

Making History

By Bill Wolfe

The six aspiring starlets were lined-up according to height, just the way The Chief wanted it. He sat behind his monstrously-oversized, ornate island of a desk, intensely puffing on an almost equally huge Cubana and stared at them, one-at-a-time, as if they were bugs on a dissecting plate. Behind him, three toadies with sophisticated Datapads stood like statues, afraid to break the silence. One had the misfortune to find himself completely surrounded by the noxious blue cloud of smoke as it made its way lazily toward the room's intake grille. He looked a little green, but knew better than to even fidget.

"Number three," he growled to Toady2. He spoke low—compared to usual—but anyone standing outside the closed door would have heard him, clearly. "She the one from Thursday?"

"Yes CG," the only way any successful Toady ever answered. "But she was Tuesday."

"Tuesday, huh?" He eyed her up-and-down like a Master Chef examined a choice cut for the King's table. "Thought she was taller. Maybe if we put a wig and heels on her she would. . ."

He was interrupted—unusual, but not unheard of—by the buzz of a large vintage speaker on his aircraft carrier of a desk. Sorry to bash the party, Chief, but Sal is on the phone.

"I'll take it, Blanche." He held his hand out and one of the Toadies handed him a phone. Blanche had been with him for years. She knew what his priorities were. "These stay," he pointed his cigar vaguely in the direction of the girls. "I ain't decided, yet." Nobody moved, nobody so much as breathed loud, especially poor Toady1, still immersed in a cloud of what could be the world's most expensive smog.

"Sal Baby!" His voice boomed. "I got great news!"

"What? Yeah, she's fine. And your wife. . ." He snapped his fingers and Toady2 quickly flashed him his Datapad screen. ". . .Genevieve. . .She doing okay?"

"Good. Good. State Finals, eh? Good."

"Hey listen, Sal. Your idea with What's-her-name and the Senator. We're gonna run with it but I need you to make it the President, instead."

"No, the Science Boys found her in the alternate world but hey, listen. You ain't gonna believe what the Senator's doin' there! Right! Over there, he's the President!"

"Nanocams in the Oval Office! Bedroom scenes in the West Wing! This is gonna be huge! I tell 'ya Sal. HUGE! HBO is droolin' over the first rights."

"Yeah, she's almost as big a star there as she was here, but listen Sal-old-buddy-old-Pal. . .you're gonna hafta' rewrite her whole life to make this work. Maybe a too-friendly uncle or a bad first marriage, or something. Our boys say she's too stable and too committed to DiMaggio in that timeline."

"Him? Naw, the Senator is perfect over there. You know how them Irish Jews are. You won't need to write him nothin'. Doing it like a bunny. Though I guess we should call him the President, instead?"

"Scandal? With the press corps they got? What I wouldn't give for that kind of wink-and-nod, look the other way press. Geeze-Louise but that imaginary mook's got it easy."

"Say what, Sal? Yeah-yeah-yeah. I know they ain't really imaginary. I guess they're as real to themselves as we are."

"When can you get me the re-write, Sally-Boy? What? You wanna pitch me one now? Another historical?"

"Sal, you're killin' me! After that Anthony and Cleopatra fiasco you sure you wanna go ancient history? We only sold it to ABC because the murder scene with Caesar and Brutus was decent. Everything else was barely R-Rated. What can you do for me, Sal?"

"Rape and murder, huh? Torture and ethnic cleansing on a worldwide scale? You're speakin' my language, Sal. Go on."

"Centuries of it? Centuries? How?"

"Really? What makes you think. . .?"

"Sal. Bubbke! Another World Religion? You gotta' be kiddin' me?!"

But Sal, Baby. We're. . .uh. . .They're still gonna' have the gentle Muslims to counter the Jewish Conversion of Europe, right?"

"What Sal?"

"They're gonna persecute both?"

"You gotta' be kiddin' me?"

"And you're gonna' do all this from one Jew kid in the time of Caesar Augustus?"

"Wait, you tellin' me they're gonna buy a virgin birth?"

"Again, Sal, you're killin' me!"

"I get it, Sally, an old guy and a knocked-up teenager. The kid is really the son of God. I get it."

“And Everybody. And I mean Everybody is gonna’ buy into this?”

“Look Sal, I know you’re the best writer in Hollywood, but you really tellin’ me that they’re gonna fall for this?”

“I hear you, Sal. I believe in you, Sal.”

“What?”

“Marketing for the Twentieth Century?”

“Guy in a red suit?”

“Saint What?”

“Sal! You’re a genius!”

“This sounds too big for TV!”

“Yeah!”

“Me too!”

“You got it Sal. I’m pitchin’ this as a miniseries on Pay-Per-View!”

“We’re gonna make a mint off this one!”

“You got it, Sal. I’m takin’ it to the networks first thing in the morning.”

“What you want to call it, Sal?”

“Nazarene?”

“It just don’t sing for me, Sal.”

“What was this mook’s name, again?”

“What would that be in English, Sal?”

“Hmmm. Still ain’t doin’ it for me.”

“Your’re the educated one, Sal. What’s the Greek for ‘Savior’?”

“Perfect, Sal!”

“Christos!”

“We’ll call it Christ Mas!”

“The marketing boys will love it!”

The End