

REVEL-ATION

Oedipus Rocks Act I

"I have rehearsal tonight," Ray announced one Friday afternoon this past summer.

"Rehearsal for what?" I asked.

"For the movie I'm in," he informed me in his start-in-the-middle-of-the-subject manner.

"What movie?"

"The one I saw an ad for in the paper. I auditioned and got the part."

"What's the movie about?"

"I don't know," Ray answered in his what-difference-does-it-make-anyway fashion.

"Who's producing it?" I queried patiently.

"There's no producer, just a filmmaker."

"Does this movie have a title yet?"

"Yea." Pause. Pause.

"Well what is it?" I yelled, my arms flailing.

"Oedipus in Las Vegas."

Trying not to laugh openly, I managed to ask quite sincerely of my then unemployed spouse, "Will you be compensated monetarily for your time and talent?" I asked.

"Yea." Pause. Pause.

I closed my eyes and uttered

through clenched teeth, "How much?"

"Thirty bucks."

My hopes were dashed, and I wanted to cry. "What part do you play?"

"The bartender," he answered.

"There's no bartender in Oedipus," I stated in my I-may-be-stupid-sometimes-but-I'm-not-ignorant tone of voice.

"There is now, and I'll be playing him for the next six Friday nights."

"Well, if you don't know what, specifically, the movie is about, do you know what kind of a movie it is?" I ventured to ask with visions of an X rating on its opening frames.

"It's a dark movie. That's all I know right now."

I'll bet it's dark. "What time is rehearsal?"

"Nine o'clock."

Oh boy, I was getting jealous of somebody, somewhere about something of which I knew very little.

During supper I thought about how Ray loved the theater and about the plays in which he had many parts in many cities over the years. I felt guilty and hoped that I didn't quell his well deserved and overdue enthusiasm. But as he prepared

to leave, the only thing I could think to say was, "Be careful." Boy, was my jealousy showing.

Act II

One night about a month later Ray announced, "The location person is coming over to check out our yard."

"What for?"

"They need to film someone climbing over a wall."

"With all the walls in Las Vegas they picked our property to shoot?" There was something he wasn't telling me. "Did you check with the neighbors?"

"No need. I figured that they could film the climbing part from one angle and the jumping down part from another."

I sighed in relief. One of our neighbors is tolerant only of his own actions.

"Well if it's just the yard...." For some reason unknown to my conscious mind, I do not like spur of the moment visits, especially from unknowns. In fact, four of the five people in this house do not.

Michelle showed up a few minutes later. I casually mentioned that we had three day sleepers and joked about her not letting Ray get too carried away vocally in his enthusiasm. All the while I was wondering why she was IN our house.

"This is the sliding patio door that gives access to the back

yard," Ray explained to her as he whipped back the lace drapes. "Through the doorway here is the kitchen, and through there is the family room."

Many questions immediately surfaced, but I said nothing as the house tour continued. Upon her exit, I was ready to burst.

"Why did you show her the inside of the house," I asked nicely.

"They might want to do some shooting inside."

"Please give us all early warning," I pleaded. Although the other family members in our home have known Ray for many years, nobody really knows him.

"Of course," he replied.

Just half an hour later, my sister answered the phone and took a message for Ray. "Shiffon will be right over," she reported.

In a slightly higher than normal pitch, I asked the man to whom I've been married for twenty-five years, "Who's **Shiffon?**"

"The director."

It just slipped out, "Is that her real name?"

"That's what everyone calls her."

Safe answer, Ray. "And why is she coming over?"

"Michelle probably called her and gave a favorable report on this location, so Shiffon wants to check it out for herself."

Great, the home into which we have invested sweat, tears and blood and have sacrificed time and money so that we few

remaining members of this family may have a modicum of creature comforts in out middle years is now referred to as a *location*. Not only was I jealous, I was pissed. I busied myself in the bedroom during her tour and hoped that she wouldn't demand to see the sleeping quarters.

"Well, how did she like the house?"

"She loved it. The whole crew will be over in the morning to shoot."

"What do you mean by 'the crew'?"

"You know, the filming, lighting, sound and costume folks and the actors."

"When will they be here?"

"About 5:30. It will take a few hours, and they want to be done before the hottest part of the day."

A few hours to film someone jumping a wall? He was definitely withholding information.

Act III

I awoke several times during the night and checked to see if Ray had come to bed. He had not, which is always the case when he is either extremely upset or excited about something. At 4:15 I was disturbed by strange voices in the house and much flushing in the hallway bathroom. Wicket, our cat, bolted from the bed and scooted under-

neath. It had begun.

I tried to keep as close to my morning routine as was decently possible - not running around in my jammies or undies and trying to control my hair before someone saw me and became frightened. It was difficult; I function by routine and try to keep to it, no matter what. I didn't even look outside. I didn't want to know who was trampling my lawn.

The three others in the house work the graveyard shift and usually arrive home together at about 6:00. At 6:30 I got concerned.

Within minutes they came in a bit winded. A Las Vegas Metro police officer in front of our house closed off the block and instructed residents to park in other than their usual spots.

Penne, my sister, spewed forth, "There are about twenty people in our yard with all sorts of equipment and all the neighbors are out wondering what's going on and who got robbed. This is so neat. Our house is going to be in a movie."

Our house? What about the wall climb?

Brother Willie became even more charming than usual and rapped with some of the crew in silent hopes of landing, at the least, a cameo.

Brother-in-law Don grunted and went to bed.

Just before it was time for me to leave for work, Ray came in from outside. "I moved your

car onto the street so it wouldn't be a problem for you to get out of the garage."

The wall nearest the garage is only a two footer. Who's doing the climbing, a midget?

The first thing I saw upon opening the front door was a grape muumuu. It was covering a bun haired lady who gave me the halt sign with one arm and the silence gesture with the other. I closed the door and envisioned myself explaining to Arnie and Joyce the reason for my being late for work. "You see, there was this film crew in my front yard, and they wouldn't let me out of my house." Yea, right.

A few minutes later, I was the only attraction as I walked self-consciously from the house to the car and pulled away as forty eyes watched and waited. I thank heaven that the work day was normal.

Soon after arriving home in the afternoon, I wash a load of laundry. While loading the washer, which is located in the garage, I noticed that the wheelchair that Willie no longer used was missing. Of all the things in our garage to nick, why a wheelchair?

"Ray, did you notice that the wheelchair is gone?"

"Yea." Pause. Pause.

"Any ideas?"

"The camera crew is using it. It's better than hand held. The actors needed some clothing, too; my army raincoat and my silk sport coat. Oh, and they'll be

back tomorrow to finish shooting."

Instead of blurting, "How much is this going to cost us in lost goods," I inquired, "Did they get the wall climb?"

"No, they decided to shoot a jump over the low one in the front yard."

"What's there left to shoot?"

"Something inside."

"What inside?"

"I don't know."

"When will they be here?"

"I don't know."

"Do Penne, Don and Willie know?"

"Not yet."

What's new?

ACT IV

After work the next day, I eyeballed the aftermath of the filming episodes. Not bad. A couple of footprints in the rosebed, a strange glass on the kitchen counter, and the aluminum can bin in the kitchen was full. Hmm. Heavy soda drinkers. The wheelchair was even back in its storage spot. When an occurrence out of the ordinary has passed, one that I believed at the time inconvenienced me, I reflect on its relevance to my life and inevitably conclude that it was no big deal as far as I'm concerned and that I should try harder to live and let live. As far as Ray was concerned, I think I

faked my true feeling quite well, thank you.

I had survived, Ray was pleased that he could assist in something that he enjoyed, and there was no damage. I rewarded myself with a bowl of ice cream.

"Ray, where's the chocolate syrup? We had two full bottles."

"We used it for the movie."
Pause. Pause.

"Was it used for a soda fountain scene or what?"

"Blood."

"Real old blood, huh?"

"No, fresh blood shot in black and white."

At this point there was nothing left to do but to laugh.

Encore

"Do you want to go to the wrap party with me?"

Unlike many people my age, I enjoy rap songs, not the gangsta crap, but the good stuff. "When is it?"

"Tonight in about three hours."

"Did you just find out about it?"

"No."

"And you didn't ask me earlier because..."

"I forgot."

"Whose playing at this rap party?"

"Some reggae group since its at a reggae bar."

"Shouldn't a rap group play at a rap party?"

"Not that kind of rap. A wrap

it up party. You know, it's a wrap."

Remembering how much fun we had at all of the theater cast parties over the years, I acquiesced.

The bar was far from being crowded at 9 PM, but about a dozen of the movie people were there, and I was really looking forward to meeting them and having stimulating conversations (expecting them to be like theater people).

Donald, a balding man in his thirties, went on about how amused he was when he attended a Roman Catholic mass in China. The mass was celebrated in Latin, you see, but the congregation responded in Chinese. Ho-kaay.

Ray introduced me to a well endowed gal in her late twenties whose name I didn't catch because of the extremely loud music.

"Ray, you finally get to see me with my clothes on," she twittered.

"Excuse me?" I said as forcefully as Joy-Lynd Chamberlain would have.

"Just kidding. I played a stripper. In real life I'm an aerobics instructor, but I have a degree in geological engineering. Can't get a job."

On that note she was gone and was replaced by an interesting looking young person who spent a few minutes chatting with Ray. I heard nothing of their conversa-

tion although I was sitting next to them. I admired the clean, crisp white shirt, colorful vest, tailored slacks and below shoulder length, well groomed hair adorned with a fashionable wide brimmed hat. All right! Someone who appears to have it together. Let's talk.

A long fingered hand with manicured nails was extended toward mine. "Hi, I'm David," a gentle voice spoke. "It was really a pleasure working with Ray." And with that, he moved on.

"Ray, what part did David play?"

"A transvestite. Did you say David?"

"That's how he introduced himself to me."

"All this time I thought he was a girl."

That's my Ray.

That basically was the night. Theater people they weren't, but interesting all the same.

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Coming Attraction

A letter from Desert Wind was delivered to the house recently. That's the drum and bugle corps that's organizing in Las Vegas. I just know that Ray contacted them first as a former corps instructor. I hope they have a place to practice.