

Intro-----Great in the Hay

The story that follows, Great in the Hay, was written fifty years ^{white} ago (in a year
of living and working occasionally in Hollywood.) It could be argued
(although feebly) that the seed of The Deer Park is here.

~~Script Intro~~ Great in the Play

#

It will be noted that in the screenplay that follows, a montage is proposed ^{for} in the middle of the action ^{and} provided "the budget permits."

This screenplay was written for my son, Michael Mailer who is a movie producer (Two Girls and a Guy, Black and White, Religion Inc., etc) after he asked me if I would do a twelve-minute short-short script for the Internet and to my surprise, the notion did appeal. The budget, however, as Michael was quick to point out, was minimal. Hence, the note.

I have to say that this adaptation was fun to do—how much had I ~~some~~ ^{tricks over} / A few learned in fifty years? ^{a bit of} A little, one would hope, at least enough to put some female flesh on the all-too-clearcut bones of the original narrative.

In heaven, where the cast of your dreams can be found, the lead role of Bert would be played by Danny De Vito.

#

Great in the Hay

Once there were two producers named Al and Bert. They were both short, they were both bald, they were both married, and they both produced pictures. They even had offices next to one another. Everything about them was so similar that they might have been considered twins if it were not for a difference so great that one never thought of them as being the least alike.

The difference was that the one named Al had the reputation of being great in the hay. In every other respect he was much the same as Bert, whose only reputation for want of something better was that he made a great deal of money.

This irritated Bert. He would call people in, he would talk to them, he would say: "I've known Al for twenty years. We got married within three months of each other, we make the same salary, we've had approximately the same number of big box-office grossers and box-office duds, we're almost the same weight, our looks are similar, and yet Al has the reputation for being great in the hay. Why should he have that reputation?"

It came to bother Bert, it came to bother him colassally. He would ask everyone, and no one would tell him the answer. He came at last to approach it as a business problem. He called in a private detective.

To the detective, he said, "I want you to find out the reason. I don't care how low-down and dirty. The man has a secret, there's a reason why Al is an expert and I'm an unknown. I want you to find that reason."

The detective went out, he scouted around, he compiled a list of names, he ended with a duplicate of the little black book that Al was keeping. To each of the addresses listed went the detective. As he obtained his answers he filed his reports, and when it was done he returned to Bert.

"Your report is wasted money," cried Bert. "You've taught me nothing. You've merely confused me. Let me read to you what you say. It's disgusting."

Bert read from the report. He read what Claudia Jane had to say, and Dianthe, and Emeline, and Fay, and Georgia, and Hortense, and the others.

"He is the best lover I ever used," said Claudia Jane, "because he is floppy and lets me throw him around."

"He is magnificent," murmured Dianthe, "he rides over me, disdains me, leaves me convinced I am a woman."

"He is cute," wrote Emeline, "and all my own."

"A master at sexpertease," stated Hortense, "because I tell you, buster, I'm bored with less."

"Pure," dictated Fay, "and not addicted to the nasty. Love for us is a communion of purity and simplicity which intensifies my hard-won religious conversion."

"He likes to spend money," lisped Georgia, "and I think that's everything, don't you?"

Bert was enraged. "You call this a report?" he shouted at the detective. "It is nothing but a mish-mosh." He threw the sheets into the air. "You go find his secret."

The detective pounded a weary scented beat. His flat shoes went through boudoirs while he attempted to elicit a gimmick from the mish-mosh.

At last the case was closed. There came a morning when, to everyone's surprise, Al left a note which read *Every year I have been getting more and more depressed*, and blew out his brains. Bert could never understand it. When he discharged the detective, he complained with a sigh, "I still don't understand why Al was so great. It's aggravating. I've lived a full life, and I can tell you, women are all the same in the dark. I ought to know."

So the moral of the story may well be: People who live in the dark live longest of all.

Norman Mailer

1950

GREAT IN THE HAY

FADE IN

1 INT. DAY - BERT'S OFFICE

Two men are sitting in a producer's office. The producer, BERT, speaks.

BERT

I've known Al for twenty years. We got married within three months of each other. As producers, we've had approximately the same number of big box-office grossers and box-office duds, we're the same size, about the same weight, and yet Al has the reputation of being great in the hay. Since you are a private detective, I am telling it to you straight. But if you have a tape recorder in your jacket, turn it off. Don't take notes. Just look at me and look at this guy.

(shows him a framed photograph of two short, tubby bald men with their arms around each other.)

There we are. Al and Bert.

(taps his chest to indicate that he is Bert.)

We're both married, and, I don't have to tell you, ~~we even look alike~~. Everything about us is so similar that people could think of us as twins except for this one difference which is so huge that nobody ever thinks of us as being ~~at all~~ alike. That is because my ~~only reputation is that most of my pictures make money, whereas~~ Al has ~~the~~ reputation of being great in the hay.

~~Why should he have that reputation?~~ ~~It~~ bothers me, colossally. I see it as equal in importance to an ~~urgent business~~ problem. So I've called you in. I want you to find out the reason why Al is considered great in the hay.

(more)

the
It bothers me

the least bit

That

a can kill you

2.

BERT (cont'd)

I don't care what you dig up. I
don't care how low-down and dirty.
Al has a secret. There's a reason
why he is ~~labelled as~~ top-gun in
the sack and I am ~~a nobody~~. I

but a nobody. I

want you to find that reason.

what? Nothing

car detective

FADE OUT:

a flounders such outlays
If the budget ~~permits~~ we can have a montage of the detective
knocking on doors and entering rooms. During this we get a
glimpse of some of the women. ~~Other shots of him exiting~~
other doors with other women waving goodbye.

Further

FADE IN:

2 INT. DAY - BERT'S OFFICE

His TV monitor is on, but Bert is still holding the tape
prior to inserting it in his VCR.

BERT

It's taken you two months and two
big bills. This better be good.

DETECTIVE

It's good.

BERT

You got them to talk?

DETECTIVE

I did.

BERT

How?

DETECTIVE

By using my blue sheet.

BERT

Come again?

DETECTIVE

I brought my blue sheet along with
my videocam and my tripod.
Photographed them in front of it.

3.

BERT

You son of a bitch. You gave them the idea that movie work might follow?

DETECTIVE

Out here, that's the only way I know to bullshit a smart woman.

BERT

And for that you charge an arm and a leg and my dick and my nuts?

DETECTIVE

I put in the hours. I got them to talk. It wasn't automatic. Some of them were pretty mad at Al. "I haven't heard from the son of a bitch in three days." Crapola like that.

BERT

I don't know. How does he do it?
(clicks the video scanner to begin the detective's tape.)

The video opens with a powerful-looking blonde sitting in front of the blue sheet.

CLAUDIA JANE

I am Claudia Jane. Hello.

DETECTIVE (O.S.)

Hello, Claudia Jane.

CLAUDIA JANE

Now, what? What comes ~~next~~ after I say I am Claudia Jane?

DETECTIVE (O.S.)

You've told me a lot about Al. Can you summarize your conclusion?

CLAUDIA JANE

This is a one-minute audition, right?

DETECTIVE (O.S.)

As of now. You can progress to more.

4.

CLAUDIA JANE

I will put it in a nutshell. Al
is the best lover I ever used.

DETECTIVE

You say used. Why?

CLAUDIA JANE

Because he is floppy. He lets me
throw him around. He is a groove!
(Her eyes get misty
in recollection.)

CUT TO:

DIANTHE

(a slim intense
brunette dressed in
black leather and
smoking a cigar)

I am Dianthe. I feel ready to
tell you. Albert is magnificent.
He is the only man who has ever
been able to melt my ice.

DETECTIVE

Are you serious, Dianthe?

DIANTHE

Indubitably and ~~Irremediably and indubitably.~~

DETECTIVE (O.S.)

Wow!

DIANTHE

Albert rides over me. He disdains
me. He leaves me convinced I am
a woman. He's the only man I know
who ever succeeded in getting me
to take off my leather.

peel

CUT TO:

EMELINE

(a cuddly brownette,
warm and soft in
appearance)

He is cute, and when we are
together I know that he is all my
own.

5.

DETECTIVE (O.S.)
Emeline, how do you know?

EMELINE
Because I can always tell. I
would not dream of sharing a man
with anyone but his wife.

CUT TO:

HORTENSE
(Tall and horsey.
Mannish. Wears
slacks and a canvas ~~shirt~~
gun-vest with pockets for cartridges
Al, baby, is one master-mother of
sexpertease.

DETECTIVE (O.S.)
Could you, Hortense, clarify *even this remark.*
~~more precisely what you mean?~~

I can put
it this
way. Al
lives in
HORTENSE
~~Just think of it this way. Al lives in~~
~~the nitty-gritty. Because that is crucial. Because~~
~~I tell you, buster, I'm bored with~~
~~less.~~ *am*

DETECTIVE (O.S.)
~~I still don't understand.~~ *I'm still in the dark*

just
HORTENSE
~~Sugar-pie,~~ forget it. People who
live in the dark live longest of
all.

CUT TO:

FAYE
(a redhead.
Seriously overweight)
My name is Faye.

DETECTIVE (O.S.)
Yes, Faye, and you were saying
that relations between you and
Albert are not to be considered as
carnal.

6.

Most of the time—not I can say it.

FAYE *He is*
 Al is pure. ~~We are not~~ addicted *Never!*
 to the nasty. ~~We need do no more~~
 than hold hands in order to have a ~~con-joining~~
 a ~~joining~~ of the spirit. ~~Then we~~
 are on wings.

Sounds DETECTIVE (O.S.)
 That's uplifting. Is it always
 this platonic?

FAYE *also*
 Oh, no, we can certainly bong the
 gong. *(A sudden rush of emotion has thickened her voice.)*

DETECTIVE
 Would you say that again?

tell him

FAYE *(her other face can now be seen.)*
~~(her real face shows)~~
 We bong the gong. But I always
~~feel~~ that we do it like man and
 wife. In the name of a higher
 purpose.

CUT TO:

GEORGIA
 (over thirty. Of all
 these women, she is
 the nearest thing to
 a Marilyn Monroe
 look-alike)

DETECTIVE (O.S.)
 And your name is Georgia?

GEORGIA
 (nods. She has been
 drinking, and now
 takes a cherry out
 of the ice cubes in
 her empty glass,
 pulls off the stem
 and holds it up.)
 I'll bet you I can tie a knot in
 this. On? You on?

DETECTIVE (O.S.)
 Can I afford it? What are your
 terms?

7.

GEORGIA

If I do it in 15 seconds, ^{you give} me fifty bucks ^{if I can do it in 15 seconds.}

DETECTIVE (O.S.)

Go.

GEORGIA

(she puts the stem in her mouth. The CAMERA moves to closeup. We see a series of calculating expressions and shrewd evaluations as she works at it with her tongue inside her closed mouth. There's a truly tough look around the jaw. In twelve seconds she brings forth a cherry stem tied in a granny knot and extends her hand for payment. The CAMERA picks up the sight of his hand passing a fifty dollar bill over.)

DETECTIVE (O.S.)

Beautiful. I have to say. It was worth fifty bucks. This really *supports* ~~builds~~ our interview.

GEORGIA

(He gives her his best-pal/old-pal look.)
~~Sure it does.~~ My record is four seconds.

DETECTIVE (O.S.)

That's so great. Georgia, tell me. Just between us. What is the real lowdown on Al?

Like a honey, tell me

GEORGIA

ba by, Oh, ~~honey~~ he loves to spend money, and I think that's everything. Don't you?

The video ends.

8.

~~The video ends.~~

CUT TO:

Bert, ~~back at his desk~~, looks at the detective, but says nothing. The detective is about to speak but also remains silent.

Bert suddenly starts screaming.

BERT

You call this a report? I call it a waste of ~~my~~ money. ~~What have you informed me of?~~ You've merely confused me. ~~Why?~~ Your entire video report is nothing but a... a mishmosh, a black curse of a mishmosh. *A curse!*

The phone rings.

BERT

(continuing;
listening)

What. . . what are you saying? No, it's not possible. Oh, that's so awful. ~~And~~ that's all he said in his note! It's the pits. It's the pits of the pits. I can't say another word.

(hangs up.)

Al is gone. He committed suicide. *He* ~~blew~~ out his brains.

DETECTIVE

That's a shocker. What a shocker.

BERT

cockamamie
He wrote this unbelievable (note.

(recites from memory)

Every year I have been getting more and more depressed.

DETECTIVE

That's all?

BERT

That's it. I can't understand.

~~why~~. How could he do it? *All that gash*

(more)

ready to die for him.

9.

BERT (cont'd)

How could ~~a man who's supposed to~~ *he?*
~~be so great in the hay!~~ *Dead!*
~~Just like that?~~ *about* And I still know
nothing from nothing why he was so
great. It's aggravating. I've
lived a full life and I can tell
you. All dames are the same in
the dark. I ought to know.

It could
drive you
nuts.
How?

He gets up, walks around the room, punches the STOP on the tape recorder in the middle of its automatic rewind and then, almost without thinking, presses START.

CUT TO:

The TV monitor. Hortense is on.

HORTENSE

just Sugar-pie, forget it. People who
live in the dark live longest of
all.

THE END