

Complete Meltdown

ATC's 'God of Carnage' is a hilarious, capable play with a message

by [Sherilyn Forrester](#)

Who *are* these people?

Not since George and Martha and their unsuspecting guests in Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* have two couples crashed and burned as spectacularly as they do in *God of Carnage*, which opened last week at Arizona Theatre Company.

In Yasmina Reza's play, however, the tone is much lighter. In fact, it's a comedy of no manners in which we watch the devolution of four classy people as they attempt to address an incident between their two young sons in the most civil of ways.

But the lighter tone doesn't attempt to hide the ugly truth about these folks. You can disguise the savagery that clings to their DNA with education, wealth, a world-centric sensibility and impeccable manners—but with a little provocation, that savagery is too powerful to be contained. It's the essence of who we are, and from where we have come.

We are these people.

French playwright Reza enables us to laugh at her characters, even as it's obvious that there is a message in all this raucous foolishness. Director Rick Lombardo has allowed his talented cast to create characters who push against civility's—and civilization's—veneer as hard as they can before bursting through its boundaries, which are not as solid and stable as perhaps we'd like to think.

Michael (Bob Sorenson) and Veronica (Amy Resnick) Novak have welcomed the Raleighs, Alan (Benjamin Evett) and Annette (Joey Parsons), into their imposing and tastefully appointed home. The purpose is to discuss the fact that the Raleighs' son Benjamin has whacked Henry, the Novaks' lad, in the mouth, causing him to lose two teeth. Their demeanor is strained, but both couples deport themselves in a cordial, if chilly, fashion. Lawyer Alan perpetrates the first disturbance to good manners by taking a call on his cell phone during the discussion. He does this repeatedly, revealing to all within earshot his shady advice to a client whose product might be causing harm to the public.

Annette, who we learn is in wealth management, is visibly upset by her husband's behavior, while Michael and Veronica try to keep the discussion on point. Bit by bit, the whole fabric of the cloth in which the group's true feelings



Benjamin Evett, Joey Parsons, Amy Resnick and Bob Sorenson in Arizona Theatre Company's *God of Carnage*.

God of Carnage

Presented by [Arizona Theatre Company](#)

7:30 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 3, and Friday, Nov. 4; 4 and 8 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 5; 2 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 6; 2 and 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 9, and Thursday, Nov. 10; 7:30 p.m., Friday, Nov. 11; 2 and 8 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 12

Temple of Music and Art
330 S. Scott Ave.

\$31 to \$56

Runs 95 minutes, with no intermission

622-2823

have been dressed is unraveled, exposing ugly, bitter and hateful hooligans. Couples vs. couples. Gender vs. gender. Husband vs. wife. It's an uncensored, extreme, nothing-spared meltdown. It's utterly horrible at the same time that it is utterly hilarious. We are as disturbed as we are delighted. This is very funny stuff.