

Story for performance #934
webcast from Sydney at 08:10PM, 10 Jan 08



Source: Martin Chulov, 'Bush checks in to Holy Land hotel', *The Australian online*, 10/01/08.

Tags: film, desert, travel, storytelling

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This guy earns \$2900-a-night as a Consultant Inspirational Speaker to Big Business—why would he even be staying in a sleazy motel like that one?

That was what Bob said as a first objection to the idea I put forward for a movie. I said I don't know, maybe he has flat tires or something. He is travelling across the Mohave Desert and he gets a flat. He gets out of the Jeep and starts to walk down the road. He knows that there's a town nearby. It's getting dark. And cold. Then he sees the motel and thinks he is saved. Maybe that is why.

Uhuh, maybe. That was the one comment from Bob before he got up saying I gotta take a Leak and I was left alone with my doubts about him as co-writer. Thing is he said, when he got back, even if our guy did have a flat out there or whatever I don't see him getting into that kind of relationship with a chamber maid. I mean on his kind of money...why would he do that? Why would he even stay there, when he could just call a freaking helicopter and escape? He has a Satellite Phone.

It took us months of this to fix all the plot holes and figure out a name for our guy. First off we called him Gregg Tristan but that sounded too much like an action name and we wanted something maybe more ambiguous, so we switched it to Jace Millerand. Two days before we sent the script off (to Amarax Pictures) we saw industry announcements of a movie in post-production with James Gandolfini in the role of a detective called Grace Jillersand. It's too close, that's what I said and Bob said we should just, you know, stick with our instincts but then we asked Misha and she said no way. Please she said, are you kidding? You have to change that. So Jace Millerand got Find-and-Replaced as Quince Spence. It was a kind of in-joke I guess cos Quince and Spence were friends of ours from kindergarten. Anyway.

We submitted the film on a Thursday and on the following Monday Bob took the call from Amarax saying they liked it a lot. Unbelievable. He was practically yelling down the phone over the traffic noise. They fucking loved it man he said, they fucking LOVED IT. The hitch was that they really only needed movies at that point for ———. I cannot tell her name because of the libel laws. The guy from Amarax wanted us to turn the script round a bit so the emphasis was more on the chamber maid and her son with the Downs Syndrome. Quince Spence would be just a one night stand that passed through and the rest of the movie would be more about life in the motel. I made a few noises concerning artistic integrity but Bob was already rewriting stuff in his head, right there on the highway so far as I could

make out. The big financial swindle that Spence uncovered could become a kind of IRS avoidance thing involving the Motel Owner, he said. The gun battle between Spence and the bent corporate lawyer would become a kind of domestic row between the chamber maid (played by a certain jail-bait coke-eating hooker, you know who I am talking about). He had it all figured out but then the whole thing came to nothing anyway when a certain good-for-nothing actor of the female persuasion did not like the movie and Amarax declined to option it.

Bob had meetings with a few more people but basically we were stalled. At the end of the summer two things happened. First I could not get one scene out of my mind. It was near the end—where Quince Spence is wounded and trying to get out of Las Vegas and he's lost everything, except the clothes he's standing in and the gun in his pocket. I kept going back to that scene. In the second version of the movie, with the chamber maid (we called her Carina Sociale) it's pretty much the same, only she has no gun, and it's not the bus she takes to escape but one of those sad rural trains. Anyway. This scene—two scenes really—were constantly on my mind. The second thing was I got a call from UpperCut who said they had a backer who was really into sci-fi. Did I have anything? It was Wednesday and he said Friday they had a meeting with this developer and they'd love to pitch a project from Bob and me. At first I was doubting but then the bus/train scene came back to me and especially the way that Quince/Carina are looking from the window, replaying everything that's happened to them over the whole movie. I had this thought that maybe we could shift that entire scene to the passenger compartment of an intergalactic cruise ship and have the central character (maybe a cyborg of some kind) looking out on the universe as it blasts-off taking him away from his adventures on another world. I called Bob and by the time he got over I had it half-worked-out; straight swap of the cyborg for Quince but keeping the Downs Syndrome kid from the second version and keeping the Motel Owner, only now the Motel itself would be less 'Bates Motel' and more like one of those hi-tech Japanese coffin places while the Owner would be like a mutant or a member of some alien species. Bob still had a problem with the money though. This cyborg earns 2900 galactic credits-a-night as a Diplomat in the Govt. of Earth he said, why would he be staying in a sleazy place like that one? To tell you the truth I was fucking exasperated but I just said I don't know. Maybe he lost all power from his Jetpack.

Adapted for performance by Barbara Campbell from a story by Tim Etchells.