

'ORDINARY JOE'

Star Elizabeth Lail shares take on characters

It doesn't matter which side of the bed you woke up on, when you got that first cup of coffee, or what you had for breakfast.

Each day's success – or lack thereof – is based on one thing: The decisions we make.

Such a simple, profound truth is the basis of NBC's new series "Ordinary Joe," a heart-warming, "Choose Your Own Adventure"-style show.

On the day of his graduation from Syracuse University, Joe Kimbrey (James Wolk) is faced with the biggest question of his life: Take off with Amy Kindelan (Natalie Martinez), the new girl he just met and with whom he immediately clicked; go back to Jenny (Elizabeth Lail), his sort-of girlfriend – who has news to share; or leave with his family, and follow in his late father's footsteps as a police officer. The path Joe chooses will shape his life for the next 10 years – which is where the storyline picks up following commencement.

"Rocker Joe" is a musical superstar married to Amy and adored by the masses. Despite living a life of luxury, Joe longs to be a father and grows discontent when Amy – who has miscarried on several occasions – decides to pursue a career in politics instead of starting a family. He bumps into Jenny at their 10-year reunion. Lo and behold, law partner Jenny had given birth to a son – Joe's son – but, when he didn't show up on graduation day, she opted to give the baby up for adoption. Joe becomes singularly focused on finding his son – despite Jenny's objections (she's married with two daughters) and Amy's fears of infidelity.

"Nurse Joe" wed paralegal Jenny. They have a son, Christopher (John Gluck), who uses a wheelchair and is in need of regular supervision. Joe and Jenny's marriage is on the rocks, as their schedules have made them passing ships in the night. Still, they love each other and want what's best for Christopher. They decide to get counseling, talk more, and be the best parents possible. In this version, Amy is married to Joe's best friend and college roommate, Eric Payne (Charlie Barnett)

"Cop Joe" is single; a hero, following his actions to save the life of Congressman Bobby Diaz (Adam Rodriguez) from a disgruntled gunman; and a bar musician with amazing Billy Joel covers. Joe unexpectedly reconnects with Amy, who is running Bobby's reelection campaign; and Jenny, a member of the DA's office working on the attempted murder. He meets up with Amy at the reunion, and the two start a relationship. Jenny, unbeknownst to Joe, has kept Christopher and is raising him with her husband.

BTS caught up with Elizabeth Lail, an intelligent, talented actor who, while not yet 30, has already made a mark on her industry with a memorable arc on "Once Upon A Time" as "Frozen" Princess Anna; plus, a recurring role on the highly publicized "Gossip Girl" reboot. We chatted about the psychology seen on "Ordinary Joe" and debated whether there is a good, better and best version of the show's characters. She said viewers are taking an interest in "Ordinary Joe," and its character variations.

On her way to the set, a viewer "turned around, and she was like, 'Ooh, Jenny, I'm mad at you – you won't let him see his son!' (Laughs)" Lail said of the "Rocker Joe" response. "That was the first time someone out in the world was like, 'Oh, you're Jenny, and this is what you're doing, and this is how I feel about it!' And that was really cool. It was like, 'Oh, that's great.' It's great that it elicits a reaction – whether it's positive or negative. It's cool when you hear that people are invested in the story and the characters."

An edited Q&A can be found online at www.wnypapers.com.

"Ordinary Joe" airs at 10 p.m. Mondays on NBC.



Elizabeth Lail as Jenny Banks and James Wolk as Joe Kimbrey on NBC's "Ordinary Joe." (Photo by Parrish Lewis/NBC) • "Psych": Timothy Omundson stars as Carlton Lassiter, and Maggie Lawson as Juliet O'Hara. (USA Network photo by Alan Zenuk)

'PSYCH'

3rd 'movie' continues character growth, highlights franchise's genius

It's the most underrated coupling on TV's most underrated franchise that has made "Psych" special.

And it almost didn't happen.

When Maggie Lawson (Juliet O'Hara) auditioned to join the series in season one, she wasn't screen-tested with the person she would spend the most time with in eight seasons: Timothy Omundson (Carlton Lassiter). The showrunners simply didn't foresee the two Santa Barbara Police Department partners working as well as they did.

They instead opted to focus on the property's main duo, James Roday Rodriguez's fake psychic Shawn Spencer, and his best friend/pharmaceutical salesman, Dulé Hill's Burton "Gus" Guster.

As originally scripted and teased, Jules and Shawn would become romantically involved, while Lassiter would be the foil.

As the show found favor with fans, however, the writers allowed the story room to grow in different directions. Organically, as Lawson and Omundson became real-life friends, their on-screen chemistry got better and better – eventually turning into an integral part of what made "Psych" shine.

Now, there's no denying the talent of the top two "Psych" stars. Juxtapose what Roday Rodriguez does here with what he's doing on drama "A Million Little Things," or contrast Hill's comedic chops with his work on the groundbreaking "The West Wing": It's evident these are brilliant actors.

But it's Lawson's keen skill at pulling heart-strings and Omundson's ability to humanize that made a funny show touching. Their aptitude to tackle on-screen challenges in such a way that we're literally rooting for them with giant foam fingers brought depth to what otherwise could've been superficially entertaining.

As such, whenever this foursome gets together, the result is delicious flavor.

So, when "Psych" ended its run on the USA Network in 2014, fans said, "Come on, son." They pitched their pineapples at Peacock, which quickly set forth to continue the franchise with (what we hope is an endless string of) standalone films.

"Psych: The Movie" debuted in 2017, posing the question: Can Shawn settle down and commit to Jules? He did, of course, and Shules wed amid creator Steve Frank's typical brand of shenanigans. Prior to that, the Scooby Gang partnered with returning guest stars John Cena and Ralph Macchio while fending off villains Zachary Levi, Charlotte Flair and Mena Suvari.

"Psych 2: Lassie Come Home" followed in 2020 with a focus on Omundson who, in real life, endured a devastating stroke that all but kept him out of the first installment.

Lassiter takes a bevy of bullets and is left for dead. His recovery is the basis for the story – and a testament to Omundson's will to get better.

Also, Shawn finds a pregnancy test and fears he's about to become a father, but – surprise – it's not Juliet who's expecting, but Gus' girlfriend, Selene (Hill's real-life wife Jazmyne Simon). She pops the question (Gus accepts) before casually stating she's already married.

In "This Is Gus" (now streaming on Peacock) the man who has gone by many names – Bud, Silly-Pants Jackson, T.T. Showbiz, Ghee Buttersnaps, Jazz Hands – must come to grips with his most important moniker: Dad. ... Oh, and there's that small matter of finding Selene's husband and getting them divorced.

Find our Q&A with Lawson and Omundson online at www.wnypapers.com.

Jake Owen at Seneca Niagara Resort & Casino

Seneca Niagara Resort & Casino has announced a new show for country music fans. Jake Owen will perform inside the Seneca Niagara Events Center on Saturday, Feb. 12, 2022 (8 p.m.). Tickets go on sale at noon this Friday, Nov. 26, and start at \$45.

Owen is a multiple chart-top-

ping singer/songwriter with nine No. 1 songs to his name. His recent hits include "Made For You," "I Was Jack (You Were Diane)" and "Homemade."

At this time, masks will be required for everyone attending indoor entertainment shows at Seneca Niagara Resort & Casi-

no. The venue uses all paperless ticketing for all events at all of its properties. Tickets may be purchased online at www.SenecaNiagaraCasino.com or www.ticketmaster.com. Tickets may also be purchased in-person at 8 Clans.

More information is available by calling 1-877-8-SENECA.

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Isle View entertainment

The Isle View welcomes Pauly Campana on Dec. 4, NY to LA on Dec. 11, and Slim Chance and The Cant Hardly Playboys on Dec. 18.

Dine in at 791 Niagara St., Tonawanda, and visit <https://www.facebook.com/TheIsleView>.

Live music at Solidays

Solidays Restaurant, at 6935 Ward Road, has live acoustic music from 5-9 p.m. every Wednesday, karaoke from 7 p.m. until midnight each Friday, and full bands at 9 p.m. Saturdays.

Upcoming performances include JB Aaron on Nov. 24, Impact on Dec. 4, Buffalo's Midlifecrisis on Dec. 11, and the Prestige Worldwide Band WNY Ugly Christmas Sweater Party on Dec. 18.

Visit <https://www.facebook.com/SolidaysRestaurant/>.



CHICKEN
WING CONTEST

Where do we go to find the king of the wing?

TELL US & WIN!

Vote for your favorite

ENTER TO WIN A FOOD PRIZE FROM
A LOCAL RESTAURANT

Now through the end of the football season, Niagara Frontier Publications wants your input in naming the area's best chicken wing joint. It could be a bar, a restaurant or a social club – the only requirements are that chicken wings are sold to the public from a locally headquartered joint.

The chicken wing place with the most votes will be prominently featured in the Niagara County Tribune-Sentinel, Grand Island PennySaver and Island Dispatch, with additional photos and a video posted at www.wnypapers.com.

When you cast a vote for your favorite chicken wing destination, you'll be entered to win a gift certificate courtesy of an area restaurant. Winners will be chosen by random draw and notified by phone or email.

Good luck – and happy eating!

Visit www.wnypapers.com/2021-chicken-wing-contest for a complete set of rules & to enter online.

Name (Full): _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Restaurant Name: _____

Why these chicken wings are the best: _____



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