Alice's Restaurant

Arlo Guthrie

[CHORUS:]
You can get anything you want at Alice's restaurant
You can get anything you want at Alice's restaurant
Walk right in, it's around the back
Just a half a mile from the railroad track
You can get anything you want at Alice's restaurant
[RECITATION:]
This song is called "Alice's Restaurant." It's about Alice, and the
Restaurant, but "Alice's Restaurant" is not the name of the restaurant,
That's just the name of the song. That's why I call the song "Alice's
Restaurant."Now it all started two Thanksgivings ago... two years ago, on Thanksgiving,
When my friend and I went up to visit Alice at the restaurant.But Alice doesn't live in the restaurant, she lives in the church nearby the
Restaurant, in the bell tower with her husband Ray and Facha, the dog.And livin' in the bell tower like that, they got a lot of room downstairs
Where the pews used to be, and havin' all that room (seein' as how they took
Out all the pews), they decided that they didn't have to take out their
Garbage for a long time.We got up here and found all the garbage in there and we decided that it'd
Be a friendly gesture for us to take the garbage down to the city dump.So we took the half-a-ton of garbage, put it in the back of a red VW
Microbus, took shovels and rakes and implements of destruction, and headed
On toward the city dump. Well, we got there and there was a big sign and a
Chain across the dump sayin', "This dump is closed on Thanksgiving," and
We'd never heard of a dump closed on Thanksgiving before, and with tears in
Our eyes, we drove off into the sunset lookin' for another place to put the
Garbage.We didn't find one till we came to a side road, and off the side of the side
Road was another fifteen-foot cliff, and at the bottom of the cliff was
Another pile of garbage. And we decided that one big pile was better than
Two little piles, and rather than bring that one up, we decided to throw
Ours down. That's what we did.Drove back to the church, had a Thanksgiving dinner that couldn't be beat,
Went to sleep, and didn't get up until the next morning, when we got a phone
Call from Officer Obie. He said, "Kid, we found your name on a envelope at
The bottom of a half a ton of garbage and I just wanted to know if you had
Any information about it."And I said, "Yes sir, Officer Obie, I cannot tell a lie. I put that envelope
Under that garbage." After speakin' to Obie for about forty-five minutes on
The telephone, we finally arrived at the truth of the matter and he said
That we had to go down and pick up the garbage, and also had to go down and
Speak to him at the Police Officer Station. So we got in the red VW microbus
With the shovels and rakes and implements of destruction and headed on

Toward the Police Officer Station.Now, friends, there was only one of two things that Obie could've done at
The Police Officer Station, and the first was that he could've given us a
Medal for bein' so brave and honest on the telephone (which wasn't very
Likely, and we didn't expect it), and the other thing was that he could've
Bawled us out and told us never to be seen drivin' garbage around in the
Vicinity again, which is what we expected.But when we got to the Police Officer Station, there was a third possibility
That we hadn't even counted upon, and we was both immediately arrested,
Handcuffed, and I said, "Obie, I can't pick up the garbage with these here
Handcuffs on." He said: "Shut up kid, and get in the back of the patrol
Car."And that's what we did . . . sat in the back of the patrol car, and drove to
The quote scene of the crime unquote.I want to tell you 'bout the town of Stockbridge, Massachusetts, where this is
Happenin'. They got three stop signs, two police officers, and one police
Car, but when we got to the scene of the crime, there was five police
Officers and three police cars, bein' the biggest crime of the last fifty
Years and everybody wanted to get in the newspaper story about it.And they was usin' up all kinds of cop equipment that they had hangin'
Around the Police Officer Station. They was takin' plaster tire tracks,
Footprints, dog-smellin' prints and they took twenty-seven 8 x 10 colored
Glossy photographs with circles and arrows and a paragraph on the back of
Each one explainin' what each one was, to be used as evidence against us.
Took pictures of the approach, the getaway, the northwest corner, the
Southwest corner . . .
And that's not to mention the aerial photography!After the ordeal, we went back to the jail. Obie said he was gonna put us in
A cell.He said: "Kid, I'm gonna put you in a cell. I want your wallet and your
Belt."
I said, "Obie, I can understand your wantin' my wallet, so I don't have any
Money to spend in the cell, but what do you want my belt for?" and he said,
"Kid, we don't want any hangin's." I said, "Obie, did you think I was gonna
Hang myself for litterin'?"Obie said he was makin' sure, and, friends, Obie was, 'cause he took out the
Toilet seat so I couldn't hit myself over the head and drown, and he took
Out the toilet paper so I couldn't bend the bars, roll the toilet paper out
The window, slide down the roll and have an escape. Obie was makin' sure.It was about four or five hours later that Alice--(remember Alice? There's a
Song about Alice.)--Alice came by and, with a few nasty words to Obie on the
Side, bailed us out of jail, and we went back to the church, had another
Thanksgiving dinner that couldn't be beat, and didn't get up until the next
Morning, when we all had to go to court. We walked in, sat down, Obie came
In with the twenty-seven 8 x 10 colored glossy pictures with the circles and
Arrows and a paragraph on the back of each one, sat down.Man came in, said, "All rise!" We all stood up, and Obie stood up with the
Twenty-seven 8 x 10 colored glossy pictures, and the judge walked in, sat
Down, with a seein' eye dog and he sat down. We sat down.Obie looked at the seein' eye dog . . . then at the

twenty-seven 8 x 10
Colored glossy pictures with the circles and arrows and a paragraph on the
Back of each one . . . and looked at the seein' eye dog . . . and then at
The twenty-seven 8 x 10 colored glossy pictures with the circles and arrows
And a paragraph on the back of each on and began to cry.Because Obie came to the realization that it was a typical case of American
Blind justice, and there wasn't nothin' he could do about it, and the judge
Wasn't gonna look at the twenty-seven 8 by 10 colored glossy pictures with
The circles and arrows and a paragraph on the back of each one explainin'
What each one was, to be used as evidence against us.And we was fined fifty dollars and had to pick up the garbage... in the
Snow.But that's not what I'm here to tell you about.
I'm here to talk about the draft.
They got a buildin' down in New York City called Whitehall Street, where you
Walk in, you get injected, inspected, detected, infected, neglected and
Selected!I went down and got my physical examination one day, and I walked in, sat
Down (got good and drunk the night before, so I looked and felt my best when
I went in that morning, 'cause I wanted to look like the All-American Kid
From New York City. I wanted to feel like . . . I wanted to be the
All-American Kid from New York), and I walked in, sat down, I was hung down,
Brung down, hung up and all kinds of mean, nasty, ugly things.And I walked in, I sat down, they gave me a piece of paper that said: "Kid,
See the psychiatrist in room 604."I went up there, I said, "Shrink, I want to kill. I want to kill! I want to see
Blood and gore and guts and veins in my teeth! Eat dead, burnt bodies! I
Mean: Kill. Kill!"And I started jumpin' up and down, yellin' "KILL! KILL!" and he started
Jumpin' up and down with me, and we was both jumpin' up and down, yellin',
"KILL! KILL! KILL! KILL!" and the sergeant came over, pinned a medal on me,
Sent me down the hall, said "You're our boy". Didn't feel too good about it.Proceeded down the hall, gettin' more injections, inspections, detections,
Neglections, and all kinds of stuff that they was doin' to me at the thing
There, and I was there for two hours... three hours... four hours... I was
There for a long time goin' through all kinds of mean, nasty, ugly things,
And I was just havin' a tough time there, and they was inspectin',
Injectin', every single part of me, and they was leavin' no part untouched!Proceeded through, and I finally came to see the very last man. I walked in,
Sat down, after a whole big thing there. I walked up, and I said, "What do
You want?" He said, "Kid, we only got one question: Have you ever been
Arrested?"And I proceeded to tell him the story of Alice's Restaurant Massacree with
Full orchestration and five-part harmony and stuff like that, and other
Phenomenon.He stopped me right there and said, "Kid, have you ever been to court?" And
I proceeded to tell him the story of the twenty-seven 8 x 10 colored glossy
Pictures with the circles and arrows and a paragraph on the back of each one
. . .He stopped me right there and said, "Kid, I want you to go over and sit down
On that bench that says 'Group W'."And I walked over to the bench there, and there's... Group W is where they
Put you if you may not be moral enough to join the army after committin'

Your special crime.There was all kinds of mean, nasty, ugly-lookin' people on the bench there . . . there was mother-rapers . . . father-stabbers . . . father-rapers! FATHER-RAPERS sittin' right there on the bench next to me! And they was mean And nasty and ugly and horrible and crime fightin' guys were sittin' there On the bench, and the meanest, ugliest, nastiest one . . . the meanest Father-raper of them all . . . was comin' over to me, and he was mean and Ugly and nasty and horrible and all kinds of things, and he sat down next to Me. He said, "Kid, what'd you get?"I said, "I didn't get nothin'. I had to pay fifty dollars and pick up the Garbage."He said, "What were you arrested for, kid?" and I said, "Litterin"" . . . . And they all moved away from me on the bench there, with the hairy eyeball And all kinds of mean, nasty things, till I said, "And creatin' a nuisance . . . " And they all came back, shook my hand, and we had a great time on the Bench talkin' about crime, mother-stabbin', father-rapin', . . . all kinds Of groovy things that we was talkin' about on the bench, and everything was Fine.We was smokin' cigarettes and all kinds of things, until the sergeant came Over, had some paper in his hand, held it up and said:

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. . ."And he talked for forty-five minutes and nobody understood a word that he Said.But we had fun fillin' out the forms and playin' with the pencils on the Bench there.I filled out the Massacree with the four-part harmony. Wrote it down there Just like it was and everything was fine. And I put down my pencil, and I Turned over the piece of paper, and there . . . on the other side . . . in The middle of the other side . . . away from everything else on the other Side . . . in parentheses . . . capital letters . . . quotated . . . read The following words: "Kid, have you rehabilitated yourself?"I went over to the sergeant. Said, "Sergeant, you got a lot of god-damned Gall to ask me if I've rehabilitated myself! I mean . . . I mean . . . I Mean that you send . . . I'm sittin' here on the bench . . . I mean I'm Sittin' here on the Group W bench, 'cause you want to know if I'm moral Enough to join the army, burn women, kids, houses and villages after bein' a Litterbug."He looked at me and said, "Kid, we don't like your kind! We're gonna send Your fingerprints off to Washington"!And, friends, somewhere in Washington, enshrined in some little folder, is a Study in black and white of my fingerprints.And the only reason I'm singin' you the song now is 'cause you may know Somebody in a similar situation.Or you may be in a similar situation, and if you're in a situation like That, there's only one thing you can do:Walk into the shrink wherever you are, just walk in, say, "Shrink, . . . you Can get anything you want at Alice's Restaurant", and walk out.You know, if one person, just one person, does it, they may think he's Really sick and they won't take him.And if two people do it, in harmony, they may think they're both faggots and They won't take either of them.And if three people do it! Can you imagine three people walkin' in, singin' A bar of "Alice's Restaurant" and walkin' out? They may think it's an Organization!And can you imagine fifty people a day? I said FIFTY people a day . . .

Walkin' in, singin' a bar of "Alice's Restaurant" and walkin' out? Friends,
They may think it's a MOVEMENT, and that's what it is: THE ALICE'S
RESTAURANT ANTI-MASSACREE MOVEMENT! . . . and all you gotta do to join is to
Sing it the next time it comes around on the guitar.With feelin'.
[CHORUS]

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Sherman, Garry / Guthrie, ArloPublished by
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