

Vay Cay

for the
Say Jay's

a.k.a.

In the Cold of the Night

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Brett@Paufler.net

#

#

#

She was cold. The world was a cold place. And she
was cold.

#

Personally, I think it's a pretty good start. Sure, it's no, *it was a dark and gloomy night* (mainly because it's early morning), but it'll work.

#

Euro, her name was Euro. She almost had to remind herself what her name was.

#

OK. To be fair, I hadn't actually settled on it until just now.

#

And it's a nickname.

#

But still, it shouldn't be that hard to remember your name, nickname, or even a pseudonym if you want folks to believe you're not just making it up on the spot.

#

Like I was...

#

Perhaps, I should just continue.

#

It was dawn, predawn, that moment right before dawn, before the sun peaks its head over the horizon, the breeze kicks up, the morning clouds start to form, and the last of the stars slowly disappear... only one left, now, probably not even a star: just Venus, the morning star.

#

Maybe she should take on a new name, she thinks silently to herself, something like Star... or Morning Star...

#

Or how about, hell fucking no. There will be no name changes. We have a name: Euro. We're sticking with Euro.

#

Her name was Euro, on account of her European roots, her long legs, golden trusses (are those even a thing) and shapely form. I have no idea what any of that has to do with money and hence her name... only that everybody always seems to want as much of the aforementioned as they can lay their hands on...

#

Euro was all alone. Yet, she could feel the desire.

#

It was early morning on the beach, now. The sun rising, like a sunset in reverse, golden rays shining bright, way too bright, as the blazing orb peered above the water... and as if, just on cue, the breeze started blowing her hair.

#

‘Wow!’

#

Yes, wow. She looks tasty, delicious... good enough to eat... and all that.

#

‘I’m glad I came out!’

It begs the joke. Out of what? The closet?

‘Now, don’t be like that. She looks good.’

Aren’t you supposed to be sleeping or something? I thought you had a long night, going to take it easy, sleep in, and enjoy your vacation or something like that?

‘Yeah, with you two making all that racket, alarms blaring, just how many times did you hit that snooze button, anyway?’

I don’t think that has anything to do with the story.

#

Euro is alone on the beach... save for a few birds... and an early morning jogger or two.

‘Yeah, that would be me. And I’m just going to stop here for a second and catch my breath... not that I need to. But I got to admit, I really like the way the sun shines right through her dress like that.’

#

Euro embraced the sun, the morning, the day, as she embraced everything. She smiled. And hugged herself... which, being who she is, the gesture was maybe a bit grandiose and probably looked a lot more like her stretching her arms out wide to encompass the world.

#

So, like I said, she hugged herself, enjoying the sun.

#

‘Wow! So, like she’s the leading lady?’

You were there in rehearsal.

‘Geez! Don’t bite my head off, just trying to play along.’

You’re really not supposed to be in this scene.

‘Yeah, about that...’

#

I was told you could be difficult.

#

‘You’re here. I’m here. Euro’s here. What say we get this show on the road?’

#

Fine, whatever.

#

His name was Bo, short for Beauregard. Perhaps you’ve seen him in a few recent productions?

No?

Oh, well, I guess that would explain why he’s back down in the minors...

‘Hey, be nice.’

#

He doesn’t really need a name.

‘Come on, I thought we agreed, we were going to play nice.’

#

I am being nice. Even if folks can’t remember your name, when they see your face on the cover of a magazine,

they know that they know you. Thusly, he doesn't really need a name.

'Oh, OK.'

#

Euro turns to look at the man, the hunky-hunk of a heartthrob doing push ups in the sand. He's clearly showing off, doing those one handed things, switching back and forth like it's nothing; and, of course, since my productions tend to the comic surreal at times, two hands, become one, which soon becomes none, so he's like a Jeannie, floating in the air, arms folded, but still working out... it's that easy for him.

#

Bo is a movie star.

I mean, the guy we cast for the roll, that Bo, is a movie star.

#

Seriously, have you not heard of him before?

Clearly, we paid too much.

#

Bo did not come out this early in the morning to hit on women... or enjoy the view as spectacular as it might be,

this time of day, when the sun's rays are slanted the right way, and cut right through an aspiring young actress's dress.

#

Yeah, and she still thinks she's not doing a skin flick.

#

Euro watches as the man departs, running away, sweat glistening off his brow...

#

Yeah, OK. She never would think that, nor see it at that distance... nor care. The last being more to the point.

#

'Are we going to do this thing?'

That would be her.

'Her? A hundred thousand words on a man who isn't even supposed to be in this scene and I get her?'

#

The pertinent point is that Euro looks hot, tasty, delicious.... good enough to eat, but I think we've been over this.

#

‘I’m getting hungry,’ she, the she who goes by the name of Euro and is the focus of this particular segment of the story, the leading lady, as it were, says, ‘That’s better, but mind the lip.’

#

Euro takes out a compact mirror and fixes makeup that needs no fixing, you know, having just come out of wardrobe. But we need to establish that Euro is that kind of girl: the kind of girl that fixes her makeup even if it doesn’t need fixing, which probably explains why it doesn’t need fixing in the first place; but clearly, I digress.

#

Euro takes out her wallet... well, I guess it could be her wallet for all you know. Look, the pertinent point is that it’s her wallet now.

#

Gads, I am really shitty at keeping plot points a secret. I was sort of planning on that being a later reveal. Oh, well. Euro has a problem... well, no, problem isn’t the right word. See, there are good guys and bad women. Yeah, I think that about covers the leading characters in this here story.

#

Euro (of *Bad Girl Indie Rock Fame*) goes through the contents of the wallet, taking a quick inventory of the cash... credit cards that she shouldn't use... you know, that it would be a mistake to use... and finally peruses a few pictures of a wife... her real opponent... that she lets drop into the sand.

#

Old news. That was yesterday's girl...

#

Euro shivers.

'It's because I'm not wearing very much,' she says. And it's true, a bathing suit, one of those cloth throws (or are they called wraps these days, either way), the description hardly does the outfit justice. Let's just say, there are those who put on clothes, those who merely wear an outfit, and those who take on a role, which is to say, the clothes become them... in more ways than one.

'I look hot. Just say, I look hot and leave it at that.'

Yes, Euro looks hot, breathtakingly hot, which in some sense, might explain why she's shivering so much.

#

Or maybe it doesn't. I mean, if she's Hot Blooded, the early morning cold probably shouldn't bother her. And if

she's Cold Blooded (as the script says that she is), she likely wouldn't be shivering, you know, because reptiles do not feel the cold.

#

Your sauropsidian lesson over for the day, I now return you to your regular story, already in progress.

#

The point is, the world is a cold place. In some alternate universe where this is a serious piece, Euro shivers against the cold, the coldness of it all, as she counts her few remaining assets.

#

And in a non-serious piece like this, 'How about I just do a bit of modeling and everyone will know all they need to know about my assets.'

#

But there was a time, that seems so very long ago, now, and which seems to fade every second that much further into a distant past, where in (or should that be, when in) Euro was to be described as being *good enough to eat* and at that juncture she was supposed to say, 'I'm hungry,' so we could move this train wreck of a story along.

#

‘Seriously, *I’m hungry?*’

#

And this year’s award for best dramatic reading from a nearly defunct screenplay goes to...

#

Alas, I cannot find a compelling reason to finish that sentence.

#

#

#

There is a lot of potential cruft in this story, you know, scenes we’d include if this were a big budget, major studio production, but it’s not, so...

#

Bo is sitting at the hotel bar... alone.

#

Remember, when Euro was hungry?

Well, it's morning, breakfast time, and she wants blintzes.

#

I have no idea what a blintz is.
I have serious doubts whether Euro does either, probably just sounds cool to her.

#

Euro stands by the entrance to the restaurant, the breakfast buffet, all the resorts seem to have them. Or, you know, you can sit at the bar and drink your breakfast...

#

'It's a protein shake,' Bo insists. 'Besides, I want to watch the game.'

#

Euro surveys the room...
It's not really a room, though, is it? More like an open-air balcony, overlooking the ocean.
'Yeah, the sun's pretty bright out there,' Bo advises, as Euro approaches, sitting down next to him.
'This seat taken?'

#

There is some sort of subtext... no, that's not the right word. See, there is a story here. Bo's on vacation with his wife... only she's obviously not eating breakfast with him.

###

Marital discord.

Well, someone had to say it... and neither one of them were going to.

###

Bo and Euro talk. They eat. Apparently, I'm not the only one who doesn't know what a blintz is, so Euro settles for a raw fish filled crepe, which sounds disgusting, but only if you actually eat the crepe part and don't stick to the raw fish, which is pretty darn good.

Commentary over, Euro washes the meal down with a Bloody Mary. She may (or may not, but more probably, may) have a drinking problem.

###

Whatever, not really important.

###

They talk. And when Bo's wife finally makes an appearance, off screen, at the entrance, I mean, there is only so much money in the budget, and what, with my advance,

Bo's exorbitant fees, and that early modeling shoot with Euro, well, we had to cut corners somewhere.

#

'I'm sorry you're not happy with your marriage,' Euro says, as she stands up.

Bo's like, *where did that come from?* But whether he actually voices the words or not, we'll never know, as we're going to cut away. But one thing's for sure, writing it in italics implies that he smart enough to keep such thoughts to himself, whether he agrees with them or not.

#

Euro has enjoyed his company. And since this story is about a Black Widow Femme Fatale's predatory-like hunting behavior, she, of course, takes a few bills out of her wallet, slips them under her drink, and says, 'Buy your wife something nice.'

#

And then Euro is gone, walking out of the restaurant. Discretion being the better part of valor, we follow her, while back in the distance, comes the shrill voice of a woman scorned, 'Who was that?'

#

Yes, indeed Bo, who was that?

#

#

#

Have you ever been on vacation?

Well, OK, you must have been on vacation.

I mean, it's sort of hard to believe the type of person who's never been on vacation has the time to read this sort of drivel. I can just see them on the docks in New Delhi.

'Oh, you must check out his latest novel.'

And seriously, I know you did not just read that right, so go back and do it over with an over the top, totally non-racist, hyper Indian accent.

'I did. I did,' better. 'It was so refreshing to escape the bottomless pit of despair that is my continued existence for a few delightful moments.'

At which point, a new, scrawny (as, clearly, there's not enough food in all of New Delhi for anyone to be overweight or fat, so perfectly realistic), rag wearing (on account of what I don't know what those rag wrap outfits things are called, but you know what I'm talking about, not rags, not clothes, looks like someone was caught with their pants down, so just grabbed the closest thing, which just so happened to be a ten foot roll of oil stained red linen...

#

Um, I lost my place.

#

It doesn't matter.

#

The point is, lots of folks are confused at the moment. They're all, 'Take a vacation? What does that mean?'

You see, many folks on this desolate planet never get a vacation, have no expectation of ever spending a day, week, or a month at some high end resort, because, 'I just needed a break. Things were getting so hectic,' which would be said by Euro and not some Third World Ship Yard Salvage Working Schlep (does that need to be capitalized) who will probably die of gangrene before he hits thirty...

#

You know, I just can't seem to keep it together.

Suffice to say, if you're reading this, let's just assume you either know what a vacation is... or know how to do a search on that Internet thing.

#

And here's about where the Third World (once again, I have no idea on the capitalization conventions on that phrase, but whatever, the) Dockworkers jump into the picture, their smart phones at the ready, 'What did he say?'

‘I do not know?’

‘I think it was Vay Cay Ton, South Africa.’ And then he looks up, through the tele-type, to the viewers reading at home. ‘I did not think it could be possible.’ Oh, by the way, his English impeccable, much better than mine. ‘But there are worse pits than this hellhole.’

#

Coffee break over!
Back on your heads!

#

I was going to say something...

#

Oh, right vacation!
Euro’s on vacation.
Bo’s on vacation.
I mean, wouldn’t it be like a wacky coincidence if all day long they kept running into each other?

#

We could do a montage?

#

‘Oh, I like the montages,’ says Mr. Indian Dock Worker.

‘I like the dancing,’ chimes in the other.

While the third jumps in, saying something, oh, I don’t know, maybe something along the lines of, ‘And I like the singing.’

And if you need more of a prompt than that to work out the details of some sort of merry dock worker song and dance routine in your head...

#

Fine!

#

No! I said Fine!

#

And when I say, Fine! I mean, Fine!

#

So, Fine!

#

‘Oh, goody, we are going to have a song!’

‘A dance!’

‘And maybe some light romance?’

###

‘A song!’

‘A dance!’

‘And maybe some light romance!’

###

In these resort towns, it isn't that strange to keep running into the same folks during your stay, all week long, day after day, as the attractions run a sort of circuit. You can be in the morning group or the afternoon group, the late eaters or the early eaters, those who walk on the beach or those who go dancing, and so on and so forth.

###

And then, of course, the different resorts funnel their guests into the same activities (‘Hey, let's all go to the Zoo on Tuesday) for maximum economies of scale... and what we in the trade like to call kickbacks, er, I mean referral fees... or that is to say, *maximizing the customer experience*.

###

‘Would you like to go on a whale watching cruise?’

###

Oh, and it's always a cruise. Do you remember *Gilligan's Island*, that TV show and that crappy little boat of theirs? Well, that was a three-hour cruise. And that was a long time ago. These days, the 'cruises' (really need quotes on that sucker and they) hardly ever last three hours.

###

It was a one-hour tour...

The seas were getting rough, so they never left the shore, if not for the greed of the tourist board, the cruise would-have-been-cancelled, and the tax base would have been lost, yes, the tax base would have been lost...

###

But, that's a different story, one for which I don't have the derivatives rights, so no sense taking it any further.

###

But let's see. In this story (for which I do have derivative rights, fat lot of good that will do me), where are we?

###

Oh, right, the Resort Town Activity Montage! All aboard!

###

So, like, when Bo queues up for the Whale Watching Cruise, Euro is just ahead in line. Needless to say, his wife is not amused at the attention Bo lavishes on his new acquaintance.

#

Ah, the endless attraction of strange women... and stranger men.

#

Ahem! That would, of course, be a cue for:

#

‘A cruise!’

‘A cruise!’

‘We are off to take a cruise!’

#

Our Indian coolies...

#

Is that a racist remark or just a redundant remark? I mean, can one be a coolie and not Indian, Indian and not a coolie, or should I be more proactive in my research and actually find out what the word means?

#

Nope, not going to do it, so...

#

Our Indian coolies are off in song; and as they sing upon their rusted out wreck of a boat (they are salvage workers, after all), Bo, Euro, and countless others, including his wife, I'm guessing, but since we didn't have the money left in the budget after hiring the coolies (three) at the last minute...

#

'Who a coolie?'
'Your's a coolie!'
'Wouldn't you like to be a coolie, too?'
'Be a coolie!'

#

And so on and so forth.

#

Like I said, I apologize if that seems mean or something, but I will use my ignorance as a shield, as will I the fact that I hired these fine gentlemen, untrained actors, I'll have you know, and rather than pay the one a 'living

wage' or 'fair trade' or whatever that means, we split the \$4.50 between the three to better increase the New Delhi employment rate.

#

'Not just a buck...'

'But fifty cents more...'

'To sing...'

'And dance...'

'And maybe make with the light romance.'

#

And there he is (Coolie #3), dressing in drag, don't ask me how he did it. I guess, it's all in how you wear those strips of cloth. Sexy little lass...

#

Um, yeah, moving on...

#

So, the guys, we'll move on from coolies and just call them guys, so the guys...

#

'Macho! Macho! Guys!'

All but the last, of course...

#

And meanwhile, back in the story...

#

Bo watches for whales.

Euro watches for whales.

Ah, there's one, now, off the starboard bow!

#

And all the passengers rush together as one to get the best view. Yes, one thousand cameras aimed as one. Want to know why whales are so narcissistic? This is why?

#

Oh, right, except for the one camera aimed at Euro and Bo (ours, don't you know), which just so happens to cut off his wife; and really, for the most, it cuts off Bo, as if he was cutting into Euro's space, rather than her taking pains to listen in, overhear what Bo was planning on doing next, and rushing on ahead to the starboard bow, so it looked like she got there first, and he, having to come to her side of the boat and crash into her, lurch of the waves, I'll have you know, pure happenstance, leaning in close, struggling for balance, as the waves rock, back and forth, grabbing at whatever's closest...

#

Yes, things could get comfortable...

#

While back in Stalag 13, rather than watching a whale breach, the guys, the coolies three, are busy fending off a giant octopus. And I'm pretty sure they're singing about the wonders of nature, but the words escape me!

#

'Help!'
'He needs help!'
'I hope that help is on the way!'
This last sung in operatic falsetto.

#

And then, the cross-dressing coolie uses his welding torch to scare the monster away...

#

I don't know. Is scare the right word for searing flesh?

#

Or, you know...

#

Raw sushi, time for lunch!

#

‘This is the life!’

‘The life for me!’

Yeah, the last, his mouth is full, so whatever, ‘Er, grm, gmbler,’ means.

#

Using the coolie’s lunch as a stand in for Bo and Euro (at the risk of repeating myself, I will reiterate, we are not made out of money here), the next stop on our montage is the surfing scene, wherein Bo is helping Euro stand on a board.

#

‘The wife?’

‘The wife?’

‘But where is the wife?’

#

Shopping! OK? We didn’t have the money in the budget for an actress, so the fact that she has the money to

go shopping makes a perfect sort of sense! Heck, maybe that's where all the money went?

#

And as Bo and Euro, I really like writing it that way better...

#

'I get first billing. It goes without saying.'
'And yet, my face, much bigger on the marquee poster?' Euro counters.

#

'Such a face!'
'She has the face!'
Guy number three is clearly not with the beat. He looks up from where he is welding, cutting, I guess they don't weld them boats apart, but cut them apart, anyhow, he looks up, not quite understanding, 'We did the vacation?'

'It lasts all week!'

'It lasts all week!'

And since Guy #3 is really not quite with it yet, I'll sing the next line for him, 'At \$1.50/each, it darn well better last all week!'

#

Or, the day... the in movie montage only lasts the day, but shooting this sort of montage usually takes a week, more often than not, call it perk of working in paradise.

#

Anyhow, last we saw them, Bo was, er, um, steadying, yeah, that's what it's called, steadying Euro as the two of them *Split the Curl*.

#

Yeah, smarty pants, you've got the Internet, you know what a vacation is, so look up the surfer lingo if you want to know what *Splitting the Curl* means...

#

Lord knows I won't bother...

#

And as the *Curl is Split* (not really as impressive sounding that way, is it), Guy #3, hereafter known as Say-Jay (as in his name was J---something, so we just said, 'Hey, say, J,' and a name was born.

#

Pinky would say 'Point!'

#

Which really just means I'm completely loosing control of this entire fiasco...

#

Any-the-way, Say Jay, being Say Jay, rapsallion, cross dressing wonder of the Bally Wood Mock-u-Mentary World, puts his torch down, fails to shut it off, and thereby cutting...

#

The back half of the trawler the Say Jay's (seriously, they insisted their names weren't the same, but who could tell...

#

But where was I?

#

Oh, right...

#

The Say Jay's are soon surfing on their own, hanging five, hanging ten, and/or hanging on for dear life, as they

surf the wave that formed when the back half of the ship
fell into the ocean.

#

Is it me?
Or is this montage moving along way too slowly?

#

Whale watching: check.
Surfing: check.

#

They need to shop... or at least, Bo needs to go find his
wife. So the scene where Bo is waiting, his wife in the
dressing room, while Euro comes out from the room next
door, I mean, I would describe her, but we'd like to keep
the rating on this thing family friendly...

#

Thus, cut to the comic, and Say Jay appears wearing
the latest in pure white silken... punjabs... or whatever those
wrap around rag shorts things are called.

While the other Say Jay is wearing something similar,
you know, but different, so matching, but not kitchy, I'm
thinking those long white baggy trouser thingies that
Aladdin made famous so long ago.

And the last...

#

Oh, yeah. He's definitely in style. Say Jay #3 (third, but by no means last) comes out in a tailored suit, bespoke shoes, gangster hat, and sunglasses.

'We are going to do this New Delhi Style,' he says. Whatever that means.

#

So, um...

Shopping: check.

#

Dinner cruise? Is that even different from a whale watching cruise?

#

The Say Jay's hands are full, plates overflowing, stacked tall with all manner of delicacy.

'We are doing the dinner cruise.'

'This is not an option.'

#

Wait! Wait! Wait!

#

That's not how we are doing it!

#

'Fair trade.'

'We decided.'

And although there is supposed to be a third line here, it's hard to talk with your mouth full. So, instead, Say Jay picks up a curry ball and throws it towards yours truly...

#

So, um, let's flip back to rehearsal...

#

Rotting corpse of a ship, you remember that. Our poor, destitute, Third World brethren, taking a break from a hard day's work, sitting amongst the smokestacks, staircases, and scaffolding near the top of the ship, pulling rice balls from wherever...

#

Seriously, it's a pretty good gag.

Let me guide you through it.

Rice balls?

Where do they keep them?

#

Gangster Say Jay flips down his sunglasses from where he sits at the buffet table, 'Man, you need to drop it.'

And it is the other two's turn to remain silent, mouths stuffed with King Crab and the like.

#

And I think that just leaves dancing.

#

'This is the end of my career, isn't it? I need a drink.'
Um, that would be the sound of the previously World Famous, but having now fallen in with a third-rate production crew, Beauregard (just call me Bo, it's double the salary if you want to use my last name, so we won't)...

#

And, I would cut it there, but apparently, at Table Number #3 it's time for a champagne toast.

#

'Put it on the bill.'

'Or better yet, the card.'

#

So, when this wraps around to the start and they're back on the chain gang, slaving their lives away:

Credit Card Fraud!

Don't leave the Say Jay's without... a mention of... it... the crime... that is.

#

'We are not crooks!'

'Innocent!'

'We are being framed!'

#

And, now that they mention it, that's probably where the camera should pull out, fading into black, and when we reopen the lens in a moment, we will have left the Say Jay's far behind.

#

'Do not go!'

'Are we not your friends!'

'Or your coolie's, at least!'

#

Sort of sad, that last, watching an imaginary man's pride, just slip away like that.

#

#

#

I feel honor bound to point out that no Say Jay's were harmed in the writing of this story. The story is circular, so they ended where they started. It's really not my fault they turned out to be credit card thieves... or that they got involved in an international vacation time-share money-laundering conspiracy.

#

Bo on the other hand is a bit dejected.

#

'This is what my career has sunk to,' he might be saying to himself between shots (of whiskey at the bar, just in case that was unclear, so, like, drunk as it were).

#

'It's like everything I do is wrong,' he might be saying to himself when he realizes the word processor is up and running again; and it's time to move the story along.

#

Bo favors whiskey. It's odd what a normal person (peon if you will) like myself knows, sight unseen, about a famous movie star like Bo. For instance, I also know (and not just because we talked about it prior to writing the scene) that he likes the idea of smoking a cigar, but he won't do that ever again, because back in the early days of his career when he played a tough cigar-smoking sergeant in the infantry, the public backlash was overwhelming. Of course, by public, I mean mothers of third graders who now wanted to walk around cussing incomprehensibly (the third graders, not their mothers) on account of the stick wedged into their mouths that they were pretending was a stogie.

#

Though, really, the scene works a lot better if you just imagine the rolls reversed.

'Mom! You're embarrassing me!'

'Oh, was I embarrassing you when,' yada-yada, some incomprehensibly long story involving diapers, taking a hill in 'Nam, and making sure diner was on the table by the time 'Your Father' got home. I mean, not that such a story has to be long, I did it in like a line or two, but Stogie Smoking Mothers (and yes, that does need to be capitalized) are a different matter.

#

Still, as we all know (Stogie Smoking Mothers aside), real men don't smoke stogies.

#

Though, it does begs the question, what exactly do real men smoke, then?

#

Ah, where's a singing Say Jay when you need one?

#

Can you just see the one, stogie wedged in mouth, teaching the other two, new recruits to the wrecking yard, how to work a torch, stogie in mouth, acting as punk... which is what we would have called a 'fuse lighter' back in the misspent days of my youth that could have been far better spend learning whether 'coolie' was a pejorative or merely a highly accurate and descriptive adjective.

#

Ah, youth...

#

Bo is staring at the mirrored glass behind the bar...

#

Oh, my, Gra'gl! Talk about a narcissist, always looking for the best view of himself, well, good thing he's

searching for the reflection of his soul in the bottom of glass of whiskey, then.

#

I've been staying at Bo's place as of late.

'Come on, we got to do something. The idea was for you to come over, hang out, and we'd pound out a few projects. And so far, the only thing that's been pounded back are few cases of Forty Year Old Whiskey.'

#

Barrel aged, I might add...

#

Of course, somewhere, I should mention, I do not drink... well, not cases of whiskey, anyhow, Barrel Aged or otherwise.

#

But Bo, his career has been on the skids...

#

You know those big blockbusters? Seriously, if you don't, right after you do that search on 'Vay Cay Ton', do one on the 'Ten Stupidest Movies of All Time.' Most of them will be blockbusters. I don't know how these things

get Green Lit. ‘Yeah, the plot’s a little weak, but no one goes to the movies for the script anymore, it’s all about the special effects.’

###

Actually, now that I think about it, the ‘Ten Stupidest Movies of All Time’ are almost all obscure productions that no one has actually heard of... except for *Plan Nine from Outer Space*, which is only famous for consistently topping the worst movie list. But having wasted the ten minutes of my life it took to fast forward through that sucker, I can assure you, *Plan Nine from Outer Space* is absolutely no better or worse than your typical one star movie, so don’t bother wasting your time, it’s just not that bad. It’s just not any good.

###

Bo remains at the bar sipping whiskey. For some reason *Plan Nine from Outer Space* comes to mind when he thinks about the current production.

###

Bo shakes his head. Why is he sipping whiskey? He tilts his head back and drains the glass while motioning for the bartender, an East Indian looking guy... or is that West Indian... or it is just coolie?

###

No. As drunk as he may be, Bo has the presence of mind to studiously avoid the word. Can you imagine the publicity backlash?

###

On the other hand, you know what they say: all PR is good PR.

###

And either way, I paid for a week. And I'm getting my money's worth. When we're done here, I've got a bathroom that needs cleaning.

###

Blow torch in hand, visor down, flame it up, there's only one way to clean that thing...

###

Bo, I am talking about Bo... actually I'm writing... stalling... thinking... staring into the bottom of that glass... is it empty already... motioning for more... his marriage such a wreck... it wasn't even his fault... he was just being friendly...

###

Enter Euro. This story is about Euro as much as anything else. Well, as Say Jay pours her a drink, some Gra'gl awful, coconut flavored tropical monstrosity, the truth is, this story was supposed to be about her as much as anything else.

#

She's been following Bo around all day. Bo probably isn't the best man for the role. I was originally going to cast a smaller, thinner, weaker, more defensive...

#

Bo's next role, the one we've been working the most on, called for him to be angry, just plain angry. And if he were playing that part, he'd be throwing that glass against the mirrored back glass about now. Can't you just see him hurl it, Say Jay ducking, mirror breaking, and Say Jay sweeping it up, replacing it, like it was nothing, like he knew this would be first of seventeen takes, with some running gag about how every time Bo threw that glass it hit some stupid mirror.

#

In the end, the Say Jay's would be carrying a new mirror into the bar and try to move it to avoid the glass being thrown, miss, thrown, miss, and then... they slip on something, collateral damage, you take what you can get...

#

Do you remember that script? Well, of course, you don't, but Bo. He had go to war. I was going to say 'Nam, but the time for 'Nam stories has come and gone, but whatever, Afghanistan, and although Bo had been a West Pointer, career military, decorated hero, in the end, he'd felt betrayed, used as a target, decoy, laid out to die... only he didn't. His unit was supposed to draw fire, bring them in, take whatever casualties they had to, but when it was clear reinforcements weren't coming, when the field artillery failed to fire, when the air force had better things to do than napalm the enemy before him, Bo had acted, had led his men to a clear and decisive victory...

#

Not that many casualties. Oh, one can say one casualty is too many, but then, folks die just crossing the street... they write a story, reread it, and on editing, realize that it's so bad, their brain spontaneously induces a neural aneurysm to save the world a sequel, so folks die... more so in war than writing light fiction, but the point is, there's always a price to pay, and being in the military, he'd seen plenty of guys die, plenty of guys that didn't deserve to die, one minute there, the next minute, so much vaporized flesh from an exploding booby trapped camel, so death was par for the course, but the being laid out to die, just served up to the enemy, there was something wrong in that, and Bo had died a little inside when he learned that the upper

echelons signed off, that the fuster cluck... had all gone according to plan.

#

Well, it felt sort of personal.

#

It hurt.

#

And so, Bo had taken to drink.

#

And drink had taken to Bo.

#

Only, that's a different story.

#

OK. Fair enough. Maybe a better story, but this is the story we're doing.

#

Still, Bo's a well-known actor. And part of what one's buying when they buy Bo's appearance in a story like this is the name that he brings with him (p.s. it's Bo), the history he brings with him (p.s. he's Bo), and all the rest of the baggage that he brings with him (oh, it stars Bo, ends with Bo, and goes by the name of Bo, unless you're feeling rich, in which, by all means, call him Beauregard _____).

#

So, what I'm saying is, it's hard to imagine Bo sitting at a bar, drinking, on account of his wife being mad at him; it's not what Bo (or any character that he might play, by any other name) would do.

#

It's really so much easier picturing him getting mad drunk, so he can just numb himself, the better to finish the story (how many pages do we have left, anyhow), honor his contract (why did I sign that stupid thing), and be on his way (you know, down the street and back to his million dollar, beach front bungalow, if such a complex can be called a bungalow).

#

Anyway, I think we were telling a story in here somewhere.

#

You see, Euro has a motive, a driving force behind her, both in the story and out, and that's money.

#

M-O-N-E-Y-!

#

As such, she's been following Bo around (in story and out). She preys on men, feeds on them, their vices and desires (yeah, both in story and out, I mean, there is a reason her mug is bigger than his on the movie poster and it cuts off right at the bust, but, you know, not before).

#

So, maybe Bo could get mad at her, but that would be a lot easier if she weren't so damn good looking.

#

Euro sits down next to Bo.
'You look down. Let me buy you a drink.'
It seems so unlike a user.

#

They talk...

#

What do they talk about? Their craft, really, cut away from the story and they're trading bits of gossip, what it's like to be a big name star, to sign a thousand autographs at a convention... or sit through a freezing cold photo shoot in the early morning hours because some nitwit of a writer thinks it will look cool even though the temperature is in the low fifties and everyone else is wearing winter coats. You know, that sort of thing.

#

They hit it off... as only two people who have been sharing a dressing room can. Hey, it's a low budget affair. And those Say Jay's are eating into the budget.

#

'Union scale!'

'We are on the overtime!'

'Do not forget the stunt and hazard pay!'

#

Anyway, a few more drinks and Euro is helping Bo stumble back to his room and that's where the fun begins.

#

Why make it more complicated than it needs to be?

#

She's just going to steal his wallet. Seems so simple really.

#

But suddenly, Bo is awake. So many things look like whiskey, after all. And it's not like the budget includes the money for *Twenty Year Barrel Aged Anything*.

#

Even Euro is a bit past her prime...

#

'Fine! We can do this the hard way if you want. I'll just tell everyone you dragged me up here and raped me. Of course, if you want to play it that way, it'll probably ruin your marriage.'

#

Bo grabs his wallet, stuffs it in his back pocket, and hops on the bed. He's big, like, real big, so it's not like she's just going to be able to flip him over and take it... no matter how drunk he may or may not be and/or whether he passes out or not.

#

‘My marriage? What a joke?’

But the entire subject seems to enliven Bo. Jumping out off the bed, he reaches into her purse, and pulls out a wallet. It could have been the same one he shoved into his back pocket mere moments ago. I mean, there was one of those ‘# # #’ things. So, a cut and an edit: plenty of time for the special effects guys to do their magic and transfer the wallet from his back pocket into her purse.

#

In short, short-story movie-magic, be impressed...

#

Bo’s looking at the wallet, tossing it around, wondering why he ever needed to put it in his pocket in the first place before jumping on the bed, maybe it was just bad editing, that would explain a lot, as he shoves the wallet back into his pocket and jumps back down onto the bed.

#

‘At this point, I’m not really sure if it’s my wallet or somebody else’s wallet,’ Bo says. ‘But assuming you’re some Con Lady, and you really do seem to be way too sweet and forthcoming with the money to be a Con Anything,’ which if that whole montage thing wasn’t clear, she did pay his way for many an outing, it just seemed like

the thing to do, perhaps realizing she had his wallet all along or, you know, they were working the same storybook crew.

#

But whatever...

#

‘Listen,’ that would be Euro speaking if you can’t tell the two apart by sound, yet. ‘It’s a circular story. You wake up drunk with a hangover, hard night, whatever you want to call it, and I start the day on the beach, counting the bills in your wallet, shivering, saying how it’s a cold-cold world and all that.’

#

‘Oh, it is a cold-cold world, alright.’

#

‘I need that wallet for the story.’

#

‘No, you need a wallet.’ And since that doesn’t seem to suffice, ‘Just go down into the lobby and roll some random punk. Or, I hear there’s a convention in town.’

#

‘You mean, like turn a trick?’

#

‘Yeah,’ Bo agrees, standing. Now this improvisational stuff is getting somewhere, he thinks as he approaches her, towers over her. ‘Looks like you’re in a bad spot, missy, in dire need of a wallet...’

#

You know, I wonder if it’s just me... or my proximity in the room... or my proximity to the story...

#

Yeah, it’s probably the later. So, just so we’re all clear, Bo isn’t so much turning on the charm as he’s turning on the malevolence.

#

Say it with me: *mal-e-violence...*

#

‘I mean, as long as you’re going to turn a trick...’

#

There is a hand, a strong meaty hand, suddenly wrapped in her hair. The type of hand that isn't used to hearing people saying no, telling him what to do, and that is more than happy to ignore anyone who wants to try and tell him what he can and cannot do by way of touching... of the flesh... and the removing... of the clothes.

#

We can do this the easy way or the hard way...

#

'We could probably work out a deal. What did you say your name was? Euro?'

#

You see, I wanted Bo to be meaner, less predictable. He really is too heroic, too nice, too good. It makes for a boring story. Hey, but you know what would make for a better story? For a predator to search Bo out, believe she's going to get the drop on him; and then, for him to get the drop on her...

#

Down on his luck, drinking, self absorbed, marriage on the rocks... almost a farce...

#

In short, the perfect mark...

#

And that's where he lures her in, until the predator, turns to prey.

#

Let's see, I had a line for this somewhere, the tag line for the entire story...

#

Sometimes the good guy wins, even if he has to play the bad guy to do it.

#

'I'll just cry rape.'

'And I'll just show everyone the wallet that you stole from that guy, whoever it was, last night... and the night before. It's not just my word against yours. You've left an endless string of victims behind you, all of them eager for revenge.'

#

She's wearing one of those almost non-existent resort town evening dresses. He pulls the strap aside, draws a finger slowly across the flesh.

#

It could be erotic... or it could be menacing.

#

As in, a man on the verge of violent eruption...

#

The girl, Euro, stands there, taking it.

#

'Eh, if you're not going to be into it. Go find yourself a mark in the lobby.'

'What?'

'Circular story, you started with the wallet, you end with the wallet. Go get that wallet, princess.'

'I can't believe...'

'Out!'

#

I kind of like Bo...

'Shut it! I've never worked with a less prepared hack in all my life. Both of you, out of my room. Now!'

#

Both of us?

#

‘Out!’

#

Really?

#

‘Out!’

#

Ah, but there is a wavering in his voice. Well, not wavering, it’s probably only something a fellow actor (or highly acclaimed writer) would pick up, that something that says, tarry at the threshold, I have more to say to you, don’t fade the scene out, quite yet.

#

So, the two of us stand, tarrying on the threshold.

#

Euro turns. She has a sort of sadness in her eyes. While Bo's lying on the bed, that wallet must feel mighty comforting in his pocket right about now, his hands crooked behind his neck, he's almost humming, he's so happy.

#

'Of course,' he says, drawing it out, 'If it turned out we were married all along, I mean, if you were the wife that we never did see, always got cut off at the corners, well, then, maybe for you it's a circular story, day after day; but for me, it could be the same story, same day, and I just push everyone else out further into the fringe, only to replace you back at the center, at the heart of my core, everyday.'

Being a master (or should that be mistress) of the improvisation, Euro is quick on the uptake. 'I could get up early, before you, go out for a walk, being sure to take your wallet with me, so I could get back in, you know, modern hotels and their credit card locks... and then, while I'm out, I can plan the day's activities, based on our budget, which would mean, your wife today was the me of yesterday.'

'Of course, that still leaves tonight,' Bo reminds her.

#

Yeah, now we're talking.

#

Tonight...

#

But instead of the hot and heavy B-movie action, no need for a screen-double stand-in, there is only a collective, 'OUT!' from the love-struck duo.

#

And as the story fades to black, there is a final scene in the hall, where the three Say Jay's in white suits and a lone writer in a Hawaiian shirt and flip flops quietly listen, ears to the door, before they notice the reader, dust themselves off, straighten their jackets (and/or aloha wear) and proceed to launch into the song that will take us through the closing credits...

#

'A song, now?

'This is most surprising to me.'

'I do not believe we have anything ready.'

#

Which explains why we'll never be able to outsource creative work to the Indies, whichever Indy they offer.

#

But, hey! On the plus side, if Bo was drinking colored water that means there's a bottle of the good stuff somewhere. I remember seeing it on the bill.

#

'A bottle...'

'Of hooch...'

'I do believe I cooch.'

#

Yeah, like I said, outsource, never going to happen.

#

#

#

The End

#

Or Is It?

#

#

#