

WHAT WOULD MARY DO?

A Full Length Play With No Intermission

by

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WHAT WOULD MARY DO?

Cast of Characters (6 Actors)

LIZ CONROY
40s to 50s. She is a mess and makes one wherever she goes. Her outfit is all black, sweats, an oversized t-shirt and a "Mary Tyler Moore beret". She also wears a wedding ring that she constantly plays with.

JONI ROBERTS
40s to 50s. For the first half of the play she wears the perfectly coordinated, "uptight career woman" uniform. After she loses her job she wears ripped sweats and an oversized t-shirt.

CLAUDIA ALLEN
Mid 20s to early 30s. A buttoned up, junior Joni.
INTERVIEWEE WOMAN #1
INTERVIEWEE WOMAN #4
MARY TYLER MOORE'S GHOST

JASON ROBERTS
40s to 50s. Average looking with a pleasant and open face that shows all of his emotions.
INTERVIEWEE MAN #1

DR. SOLOMON
Female psychiatrist.
INTERVIEWEE WOMAN #2

NELSON CALHOUN
Mid to late 30s. Messy, disheveled. His looks mirror Liz.
INTERVIEWEE WOMAN #3

Setting

Joni Roberts apartment.

Time

Present Day

Note: Joni and Liz often talk over each other.

"Women on the Street

Interview"

AT RISE:

Lone SPOTLIGHT on
INTERVIEWEE.

LIZ'S VOICE

Describe the Mary Tyler Moore Show in one word.

WOMAN #1

Hope.

(Lights up gradually.

Neat, organized
apartment. DVDs
alphabetically arranged,
book shelves lined with
books, baseball bat
under the desk.

JONI ROBERTS, dressed
perfectly in her
coordinated outfit,
sleeps, hunched over a
laptop and neatly
stacked piles of papers
on her desk, iPhone in
hand, bluetooth in ear.

LIZ CONROY, gripping a
Tab can, wearing ripped
sweatpants, ratty
t-shirt, a "Mary Tyler
Moore hat" and a wedding
ring, quietly sneaks in.

Liz checks everything
including a sleeping
Joni before moving to the
DVDs.

She pops one into the
player, clicks the TV
on, cranks the volume
up. *Love is All Around*
(*The Mary Tyler Moore*
Show Theme) blares.
Joni jolts awake, grabs
the bat and rushes Liz.

Liz, Tab can in one hand
while pitching books
with the other, runs
around dodging Joni.)

JONI
Who the heck...are you?

LIZ
Guess.

JONI
How did you get in?

LIZ
I'd invest in better locks if I were you.

JONI
Leave now and I promise not to call the police.

LIZ
That and my good looks get me a one-way ticket to the
slammer.
(tosses her a book)
Still haven't found that signed first edition, have you?

JONI
(catches the book)
Dorothy Sayers signed --

(Joni stops and looks
Liz up and down.)

LIZ
(calmly strokes the bat)
Ya still use this as a burglar alarm? Would Mary use
this? Nah, she'd hire one of those security companies.

JONI
(lifts Liz's hat up)
Liz?!

LIZ
In the flesh, kid.

JONI
Liz! I haven't heard from you in so long. Last I heard
you were still in --

LIZ
-- Africa. I was, til yesterday.

LIZ (CONT'D)

(laughs at the TV)

That Ted Baxter, always thought he could nail Mary but she put him in his place. Hope my wheels are safe outside, got some valuable merchandise in them.

(Liz darts out the door.
Joni pinches herself.)

JONI

Ow!

(Liz wheels a shopping
cart filled with cases
of Tab and a duffle bag,
inside.)

LIZ

Now it's safe.

(Liz, pops open a Tab
then bops around
handling all of Joni's
things. Joni, on her
heels, straightens up.)

JONI

It's good to see you. So good...Why didn't you call?!

LIZ

It was just a spur of the moment thing, life was getting a little too hot there, my work visa expired and...

(whispers)

I was being hunted. If anyone comes lookin', you never heard of me.

JONI

(blocks Liz's view of the
TV)

It has been over two years. You never answered any of my letters but I just kept writing, sending them to your old address...

LIZ

Did you know the only years ending in "00" that are leap years are the ones divisible by four hundred? In Caesar's time somebody screwed up and made the year a little too long so they figured that be the best way to fix it. Of course those schmucks figured this out in the year seven-thirty but didn't move their ass on it for over eight hundred years.

LIZ (CONT'D)

By then they'd lost ten days so they decided the day after October fifth would be the fifteenth.

(pause)

What the hell happened to those ten days?

JONI

We were so worried, didn't know --

LIZ

Who's we?

JON

-- where you were or if you were --

LIZ

-- dead. Another piece of fake news, evidenced by the fact that I'm here...

(takes a deep breath)

...the perfect place for healing.

JONI

Wasn't that your reason for going back there?

LIZ

Except all I did was end up hiding, you know...

JONI

How would I --

LIZ

From immigration. Two years of keeping three steps ahead, sleeping in caves, the bush, with different tribes. I barely made it out.

JONI

I am so sorry. I lost track after MSNBC let you go.

LIZ

They canned my ass for Christ's sake! No sympathy for the grieving widow. Or maybe it was the potential Emmy winning news special I was producing, an objective report about the true nature of the hippopotamus.

JONI

You advocated the elimination of an endangered species.

LIZ

They're not that endangered. And I presented evidence proving their docility masks vicious killers.

JONI

All you filmed were shots of hippopotami sleeping in the river.

LIZ
Lying in wait.

JONI
You had no proof.

LIZ
What do you call a dead husband?

JONI
It was an accident, a rogue hippo.

(Liz pulls out a stack
of "hippo shaped" cards,
and drops them as she
reads.)

LIZ
What animal sleeps during the day and maintains activity
at night? The hippopotamus. What animal frequently
raids agricultural crops and inflicts so much damage that
the villagers starve? Hippos. What is the leading cause
of animal mutilated deaths in Africa? You guessed it,
that same, ugly, mud colored massive animal, the
hippopotamus! And what is one of the most valuable food
sources for the natives in Africa? That one and only
killer, the hippo! The last tribe I stayed with, the
Barangees, definite communication problem but that didn't
matter, the food, just what the doctor ordered. Did you
know there are thirty-three ways to prepare hippopotamus?
Spent four weeks gorging myself on Horace and some of his
pals.

(Joni picks the cards up
and organizes them.)

JONI
Horace?

LIZ
Chase's murderer.

JONI
You named the hippo?

(Liz pulls out a DVD from
her duffle bag.)

LIZ
Those animal rights freaks did. Horace! What a lame
name for a killer. And the chicken shits refused to air
my doc, afraid of losing the support of those freaks and
that obviously outweighs the victim's family.