...

KYLE
Yeah. I'll do this myself.

DORA
Kyle, you can't cook.

KYLE
I am the number one rated
television chef in America. I
have a best selling cookbook. Of
course I can cook! Ask...

The floor manager issues a loud burp. Everyone turns to
gawk at him. He points at the empty plate.

FLOOR MANAGER
This was really good.

KYLE Thank you. DORA Thank you.

Kyle and Dora do a double take.

INT. KYLE'S APARTMENT

Kyle enters his exquisitely decorated dining room from the
kitchen, in his hand an elegantly presented plate of lamb
rissole served on pilaf with a mint sauce. His arm
extended, he holds the plate away from his body.

The nervous pimply faced young intern sits at a mahogany
dining table, a goblet of red wine before him. His eyes
follow Kyle's extended arm and rest on the plate.

YOUNG INTERN
Are you trying to seduce me Mr.
Anderson?

Kyle looks shocked.

KYLE
Whatever gave you that idea? Of
course not.

The intern seems unconvinced.

YOUNG INTERN
Inviting me to your apartment,
the wine, a 'special' meal.

KYLE
I just wanted your opinion of
this new dish I've created.

YOUNG INTERN
You really just wanted my
opinion?

KYLE
That's all.

The intern seems disappointed, but his eyes light up as Kyle places the plate before him.

YOUNG INTERN
It looks too pretty to eat.

KYLE
Presentation is my specialty.

The intern smiles and nods in agreement. He clumsily picks up his fork and stabs a rissole. Then he eagerly shoves the entire speared rissole into his mouth.

Kyle watches the intern intently as he bites down on the lamb morsel.

The intern's immediate expression is one of horror, though as he chews it gradually becomes one of disgust with a bit of a gag reflex thrown in.

KYLE
Well, how is it?

The intern holds up a finger. He urgently quaffs half his glass of wine to wash down the remains of the rissole. He looks a bit green.

The intern holds his rumbling stomach.

YOUNG INTERN
I don't feel so good Mr. Anderson.

He moans. He purses his lips. He gulps.

KYLE
You need to lie down?

The intern shakes his head. A louder rumble, a gag.

And then he vomits, at first from the corner of his mouth, then full force. Kyle seems dismayed as the sick splashes from the table and onto his shirt.

EXT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION - NIGHT

Establishing shot of governor's mansion at night.

INT. GOVERNOR'S MANSION

Anybody who's a media somebody sits around the enormous teak dining table. They are all formally dressed.

At the head of the table sits governor ARTHUR LAWFUL (45).

His TROPHY WIFE (23) sits to his right, smiling but disinterested. Her toy poodle FOODLES sits on her lap.

On the governor's left sits the debonair GERARD SPOONEY (40). Next to Gerard is OLGA FINLEY (40) and across from her sits HELMUT LOCK (38).

ARTHUR
The polls have been excellent.
My approval rating is soaring.

GERARD
Thoughts about the presidency?

OLGA
Oh, you should run Arthur.

ARTHUR
Now, now, let's not go jumping
the gun.

GERARD
You'd make a great president. And
I should know, I played one once.

OLGA
Right. 'All the presidents
women'. One of your best
performances...You should really
come on my show again, Gerard.
My audience loves you.

Gerard flashes an irresistible smile at her. She blushes.

OLGA
That's what I'm talking 'bout.

HELMUT
And vut about me?

OLGA
What about you, Helmut? You
cooking tonight?

ARTHUR
Helmut has arranged for Kyle
Anderson to cater for us this
evening.

OLGA
Oh! 'Cooking with Kyle'. Shame.
Can't have him on my show.
Different network.

Helmut shoots an angry look at Olga. He stands.

HELMUT
If you'll excuse me. I muss check
on Kyle?

OLGA
You do that Helmut...So Gerard,
You going to do my show or what?

Agitated, Helmut walks away from the table.

KITCHEN

The kitchen is large, professional and stainless steel.
There is elegantly prepared food as well as raw ingredients
scattered about.

Kyle is dressed in full chef's regalia as he toils away at his kitchen duties. He stands behind the metal island bench and stares at an open cook book. His finger points to the first ingredient on the page.

KYLE
1 cup flour.

He touches a measuring cup full of flour.

KYLE
Check. One tablespoon...

He hears a whoosh as the kitchen door swings open.

He slams shut the cook book. On the cover is a photo of Kyle and emblazoned across the top are the words 'Cooking with Kyle'. He tosses the book under the bench and tries to look innocent.

Helmut struts in with a sneaky smile. Kyle's eyes narrow.

HELMUT
On our own tonight, Kyle?

KYLE
What are you doing here? You aren't welcome here.

HELMUT
Oh! Not welcome, ya? I vas invited, I am da V-I-P. My goot friend da governor wants me at his table.

KYLE
And this is my kitchen. They hired me to cook, not you. So get out!

Helmut moves closer.

HELMUT
You would bite da hand dat feeds you?

Kyle looks confused.

HELMUT
You tink your agent, he is very goot? He get you dis elite job. Vell tink again, I ask him to be discrete, so he vas.

Helmut chuckles.

HELMUT
Ya, it vas I dat got you dis job.

KYLE
But why? You tried to have my membership revoked from the American Culinary Federation. You hate me.

HELMUT

Ya. I hate you. I hate everyting about you...But tell me now, dat troll, dat Dora girl, does she enjoy her vedding?

Kyle looks shocked. Helmut nods.

HELMUT

Ya, I know she is at her vedding. Da poor ugly girl, she would not get many udder chances, would she?...She is da one dat cooks for you, ya? And she could not be here, ya? I suppose dat you vill just have to be exposed for da fraud dat you are.

Kyle looks alarmed.

HELMUT

And den after da media giants sitting out dere make of you da laughing stock, I vill once again be da number one chef in America. You, you vill be no one.

Helmut laughs maniacally. Frantic, angry, Kyle looks around for something to throw. He seizes a measuring cup full of flour. He throws the flour at Helmut.

KYLE

You bastard!

White dust scatters over the front of Helmut's black tux. Helmut angrily swipes at his tux, trying to clear away the flour.

HELMUT

Swine!
(a deep breath)
I vill not be angry. You are no one. I vill not be angry vith no one.

He turns and hurries from kitchen. Kyle looks sick with worry.

KYLE

Wait! Helmut, please...

The kitchen door swings open.

KYLE

Couldn't we make some kind of deal?

A BUTLER stands at the door. Kyle sags with disappointment.

BUTLER

Deal, sir?

Kyle shakes his head. The butler shrugs.

BUTLER
They are ready for the soup, sir.

Kyle looks horrified.

DINING ROOM

Helmut sits at the table. He uses his linen napkin to clean the remaining white powder off of his tux.

ARTHUR
What happened to you?

HELMUT
A slight mishap in da kitchen.
Dat Kyle, he is da very clumsy
person.

Helmut smiles.

KITCHEN

The butler examines Kyle, who looks like he is off in a faraway fearful place.

BUTLER
The soup, sir?

Kyle stares wide-eyed at the butler. His hand shakes as he lifts it and points toward a food cart covered with bowls of tantalizingly garnished bright orange salmon soup.

BUTLER
Thank you, sir.

Kyle winces as the Butler grabs the cart's handle, he tries not to watch as the butler wheels the cart out of the kitchen.

Kyle looks like he might cry.

DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The butler stands at the table. He serves Arthur his soup. Arthur smiles.

ARTHUR
That does looks good.

The butler continues serving, Gerard next.

KITCHEN

Kyle nervously paces about the kitchen. He takes off his chef hat, looks at it with disgust and then throws it to the floor.

DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Those served sit looking eagerly at their soup. The butler serves Helmut.

HELMUT
Have your soup, vile it is still hot.

ARTHUR
Shouldn't Kyle say a few words first?

HELMUT
He is much too busy with da cooking. I am sure ve vill hear him later. No need to wait.

Helmut smiles. Those served adjust their napkins and fiddle with their soup spoons.

The butler serves trophy wife. Foodles growls, he yaps at the butler. Trophy wife and Arthur look embarrassed.

TROPHY WIFE
Foodles, behave!

Foodles hops off her lap and onto the dining room table. The guests gasp. He growls at the trophy wife's soup dish, he cautiously sniffs it, then he sneezes.

TROPHY WIFE
Foodles, get off the table this instant! Arthur, do something.

ARTHUR
(to the guests)
I'm sorry. He doesn't normally act this...

Foodles turns and lifts his leg. With the aim of a pro he pisses right into the soup bowl.

Everyone's mouth drops open. They put down their spoons and push away their soup bowls.

TROPHY WIFE
Foodles!

GERARD
I'm a bit off the soup now.

OLGA
Me too. Completely lost my appetite.

Arthur snatches Foodles off of the table. He hands Foodles to the butler.

ARTHUR
I think it's Foodles bedtime.

BUTLER
Yes, sir.

The butler exits with Foodles.

Helmut stands, slamming his hands on the table.

HELMUT
Everyone! You must eat. Do not let a little doggie vee vee ruin vut could be the most important meal of our lives. Kyle Anderson, your chef, vorked hard to prepare this meal - by himself - and he deserves at least a taste from each and every one of you.

The faces at the table soften. The quests nod in agreement.

ARTHUR
You're absolutely correct, Helmut, we...

Two AGENTS in dark suits and sunglasses burst into the room.

ARTHUR
What's going on?

One of the agents rushes to Arthur and whispers in his ear. Arthur looks alarmed. He stands. He clinks a fork against a glass.

ARTHUR
Your attention please. Ladies and gentlemen, there is the possibility that a bomb is located somewhere in this building.

Murmurs of alarm from the group.

ARTHUR
Remain calm. We are not in any immediate danger. We will be exiting the building in an orderly manner.

HELMUT
But da soup...

ARTHUR
Ah yes, I am afraid that dinner is cancelled.

Helmut winces in anger.

INT. KITCHEN SET

A open cookbook sits on the island bench. Kyle's finger points to an ingredient in a recipe.

KYLE
One tablespoon paprika.

Kyle measures the ingredient into a tiny bowl.
Dora enters.

KYLE
One teaspoon salt.

Kyle measures the ingredient into a tiny bowl.
Dora smiles.

DORA
Hello Kyle.

Kyle looks up, he frowns.

KYLE
I thought you and George would be
on your honeymoon?

DORA
We're leaving this afternoon. I
just wanted to stop by and thank
you for the gift. It was lovely.
Baccarat! You shouldn't have.

Kyle nods.

KYLE
I'm just sorry I couldn't be at
the wedding.

DORA
How did the governor's party go?

KYLE
It didn't. It was cancelled.
There was...

DORA
Wait...lemme guess...There was...
a bomb scare.

Kyle looks surprised, then shocked, then he smiles.

KYLE
That was a very dangerous thing
to do, you know?

DORA
It wasn't nearly as dangerous as
eating your cooking.

Kyle looks angry. Dora laughs. Then Kyle laughs too.

FADE OUT