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*The Names Have Been Changed to Protect the Writer's Kneecaps



It's the Easter weekend and Oscar and I are attending the opening of a new nightclub here in Curaçao. As it is owned by Gé* (pronounced Heh with a Bill the Cat furball in your throat), the short, vile proprietor of another establishment I affectionately refer to as the "loser bar", I at first refused to attend. But

when Gé was vilified in the local press complete with insinuations of drug trafficking and prostitution, I changed my tune for the most selfish of reasons: there could be a screenplay in there somewhere.

After an hour debating my apparel, I decide on a low-cut black baby-doll dress, gold satin sandals, and silk underwear. When in Rome, I surmise, wear a toga.

I put on my sunglasses, plant myself in the passenger seat of Oscar's Mercedes (which is finally working again after being stripped for parts by his employees while Oscar was on Xmas holidays with me in Canada), and off we go.

It's a small crowd. The aforementioned press coverage has left Gé with few friends: the government minister advertised as the evening's emcee has escaped to Bonaire, while a rash of firings the previous week has alienated Gé's staff. Even the media has dwindled, down to one Telecuraçao crew.

I begin a clandestine survey of the place, sneaking down the back stairs, expecting a maze of bedded cells but finding only the bathrooms—empty, clean, no condom machines, not even one of those needle bins like in the restrooms at the Miami airport. Hmmm. So far,

Tarantino this is not.

I reappear in the bar. Gé, having rid himself of his usual stench of whiskey and garlic, is trying his best to win over the Telecuraçao reporter. More interested in cleavage, the cameraman turns the lens on me. A woman talking with Oscar jealously demands to know who I am. I ignore her and settle down instead beside Gé's wife, who fancies herself a Dutch Sue Ellen Ewing but, unfortunately, rich and drunk is where the similarity ends. One-dimensional, easy to copy, best describes the character of Gé's better half. That, and a six-year-old could write better dialogue.

So I pull Oscar away from his adoring fan—later revealed as the manager's frustrated spouse—and head outside to the Biker Bar attached below the nightclub. Alone at first, we are joined shortly by two biker dudes, one of whom looks like he just sprung his first beard. They begin playing darts in the dark. "The place isn't finished yet," the owner explains.

Two free drinks and a T-shirt later, we head back upstairs. By this time I've decided drunk and demanding is the only way to make the evening bearable. I order my third black Russian and ask Gé where the hell the food is. A plate of bar snacks is immediately produced. I feel somewhat vindicated.

Two hours later the bar is finally full, but there is still no evidence of drugs or Curaçao's version of *Showgirls*. The men are behaving themselves. Their Dutch wives are in attendance instead of their Antillean bysides. It's tragic.

Trying to make the best of things, I settle down in a corner, sober up, and start making notes.

Michelle Demers